

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL XIV 1998



PART 2

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was founded in Sydney in August 1938. The Victorian Branch of the Society was founded in October 1949. A Branch also exists in Canberra and Western Australia has its own Jewish Historical Society.

The *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* has been published since 1939. From 1988 the production of the Journal has been shared by New South Wales (June edition) and Victoria (November edition).

The Journal is edited and published by an Editorial Committee whose members are:

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

The Editors welcome suggestions for articles and manuscripts 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 3.5 inch Macintosh or DOS computer diskette. The data format preferred is Microsoft Word or Microsoft's generic intermediate data format, Rich Text Format (RTF). If you can only supply data as 'text only/ASCII' you must note which platform the data was prepared on (Macintosh/DOS/Windows). 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.

For the NSW edition, communication should be sent to The Editor, Dr S.D. Rutland, or Mrs Helen Bersten, Honorary Archivist, AJHS, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW 2008, Australia, from whom information about membership of the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

For the Victorian edition, communications should be sent either to the Editor, Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull, or to the Honorary Secretary, Mr Robert Aarons, PO Box 608, Carnegie 3163, from whom information about membership of the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

Front cover: Dr Fanny Reading receiving her medical degree
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Introduction.....	197
The Law of Loving Kindness <i>Anne Andgel.....</i>	199
Israel in Egypt Down Under: The First Synagogues in Australia <i>Robert S. Merrillees.....</i>	260
The Little <i>Shule</i> of Moshe Moskowitch <i>Morris S. Ochert.....</i>	284
Lord Casey and the 1939 White Paper: How an Australian British Minister of State Fought to Keep the Jews out of Palestine <i>Leanne Piggott.....</i>	288
Social Phenomena in Jewish Australia and the Development of Jewish Education <i>Bryan Conyer.....</i>	322
Reflections on Professor W.D. Rubenstein's Views as Editor <i>Sol Encel.....</i>	342
BOOK REVIEWS: <i>Reluctant Refuge</i> by Glen Palmer <i>Suzanne D. Rutland.....</i>	345
<i>Orphans of the Empire</i> by Alan Gill <i>Louise Rosenberg.....</i>	346
<i>Outwitting Hitler; Surviving Stalin</i> by Arthur Spindler <i>Sylvia Rosenblum</i>	349

<i>J.F.S. The History of the Jews Free School, London Since 1732</i> by Gerry Black <i>Helen Bersten</i>	350
Letters to the Editor	352
Errata	355
Genealogical Enquiries	364
New Members	365
Contributors	366

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

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Visiting Jewish leader speaking on behalf of the Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA), Malcolm Hoenlein, recently stated: 'to look back is to look forward'. It can be said that our Society, as evident through the pages of the *Journal*, is undertaking this central task for the Australian Jewish Community. As has become our tradition, this edition provides an interesting mix of amateur and professional historians and of young researchers in the field together with those who have published much material in the past.

The first article, 'The Law of Loving Kindness: A Tribute to Dr Fanny Reading', deals with the history of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) over its first twenty-five years, from its establishment in 1923 until the early post World War II era. The article focuses on the contribution of NCJW's founder and moving spirit, Dr Fanny Reading. Anne Andgel has undertaken painstaking, careful research to put this story together. The Society would also like to thank the patrons who supported this research and who are listed at the end of the article.

The next two articles deal with synagogues which were established in different parts of Australia. Robert Merrillees has produced a well researched, fascinating article in which he examines the Egyptian style architecture of the four early synagogues — York Street, Hobart, Launceston and Adelaide. He has provided a detailed historical backdrop for each of these synagogues, as well as making some interesting links between their architecture and the Masons. Morris Ochert in his article 'The Little *Shule* of Moshe Moskowitch' writes about a small prayer room, which Moshe Moskowitch built onto the rear of his Brisbane home, used by Jews who had migrated from Eastern Europe. The article highlights the fact that many small prayer groups (*minyanim*) were established in Australia by East European Jews who felt that the established synagogues were too far away to walk to on the Sabbath.

Leanne Piggott's article on Lord Casey is the product of research which she is presently undertaking as part of her doctorate which deals with Australia and the Middle East. She has shown how Lord Casey, when he was appointed as a member of the British War Cabinet as Minister of State Resident in the Middle East, supported the White Paper of 1939 and strongly opposed any easing of the restrictions on

Jewish immigration to Palestine, despite the tragedy which was engulfing European Jewry. Her contribution is very valuable and I feel that we need to be encouraging postgraduate students who are undertaking research in the area of Australian Jewish History to publish their findings in our Journal. Bryan Conyer's overview of the development of Jewish education in Australia is the product of a graduate research project. While his article is largely based on secondary sources, Bryan has brought together in one article the major trends which have emerged in Australia over the last two centuries in Jewish education and, as such, he has provided a valuable overview. Finally Emeritus Professor, Sol Encel, has given his 'reflections' on former editor, W.D. (Bill) Rubinstein's article published in the November 1997 edition entitled 'Recollections of an editor'.

We have a number of book reviews, with subjects ranging from the Jewish Free School in London, reviewed by Helen Bersten, refugee Jewish children who arrived before the Second World War, reviewed by Suzanne D. Rutland, contrasted by the story of British orphans who were sent to Australia, reviewed by Louise Rosenberg, and an Holocaust autobiography by Arthur Spindler, reviewed by Sylvia Rosenblum.

As often happens we have a number of *errata*, especially in regard to Helen Bersten's article on Jews in rural New South Wales, and Louise Rosenberg's article on historic houses in Sydney. This has all been published, since it adds to our body on knowledge on Jews in rural Australia, an area where historians are very dependent on participants' personal stories.

My article on the emergence of ultra-orthodoxy in Australia after World War II has been subject of much discussion. Historical debate is very important and the committee has decided to support the publication of Bensi Apple's comments on Professor Rubinstein's letter on this subject which was published in the November 1997 journal.

This year the Australian Jewish Historical Society, founded in Sydney in 1938, celebrates its sixtieth year. The Society has carried out its charter of recording and preserving Australian Jewish History. A special project of the Society which has just been completed is the writing of the history of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies with the publication of *With One Voice*, co-authored by Suzanne D. Rutland and Sophie Caplan for the Board's jubilee. This adds to the valuable work which has been done by the Society over its sixty years of activity.

The publication of this Journal is the result of a team effort. I would like to thank Helen Bersten for all her assistance, Nancy Hickson for her efficient typing and all the contributors for their prompt responses to my various requests.

Suzanne D. Rutland

THE LAW OF LOVING KINDNESS

A Tribute to Dr Fanny Reading,
Founder of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia in 1923

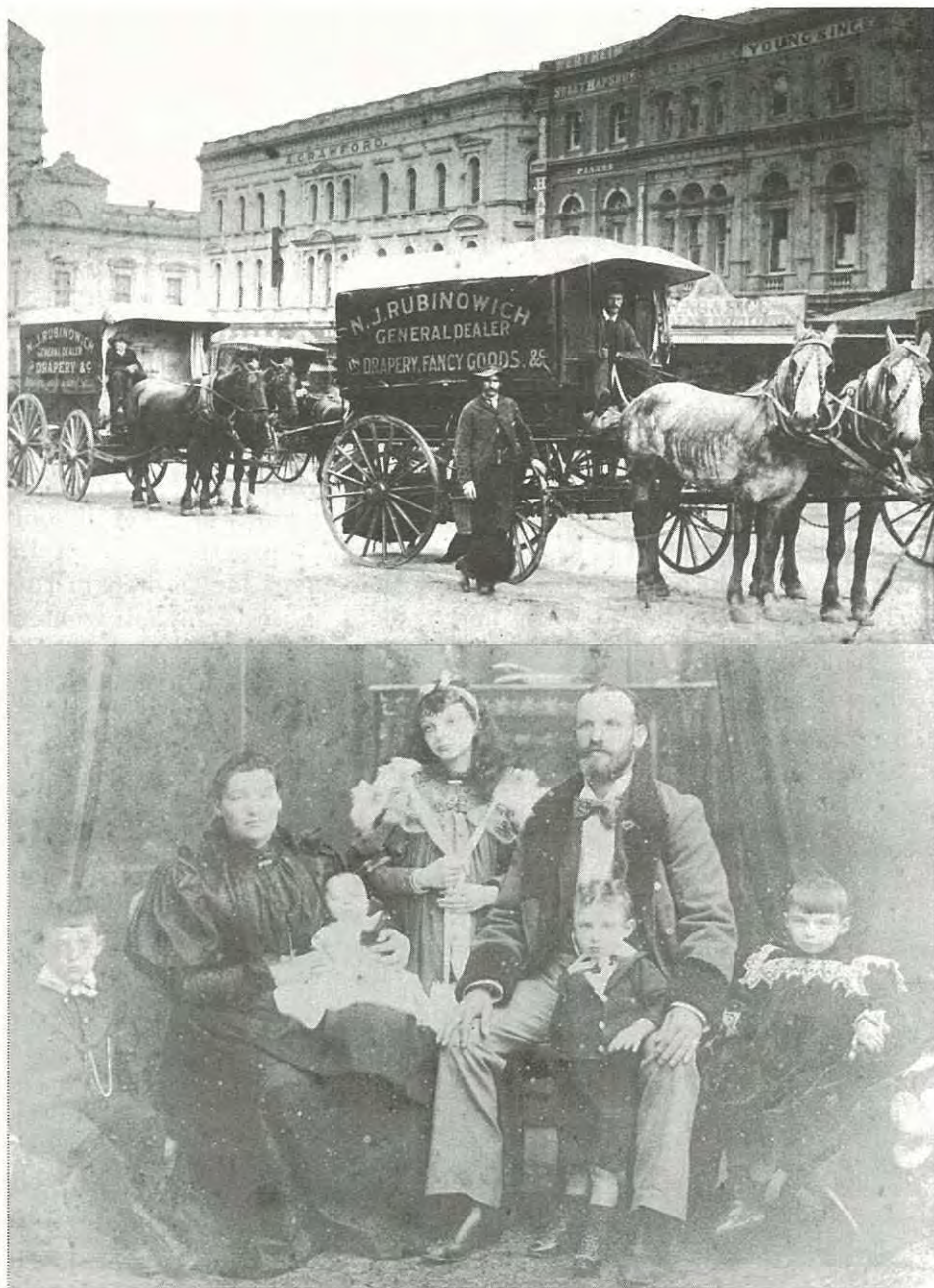
Anne Andgel

Seventy-five years ago, on 15 July 1923, Dr Fanny Reading called together a group of Jewish women in Sydney and formed the Council of Jewish Women of New South Wales. Within a decade the organisation had a nationwide membership and was reaching out to international affiliations. Although she was a practising doctor, in itself an unusual and commendable achievement for women in the early 1920s, Dr Fanny Reading had a vision to unite Jewish women all over Australia (and New Zealand) into 'one large body to work for all the problems that affect Jewry and mankind.'¹ The National Council of Jewish Women of Australia (hereafter referred to as NCJW) became that body and is a living and ongoing memorial to the life of its founder. Dr Fanny Reading, more than any other Jewish woman in Australia, is still fondly remembered throughout the country for her communal work and for the principles and ideas which she espoused and put into practice.

This article is a tribute to the life and work of Dr Fanny Reading with special emphasis on the State of New South Wales where she lived from 1922 until her death in 1974. Such was her charisma that she was generally known as Dr Fanny and to her close associates simply as Dr Fan. In spite of enormous changes in the socio-economic conditions of women in the latter half of the twentieth century, Dr Fanny's organisation is able to celebrate 75 years of *service* and to continue its work, due to the fundamental basic aims and ideals of its founder. The groups that comprise this organisation, depending on their status and the time they were formed, are variously referred to as councils, sections or groups.

THE EARLY LIFE OF DR FANNY READING

Dr Fanny Reading, whose Hebrew given name was Zipporah, was the first child of Nathan Jacob and Esther Rose Rubinovich who were married in 1883 in Russia. She was born in her parents' home



Top: Nathan Rubinovich (later Reading) worked as a hawker and removalist in Ballarat after his arrival in 1885.
Bottom: Family group c1900. Fanny is standing between her parents, Esther Rose, and Nathan. Her younger sister, Rachel, is a baby in arms. Her brothers Abe, Hyman and Lew are seated in the front row.

town of Karalitz near Minsk on 2 December 1884. Shortly after her birth her father left the Pale of Settlement² where Jews lived in stifling oppressed conditions, and came to Ballarat, Australia, via London. His wife and child, who had followed him to London, remained there until he was able to send for them when Fanny was six years old. The family settled in Ballarat and Fanny received her early education at the Humffray Street State school, Ballarat East. The family increased with the birth of three sons, Abraham, Hyman and Lewis, and another daughter, Rachel. Both parents conducted various businesses such as removalist, hawker, boarding house owner and the like in Ballarat and other Victorian country towns until the family eventually moved to Melbourne. It was while their father was proprietor of the Mafeking Hotel at Mt William that Fanny and her brother Abraham Solomon (later known as A. Stanley Reading or A.S. Reading or simply as Dr Stanley or Dr Abe) received notices in the *Melbourne Argus* (1906-8),³ she for her brilliance in music examinations and he for winning scholarships as a pupil of Scotch College, Melbourne as well as prestigious awards to study medicine at the University of Melbourne. By 1908 Fanny Rubinovich had already achieved very fine results for the previous three years through the Conservatorium of Music, Melbourne.

After 1908 there is a gap in the information available on Fanny's life and career. It is known that the family moved to St Kilda, Melbourne, and that Fanny taught both music and Hebrew classes. She received her Diploma of Music from the University of Melbourne in 1914.

In March 1918 Nathan Jacob Rubinovich, 'on behalf of myself and my heirs and issue,'⁴ followed a practice very common in those days and anglicized his surname. He chose Reading after Rufus Daniel Isaacs, the first Marquess of Reading, a distinguished English Jew.

At this point it is interesting to observe some of the early influences in Dr Fanny's life which would set the pattern for her communal endeavours. From all accounts, the bewilderment felt by the young girl on her arrival in Australia was to leave an indelible impression on her and she was determined to help other Jewish immigrants arriving in Australia to settle into their new lives.

Although Ballarat had a strong, albeit small, Jewish community when the Rubinovich family lived there, Dr Fanny had a heightened awareness of the isolation felt by Jewish families in country towns. Her own family was very orthodox and wherever they lived in country Victoria there was always a Hebrew tutor. Her knowledge of Hebrew was immaculate and her orthodox Jewish upbringing instilled in Fanny a deep love of Judaism together with an abiding belief in a Jewish homeland. Other ideals which developed from her early

training were social justice and service to all mankind and these strands were to come together later when she felt that there was a pressing need for Jewish women in Australia to band together for the common good.



In 1916 Fanny Reading started her medical studies. Until then she taught music and Hebrew. One of her outstanding pupils was Gladys Israel (Slutzkin) to whom she presented this photo.

THE STUDY OF MEDICINE AND THE MOVE TO SYDNEY

It was during World War I when she was in her early thirties that Fanny Reading decided to study medicine at the University of Melbourne (1916-1921) and to make this her profession in life. Family legend has it that younger brother Lew started Medicine but was not a dedicated scholar and that older sister Fanny enrolled to help him with his studies. While Lew did not complete his medical studies, Fanny Reading did. In embarking on this career she became one of the early women graduates in this field and was ahead of her times in choosing this career as well as in her views of society and the role of women. On graduating she moved to Sydney in 1922 where her brother, Dr Abe Stanley Reading, had set up a medical practice some eight years previously. She joined him in a medical partnership, first at Kogarah and then at Bondi Junction. Henceforth Dr Fanny Reading, the accomplished musician, would devote her life to her medical career and to implementing her ideals of service to others. There was a very strong bond between Fanny and her brother Abe and from the very beginning of their partnership he wholeheartedly supported her work outside the profession.

Dr Fanny had always been involved in the affairs of the Jewish community and during her student days in Melbourne she was an active member of the Maccabean Union, a Jewish library and debating society, as well as vice-president of the Jewish Young People's association.⁵ Soon after her arrival in Sydney she began to work for non-Jewish causes as well. She was honorary organiser in 1922 of the St George District Hospital Appeal and an honorary medical officer at the Rachel Forster Hospital for Women at Redfern. In Jewish circles she became president of the Jewish Social and Entertainment Committee⁶ and was honorary treasurer of a committee formed to raise money for the building of the NSW Jewish War Memorial at Darlinghurst,⁷ more commonly known as the Maccabean Hall.

The local scene for Jewish women in Australia in 1923 was parochial and limited in scope. As individuals, those who had the time and the right connections worked for individual charities, such as the Jewish Women's Needlework and Clothing Guild. Where Jewish women banded together it was usually as a fund-raising arm for their synagogues or the men's organisations. The only Jewish women's societies which existed in Sydney were the Jewish Girls' Guild, the Jewish Maternity Society and the Help-in-Need Society. Like similar groups in other capital cities of Australia, such as the Adelaide Ladies' Jewish National Fund and the Junior Girls' Guild in Perth, they were locally based.

It was Dr Fanny's aim to have the Jewish women of Australia look beyond the individual charities and to open their hearts and minds. She herself was a woman of great vision, 'a dreamer of big dreams',⁸ and in her own words was always deeply impressed 'by great women imbued with the ideals of service. Two American women – Hannah Solomon and Henrietta Szold especially stood out.'⁹ Hannah Greenebaum Solomon (1858-1942) established the National Council of Jewish Women in the USA in 1893. The oldest Jewish women's volunteer organisation in America, it was set up for Jewish women to help their fellow Jews, especially the new immigrants who were flocking to America. Henrietta Szold formed the Hadassah organisation in New York in 1912 to assist with the great medical needs in Palestine and was an outstanding worker for the Zionist cause. Dr Fanny was fully aware of the work of these two role models and in her public speaking pointed out that these two organisations already had memberships of 85,000 and 48,000.¹⁰

The greatest influence on Dr Fanny's perception of the role of Jewish women was the visit of Madame Bella Pevsner in 1923. Madame Pevsner came to Australia, as well as visiting other parts of the world, on a fund-raising tour on behalf of the Jewish National Fund in Jerusalem. In Sydney, Madame Pevsner stayed at the Bellevue Hill home of Morris and Celia Symonds who were very active workers in the Jewish community. One of Morris Symonds' roles was president of the Sydney Union of Zionists.¹¹ The reality, however, was that although Madame Pevsner came to Australia as a Zionist lecturer, support for Zionism was a minority movement in this country at the time.¹² Dr Fanny, herself, was an ardent Zionist but as Dora Abramovich,¹³ a stalwart of Council for many years, was to recall in 1955, 'when Dr Reading came to live in Sydney . . . a purely women's Zionist organisation had absolutely no chance of survival; its membership would have consisted of a handful of idealists and no more.'¹⁴

Madame Bella Pevsner was a dynamic speaker, a lady of 'magnetic charm and imaginative vision.'¹⁵ Although she had an exceedingly busy schedule during her lecture tour, apart from her main subject of Zionism she also spoke on such topics as Jewish women¹⁶ and the value of and responsibility of Jewish youth.¹⁷ A meeting was held on Sunday, 24 June 1923, 'for the purpose of forming a Union of Jewish Women to assist the Jewish National Fund. Madame Pevsner delivered an address and all present enrolled themselves as members . . . Dr Fanny Reading consented to work in conjunction with the cause.'¹⁸ However, two days later when Madame Pevsner addressed the Jewish Social and Entertainment Committee (of which Dr Fanny Reading was president) Dr Reading proposed

her broader scheme and sent a letter to the *Hebrew Standard*,¹⁹ part of which is reproduced here:

(The Editor of the 'Hebrew Standard'.)

Dear Sir, – At a lecture held on Tuesday, June 26th, delivered by our brilliant lecturer and co-religionist, Madame Bella Pevsner, to Jewish women, a suggestion was put forward by Madame Pevsner that the Jewish women of Sydney band themselves together, and help their less fortunate sisters in Palestine and other oppressed countries.

At that meeting I put forward a scheme in which not only the Jewish women of Sydney, but the Jewish women of Australia and New Zealand might unite in one large body and form what I term 'The Council of Jewish Women in Australasia.' This council should be representative of the whole of Australian Jewish women. There would be active centres in every city of Australasia. This council would meet periodically and attempt to solve the many serious problems that threaten the backbone of our Jewish race.

Too long have we Jewish women been dormant to these urgent and pressing needs, and many of us feel that we should arouse ourselves to greater communal service, and not be content with the easier paths of apathy and indifference. By communal service I do not only mean charity and the giving of money (although these attributes are to be highly commended, and are of a necessity amongst our people) – but a fuller sense of the greater responsibility that should rest on the shoulders of the Jewish women, viz., in the study of educational, domestic, personal, charitable and national movements both at home and abroad.

.....

To carry out this scheme for the accomplishment of our national problems, local and abroad, we shall need the support of every Jewish woman. Woman is the spiritual [sic] force of the universe – women [sic] is behind man in all his actions, whether in role of mother, wife, sister, etc. With the re-animation of this great force, and a *unity* of purpose, there will be no limit to the activities of so large a body of women.

.....

Therefore I humbly beg of the Jewish women of Sydney to *make* this our opportunity, and show the rest of the Jewish world, whose eyes are on us, that the Australian Jewish woman can, and will, do what our beloved race has a right to expect of us.

FANNY READING

Dr Reading included the fact that she already had 60 members but that she would not convene a meeting until 200 women and girls of Sydney promised their support. Essentially Dr Reading planned her Council on the lines of the American Jewish women's organisations to which she added her Zionist ideal, her pledge to Bella Pevsner to include Palestine in her scheme.²⁰

The time had come to put the formation of a broadly based Jewish women's organisation to the test. An impromptu preliminary meeting with Dr Fanny Reading presiding was held at the Symonds' home on 8 July 1923 and the provisional objects of the proposed new movement were drawn up. As there were only a few ladies present on this occasion, a further preliminary meeting was held at the same venue on 15 July 1923, 'at which about 50 ladies attended. It was unanimously agreed to form such an organisation of Jewish women and that a provisional committee be appointed to begin the work. Those present formed themselves into this Committee.'²¹ At the inaugural general meeting held at the Great Synagogue schoolroom at 4 pm on 19 July 1923, the discussions held at the previous two meetings were formalised. 'In a simple, straightforward earnest speech,'²² Dr Fanny outlined the objectives of the scheme, stressing that the foremost need was to educate young Jewish women in their tradition as assimilation and intermarriage were the most vexing problems of the day. The next aim was to improve the conditions of Jewish women abroad, especially in Eastern Europe and Palestine. The third aim was 'to induce every Jewess to render communal service on behalf of her people and the Empire.'²³

There was much discussion at this meeting. Some thought the formation of the group might lead to antisemitism and wanted the word 'Jewish' deleted from the proposed name. Others felt that by stepping outside local boundaries, they were aiming too high. In the event, the meeting noted that the organisation be called The Council of Jewish Women of New South Wales and that the provisional committee that had been nominated the weekend before be the committee for the first twelve months, as follows:

<i>President</i>	Dr Fanny Reading
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>	Mrs M. Symonds, Mrs A. Diamond
<i>Hon. Treasurers</i>	Mrs M. Lewis, Mrs Beards
<i>Hon. Secretaries</i>	Mrs V. Cornfield, Misses S. Rosenthal and Sally Adams
<i>General Committee</i>	Mesdames Selig, Whitmont, J. Marks, L. Goldberg, S.C. Isaacs, L.A. Falk and the Misses Esserman, Lena Solomon and Queenie Kersh

As regards service to the general community, Dr Fanny mentioned during this meeting that the Children's Hospital at Camperdown needed warm winter garments and immediately those present committed themselves to making and sending several hundred new warm garments to that hospital. At the conclusion of the meeting 'Mrs J. Marks gave a fine little speech which was warmly applauded. She wished long life and great success to the new movement saying it would supply a long felt want. She said she had been a great number of years in Sydney and had never been called upon to give communal service. Great credit was due to Dr Fanny Reading in her indefatigable efforts to launch this much-needed society.'²⁴

The response to these sentiments was very warm. Clearly, the formation of the Council of Jewish Women of NSW underpinned some crying needs of Jewish women in Australia to participate in community work in their own right. Dr Fanny Reading brought her great gifts of organising ability and tireless energy to these untapped sources of voluntary work and in all Council endeavours she led by example. Her dreams were capable of being realised and as early as September 1923 she stated that:

They hoped to have branches not only in every suburb of Sydney, but also in every city of New South Wales, and later in every State of Australia and New Zealand. She had visions of conferences, here in Australia of representatives of Jewish women, when important Jewish problems might be discussed, and looked forward to the time when they might be able to send delegates to American and European conferences of Jewish Women.²⁵

On the local scene the membership grew rapidly and within a few short years Council expanded nationally. The dream of sending delegates overseas as well as having an international conference of Jewish women in Australia all became a reality in the fullness of time.

After the formation of Council its membership increased rapidly – from 200 to 377 in the first year, and to 600 by early 1927. At this time, the female Jewish population of New South Wales was barely 5,000.²⁶

The group began to hold functions regularly – soirées, conversaciones (the terms of the day), musical evenings, debates, dances and large events such as balls, with increasing success. Often the greatest difficulty was that the chosen venue could not accommodate all those who wished to attend. A 'Simchas Torah Ball'²⁷ held in October 1923 was a 'phenomenal success . . . as the

people of Sydney amply demonstrated their appreciation of this energetic, ambitious evergrowing body of women by turning up in their hundreds.'²⁸

With the funds raised, before the end of 1923, money was given to the Ukrainian Jewish Relief Fund,²⁹ to the London Society which funded health schemes for infants in Palestine, and for local worthy causes.

After the Jewish War Memorial Centre at Darlinghurst, Sydney, was opened in November 1923, Council decided to hold all its committee and general meetings there. 'The monthly meeting held at the Maccabean Hall was a feature of our lives . . . what a pleasure it was to organise successful functions,' reminisced Dora Abramovich in 1981.³⁰

During 1924, Council continued to be successful, both socially and financially. The most ambitious function during the year was the 'Colourland Fair' held on August 27/28 in the lower Sydney Town Hall. The Fair, which was under the patronage of the Governor, Sir Dudley de Chair, and opened by the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Sydney, raised over £1,000 for infant welfare centres in Tel Aviv, Palestine.³¹ While many did not approve of sending funds to Palestine, 'Council continued to raise large sums of money for Zionist causes in the face of indifference and opposition.'³²

Dr Fanny Reading was able to report at the first AGM of Council that 'during the year in review, 23 committee meetings have been held, 7 general meetings, 9 social functions and 4 special meetings.'³³ There were now over 400 workers in Council and over 200 members as well as a number of gentlemen were present at this meeting. Always aware of the need to educate the younger generation, Dr Fanny noted that 'an important section has been formed, namely the Girls' sub-committee.'³⁴ This section became the Council Juniors in 1927. Further important events occurred between the years 1924-1929, culminating in the next milestone of Council history, the formation of a National Council in 1929.

It is interesting to note the reporting of Council's formation in the Jewish papers of the time, equally for the light they shed on the perceived role of women as for the events themselves. It so happened that in 1923 the editor of the *Hebrew Standard of Australasia* was Jonah Marks (he resigned from the position in 1925).³⁵ He was a former classmate of Dr Fanny in Ballarat and a like-minded Zionist. As the only editor who managed to publish independently of the establishment views of this paper, he was very supportive of Dr Fanny. The *Australasian Jewish Chronicle* was less parochial generally but could not conceal its paternalistic, chauvinist comments so typical of the times. In an editorial article on 26 July 1923, the

concern was 'that Council may exceed the limitations of its objects as now given and adopt a dominating attitude in congregational affairs many things make a sentimental appeal to women, which apparently harmless as they seem produce ultimate results that are harmful [sic].' The article goes on to concede that 'All the objects which have been laid down cannot be described in any way but as admirable' but cannot resist the misgiving 'that the fears and suspicions about the movement will prove entirely without justification.'

The Council of Jewish Women was gathering momentum on the local scene and was held in high esteem by all. Various committees were working for local charities, for mothers and babies in Palestine, hospital visiting, meeting and helping new arrivals, and the like. Other committees dealt with entertainment and catering necessary for the financial success of the movement.

Dr Fanny Reading spent most of 1925 abroad, both to further her own education³⁶ and to promote and glean ideas for her new Council. She was the accredited representative of the Council of Jewish Women at the quinquennial convention of the International Council of Jewish Women in Washington, USA. Accordingly, Council affiliated with the International Council of Jewish Women of this time. This was an extremely important event for Australian Jewry as it was *the first time ever that it had a representative in the councils of world Jewry*. 'This visit established overseas links and helped to end Australian Jewry's isolation.'³⁷ The AJC could not minimise the importance of this event:

. . . although many will still regard with a doubtful eye the tendency of women to form organisations which may trespass upon the Councils formerly entirely in man's prerogative [sic] . . .

It may be to some extent regrettable that it has been left to a woman's organisation to establish a lead in the direction of making the voice of Australian Jewry heard on world councils; but even so, the lead is an excellent one, which, in the natural course of events, must be followed. It is impossible that Australian Jewry should remain to all practical purposes cut off from the Jewry of all the world of which it should be an active unit.³⁸

The article concluded that as Dr Reading had 'done marvels' with her group, then most likely she would 'bring to Australia, all the best of the American methods and none of their mistakes.'

In New York, Dr Fanny met Henrietta Szold and, later in the year, when she was the accredited Australian delegate to the 14th Zionist Congress held in Vienna in August, she renewed personal

contact with both Henrietta Szold and Madame Bella Pevsner.³⁹ After Vienna Dr Fanny, accompanied by her mother, spent several weeks in Palestine on her first visit to that country. Whereas she was greatly impressed and inspired by the work of the *Chalutzim* (pioneer workers) in the upbuilding of Palestine and pledged to involve Council in this work, she was shocked by the plight of women and children. Another resolution was that her group back home would work towards the establishment of a maternity unit at the Misgav Ladach hospital in Jerusalem. This was done and in 1926 the Sydney Infant Welfare Centre in Tel Aviv was also opened. Dr Fanny then journeyed to Great Britain where she met up again with Madame Bella Pevsner, both in London and Manchester, and spent the month of October 1925 at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin where she received her certificate in midwifery. The year 1925 was a highlight in her life as she strengthened her ideas and personal ties on the international scene. Flowing on from this experience were several initiatives introduced by the Council of Jewish Women of NSW.

THE BULLETIN

The introduction of Council's own publication was a high priority, not only to inform and exchange ideas with current members but also to reach out to Australian Jewish women in country areas. The *Council Bulletin* was modelled on *The Bulletin of the Council of Jewish Women of Philadelphia*⁴⁰ and began publication of 12 issues per annum in September 1926. In the first issue, founding editor Dora Abramovitch stated two main Council objectives, namely that Council was founded 'in order to bring Jewish women to a loftier consciousness of the meaning of public spiritedness'⁴¹ and that the *Bulletin* was 'to enable every woman to keep her finger on the pulse of the movement.'⁴² The same editorial noted Council's support for cancer research in Sydney (and proudly claimed to have raised more money than any other single group), maternity work in Palestine and aid for 'our suffering brethren in Poland'. The hospital visiting committee was very active and immigrant welfare, as in America, had a high priority.

A garden fête was held in the Sydney Town Hall in March 1927 but did not completely achieve its financial target for these various activities. It was memorable because it introduced the first of many 'Queen' competitions, which were excellent fund-raisers for Jewish causes until the 1980s. On this occasion, Doris Harris was crowned Queen of the Eastern Garden Fête at a ceremony at the Maccabean Hall on 13 April 1927.

Members worked very hard in 1926/27 to raise the deposit on a property in Francis Street (off College Street), Sydney, which was intended to be Council headquarters as well as a stopping-off point for newcomers and, later, a hostel for Jewish girls both from the country and from overseas. These schemes did not eventuate on the Francis Street premises but a men's hostel was duly established in Day Street in 1928. Dora Abramovich and her sister also organised English classes for newcomers as early as 1926.

IMMIGRANT WELFARE AND THE JEWISH MEN'S HOSTEL

In 1926 the immigration sub-committee, which was formed two years earlier, was headed by Rieke (Mrs Harris) Cohen, who was also chairman of the welfare committee. Whenever a ship bringing Jewish passengers arrived in Sydney the ladies of the immigration sub-committee went down to the wharves to help with customs formalities, transport and accommodation. The most pressing need was temporary accommodation and Rieke Cohen set her goal to establishing a place where the Council of Jewish Women could offer shelter. On 11 March 1928, the Jewish Men's Hostel, occupying the top floor of the building at 74 Day Street, Sydney, was opened with much ceremony. This recognition was greatly deserved as Council was the *first Jewish body in Sydney to provide assistance to immigrants on an institutional basis*. The hostel was maintained by donations, both financial and in kind. One Council member, 'Mrs Dora Wolfson, offered to pay the rent of the hostel for as long as Council maintained it'⁴³ and her daughter volunteered £1 per month towards the cost of the laundry. Others provided linen, crockery, eating and cooking utensils, tea, sugar and the like. Several men gave their services voluntarily as supervisors and the hostel operated for five years with no cost to Council. J. Whitefield, father of future state and national president Ray Ginsburg, was an enthusiastic supporter of the hostel and his wife Annie was an active Council worker in many directions.

There was a decrease in Jewish immigration to Australia in 1928 when the Australian government refused to set up a special quota for East European Jews as it had done for several other nationalities. Dr Fanny Reading was one of the few community leaders to criticise this decision – her attitude was contrary to the complacent Australian Jewish leadership of the time which opted mainly for preserving the status quo of restricted Jewish immigration.⁴⁴

As economic conditions deteriorated towards the onset of the Great Depression and with a lessening of immigration after 1928, Council was able to offer temporary accommodation to unemployed men who were mainly referred by the employment bureau of the

Maccabean Hall. Between March and June 1928 the hostel provided 1,429 beds, so great was the demand.⁴⁵ The hostel was consistently filled over the next few years but just as the Depression increased the number of unemployed, it also drastically decreased the level of donations. The hostel faced closure in 1931 until help came from an unexpected legacy.⁴⁶ During 1931-32 '3,150 beds were given for the use of indigent men gratis.'⁴⁷ However, it could not survive beyond a few more months and the premises were vacated in March 1933 after five years of constant use.

The Jewish Men's Hostel had been a trail-blazing initiative in the Sydney Jewish community. Members of Council were undoubtedly in the forefront of welcoming Jewish migrants to Australia and this work continued with the arrival of refugees prior to World War II and also with displaced persons who settled in Australia after the war. In addition to the Men's Hostel, two other projects which occupied Council members in the early years were hospital visiting and a thrift shop.

THE HOSPITAL VISITING COMMITTEE

This was formed soon after the establishment of Council in 1923 under the chairmanship of Celia Symonds. By 1926 the committee was visiting as many as eight Jewish patients in a single day.⁴⁸ As well, they held functions to raise money for annual donations to the various hospitals and endowed a bed at Crown Street Women's Hospital in 1928.⁴⁹ In 1928 Becky Lake was elected chairman of this committee, having previously served as secretary, and she continued to hold this position for over forty years. Undoubtedly the greatest achievement of the hospital committee was the acquisition of a home bequeathed to the Committee by Gertie Wolper Stone. This endowment eventually became the Wolper Jewish Hospital in Woollahra.

THE FIRST THRIFT SHOP

This was an earlier initiative than the phenomenon of 'op shops' which proliferated in the 1950s and continues to do so. On an overseas trip, Rieke Cohen visited the CJW shop in Los Angeles and felt the idea would adapt well in Sydney. Accordingly, it was decided to use one of the shops on Council's property in Francis Street as a thrift shop and storeroom and it began operating in March 1929.⁵⁰ Several ladies offered to use their cars to collect goods and a large jumble sale was held every Wednesday at the Francis Street shop. For the first two years it produced excellent results but by mid-1931, owing to the

Depression, 'nearly all clothes were given to the Jewish Women's Clothing Guild for distribution to the needy from us.'⁵¹ The shop closed at the end of the 1931/2 financial year.

The schemes proposed for the Francis Street property did not eventuate and as early as 1928 Council rented rooms on the first floor of Hannam's Building, 134 Castlereagh Street,⁵² to act as a meeting place in the heart of the city. There were several other premises used as headquarters until a permanent Council House was established in 1963.

EXPANSION OF THE COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN OF NSW INTO A NATIONWIDE ORGANISATION

The Council of Jewish Women had been formed in Sydney and existed solely in that city until 1927. Having proved itself to be a 'complete success',⁵³ Council was then ready to expand into other states of Australia.

Its success lay in the fact that by 1927 it was regarded as a strong forward-thinking organisation which represented all Jewish women in New South Wales. The Council had established contacts both nationally and overseas with both Jewish and non-Jewish movements. Locally, Council was affiliated with the National Council of Women of NSW, the New Settlers' League and the Rachel Forster Hospital, among others. It was also represented on the Board of Jewish Education of NSW and the Jewish Employment Bureau. Overseas it had affiliated with the International Council of Jewish Women in 1925 and had contact with Jewish women's organisations in the USA, England, Palestine and Germany.

Council members had worked tirelessly to raise funds for both Jewish and general local causes. The monthly meetings were always well attended and, once the formalities were dealt with, offered outstanding speakers, musical recitals and cultural events.

In these early years the aims and objects of Council could be classified under four broad headings: Judaism, Palestine, education and philanthropy.

Gradually, the ideals of the organisation were streamlined into three major objectives and this three-point plan, as it is still known today, consists of: 1. Upbuilding of the State of Israel; 2. The welfare of the Australian Jewish community; 3. The welfare of the general Australian community.

The success of the Council of Jewish Women of NSW was so resounding and exciting that Jewish women in other States and country centres were anxious to form similar groups and combine their activities for the common good.

Queensland

In 1927 the first State to form new Council Groups was Queensland, followed by Victoria later in the same year. On 30 August 1927, an inaugural meeting was held at the home of Mrs H. Portrate of New Farm, Brisbane, to welcome a delegation from New South Wales and to inaugurate a Council in Queensland. The ladies from Sydney were Mrs M. Lewis, an honorary vice-president of the NSW committee who was the speaker on this occasion, assisted by committee member Mrs Lionel Levy and two other Council members who were on holidays in Brisbane. They were received with much enthusiasm and the Brisbane ladies held their first formal meeting on 8 September 1927 when an executive was formed under the presidency of Mrs E.R. (Julia) Isaacs.⁵⁴

The Council of Jewish Women of Queensland set up several standing committees along the NSW lines and immediately began working. A girls' committee was also formed with its own executive and agenda and this was very pleasing to Dr Fanny who was very keen to involve younger women in her overall plan of 'giving our women a purpose which is unselfish, sympathetic and humanitarian . . .'⁵⁵

For the first year meetings were held at the home of Mrs Isaacs until August 1928 when rooms were rented in the very heart of Brisbane. These rooms were intended to be a focal point for the whole Queensland Jewish community and it was to the credit of Council women that they addressed a longstanding need. Council began to help Jewish immigrants, to send clothes to the needy in Palestine, to distribute books to Queensland country members; the proceeds of a large fête held in 1928 were used to assist the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

At this time there were two synagogues functioning in Brisbane. The older congregation which had been formed in 1865 and occupied its Margaret Street premises in 1885 was known as the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation. The South Brisbane Congregation (known as the Central Synagogue) was formed in 1915 and had wooden premises in Deshon Street. Originally it catered mainly for Russian/Yiddish-speaking migrants who had come to Brisbane via China. This congregation also had a hard-working ladies' auxiliary and on 17 April 1929, during a week's visit to Brisbane by Dr Fanny and her mother, it organised a reception 'where a very fine musical programme was presented to an audience of 250.'⁵⁶ There had already been a similar event staged by the Brisbane Council and Dr Fanny appealed to the women of South Brisbane to form another Council of Jewish Women as she felt that all the pre-requisites were already in place. This duly came about and the CJW of South Brisbane was

represented by Mrs J. Levy at the first Jewish Women's Conference held in Sydney in May 1929.

By mid-1929 Queensland had three groups of women working for the Council of Jewish Women which included the independent Queensland Juniors. The South Brisbane CJW functioned independently until 1957. Owing to the fairly small size of Queensland Jewry the redistribution of Jewish residents caused all the Brisbane Council sections to amalgamate eventually. Part of the changing Jewish scene in Queensland was the establishment of the Jewish Gold Coast Congregation in 1958 with its first synagogue building finished in 1961. A small liberal Jewish Congregation was also formed on the Gold Coast in recent years.

The Jewish population of Queensland which numbered 383 in 1911 increased to 765 in 1921 because of immigration. As late as 1981, the Census figure gave the Jewish population as only 858 although the number was probably closer to 2000, allowing for non-affiliated Jews.⁵⁷ According to the 1991 Census, the Jewish population of Queensland had risen to 4278, evenly split between Brisbane and the Gold Coast with a few other scatterings.

In 1969, a Council group was formed on the Gold Coast with Anne Gilray as chairwoman. This group became an independent section in 1973, with Aelsie Magnus as president.

Victoria

In November 1927, when she was on a short holiday in Melbourne, Dr Fanny was approached by several ladies who were enthused by what they knew of Council to date. Two other members of the NSW Council, Rieke Cohen and Becky Lake, were also in Melbourne at the time and their enthusiasm and sincerity combined with Dr Fanny's charisma ensured that a provisional Council of Jewish Women of Victoria was formed when a meeting was called at the home of Dr Fanny's parents on 28 November 1927. The number of members increased from 46 who were present at this meeting to 80 within the first week. A second meeting was held on 14 December 1927 to elect a provisional committee (headed by Mrs Maurice Patkin) for three months, until the first general meeting of the CJW of Victoria could be held in February 1928. At the December meeting the number of financial members had increased to 115 and the provisional committee was entrusted to 'plan an intensive programme upon social, educational and philanthropical lines.'⁵⁸

Dr Fanny had this to say about the formation of another Council, which meant that the whole eastern side of Australia now had a sisterhood of Jewish women:

It is with a sense of deep gratitude to the Giver of all things that I report the formation of a Council of Jewish Women of Victoria . . . it will be only a matter of time before the other States join us . . . we will be drawn together by our one big common desire, 'service' . . . when the time will come that there be a CJW of Australia and NZ . . . then shall we meet . . . to discuss big local and world problems . . . and send delegates . . . to the conferences of the big Women's Movement in the Old World.⁵⁹

On a lighter note, it is interesting to recall that as in the other States the ladies wore evening dress to these meetings. After the conclusion of business matters, they were entertained with a musicale or recitations and were served a *dainty* supper.

The formal inaugural meeting of the CJW of Victoria was held on 8 February 1928 with 150 members and non-members present and Mrs L. Heymanson as acting Chairman. The speaker at this meeting was Rabbi Israel Brodie who was later to become Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth. Although he was originally hesitant about increasing the role of women in society, he was to become a great ally of Council. At this meeting he stated: ' . . . the Jewish woman must also exercise her influence outside the home . . . must organise to exert this influence.'⁶⁰

The Victorian Council encountered some early resistance from other organisations who were worried that their roles might be duplicated, but by mid-1928, when a meeting of the standing committees of NSW was held and Mrs Patkin and Mrs Burman (Dr Fanny's sister) from Victoria attended, these problems seem to have disappeared.⁶¹

When the first AGM of the CJW of Victoria was held on 12 December 1928,⁶² its membership had climbed to 400. In attendance were Dr Fanny Reading and Dora Abramovich, president and secretary of the NSW Council, as well as Violet Halingberg, vice-president of the Queensland Council. Dr Fanny brought good wishes from the 500 members of NSW and stated that not in her wildest dreams could she imagine how great the progress would be. She congratulated the Victorian organisation on its tremendous sphere of philanthropic work both at home and abroad. Always a visionary, Dr Fanny concluded by asking those present to dream of a united band of Jewish women all over Australia with the same ideals addressing the same problems. She suggested a conference with representatives from the various states and 'urged the Council to keep straight on in the paths of righteousness, duty and truth, and hoped they would be always blessed with peace, perfect peace.'⁶³

The First National Conference



First National Conference, Sydney 1929

The first national conference of Jewish women of Australia was held from 21-27 May 1929 and before the end of that year Victoria had three additional council groups – Ballarat, Geelong and Council Juniors. The conference, which was held in Sydney, attracted delegates and visitors from all parts of Australasia including Ballarat, Geelong, Perth, Townsville and New Zealand. There were also junior sessions presided over by Lena Rose, president of Council Juniors of NSW. The voting members were from the Councils of Jewish Women already established, namely New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Brisbane. It was resolved that similar conferences be held biennially. After such an enthusiastic gathering, Dr Fanny set about personal visits to the other states to cement the ideas proposed to establish a *national* body of Jewish women.

Further expansion during 1929

The year 1929 was the time of Council's greatest expansion; it was also the year which marked the beginning of the Great Depression. This meant there was a need for an increase in fund-raising efforts to help those in Australia affected by world economic problems. The late 1920s also witnessed a cry for help from Jews in Poland who suffered from periodic pogroms. In spite of the poor economic climate, Councils established a self-denial fund and members helped fellow Jews both at home and abroad.

During the month of September 1929, Councils were established in Perth on 18 September, Kalgoorlie on 25 September and Adelaide on 30 September. The following month Ballarat inaugurated its Council on 8 October, followed by Geelong two days later. At the end of 1929, Newcastle also formed its own Council and the circle of Councils around Australia was achieved.

To visit the western states of Australia Dr Fanny undertook the long train journey with stops at Kalgoorlie, Perth and Adelaide. These were the days before commercial airflights and the advances in technology which have characterised the second half of the twentieth century. Communication was mainly by letters and telegrams which preceded the enthusiastic welcome on Dr Fanny's arrival and stopovers in the west. With the old train system, the Perth Westlander terminated at Kalgoorlie where passengers changed over to the National Rail across the Nullarbor Plain and transferred again at Port Pirie for Adelaide. This stage by stage train travel explains how Dr Fanny met the small group of Jewish ladies from Kalgoorlie twice in ten days. On her way to Perth on 15 September 1929, Mrs Zeffert of Kalgoorlie and her friends met Dr Fanny:

... entertained her and became interested in the ideals of the work of Council as expounded by Dr Reading, who promised on her return journey to help them establish a Council of Jewish women here, even if their numbers were few ... accordingly, nearly all the Jewish women of this city entertained Dr Reading at the Kalgoorlie station on September 25th, and after greetings were exchanged it was formally resolved to form a Council of Jewish Women of Kalgoorlie ...⁶⁴

This section is presented in more detail with the Ballarat and Geelong Councils which Dr Fanny formed just a few weeks later, as these three Councils of Jewish Women have much in common.

Council of Jewish Women of Western Australia

Perth, the capital of Western Australia, has the third largest Jewish community in Australia and although its numbers fall far short of Sydney and Melbourne, it is a vibrant community. There was a Jewish presence in Western Australia as far back as the 1820s although the religious congregation was not formalised until the 1880s. The estimated current population of 6000 is roughly four times the pre-World War I Jewish population of Western Australia and double that in the 1960s (3000), before migration from South Africa, the UK and lesser numbers from Israel and Russia took place in the 1980s.

In 1929, when Dr Fanny came to Perth, the Jewish population was roughly 2000. The two main Jewish women's voluntary groups were the Jewish Girls' Guild, which had been formed in 1903 to assist hospital and Red Cross work, and the WA Jewish Women's League formed during Madame Bella Pevsner's visit in 1924. Its aims were sponsoring welfare projects for women and children in Palestine. The same ladies worked on most committees and two distinguished names were Rosetta Luber and Fanny Breckler.

Dr Fanny travelled to Perth with the express purpose of forming a Council of Jewish Women. She was met at the railway station on 16 September 1929 by the Rabbi, Rev. D.I. Freedman, and members of the Jewish community. That afternoon she gave an introductory talk about the ideals of Council at the home of Mrs J. Robin of Fremantle and on the same evening addressed women from various Perth Jewish organisations at the home of Fanny Breckler. Dr Fanny explained that:

Council will not be another charity organisation doing individual relief work, but an organisation which stimulated each individual to still greater endeavour, i.e. to give service to themselves, to their race and to the country in which they lived . . .⁶⁵

Two days later, a meeting at which 66 ladies were present was held at Prince's Hall (later known as Breckler Hall) to discuss the formation of a Council and all present agreed that the WA Jewish Women's League should form the nucleus of the proposed group. The following evening the whole community attended a reception for Dr Fanny during the course of which it was formally proposed and unanimously carried that a Council of Jewish Women of WA be formed. Fanny Breckler was elected first president and Vera Rosenwax (her daughter), the first secretary. Many new members

other than members of the Women's League were enrolled and the meeting was highly successful.

Dr Fanny also held meetings with young women and these resulted in the formation of a group aged 16 and over called the Council of Jewish Juniors. Dr Fanny attended the formation of this Council on 22 September 1929, when Edna Luber-Smith was elected president. The following evening she conducted a general business meeting as a model for the senior Council of Jewish Women of WA. Dr Fanny left Perth on 24 September 1929 'after a wonderful 9 days' sojourn amongst her own people.⁶⁶

Under the leadership of Fanny Breckler, the CJW functioned as the premier Jewish women's group for some years and it assumed many philanthropic responsibilities. The direction of Council's charitable work changed as the result of a large bequest left to the Perth Hebrew Congregation in 1935. Mrs Breckler's senior section worked to raise money for Palestine when no other women's organisation in WA was involved in such work. In the 1930s when refugees from Hitler's horror began to arrive in Australia, NCJW helped to meet boats and settle people into suitable accommodation and employment. The Junior Council gave outstanding service during the war years through its Red Cross Company with 40 young women of 16 years and over working in hospitals, blood banks, transport services, canteens and the like.

On the occasion of Dr Fanny's second visit to Perth in 1939, a Sub-Junior Section was founded with an enrolment of approximately 40 girls under the age of 16. Gradually the sub-juniors became sub-seniors and they, in turn, became seniors.

In 1945 Fanny Breckler retired on account of ill-health and Edna Luber-Smith became president. The senior and junior sections of the CJW of Western Australia were amalgamated under her leadership of the combined body and she remained at the helm until 1970. She was made an honorary life member of Council and continued to attend State committee meetings each month as well as other functions. In 1961, due mainly to the efforts of Mrs Luber-Smith and her supporters, the Maurice Zeffert Home for the Aged was opened and this has remained the primary local Jewish project for Council while much volunteering has been directed to the public King Edward Hospital, Perth. Council in Perth has also set up a kosher kitchen at the Jewish Centre and has supported all national council projects in Israel, among other activities. Edna Luber-Smith was awarded the AM in 1977 and two other former state presidents of NCJW, Western Australia, Jeanette Machlin and Dulcie Trobe, have received the OAM for their philanthropic work.

Perth has hosted several NCJW conferences, the last being the most recent in May 1997. The guest of honour at the 17th Triennial Conference held in Perth in 1979, which was also a celebration of WA Council's golden jubilee, was the then Governor-General of Australia, Sir Zelman Cowan. In his keynote address he told how both his mother and mother-in-law were early members of the Council of Jewish Women of Victoria.

South Australia

From Perth, Dr Fanny travelled to Adelaide, again with the express purpose of forming another Council of Jewish Women. The stop-over in Kalgoorlie only left time for the inaugural council meeting at the railway station. After her nine-day sojourn in Perth, Dr Fanny spent another busy six days in Adelaide. She was again welcomed with great enthusiasm and left that city with her plans fulfilled.

The settlement of Jews in South Australia dates back to the very beginnings of that State (1836) as occasional Jewish services were held even before the foundation of the Adelaide Hebrew Community in 1848.⁶⁷ The population of Adelaide Jewry rose from 435 in 1871 to 840 in 1891. Reverend A.T. Boas, the first qualified minister, came in 1870 and served the congregation for nearly 50 years. However, the number of Jews in Adelaide declined substantially in the early twentieth century and the community has just managed to remain viable through waves of immigration – very roughly, from Europe in the 1940s, Egypt in the 1950s, Britain in the 1960s and South Africa in the 1980s. Members affiliated with the community number 1300–1500⁶⁸ but it is believed that the actual number is closer to 3000, perhaps even greater.

The Adelaide Jewish community has always been in a different position from that in Perth, as it struggled to find the critical mass, that is the number of people needed to guarantee the survival of a community; nonetheless, Adelaide Jewry is 150 years old. For the same reason, the CJW of South Australia has struggled to stay in existence but has survived and will celebrate its 70th birthday in 1999.

Dr Fanny was welcomed to Adelaide by the Rev. Dr Hirsch at a *conversazione* held in the synagogue chambers on 28 September 1929. Present on this occasion were N.J. Solomons, president of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation and mayor of the Kensington-Norwood Council, together with his wife Isabella Jane Solomons, president of the Women's Zionist Society of South Australia. As was customary, the evening ended with musical and elocutionary items presented by the young people. Dr Fanny's visit was also recorded by interviews in the local press which gave a most favourable account of her aims and

ideals. Again, she emphasised that Council was not simply another fund-raising organisation.

On 29 September 1929, Dr Fanny addressed a large meeting at which she again stated that the paramount ideal of Council was *service*. At this meeting the motion that 'a Council of Jewish Women of South Australia be formed'⁶⁹ was unanimously passed and the formalities and elections were scheduled to take place the next day. Accordingly, on 30 September 1929 Mrs Solomons invited 80 ladies to afternoon tea to meet Dr Fanny; the elections were held and Mrs Solomons was voted president, a position she maintained until 1946, and 31 ladies enrolled as members.

Such was the enthusiasm that a meeting of the younger women was held on 1 October 1929 and it was decided to form a junior section under president Miriam Rochlin. This section got off to a good start but it did not survive beyond 1937 when it merged with the senior section. As most of the young women who enrolled initially were under 18 years of age, the task was possibly too responsible for them at this formative stage of their lives. A group of young men was also organised by Dr Fanny to co-operate with the Council Juniors but as was the case in the other States, the combined groups did not stand the test of time.

Another meeting was held in Adelaide on 2 October 1929 so that Dr Fanny could personally demonstrate to both groups how the other Councils conducted their monthly meetings. Dr Fanny left Adelaide, delighted that:

... South Australia would help to complete the chain of Councils ... then this National Council could directly link up as one big body with World organisations of women, Jewish and non-Jewish, and all could imagine the power of good such an organisation would be for humanity.⁷⁰

The basic problem with the Council of Jewish Women of South Australia, which worked magnificently during World War II for the Red Cross and the armed forces, was and continues to be its small membership. Owing to the declining Jewish population, members have not been replaced as they have grown older or passed away. In future the solution may be to include this group in the Victorian ambit of activities.

Ballarat, Geelong and Kalgoorlie

Three small Councils of Jewish Women which were founded in 1929, namely Ballarat, Geelong and Kalgoorlie, belonged to Jewish

communities which had a great deal in common and their edifices were memorials to goldfields Jewry. The goldfields at Ballarat were discovered in 1851 and at Kalgoorlie in the late 1890s. Although Geelong itself was not a mining town, it was a point of entry to the Victorian goldfields and the first nucleus of Jewish settlers came there in the 1840s. Each of these three communities was on the decline by the time Dr Fanny set up Councils in 1929. In a converse way, the existence of these organisations increased the lifespan of Jewish activities in these cities to a greater extent than would otherwise have been the case.

Dr Fanny was herself mindful of her country-town childhood and the feelings of Jewish isolation she experienced and was determined that wherever at least ten Jewish women lived in a country town, they could form a Council and keep in touch with mainstream events. The original membership of the Kalgoorlie Council of Jewish Women totalled eight senior and four junior members. Even with such small numbers, this section lasted for 25 years and, like Ballarat and Geelong, achieved on a smaller scale what the larger Councils were doing. These three groups raised money for Jewish and local charities, helped appeals for Palestine and did stirring service for the Australian war effort during World War II. They exchanged ideas by sending delegates to the national conferences and the presidents of these sections were ex-officio vice-presidents of the national organisation. In the early years of Council, when conferences were held in Melbourne, they would include a Geelong Day and a Ballarat Day. By the time Dr Fanny stood down as federal president in 1955 these groups had all but vanished owing to a decline in numbers. However, during their active years they were valued participants in Council programmes.

Kalgoorlie

Kalgoorlie was not the first Jewish congregation in Western Australia that owed its existence to the goldfields. The Coolgardie Jewish Congregation held its first service in 1894 and a wooden synagogue building was erected in 1896. However, the discovery of rich gold deposits at neighbouring Kalgoorlie in 1899 meant the demise of the former congregation.

A synagogue (made of timber and iron and often used as a hall) was built in Kalgoorlie in 1902. Its congregation appears to have varied in numbers between 50 and 70 and financial commitments were always of concern. It was Louis Arthur Alman, an influential citizen and sometime mayor of Kalgoorlie, who kept the congregation alive for nearly 40 years and, with his death on

1 April 1967, it ceased to exist. His wife Rose was president (for all but three years of its existence) of the Council of Jewish Women of Kalgoorlie.

When Dr Fanny's train from Perth to Adelaide stopped at Kalgoorlie, as promised on her trans-west journey ten days earlier, she met with the Jewish ladies of Kalgoorlie at the station and set in motion the formation of a Council of Jewish Women of Kalgoorlie. The first formal meeting of this group took place on 29 September 1929. Ten years later, Dr Fanny again visited Kalgoorlie and spent two days there discussing Council matters.

Kalgoorlie was an active group at first and met monthly in members' homes. The women were responsible for the introduction into the synagogue of regular Friday night services and made improvements to its accoutrements. The juniors provided equipment to the children's ward of the Kalgoorlie hospital and both sections worked for the Red Cross, both during the war and after. They raised money by holding bazaars, stalls, sewing circles and the like. In 1943-4, Kalgoorlie CJW held a forum with other local organisations and discussed world affairs on a high level.

According to Harold Boas, OBE, the only Jewish organisation that identified with the Congregation was the NCJW and 'in many ways it was intellectually, culturally and charitably superior in every way to the committee of men of the congregation as shown by its work and activities.'⁷¹

Rose Alman continued in the difficult role of president (from 1945 to 1953) as the Jewish numbers grew smaller and smaller until in 1953 the Section ceased to exist. After her husband's death in 1969, she settled in Perth and continued as an active member of Council; she died in 1991 at the age of 101.

Geelong and Ballarat

In nineteenth century Victoria, the increase in the Jewish population owed much to the discovery of gold. From 200 to 300 Jewish inhabitants in 1848, the number increased to 3000 in 1861. This increase included an influx of non-British Europeans. At this time some 40% of Australian Jews lived outside the metropolitan areas but with the shift away from the goldfields this percentage had fallen to 25% by 1881.

There were enough Jewish residents in Geelong in 1849 to warrant a grant for a plot of land for a cemetery and a larger plot in 1851 for a synagogue. The wooden building constructed for this purpose in 1854 was followed by a stone building in 1860. Whereas the Jewish population of Geelong numbered 128 in 1861, it had

decreased to 84 in 1921. After the death of Rev. Herman in 1879, the community could no longer afford to keep a full-time minister and members of the Melbourne rabbinate travelled there for the High Holydays and for special occasions. Several notable Jewish personalities served as lord mayors and councillors of Geelong;⁷² Zilla Crawcour became the first woman to hold mayoral office in Australia in 1963.⁷³ Today there are still a few Jewish families in Geelong but the synagogue was sold in 1984 and its fittings were sent to the Jewish Museum in Melbourne.

In Ballarat, a mere two years after the discovery of gold, the first services for the Jewish High Holydays were held at the Clarendon Hotel in Lydiard Street in 1853. In 1855 a wooden synagogue capable of seating 200 members was consecrated in Barkly Street. In 1861 it was replaced by a beautiful stone building which today is administered by the National Trust. In 1861 there were 261 Jews in Ballarat; the peak number of 355 which was reached in 1891 had fallen to 266 at the turn of the century. After World War I the numbers began to dwindle with only 81 remaining in 1921 and the numbers have fallen continuously since then. As was the case in Geelong, the Jewish community played an important role in Ballarat: 'A number of congregants held distinguished positions as Mayors or Councillors or founders of charitable organisations.'⁷⁴

Between 1864 and 1942, the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation was able to employ a full-time minister and for some time, particularly the late nineteenth century, Ballarat was a flourishing centre of Australian orthodox Judaism. The influx of numbers in the 1880s and 1890s consisted mainly of Russian refugees who were very orthodox, very poor and the majority of whom earned a living hawking fruit around the town and surrounding districts. As already discussed at the beginning of this article, Nathan Jacob Rubinovitz (father of Dr Fanny) from Karalitz near Minsk came to Ballarat in 1885 and his wife and young daughter, then known as Zipporah, joined him in 1890. When Dr Fanny, accompanied by her mother, arrived in Ballarat on 8 October 1929 it was an emotional occasion. At a communal welcome, Hannah Stone, wife of the president of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, said, 'they were all delighted to have Dr Fanny and her mother back in their old home town.'⁷⁵

Rev. Mandelbaum and his family were very supportive of Dr Fanny's aims and their daughter Rose Mandelbaum, who moved to Sydney in 1932, was a staunch Council supporter and wrote many fine articles for the *Council Bulletin*. Another daughter, Rae Jerdan (later Lipton), was editor of the *Bulletin* at one time but is better known for her bequest which led to the establishment of Mandelbaum House in Darlington, Sydney.⁷⁶

After Dr Fanny addressed them on 8 October 1929, the ladies of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation proceeded to form a Council of Jewish Women of Ballarat with Mrs Stone elected as president. Twenty ladies, virtually every Jewess in Ballarat, joined Council and Mrs Stone continued to hold the position of president for 29 years until her death. In an article published in 1946, Nathan Spielvogel said: 'The one bright spot in an otherwise gloomy picture today is the work carried on by the branch of the NCJW. This . . . does valuable work in charitable and social directions.'⁷⁷ Although more and more Jewish families had moved away from Ballarat, the membership of Council stood firm at 21 in 1946.

The Ballarat Council worked along the same lines as its sister organisations. Proceeds from fundraising at the meetings were used to help the Ballarat Synagogue and local charities. Contributions were made to the Ballarat Base Hospital, the Ballarat Youth Centre and, during World War II, the Food for Britain Appeal. Secretary Jessica Stone (later Mrs Paul Simon) was honoured for organising an appeal which raised £14,000 for the Ballarat Peace Memorial Hospital, a very large sum of money in those days.⁷⁸

Both in 1934 and 1953 when Melbourne was the host city to an NCJW Conference, Ballarat organised a special day for the delegates and visitors. Delegates from Ballarat also attended the interstate Council conferences. Although Jessica Simon took over the presidency of the Council on the death of her mother, this section did not have the numbers to continue after 1967.

In March 1967, reluctantly but inevitably the Ballarat branch of the National Council folded. To it is due the recognition that for some years a few ladies had banded together to keep the Congregation alive and that they were forced to give up only because they, too, had run out of people.⁷⁹

On her visit to Geelong on 10 October 1929, Dr Fanny was accompanied by the president and senior vice-president of the CJW of Victoria as well as her mother. After her initial address to the Jewish ladies of Geelong it was decided that the Geelong Hebrew Congregation Ladies' Auxiliary, which was already in existence, should be formed into the Council of Jewish Women of Geelong. Mrs Sol Jacobs who was president of the ladies' auxiliary did not take up the position of president of Council until 1935 as she was fully occupied with her duties as mayoress of Geelong. Mrs I. Goldenberg became president with vice-presidents Mrs A. Pizer and Mrs H.L. Crawcour. Mrs L. Crawcour was honorary secretary and Frances

Rosenberg honorary treasurer, and all other members, 22 in all, formed the committee. Frances Rosenberg remained the honorary recorder for the whole lifespan of the Council of Jewish Women of Geelong. Like its sister-group in Ballarat, the Geelong Council held sewing afternoons, card evenings and cultural events and raised money for improvements to the synagogue as well as helping local institutions such as the Bethany Babies' Home and the Free Library. This group also hosted special days when Council conferences were held in Melbourne.

Until 1946, a Hebrew teacher was sent to Geelong by the United Jewish Education Board of Victoria and there were still some two dozen Jewish families in the area.⁸⁰ Every year, however, more Jewish residents left for Melbourne and Council struggled to find a quorum for its meetings. Although it entertained delegates who were attending the 10th NCJW Conference in Melbourne in 1953, this gathering appears to have been its swansong. Like Kalgoorlie, the Geelong Council of Jewish Women flourished for almost a quarter of a century until its numbers simply faded away.

Hobart, Broken Hill and Wollongong

Many current members of NCJW would no doubt be surprised to learn that sections of Council existed in earlier days in Hobart, Broken Hill and Wollongong.

When Dr Fanny visited Tasmania in 1932 she suggested that a Council group be formed in Hobart. Although this group helped local charities and the Australia-wide German-Jewish Refugees Appeal Fund, it folded within 18 months. Dora Wolfensohn⁸¹ revisited Hobart as an honorary emissary for NCJW in 1950 but could not revitalise the group for any length of time. WIZO had established a group in 1945 (which still exists today) and the tiny community could not sustain two groups with overlapping aims and the urgent requirements of the State of Israel took priority.

At Broken Hill, the synagogue was consecrated in 1911 when there were perhaps 50 Jewish families in the city. Rev Zallel Mandelbaum (who later moved to Ballarat) had come there as minister in 1905 and he stayed until 1914. As was the case with Ballarat, Geelong and Kalgoorlie, the congregation was on a gradual downward decline when Council came into the picture. According to a 1934 report from Mrs H. Griff there were 48 Jews in the district. The departure of Rev Abram Berman from Broken Hill in 1944 signalled the beginning of the end for the congregation and the synagogue closed its doors in 1962. It was bought by the Broken Hill Historical Society in 1989 for use as a museum.

At the second national conference held in Sydney in 1932, there was a delegate, Mrs A. Wein,⁸² and a visitor, Mrs H. Griff, from Broken Hill. Although Broken Hill was not formally a section, Mrs Griff continued to send reports to Council's national conferences and the community supported many Jewish causes. After Dr Fanny made her first visit to Broken Hill in 1948 and was delighted with the hospitality she received from the 12 Jewish families there, the Broken Hill Section of NCJW was formed. Mrs Wolfensohn made a follow-up visit in 1950 and found the section very responsive to Council's ideals but the community no longer existed one decade later.

For a few years a Council section existed in Wollongong after its inauguration in 1947. When Council in NSW celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1948, a Wollongong Day was regarded as one of the highlights of the ninth national conference. Similarly, there was co-operation between the New South Wales Section (as Sydney was called) and Wollongong during the tenth conference in 1953.

Newcastle

Newcastle was the largest of the regional Councils of Jewish Women to be formed in 1929 and although its status has diminished in recent years as the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation has diminished, both it and the congregation are still in existence.

The Newcastle synagogue was consecrated on 18 September 1927 and Rev. Isack Morris was minister there until 1949 (and emeritus minister until 1951). The Newcastle Hebrew Congregation benefited from a donation in 1928 from the Council of Jewish Women of NSW and in November 1929, Raie Morris, wife of Rev. Morris, wrote to Dr Fanny suggesting that she form a council group in Newcastle. Accordingly, on 8 December 1929, Dr Fanny accompanied by 30 ladies and juniors of the NSW Council travelled to Newcastle to inaugurate this section. Their welcome was so warm that henceforth Dr Fanny had a 'special love for Newcastle, attending each annual meeting as long as possible . . .'⁸³ Raie Morris was an active member in council affairs and attended several conferences where she delivered stimulating addresses.

The congregation was at its strongest in the early days of Council. According to the 1954 census, the Jewish population of Newcastle was 234 but it had fallen to 133 by 1986.⁸⁴ Currently the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation has a stable membership of 60–65; the strength of NCJW has paralleled the strength of the congregation. The Newcastle section of NCJW worked in the tradition of councils all over Australia – monthly meetings, auxiliary to the synagogue, etc., and supported the German-Jewish Refugees Fund in the early

1930s as well as projects in Israel in later years. Every significant anniversary in Council's annals was also celebrated. In 1948 Newcastle offered hospitality to visitors from Sydney as part of Council's 25th Jubilee celebrations (in conjunction with the 9th conference held in Sydney from June 25 – July 8).

In the early years some outstanding members were Elsie Goldring, Rae Samuels and the Gouttman sisters. Although Newcastle CJW was attracting about 40 members in 1967, in 1973 at the 17th Triennial Conference held in Sydney Rae Samuels was sad to report that

... in many ways I am proud of the fine achievements of so few, but it is with deep sorrow that I see no growth in numbers or enthusiasm about 12 members give constant service in all projects but when a communal event occurs, all the community rallies to the cause. Hence, we have been able to achieve excellent results . . .

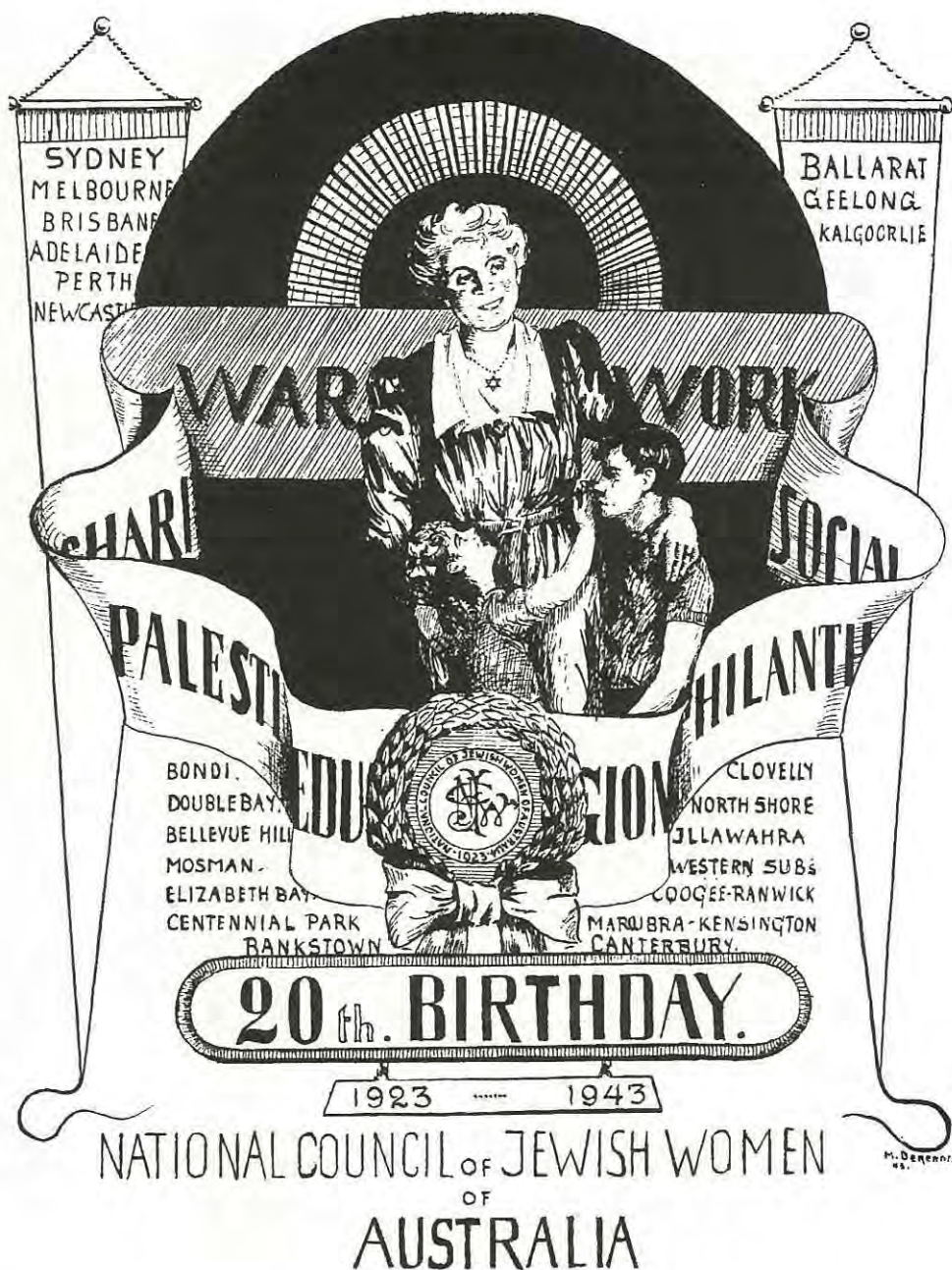
Thus Council continued and in 1979 a Jubilee Luncheon was held to celebrate 50 years of service. Guest speaker was Stella Cornelius who spoke of her role in the Media Peace Prize under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation and reminisced about the time her mother had been an early member of Council in Newcastle and she herself a Council Junior. At this celebration Newcastle decided to help raise funds (in conjunction with the B'nai Brith Sydney Lodges) for Indo-Chinese migrants in a half-way house.

In the mid-1980s, the Newcastle section of NCJW had reached its lowest point. However, a meeting attended by 16 ladies held on 2 February 1987, decided to resume activities and in May 1994, at the 24th National Conference, it was decided that Newcastle continue its activities as a group rather than a section.

Canberra

The Canberra section of NCJW is one of the smallest of all but it has a special importance from the very fact that it exists in the national capital. The Jewish community is also small and has all the problems of a shifting population and the uneven structure of the workplace in Canberra.

In the 1933 census, only four Jews were listed as living in Canberra and two of these were the Governor-General, Sir Isaac Isaacs, and his wife! In 1981, the number was given as 430 – 0.19% of the population of Canberra. By 1986 the number had climbed to 500 and nowadays is estimated to be 1000. It is known that there were less



Poster produced to celebrate 20 years of Council work in 1943.

than 100 Jews in Canberra when a gathering was held at the home of Dr Ronald Mendelsohn in 1951 to formally constitute the Canberra Jewish community. In 1959 a lease was signed with the Commonwealth Government for land in Forrest, ACT, which would become the National Jewish Memorial Centre. The synagogue was consecrated on 5 September 1971 by Rabbi Dr Israel Porush of the Great Synagogue, Sydney. He had long supported the Jewish citizens of Canberra and travelled there for communal functions as well as various Commonwealth conferences.⁸⁵

The National Jewish Memorial Centre was officially opened by the then Prime Minister, The Rt. Hon. William McMahon, on 12 December 1971. His wife named the main hall the Fanny Reading Auditorium at the same ceremony.

A section of NCJW in Canberra was formed as early as 1955, with Ruth Mendelsohn its first president. Dr Fanny, Vera Cohen and Mrs Gerald de Vahl Davis came to Canberra in mid-1955 to attend a function in honour of the State of Israel and met with several Jewish women residents for morning tea. Originally, 12 women became members but the number has doubled and trebled at various times.

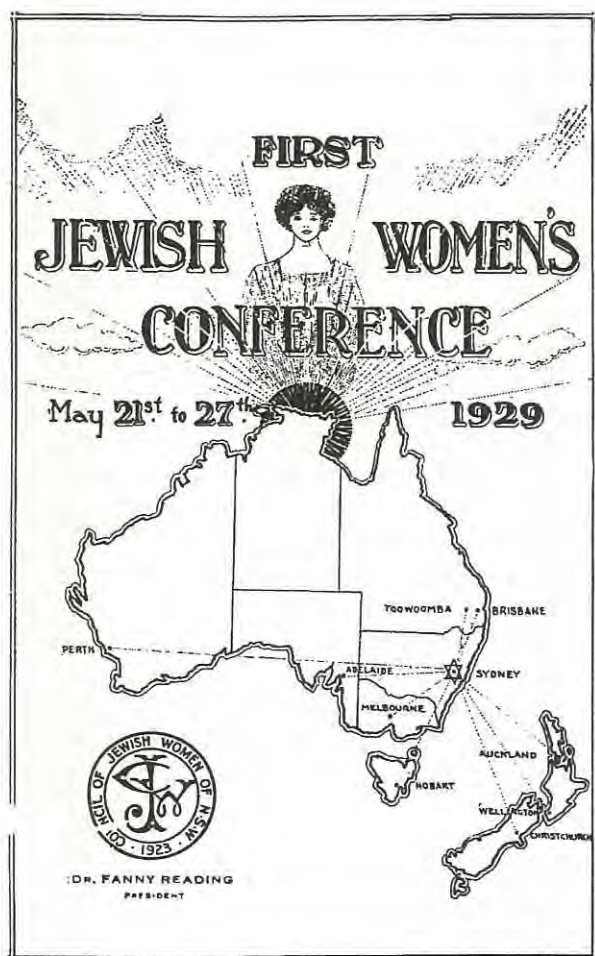
Vera Cohen succeeded Dr Fanny in 1955 as national president of NCJW, a position she held until 1967. She was very keen to champion a national centre and in 1961 asked delegates at the NCJW 13th Triennial Conference in Sydney to raise funds for this purpose. Council was the first Jewish national organisation to do so. In 1964, when she attended the laying of the foundation stone of the National Centre, Vera Cohen presented the first of two cheques that year for £1000 each. All sections of Council worked for the national project and raised \$12,000 for the main hall of the National Jewish Memorial Centre. Mina Fink, who was national president of NCJW in 1971, had her name inscribed on a plaque at the opening ceremony and she insisted that Vera Cohen be similarly honoured as a past national president of NCJW as so much of the inspiration for this project had come during her presidency.

The 18th Triennial Conference of NCJW was held in the national capital in 1976 and in 1994 the 24th Triennial Conference was hosted in Canberra while a plenary session of Council was also held in Canberra in 1986.

NATIONAL CONFERENCES AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

With the exception of the NCJW Gold Coast Section established in 1973, Dr Fanny was active in the formation and progress of all the Council Sections. She retained the position of founding president of

the Council of Jewish Women of NSW from 1923–1931, when she relinquished the position to concentrate on national matters. From 1936–1948 she resumed the state presidency and also held the position of national president from 1929–1955. During the late 1930s and the 1940s, the number of Sydney groups mushroomed and, apart from being involved with these, Dr Fanny expended a great deal of time and energy to consolidate and guide the national body. As well as dealing with the normal formalities, she always made it her concern to send personal notes to her helpers. In one form or other, her active presidency spanned 32 years and her interest in NCJW continued for the rest of her life.



Front cover of Conference Brochure. Dr Fanny's inscription which was written on the back is reproduced opposite.

It has been noted that in May 1929, Dr Fanny called together the first Jewish Women's Conference of *Australasia* to which she invited delegates from Jewish women's groups throughout Australia and New Zealand. The conference was so successful that it led to the formation of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia⁸⁶ and encouraged Dr Fanny to make personal visits to almost all the states and cities in Australia with sizeable groups of Jewish women to include them in the national body.

The conference of Jewish women in Sydney in 1929 was only the second national Jewish event to take place in Australia.⁸⁷ It was conducted on a high intellectual level *solely* by women who at this time generally lacked a voice on Jewish community councils. The delegates discussed such issues as assimilation, the introduction of Jewish day schools, the status of Jewish women especially in relation to some unfair aspects of Jewish divorce (matters still not resolved), aid for Palestine and the like. The papers were of a high standard and led to a stimulating exchange of ideas. On the back cover of this first and other early conference booklets was Dr Fanny's message which so effectively describes the spirit of the organisation and its founder:

And the best of all impressions
to take back from this Conference to
your States your cities and your Homes,
is, that the Council of Jewish Women,
stands above all things, for the Law
of Loving-kindness.
With love and kindest greetings
Fanny Reading.

With the success of the first conference came the awareness that such events would be held at regular intervals in the future (in practice, biennially for some years and then triennially) and that it would be necessary to establish a central executive and/or board of directors to frame the programme of future activities. Accordingly, when the Second National Conference was held in Sydney in 1932 to coincide with the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia was formally established with Dr Fanny its first president. The main purpose of the third conference held in Melbourne in 1934 was to formulate the by-laws and regulations for the administration of the NCJW. Henceforth, these formalities were only mentioned where changes were proposed.

To date, NCJW has held 25 conferences, the most recent of which took place in Perth in May 1997. The conferences have been hosted in most capital cities of Australia and have always been prestigious events with notable guest speakers and challenging and important conference themes. Before air travel became the norm, many delegates willingly made long bus and train journeys to participate in these national gatherings. As well as working sessions, there are social events which allow members to relax and renew contacts and experience a week of diverse, worthwhile activities. Wherever possible, delegates from every Section of NCJW attend the conference to formulate programmes for the next three years. Additionally, the national committee of management meets regularly and a major mid-term plenary session is held so that NCJW board members from all Sections are able to consider important matters during the period between conferences.

In the first two decades of its existence, NCJW was the only organisation concerned with issues pertaining to the entire Jewish population of Australia. Gradually other community organisations evolved to address these concerns; for example, in 1944 the ECAJ was established as the representative body of all Australian Jewry. Council discussed matters of education and Jewish day schools at its Fourth Conference in Adelaide in 1936, 13 years before Mt Scopus College opened in Melbourne in 1949. For many years NCJW formed and encouraged junior and sub-junior sections and male/female groups such as the C & Y Juniors in NSW, which comprised members of Council Juniors and the YMHA (Young Men's Hebrew Association). They were formed not only for social reasons but to give members a sense of responsibility by fundraising for their own community projects. These junior groups pre-dated the strong Zionist youth groups which were established in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As stated, Council had a strong Zionist platform in its original aims articulated in 1923, 14 years before the establishment of the WIZO Federation of Australia in 1937. Another early commitment, support for mothers and babies

in Palestine, was later channelled through the Ezra organisation in 1939. Apart from her work with her 'women and girls', Dr Fanny was also instrumental in the founding of the YMHA, of which her brother Dr Abe was first president in 1929. Many future leaders of the Sydney Jewish community were members of the YMHA during its active years. In the case of the Zionist Youth organisation *Shomrim* (meaning Watchmen) which existed from 1939–1944, Dr Fanny was one of the original committee members of this group.



Second National Conference, 1932

The training and skills for leadership which were acquired by trial and error and sheer weight of experience within NCJW, spilled over to later Jewish organisations, to their benefit. What set NCJW apart was that its activities have always combined the specific needs of the Jewish community with those of the community at large; for example, in 1929, NCJW affiliated with the National Council of Women of Australia and has enjoyed a close relationship from that time. Several NCJW members, and especially Sylvia Gelman, National President of NCJW, 1973–1979, have held high executive positions with this umbrella organisation of all Australian women. Council is also affiliated with United Nations associations and its Status of Women Committee.

Conferences continued to take place on a less regular basis throughout the cataclysmic world events of the 1930s and 1940s and Council set its programmes and priorities in accordance with changing conditions; for example, on the cover of the May 1940 *Council Bulletin* (Vol.14, No.10) members were asked to take note of the new four-point plan, viz. 1. War work, 2. Zionist work, 3. Jewish education, 4. local charities. The work of every Council Section to help the Australian war effort was exemplary and the assistance given to Jewish immigrants both before and after World War II was a beacon of light in otherwise depressing circumstances.

The establishment of Israel in 1948 led to a variety of Council projects to help particular needs in the Jewish homeland. For example, ILAN, the Israel foundation for handicapped children and adults suffering from cerebral palsy, was adopted as an NCJW national project in 1964 and members continue to raise funds for this cause.⁸⁸ Together with other Australian Jewish organisations, Council has co-sponsored projects to assist Israel, the latest being the Vera Cohen Besor Reservoir Project, named in honour of one of NCJW's most outstanding members, Vera Cohen, who died in September 1994.

At the opening of the 11th Triennial Conference in Sydney in March 1955, Dr Fanny, who was now 71 years old, announced that she felt the time had come to relinquish the presidency of NCJW and commended Vera Cohen as the new national leader. In her message to conference, Dr Fanny said:

I pray that in 18 years' time we shall celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our beloved organisation, the organisation which has meant so much to me personally and which is founded upon the permanent foundations of service and devotion.⁸⁹

This prayer was answered when, to great acclamation, a very frail but alert Dr Fanny was wheeled into the 50th Jubilee celebrations of

Council in 1973. In describing the Golden Jubilee celebrations, Gertie Bartak wrote that there were two special occasions:

These gala occasions were the official Opening Banquet at the Maccabean Hall and the Golden Jubilee Morning Tea at Council House. We all had a sense of joy and thanksgiving that our 'living legend' Dr Fanny Reading, MBE, was present: that she who had founded NCJW in Australia should see its 50th Anniversary. Dr Fan's personal delight and satisfaction in attending both functions were expertly expressed in her own words – 'I made it.' She received a standing ovation from 400 guests when she arrived . . .⁹⁰

Another outstanding occasion for NCJW occurred in 1975 when Melbourne was host city for the 10th Conference of the International Conference of Jewish Women (ICJW)⁹¹ of which Dr Fanny had been a long time vice-president. Although Dr Fanny did not live to see an international conference of Jewish women take place in Australia, in 1957, she and other Council members participated in such a gathering in Jerusalem. After this convention, the settlement Neve Zipporah in Gan Yavneh, funded and established in her honour by NCJW Australia, was dedicated. Other members of NCJW have been honoured by association with various projects in Israel.⁹² Australian delegates have attended ICJW conferences overseas and several presidents of ICJW have been present at the NCJW triennial conferences in recent times; Australian members of NCJW hold executive positions on the Board of the ICJW and NCJW hopes that Sydney will be host city to the ICJW international conference in 2002.

The 1960s were times of change for NCJW which had been most strongly associated with New South Wales until that time. In 1964, the *Council Bulletin* was published in Melbourne for the first time and publication has since alternated between Sydney and Melbourne. In 1967, when Vera Cohen stepped down after 12 years as national president at the 15th Triennial Conference in Perth, the national board itself moved to Melbourne under the presidency of Mina Fink, 1967–1973. She was succeeded by another Melbourne leader, Sylvia Gelman, who was national president from 1973–1979. Since then the national board has alternated between NSW and Victoria, the two Council sections which have the largest number of Council members. Succeeding national presidents have been:

Ray Ginsberg	NSW	1979 – 1985
Malvina Malinek	Vic.	1985 – 1991
Lynne Davies	NSW	1991 – 1997
Dr Geulah Solomon	Vic.	1997 –

The majority of Council's national presidents have been awarded Australian honours in appreciation of their services to the community.

In June 1970, the growing awareness of the problems facing *all* voluntary organisations was expressed at Council's 16th Triennial Conference held in Brisbane: 'Nowhere is the 'generation gap' more obvious but *less* acknowledged than in voluntary organisations . . .'⁹³ Traditionally, women were the main volunteers for community service and when their absence was beginning to make a difference in the early 1970s, 32% of married women had joined the workforce. By 1990, 53% of all married women and 60% of all mothers with dependent children were in the workforce. The revolution in the status of women was undoubtedly one of the great developments in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

In the 1970s Council was also becoming more assertive in women's issues, in line with the progress of feminism in western democratic countries. Again at the 16th Triennial Conference, the following two resolutions were adopted: 'Through NCJW we aim to help women achieve their full potential in every sphere of life,' and Council 'should promote the fullest participation of women in the social, political and economic life of Australia.'⁹⁴ At the 20th Triennial Conference held in Surfers Paradise (Gold Coast Section) in June 1982, Resolution 9 stated 'that all sections of NCJW undertake the study of the Status of Women within Jewish Law.' This matter, particularly with regard to the *gett* (religious Jewish divorce) and the *agunah* (deserted wife), has been vigorously pursued by the National Board.⁹⁵ In a wider context, NCJW is one of the 46 women's groups to have participated in round table conferences at Commonwealth Government level in recent years.

The current position of NCJW (as tabled at the 25th Triennial Conference held in Perth in May 1997) is that all Sections have fulfilled their commitments to the Israel projects and are continuing to raise funds for their local Jewish and non-Jewish causes. Some recipients of the fund-raising efforts of NCJW were the three senior Jewish groups supported by the Victorian section, the Maurice Zeffert Home for senior Jewish citizens in Western Australia, while the NSW Section made donations to the Asthma Foundation, the Cancer Council of NSW, and The Prince of Wales' Children's Hospital, among others.

There appear to be two main problems facing NCJW in the 21st century: (a) development of new guidelines for the smaller Sections which have increasing demands on their already stretched resources; (2) adapting to rapidly changing social and economic conditions without losing the concept of *service*.

SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE NSW SECTION

Council WIZO

One of the principal aims of NCJW has always been aid for Israel (Palestine, until 1948), which in practice usually took the form of improving care for mothers and babies in that country. Whereas a specific women's Zionist group would have been non-viable in Australia in 1923, by the mid-1930s, with the rapid ascent of Nazism and antisemitism in Germany and Europe, support for a Jewish homeland was increasing. WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organisation) had been formed in England in 1920 by Rebecca Sieff to promote the welfare of women and children and to carry out other specific reconstruction work in Palestine. In 1937, when Ida Bension,⁹⁶ Canadian WIZO leader and international WIZO emissary, visited Australia and consolidated the women's groups doing some Zionist work, the Australian Federation of WIZO was formed with Ruby Rich as president. In an ironic twist, the original founder of WIZO in Australia in 1935 is considered to be Rieke Cohen, who had been a most enthusiastic worker for NCJW from its very inception. She was president of Council's immigration welfare section established in 1929 and State president from 1931–1933. After a falling out with Dr Fanny, Rieke Cohen resigned from Council in January 1935 and shortly after (March 1935) called together a meeting of members of her former eastern suburbs group, among whom were a number of recent refugees. These women were more likely to espouse Zionism than the majority of established NCJW members. At this meeting a new group, Ivriah (meaning Hebrew woman) was formed. Rieke Cohen immediately brought out a journal which was published monthly and the stated aims of Ivriah were work for Zionism and Hebrew education. Ivriah was the forerunner of WIZO in Australia: a clash of personalities had led to a split between two eminent women, Dr Fanny and Rieke Cohen, and to the existence of two Australia-wide Jewish women's organisations.⁹⁷

During Ida Bension's first visit to Australia, Dr Fanny decided to form the Zionist Committee of Council into a Council WIZO group. The membership subscriptions were forwarded directly to WIZO while members had the same privileges as other Council members. However, after the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, Council WIZO group was disbanded after eleven years as it imposed a conflict of loyalties for its members. WIZO, in no small part due to the urgency and immediacy of Israel's problems, became the stronger Jewish

women's organisation in Australia with double and treble Council's mean average number of 2000 members.

In 1998, the position may be changing. Israel is celebrating 50 years of nationhood and is less dependent on the Diaspora whereas NCJW, in keeping with its three-point plan, is committed to the welfare of the Australian general community and such assistance is unlikely to diminish.

The War Effort

As regards NCJW's contribution to the general community, its work during World War II (1939–1945) can only be described as magnificent. Council's proud claim was that war began on 3 September 1939 and its war effort began the very next day. In Sydney the Council Emergency Committee was formed and this group of women worked day and night to help Council in any emergency.

Although this article focuses on the New South Wales Section, it must be stated that every Council section throughout Australia did its utmost for the war effort:- to raise funds for the comfort of the Australian troops, to help the Red Cross, to support particular projects such as funding ambulances and mobile canteens and other related activities. Knitting and sewing circles were formed, shops were dedicated to raising funds for the war effort, troops were entertained, helped with food parcels and visited in hospitals and convalescent homes. In July 1940, Council suspended all its activities except those connected with the Australian war effort and it set up two special committees, defence and catering, to co-ordinate all its patriotic efforts.

The best known amenities centre for the troops in Sydney during World War II was the Anzac Buffet in Hyde Park, the full title of which was the Sir John Monash Hut Anzac Buffet. In 1939 the Sydney City Council, at the request of the RSL, agreed to renew the old kiosk in Hyde Park which had been used as an Anzac Buffet in World War I, and to approve a large self-contained extension to this to be known as the Sir John Monash Hut. The money for the buildings, £6000, was raised by the Jewish community. The cover page of *Council Bulletin*, Vol.15, No.2, 1 September 1940, stated:

In Sydney the Jewish citizens have presented to the ACF (Australian Comforts Fund) two finely constructed and furnished buildings, the Sir John Monash Recreation Hut and the Anzac Buffet in Hyde Park . . . of which the Sydney NCJW will have contributed up to date almost £500.



Top: Certificate presented to Adele Bersten, one of the 300 volunteer workers at the Kiosk, Martin Place.

Bottom: The mobile canteen which was presented to the City of Sydney in 1940. It is outside the Kiosk in Martin Place.

Although it had been operating for some months, in September 1940 Lord Wakehurst, the Governor of NSW, officially opened the 'Sir John Monash Hut Anzac Buffet' in Hyde Park. The Jewish group of volunteers, some 70 helpers on one day, were on duty once a month from 8.45 am to 10 pm and many of them attended on other days as well. They usually manned the Buffet over Christmas so that the other volunteers could be with their families. In the main, NCJW members worked for their own particular projects but there were some who helped wherever they could. One council member describes the Anzac Buffet as 'a huge amenities centre for soldiers where we helped prepare thousands of meals – smile at the boys and later, exhausted, partner them in dancing for a couple of hours.'⁹⁸ In 1947 the Sir John Monash Hut was transferred to Rose Bay as their RSL meeting place. The original plaque is housed in the premises of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney and reads: 'THE ANZAC BUFFET. This building is a gift from the Jewish citizens of Sydney, 19.9.40.'

For six months in 1940, NCJW operated a War Chest Shop for the Lord Mayor's Fund in Her Majesty's Arcade, Castlereagh Street, Sydney. On sale were freshly baked cakes and biscuits and such delicacies as pickled herrings and cucumbers. The shop raised £353 for the war effort without a penny of expenses. It was decided to open another war chest shop and kiosk in Martin Place near Phillip Street. The shop was superseded by the Kiosk only, which was a huge success, with all proceeds going to the Lord Mayor's Patriotic and War Fund of NSW. The Lord Mayor of Sydney opened Council's kiosk on 8 October 1940.⁹⁹ The ground for the kiosk was loaned by the City Council for the duration of the war and many firms donated building materials as well as building and architectural services. The kiosk offered an *al fresco* setting for the citizens of Sydney, a rather novel concept in those days. At first it was open to the general public from Monday to Friday for refreshments, light luncheons, afternoon teas, ice creams and cool drinks. Within a few months it opened on Sunday afternoons from 12.30 to 7 pm and then at night from 8 pm to midnight, except on Friday and Saturday nights.

NCJW staffed the kiosk on a completely voluntary basis and various Council groups were given certain roster days. There were 8–15 workers at the kiosk on a daily basis (under the supervision of Bertha Feldheim) and from an initial 160 women, the number who gave their services each month climbed to 300. The hostesses and groups on duty had to supply their own foodstuffs for their respective days, thus making the proceeds, which were paid monthly into the Lord Mayor's fund, almost a net profit.¹⁰⁰ On 19 December 1946 a farewell party was held to thank 'the magnificent group of 300 women

who had been responsible for the phenomenal success of the Kiosk in Martin Place.' Over five years £11,500 was raised for the war effort.¹⁰¹ Among its other achievements, Council in April 1940 provided all the equipment for and took care of the personal needs of the soldiers in a 14-bed ward in The Lady Wakehurst Soldiers' Hospital in Birrell Street, Waverley. That same month, the members also presented a fully equipped mobile canteen to the city of Sydney. NCJW also raised very large sums of money for Commonwealth War Loans and Victory Bonds.

Dr Fanny Reading v. *Smith's Weekly*

In 1949 the Jewish community of Australia was confronted with a public conflict which aroused much interest and a deep sense of outrage. The event was a court case held in Sydney – Dr Fanny Reading v *Smith's Weekly*. The case came about as the result of headlines in this paper two years previously, as follows: 'JEWS RAISE HUGE SUMS TO FIGHT BRITISH' and 'HEAVY LEVIES ON JEWS IN AUSTRALIA.'¹⁰² These headlines referred to a meeting held in Sydney to raise funds for *Youth Aliyah*, a movement which had been started years earlier to bring Jewish children and young adults, victims of Nazi oppression, to the Jewish homeland. The appeal speaker was Major Michael Comay, working on behalf of the Jewish Agency in Israel.¹⁰³ The Jewish community felt it had been libelled by *Smith's Weekly* (National Press Ltd.) which was not renowned for its high journalistic standards.

It was originally intended that there be two Jewish plaintiffs, one in Melbourne and one in Sydney, to take action against the paper. However, of the persons suitable to take part in this very public dispute, most felt that their business or profession would suffer from the type of exposure to be expected. In Sydney there was one eminent person prepared to take a courageous stand, a senior vice-president of Youth Aliyah Australia, namely Dr Fanny Reading. Legal technicalities which could affect the outcome of the case were surely evident to her advisers but it was a matter of principle that such vilification could not go unchallenged. The case was heard in the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Dr Fanny had to leave her medical practice and be present in court from 26 April to 30 May 1949, during which time she underwent intensive questioning. Justice Herron, who called Dr Fanny a 'woman of distinction', found 'with some regret' in favour of *Smith's Weekly* as there was no law for group libel as such. The victory was a hollow one, however, as the newspaper, which had been in existence since 1919, closed down its business within six months of this court case.

The Wolper Jewish Hospital

The Wolper Jewish Hospital, a leading private hospital in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, came into existence as a direct result of the efforts of NCJW. As far back as 1933, a Jewish hospital was on the agenda of NCJW: 'It has been one of the aims of the NCJW to establish in each big Australian city, a Jewish Hospital especially as this is needed for orthodox Jews.'¹⁰⁴ The opportunity for Sydney came through a bequest from Gertie Wolper Stone who had been a foundation member of Council. Beset with illness during the last years of her life, she was so unhappy with conditions in a convalescent home that two members of Council's hospital visiting committee arranged for her transfer to her own home. Here, the hospital visiting committee members continued to look after her for the rest of her life. In gratitude, Mrs Wolper Stone bequeathed her Coogee home to the hospital visiting committee with instructions that it be used as a hospital or convalescent home for Jewish people and that it be known as the Aaron and Gertie Wolper Convalescent Home or hospital. The original trustees of the home were Becky Lake, Ethel Zines and Dr Fanny Reading. The rest of her estate was to be divided equally between this convalescent home/hospital and the then existing Jewish hospital at Point Piper. When the trustees of the Coogee site considered it unsuitable for its specified purpose, they went to law and received permission to sell it and then bought a property at Woollahra.¹⁰⁵ On 17 May 1953, the official opening of the Wolper Convalescent House at 8 Trelawney Street, Woollahra, took place and NCJW ran this home successfully for several years.

In the late 1950s, the Jewish Hospital in Point Piper (of which Dr Fanny was secretary) ran into financial difficulties and approached NCJW for use of the property in Woollahra. In 1961 the Jewish Hospital and the NCJW Wolper Convalescent House amalgamated to become the Wolper Jewish Hospital. While the hospital had its own board and was run independently of NCJW, the buildings were owned in perpetuity by the NCJW hospital visiting committee. It was agreed that three members of NCJW would always act as trustees on the board of the Wolper hospital. However, in 1982 when the hospital wished to undertake a complete refurbishment, local council requirements insisted that the buildings be in the name of the hospital. In order that the whole community could benefit from a modern Jewish hospital, the trustees and Board of Management of NCJW transferred the Title Deeds into the name of the hospital at no cost whatsoever. In 1982/3 Wolper hospital closed for 18 months to carry out this (entirely self-funded) refurbishment. NCJW's involvement and generosity is still recognised by the fact that three NCJW members will always sit on

the hospital board. Long-serving president of Wolper Hospital, Lynne Davies, was state president of NCJW (1980–1984) and national president (1991–1997).

Council House

In 1923 when Council was founded, meetings were held in the Maccabean Hall and at the homes of foundation members. It was always the intention of the organisation to have a home of its own for bigger events than local meetings which still take place today. This was one of the reasons for the purchase of property in Francis Street, Sydney, in 1926. However, there were always other more important priorities and it seemed that like Moses and the Israelites of old, Council was to wander for 40 years before reaching its own home in 1963. Until then Council occupied a succession of premises in Sydney, sometimes in conjunction with the YMHA, and provided kosher catering and the venue for many functions and meetings. The best remembered location which was occupied by NCJW for almost 20 years was History House in Young Street, Sydney. It was to these premises that Jewish migrants arriving in Sydney were brought by Council members night and day, to be given any necessary assistance before leaving for their new destinations.



MRS. WARWICK FAIRFAX
with
MRS. MARCUS BALKIND

Invite you to...

Invitation to testimonial luncheon for Dr Fanny, 30 July 1962.

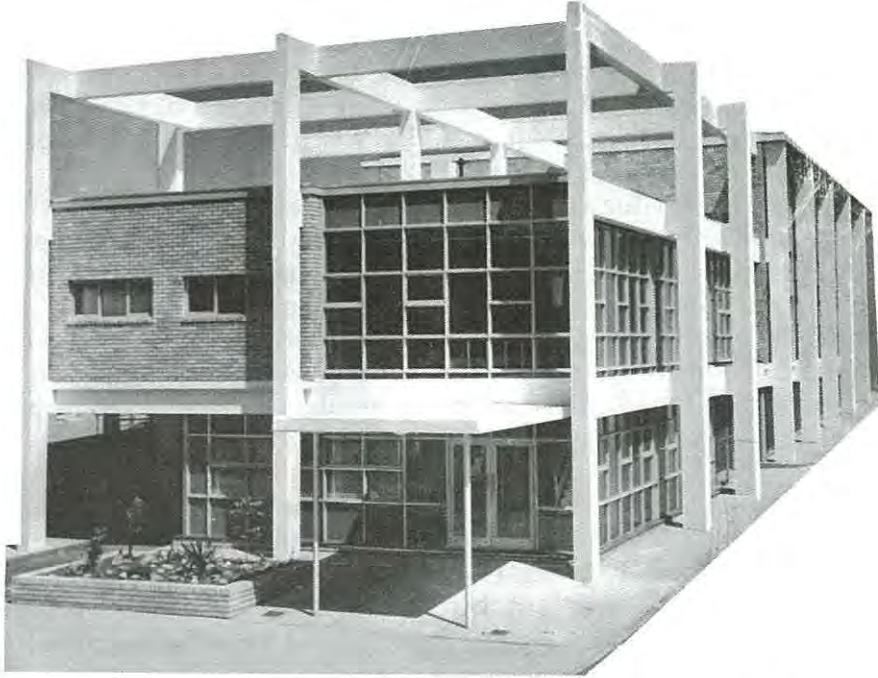
Members worked energetically to raise funds for the establishment of the present Council House at Woollahra. Perhaps the best known event in this regard was a testimonial luncheon organised by Jill Balkind and Mary (later Lady) Fairfax in 1962 in honour of Dr Fanny. All proceeds were donated to the building of Council House. The luncheon at the Chevron Hotel in King's Cross was attended by 800 guests and a further 100 could not be accommodated. In attendance at this prestigious affair was another well-known personality, the American Jewish vaudeville star, Sophie Tucker.

In December 1963 the NCJW War Memorial Fanny Reading Council House, Queen Street, Woollahra,¹⁰⁶ was dedicated to the servicemen and women of Australia and the founder of NCJW, Dr Fanny Reading, MBE. This was another great dream come true for Dr Fanny.

Presidents of NSW Section, 1923–1998

Dr Fanny Reading, MBE	1923 – 1931
Reike Cohen	1931 – 1933
Rae Cornfield	1933 – 1936
Dr Fanny Reading, MBE	1936 – 1948
Vera Cohen, MBE	1948 – 1955
Ann Einfeld	1955 – 1958
Dolly Lambert	1958 – 1960
Dora Wolfensohn	1960 – 1962
Jill Balkind	1962 – 1964
Ray Ginsburg, AM	1964 – 1972
Phyllis Glasser	1972 – 1976
Zara Cohen-Young	1976 – 1979
The Hon. Margaret Davis	1979 – 1980
Lynne Davies	1980 – 1984
Zelda Feigen	1984 – 1987
Estelle Gold	1987 – 1988
Zara Young	1988 – 1989
Robyn Lenn	1989 – 1995
Jan Shedlezki	1995 – 1997
Denise Edelstein*	1997 –

(*Granddaughter of Vera Cohen, MBE)



Council House as it was when it was first opened, 1963.

DR FANNY READING, THE PHYSICIAN AND WOMAN

Dr Fanny in her later years came to be regarded as a living legend whose achievements were seemingly endless. Apart from the events and anecdotes related in this tribute there are doubtless many more. She herself did not dwell on personal matters and was genuinely humble to the extent that she did not write her memoirs in spite of many requests to do so. She has been described in Council Bulletins and the press in such glowing terms as 'goddess' and 'queen of Australian womanhood.' These superlatives were probably anathema to someone who prefaced her speeches and writings with the words, 'It is with a deep sense of gratitude and thankfulness to the Almighty that I have been spared'. To all who sent her get-well cards after a serious illness in 1936, she quoted from the Psalms, 'Be strong and of good courage and walk humbly with me in the way of the Lord.'

By all accounts Dr Fanny had a flair for organisation and was a born leader who was able to come up with ideas and then translate these initiatives into action. Rabbi Dr I. Porush, OBE, former chief minister of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, paid tribute to her shortly after her death thus: 'She had the gift of persuasive leadership which could inspire thousands of women to follow her and to work with her in fellowship.'¹⁰⁷

Long-serving members of NCJW, Ray Ginsburg and Phyllis Glasser, still remember and carry out her injunctions. Some of her sayings included: never cancel a function and if you have a problem, rather than act hastily, sleep on it. She was generally the first person to arrive at a function and the last to leave.

It is this writer's observation, based on many interviews and discussions with people who knew Dr Fanny well, that she was the quintessence of goodness – kind, caring, humble, hospitable, strong in her faith and also – strong-willed. The adjectives used most frequently were gentle, quietly-spoken and firm. Much praise came her way but she always gave credit to others. At the opening of Council House in 1963 (the fulfilment of her greatest dream apart from the establishment of the State of Israel), she said:

As for myself, I deeply appreciate and am humbly proud of the great honour paid to me by naming Council House in my name. For 40 years I've had the great privilege to hold the position of President, National President and Life President, and in all those years I have gained hundreds of loyal and devoted friends in Australia and overseas. This has made my life full, interesting and colourful. For this I am most grateful to them. They have assisted in making me what I am. I owe a debt of gratitude to Australia, the land of freedom and liberty which has given me everything. We have a great cause to work for, a cause dedicated to service for humanity. . . ¹⁰⁸

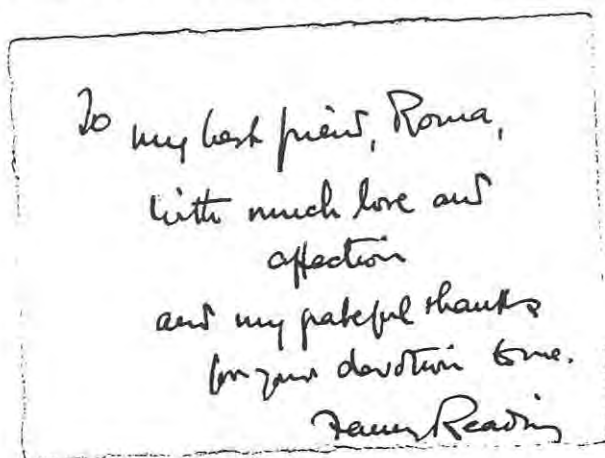
On a public level, Dr Fanny received recognition from the Jewish community by way of lasting testaments, e.g. prizes and scholarships in her name and commemorative plaques on buildings in Australia and Israel. In December (the month of her birthday), all sections of NCJW celebrate Founder's Day every year to pay tribute to Dr Fanny's memory and to learn from past endeavours.

In the early years of her medical practice in Sydney, Dr Fanny did much unpaid work for the sick and needy. Not only was she an 'honorary' at the St George District and Rachel Forster Hospitals in Sydney but she was also made a life-governor of the Crown Street Women's Hospital and of the Benevolent Society of NSW, which was responsible for the Royal Hospital for Women at Paddington and several children's homes. She also became a life-governor of the Dalwood Children's Home at Manly in recognition of her work there as an honorary medical officer.

In recognition of her 'devoted social welfare work for all creeds and classes,' Dr Fanny was honoured with the King George V Jubilee Medal in 1935 and the King George VI Coronation Medal in 1937. She

received citations from the Australian government for her efforts during World War II and is said to have declined the honour of having her name inscribed on the Anzac Buffet plaque although this building was largely the result of her initiative as a member of the Jewish Citizens' War Emergency Committee.¹⁰⁹ In 1961 she was awarded the MBE for her many services to the Australian community.

After working for a short time in the Sydney suburb of Kogarah, Dr Fanny joined her brother in a family practice in rooms in Old South Head Road, Bondi Junction, and then at 253 Oxford Street in the same suburb. There was a strong bond between brother and sister and Dr Abe supported her Council work both morally and financially. A characteristic which is not normally associated with Dr Fanny was recounted by Jenny Burman,¹¹⁰ daughter of Dr Abe and Esma Reading and niece of Dr Fanny. Apparently her aunt was a giggler and as Jenny's father was a wonderful raconteur, there was often much giggling when the two of them were together. Roma Baffsky (née Lang) worked in the Oxford Street surgery from 1940–1957. It was a familiar setting as she and her brother had been patients there as children. When Dr A.S. Reading died in 1957 and Dr Fanny was herself not well, Roma became live-in companion and carer for Dr Fanny at her residence in Macleay Street, Potts Point, for four years until Dr Fanny became a permanent patient at the Wolper Jewish Hospital in 1962. Roma recalled¹¹¹ how Dr Fanny worked from early morning until late at night and her only 'thinking time' was in the bath which took place late at night and lasted for a very long time. Roma absolutely adored Dr Fanny, with whom she shared a room at the various conferences, and today she treasures the mementoes and beautiful sentiments in the notes written to her by her employer and dear friend.



To my best friend, Roma,
with much love and
affection
and my grateful thanks
for your devotion to me.
Fanny Reading

Thank you note from Dr Fanny to Roma Lang (Baffsky).

As well as working in the family practice at Bondi Junction, Dr Fanny also had her own rooms at King's Cross above the Bank of New South Wales on the corner of Darlinghurst Road and Springfield Avenue, and sometimes her brother would assist her in these rooms. Dr Fanny's apartment which she shared with her mother until the latter's death in 1946 adjoined the surgery. Both Esther Rose Reading and Dr Fanny were very hospitable and always had guests, some perfect strangers, for lunch on the Sabbath, a tradition which Dr Fanny continued as long as possible. The front balcony of the apartment was always piled high with boxes of Council records and it was also the surgery office with desk, typewriter and files.

Betty Roden (née Krantz) worked for Dr Fanny as her secretary at the King's Cross surgery in 1938. Previously Council volunteers had done the bookwork as some small gesture for all the time Dr Fanny devoted to Council matters. The procedure was that Dr Fanny dictated letters to Betty in the morning, then visited her patients and returned to the surgery about midday. After lunch was served by her mother, the work continued. At this time Mrs Roden recalls that Dr Fanny was planning the 5th NCJW Biennial Conference to be held in Sydney in March 1938. There were letters and invitations to be sent out,¹¹² arrangements made for entertainment, lunches, dinners, and they worked well into the night. After a very successful conference at which Betty took shorthand notes of all the proceedings, came the 'thank you' letters to visitors as well as the regular letters to members of Council and the surgery correspondence. The patients were never rushed or neglected.

When Mrs Roden married, although she was no longer in Dr Fanny's employ, she was treated to a celebratory afternoon tea by Dr Fanny and Dora Wolfensohn. Not surprisingly, when Mrs Roden's son was born, it was Dr Fanny who delivered the child. In a letter written to me by Mrs Roden on 23 August 1995, she stated:

It was inspiring to work for and with Dr Fanny Reading. She was a genius. I never saw her harassed and realized she was as strong as the rock of Gibraltar – It was awesome to see how much she could accomplish in one day.

Apart from her medical practice and NCJW, Dr Fanny was involved with writing, public speaking, public relations, dispensing hospitality and dealing with countless invitations to celebrations and public events, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Morris Ochert, was a young, active member of the Jewish community in Sydney before he went overseas on active service in World War II. Dr Fanny, who was known as the 'Angel of King's

Cross', was a family friend and his mentor and he vividly recalls some of the incidents which were part of her daily life. One Sunday night, just before World War II, a few youth leaders were having a meeting at Dr Fanny's place at King's Cross when a badly injured young woman practically fell through the door. She had been beaten up by her lover who was also her pimp and she was terrified that he may have followed her. An even greater concern was for her baby whom she boarded with a neighbour nearby. Dr Fanny sent Ochert and one of the girls at the meeting to fetch the baby while she attended to the medical needs of the mother. She made up a crib for the baby and settled the mother in a makeshift bed. At midnight the meeting resumed and when it was finished at about 2 am she made omelettes and black coffee and drove the participants home. She told them that first thing in the morning she would drive the girl to have her jaw X-rayed and would then take mother and child to the Salvation Army shelter – after that it was back to the surgery where she had a full appointment book for the day! Dr Fanny was already in her mid-fifties when she worked in this endless round of service to others.

Ray Ginsburg, former state and national president of NCJW, remembers Dr Fanny, the physician, as the kindest person imaginable. Dr Fanny attended Ray's daughter who was an asthma sufferer and would stay with her until all hours of the morning until she came out of the attack.

One of Dr Fanny's greatest admirers is Jana Gottshall, widow of Rabbi Dr B. Gottshall. Both survivors of the Holocaust, they arrived in Australia in 1949 under the auspices of the AJWS and were accommodated at the 'Chip Chase' Hostel (later renamed the E.H. Komlos Hostel) at Greenwich,¹¹³ which the AJWS administered for 16 years. As was her custom, Dr Fanny was at the wharf to meet the dispossessed newcomers who generally could not speak English.¹¹⁴ She spoke with the Gottshalls in Yiddish and reassured them about their accommodation at 'Chip Chase'.

At the time, Mrs Gottshall was highly pregnant with her second child and it was Dr Fanny who arranged for her hospitalisation, delivered her baby son and called in Dr Abe to assist when complications arose. When things settled down, Dr Fanny did everything in her power to help establish the Gottshall family. They never forgot her kindness and visited Dr Fanny at the Wolper Hospital as often as possible. It was Dr Fanny's wish that Rabbi Gottshall conduct her funeral service which he did with great dignity and sadness.

Following her death, NCJW published a special Council Bulletin 'In Memoriam' in honour of Dr Fanny Reading, in December 1974.

One of the many tributes was written by the then national president of NCJW, Sylvia Gelman. She summarised Dr Fanny's life thus:

It was at Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, that ninety years ago in far-away Minsk was born the girl who was to bring light and love and care to her people. Named Zipporah the little bird, she was destined to travel far to achieve great things, to make possible the impossible dream . . .

Half a century before the United Nations' Charter for Human Rights, Dr Fanny was calling on women to accept their responsibility in correcting social injustice . . .

Her achievements, her influence, her character, have made her immortal . . .

May the light that was Fanny Reading illuminate our paths for many years to come.

The title of this article comes from Proverbs 31:26: 'She openeth her mouth with wisdom and the law of loving kindness is on her tongue.' It is fitting, in conclusion, to add from Proverbs 31:29: 'Many daughters have done valiantly. But thou excellest them all.'

ABBREVIATIONS

AJC	<i>Australian Jewish Chronicle</i>
AJHS	<i>Australian Jewish Historical Society</i>
AJWS	Australian Jewish Welfare Society, now known as AJWS – Jewish Community Services
CJW	Council of Jewish Women
ECAJ	Executive Council of Australian Jewry
HS	<i>Hebrew Standard of Australasia</i> , commonly known as the <i>Hebrew Standard</i> .
ICJW	International Council of Jewish Women
JNF	Jewish National Fund
NCJW	The National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, also sometimes denoted as NCJWA
RSL	Returned Services' League of Australia
WIZO	Women's International Zionist Organisation
YMHA	Young Men's Hebrew Association
ZFA	Zionist Federation of Australia

ENDNOTES

- 1 President's Report, 10th Anniversary Bulletin of Council, 1933. As regards New Zealand, this country did *not* join an Australasian

- organisation but has always maintained close ties with Australia.
- 2 The Pale of Settlement was an area which covered one million square miles from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. It formed 94% of the total Jewish population of Russia and 11.6% of the general population of this area.
- 3 14 January 1906, 3 January 1907, 1 January 1908.
- 4 *The Argus*, 6 March 1918.
- 5 A biographical sketch of Dr Fanny Reading from the programme of the Triennial Conference held in Melbourne, 25 June - 1 July 1964.
- 6 *Australian Jewish Chronicle (AJC)*, 14 June 1923, p.8.
- 7 *AJC*, 28 June 1923, p.9.
- 8 *Hebrew Standard of Australasia (HS)*, 27 July 1923, p.15. The article by Betty Lapin goes on to say: 'She is intensely practical withal. In her well ordered mind, each idea is clearly thought out - every detail carefully considered.'
- 9 A speech given at the Triennial Conference in Brisbane, 1946.
- 10 *HS*, 13 July 1923, p.8.
- 11 The ZFA (Zionist Federation of Australia) was not formed until 1927.
- 12 Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, Collins, Australia, 1988, p.170.
- 13 She was an early editor of the *Bulletin* and National Secretary for 38 years.
- 14 *Council Bulletin*, vol.29, no.9, April 1955, p.23.
- 15 *Ibid.*, vol.16, no.4, November 1941, personal tribute from Dr Fanny Reading.
- 16 Myola Café on 11 June 1923 (*AJC*, 14 June 1923, p.10).
- 17 Address at the Myola Café on 26 June (*AJC*, 28 June 1923, p.10).
- 18 *AJC*, 28 June 1923.
- 19 *HS*, 29 June 1923, p.11.
- 20 One of the results of Madame Pevsner's visit (*AJC*, 10 January 1924) was that she did help to strengthen marginally the Zionist cause in Australia and New Zealand but of far greater importance was her role as catalyst in the formation of the NSW Jewish women's movement. She herself wrote from Christchurch, New Zealand, on 24 October 1923 ('Early Australian Zionism' compiled by Marianne Dacy of the Archive of Australian Judaica, University of Sydney, 1993, p.22) that 'Societies and lasting ones I leave everywhere except Sydney, where the Women's Council with Dr Fannie Reading is the only redeeming feature'.
- 21 *HS*, 20 July 1923, p.9.
- 22 *AJC*, 26 July 1923.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 13 July 1923, p.8.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 26 July 1923.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 21 September 1923.
- 26 Charles Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia', *AJHS Journal*, Vol.V, Pt.

- VIII, pp.364-410.
- 27 Simchas Torah – Festival rejoicing in the giving of the Law.
- 28 *AJC*, 18 October 1923.
- 29 Note *dèja vu* – the NSW Section made a substantial donation for the benefit of Ukrainian Jewry in 1993.
- 30 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.55, No.2, July 1981.
- 31 *AJC*, 4 September 1924.
- 32 Rutland, op.cit., p.159.
- 33 *AJC*, 21 August 1924, p.7.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 21 August 1924, p.13.
- 35 Suzanne D. Rutland, *Seventy Five Years: The History of a Jewish Newspaper*. A special publication of the AJHS, Sydney, 1970, chs. 4, 5.
- 36 Diploma in Dublin.
- 37 Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, p.159.
- 38 Editorial, *AJC*, 19 February 1925.
- 39 Dr Reading mentions this meeting in a personal tribute to Mme Pevsner in the *Council Bulletin* of 1 November 1941, Vol.16, No.4.
- 40 Article by Mrs Harris Cohen, *Council Bulletin*, Vol.3, No.4, Nov. 1928, p.8.
- 41 *Council Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No.1, Sept. 1926.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.3, No.1, August 1928, pp.14-15.
- 44 See Rutland, op.cit., p.160.
- 45 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.3, No.1, August 1928, pp.14-15.
- 46 *Ibid.*, Vol.7, No.1, August 1932, p.4 – a lady supporter of Dr Fanny in Tasmania.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Ibid.*, Vol.1, No.1, September 1926.
- 49 *Ibid.*, Vol.3, No.1, August 1928.
- 50 *Ibid.*, Vol.3, No.8, March 1929.
- 51 *Ibid.*, Vol.6, No.1, August 1931, p.8.
- 52 *Ibid.*, Vol.3, No.9, April 1929, p.7.
- 53 Dr Fanny Reading in a Souvenir Brochure published in 1927.
- 54 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.3, p.5, October 1927.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p.5.
- 56 *Ibid.*, Vol.3, No.10, May 1929.
- 57 Articles by Morris Ochert, *AJHS Journal*, Vol.9, Pts 6, 7, 1984; Vol.10, Pt 1, 1986.
- 58 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.2, No.7, p.6, Feb. 1928.
- 59 *Ibid.*, Vol.2, No.6, January 1929, pp.6-7.
- 60 *Ibid.*, Vol.2, No.8, March 1928, p.6. It was Chief Rabbi Brodie who laid the foundation stone of the Jewish National Centre in Canberra, with which NCJW was greatly involved, when he visited Australia in 1964.
- 61 *Ibid.*, Vol.2, No.11, June 1928, p.10.

- 62 Ibid., Vol.3, No.6, Jan. 1929, pp.6-7.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid., Vol.4, No.4, November 1929, p.12.
- 65 Ibid., p.10.
- 66 Ibid., p.12.
- 67 Rabbi A. Fabian, 'Centenary of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation', *AJHS Journal*, Vol.II, Pt.X, 1948.
- 68 Dr Rodney Gouttman, *Guide to Jewish Life*, 1994 (published by the *Australian Jewish Times*), pp.134-5.
- 69 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.4, No.4, Nov. 1929, p.14.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 'A Short History of the Kalgoorlie Hebrew Congregation, 1901-1969', *AJHS Journal*, Vol.7, Pt.3, 1972, p.224.
- 72 Isidore Solomon, 'Geelong Jewry', *AJHS Journal*, Vol.2, Pt.VI 1946.
- 73 Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews of Victoria*, p.136.
- 74 Jessica Simon (née Stone), *Special Council House Bulletin*, published in 1964 to commemorate the opening of Council House in Sydney.
- 75 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.4, No.4, November 1929, p.16.
- 76 Residential college for students at Sydney University and headquarters of the AJHS in New South Wales. See *AJHS Journal*, Vol.XIII, Pt.2, 1996.
- 77 Nathan F. Spielvogel, 'Ballarat Hebrew Congregation', *AJHS Journal*, Vol.2, Pt.VI, 1946, pp.350-358.
- 78 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.21, No.2, September 1946, p.18.
- 79 Newman Rosenthal, *Formula for Survival: The Saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1979, p.101.
- 80 Isidore Solomon, 'Geelong Jewry', op.sit.
- 81 Mother of World Bank chairman, James Wolfensohn.
- 82 Mother of Lady Mary Fairfax.
- 83 Rachel Samuels, 'Council Memories of Newcastle', *Council Bulletin*, Vol.56, No.1, March 1982.
- 84 Lionel E. Fredman, *Newcastle Synagogue 70th Anniversary and Newcastle Bicentennial 1997* (booklet).
- 85 Rabbi Israel Porush, 'The Canberra Jewish Community, *AJHS Journal*, Vol.IX, Pt.3, 1982.
- 86 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.5, No.1, August 1930, pp.6,7.
- 87 The first was in 1927, held by the Zionist Federation of Australia, but it was a much smaller gathering.
- 88 Before 1952, all monies raised by Council for Israel went into the general fund of the JNF (Jewish National Fund). It was then decided to sponsor specific projects which would be attributed to Council unless other arrangements were entered into.
- 89 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.29, No.9, 1 April 1955.
- 90 Ibid., Vol.46, No.3, September 1973, p.4.

- 91 ICJW was restructured in 1946 and is an all-inclusive organisation of Jewish women's groups around the world and is affiliated in 46 countries.
- 92 For example, on Neve Zipporah, the communal hall which is in daily use is dedicated to past national president Vera Cohen and the Gladys Slutzkin library honours a past president of the Victorian section.
- 93 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.43, No.2, July 1970.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Dr Geulah Solomon initiated a *Gett* petition for world-wide Jewry and reported at the 24th Conference in Canberra in 1994 that the position was becoming less intransigent. She has also been very involved with all matters relating to the status of women.
- 96 Married Samuel Wynn of Melbourne in 1940.
- 97 During an interview with Vera Cohen at the Montefiore Home on 17 May 1993, she stated that 'Dr Fan always regretted the split with Rieke Cohen'.
- 98 Anonymous typed address from Council's archives, most likely given by Jill Balkind soon after the war.
- 99 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.15, No.4, 1 November 1940, p.4.
- 100 On a personal note, the late Rachel Wise recalled how she used to catch the bus from Bondi to Martin Place with a bucket of potato salad in each hand and a four-year-old toddler trailing along behind: interview at Council House, October 1992.
- 101 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.20, No.7, p.5.
- 102 Full details of this case are contained in a comprehensive article by Morris S. Ochert in the *AJHS Journal*, Vol.XIII, Pt.2, 1996, pp.308-342.
- 103 In 1953, he was Israel's Ambassador to Australia.
- 104 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.9, No.11, 1 June 1933, p.14.
- 105 It is interesting to note in pages of the Title Deeds of this site that it was originally part of an 1830 land grant to Daniel Cooper and Solomon Levey (the latter being a Jewish convict who became a wealthy trader).
- 106 There have been two refurbishments since 1963, the second in the early 1990s under chairperson Zara Young, which makes this building an ideal venue for functions as well as working headquarters.
- 107 Special issue of *Council Bulletin*, 'In Memoriam', 1974.
- 108 *Council Bulletin*, Vol.38, No.2, May 1964, p.2.
- 109 Recollection of Morris Ochert, OAM, retired engineer and historian, who has been most helpful with information for this article.
- 110 Interview, 16.8.94.
- 111 Interview, 28.9.93.
- 112 Two of the speakers were Dame Mary Gilmore and Camilla Wedgwood.
- 113 Dr Fanny had inspected and recommended this property to AJWS leaders as a suitable transitional centre for Jewish newcomers and

NCJW was responsible for much of the refurbishment.

- 114 There is a humorous story that Dr Fanny's brother Hyman owned a hotel at this time but could not stay viable because of his sister's unmitigated generosity to those in need of shelter.

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Bulletins, Reports of Conferences and various pamphlets at the NCJW office, Sydney.

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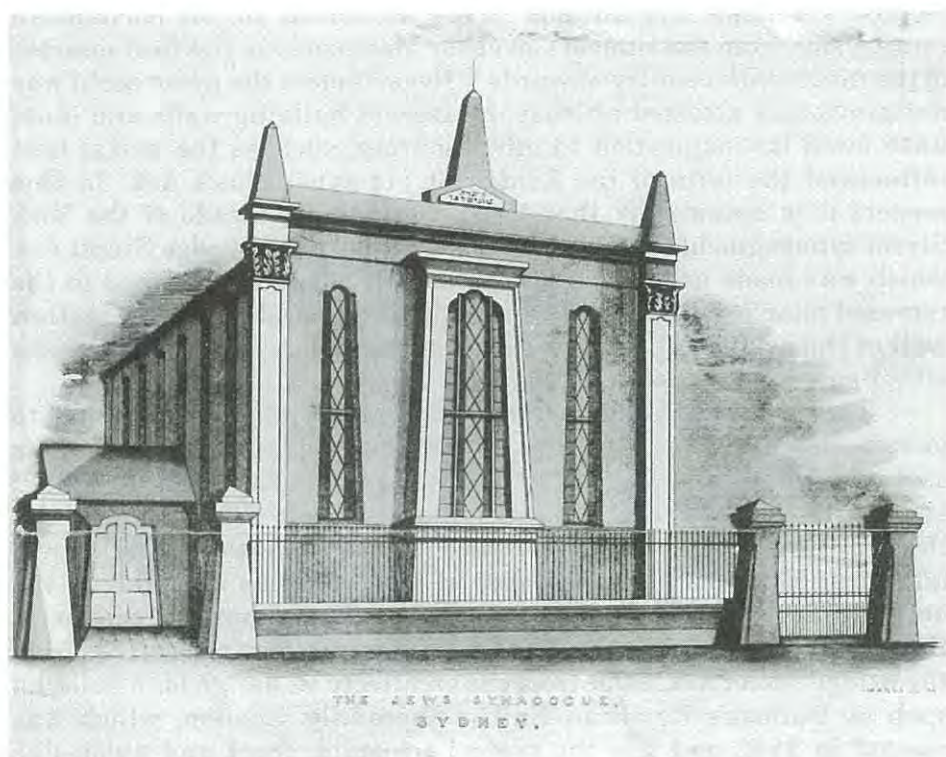
ISRAEL IN EGYPT DOWN UNDER: THE FIRST SYNAGOGUES IN AUSTRALIA

Robert S. Merrillees

No buildings in Australia have the potential to arrest the eye and capture the imagination more than the four synagogues built in the Egyptian style 150 years ago in Sydney, Hobart, Launceston and Adelaide. Though only two survive in their original form, they evoke not just Western traditions of architecture and art which were transplanted without change from Great Britain after European settlement began in 1788, but the Oriental background to contemporaneous fashion which was dictated by historical events far removed in time and space from Australia. In a continent which owed none of its development directly to the civilisations of ancient Rome, Greece and Egypt, it is difficult to describe the sheer incongruity of these religious structures whose design made no allowance for local climate, culture or comprehension. They reveal as much about society and its perceptions, not to mention prejudices, at the time as about the history of the Jewish community in Australia. They also provide an Antipodean dimension to the Egyptian Revival which held sway in Europe and North America during the nineteenth century and inspired some of the most remarkable buildings and *objets d'art* which have come down to us from that imperial and confident era.

The first Egyptianising synagogue built in Australia, and the oldest custom made Jewish place of worship in the country, was originally located at what is now 143 York Street, on the west side, north of Druitt Street, in the centre of the city of Sydney.¹ It originally stood opposite Lewis' police station, now occupied by the recently refurbished Queen Victoria Building, and to the north of the present Town Hall.² The foundation stone for the new structure was laid on 19 April 1842³ on a plot of land bought for the purpose on 3 November 1841,⁴ and the completed synagogue consecrated, after several delays, on 2 April 1844.⁵ It remained in use until 1877,⁶ when the Jewish community disposed of the property. It was demolished around 1918.⁷ Contemporaneous descriptions exist of the building, together with prints and photographs of the exterior,⁸ and the original Ark made for the synagogue has been preserved (see below).

The architect of the York Street synagogue was James Hume, a Scottish Gentile, about whose life and work not much is known. He was born in Falkirk, Scotland, in 1797 and arrived in Sydney on 8 May 1835.⁹ He was appointed in 1837 architect and superintendent of works for the construction of St Andrew's Anglican Cathedral in Sydney, and was the architect of churches in Goulburn, an inland city south-west of Sydney (1838), Wollongong on the coast south of Sydney (1839), and in Campbelltown south of Sydney (1842).¹⁰ He also designed and supervised the erection of a number of public and residential buildings, all in the Old Colonial Regency and Gothic Picturesque styles,¹¹ but the synagogue was the only one he built in an exotic, non-traditional form. Hume had his office at 10 King Street in Sydney,¹² and is known to have worked from pattern books.¹³ He not only designed the synagogue but supervised its construction, and his plan, which was reproduced in the local Jewish newspaper, *The Voice of Jacob*, on 24 June 1842,¹⁴ was faithfully carried out. He died in Sydney on 15 November 1868.¹⁵



View of the York Street Synagogue, Sydney, 1844.

Described by a contemporary newspaper as 'a splendid building of the pure Egyptian order'¹⁶ and more recently as 'a vaguely classical version of a Nile temple',¹⁷ the York Street synagogue was a rectangular structure whose short, eastern wall fronted the road and contained the main Egyptianising elements. The facade was typically symmetrical and tripartite, with a window in the centre shaped like a pylon with battered sides and cavetto cornice. The tall narrow windows either side were also tapered and the parapet was surmounted by three equidistant obelisks, the one in the centre taller than the other two at each end. The doors in the side entrance to the synagogue were similarly battered. Inside once stood a cedar Ark in flamboyant Egyptian style, especially made for this building.¹⁸ It was located at the eastern end with its back to York Street¹⁹ and owed its basic design to an Ark of the same order which was produced for the earlier synagogue in Bridge Street.^{*20} Alongside the Ark in the York Street synagogue were four lamps placed on ornamental pyramids.²¹

There was no architectural prototype in Sydney for the Egyptianising wall of the York Street synagogue, and indeed no known antecedent for the Victorian Egyptian style to which this structure has been assigned.²² Egyptianising influences were, of course, attested earlier. Obelisks had already begun to sprout in the Australian countryside from the time of Governor Macquarie in the first quarter of the nineteenth century onwards.²³ Nevertheless the pylon motif was not previously attested at least in external building walls and must have owed its inspiration to other sources, such as the one(s) that influenced the form of the Bridge Street synagogue's Ark. In this respect it is noteworthy that the Egyptianising facade of the York Street synagogue has a striking resemblance to the Bridge Street Ark which was made around 1838 and has not only rounded tops in the recessed panels on the doors, which match the windows in the eastern wall of the synagogue and its side entrance doors, but mini-obelisks either side of the crest at the front.

This was not the first Jewish place of worship in the world to have been built in the Egyptian style or with Egyptianising elements as it was preceded by at least three others, one in Karlsruhe of 1798,²⁴ another in Cherry Street, Philadelphia, dating to 1822-1825,²⁵ and a third in Copenhagen of 1831-1833.²⁶ There is, however, no known historical connection between any of these designs and that of the York Street synagogue. It seems much more likely that the idea for an Egyptianising facade for the York Street synagogue, if not derived from the Bridge Street Ark, came from the architectural design for a building such as Bullock's Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, London, which was opened in 1812 and has the typical tripartite front and pylon-like windows.²⁷ Thanks to the diligent research of Ms Helen Bersten,

Honorary Archivist of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney, we know that there are no minutes extant of the meetings of the Building Committee appointed on 15 September 1839 to carry out the decision to erect a new Jewish place of worship in the city,²⁸ and the first letter from Hume in the minute book of the Bridge Street synagogue from 1840 to 1845 is dated 12 June 1841, when he had already been appointed architect. Neither the Australian Jewish Historical Society nor the Mitchell Library in Sydney has any plans of the York Street synagogue by Hume, and their whereabouts, if still in existence, are currently unknown.

Just why an Egyptianising motif was used so prominently in the York Street synagogue cannot be ascertained from the available documentation. It has been assumed in the first place that the Jewish community in Sydney would have had to have recourse to a Gentile architect because they did not have any of their own due to their origins and background. Not only were many of them former convicts or the descendants of those Jews transported to Sydney for crimes committed in England, Scotland and Ireland, but there was no university in New South Wales at this time and Jews were not in any case allowed to attend tertiary institutions in England at least until the opening of University College London in 1828.²⁹ That did not, however, prevent close working relationships between Jew and Gentile in Sydney, for Kellerman notes that according to several accounts of the time, 'Christian [sic] and Jews co-operated in the building and opening of the Synagogue'.³⁰ Certainly the list of donations for the purpose of buying the block of land in York Street and putting up the building contains many non-Jewish names³¹ – Hume himself made a contribution on the day of consecration³² – and the goodwill between the two communities was epitomised by the announcement three days after the ceremony that the synagogue was open to members of all religious creeds.³³

It must accordingly be assumed that the idea for drawing on the ancient monuments in the Nile Valley for the shape of the facade came from Hume, though what in its turn inspired him is another matter. The idiom chosen was, to say the least, unexpected for, as the Catholic paper, *The Morning Chronicle*, observed on 6 April 1844, 'it does seem rather complimentary to the memory of the tyrant Pharaoh.'³⁴ Certainly the design had to be acceptable to the Building Committee, which specified that 'the Edifice shall be an elegant and stately one'³⁵ and approved the plans submitted by Hume,³⁶ and it may be significant that part of the service at the laying of the foundation stone included a reading of Solomon's Dedication to the Temple.³⁷ How Hume was engaged by the Building Committee is again not recorded, but one thing the Jews and Gentiles had in common in those God-fearing days

of yore was membership of Freemasonry, which became formally established in Sydney as early as 1820.³⁸ Though Hume is not known to have been a Freemason – his illustrious convict predecessor, Francis Greenway, belonged to the movement³⁹ – at least one member of the synagogue's Building Committee, Samuel Benjamin,⁴⁰ belonged to Australian Social Lodge No.260, the first to be constituted in the Colony of New South Wales.⁴¹

In this regard it is noteworthy that the first meeting place for the Freemasons in Sydney was established prior to 1825 in a tavern located at what was originally 3 York Street, between King and Barrack Streets,⁴² and following reconstruction in 1839 became the Masonic Hall.⁴³ Subsequently this building was vacated by the lodges that had used it, and another purchased in 1853 at 102, now 125 York Street, on the eastern side between Market and Drutt Streets.⁴⁴ This had served as the Town Council Chambers⁴⁵ and was converted to Masonic purposes in 1854. In 1868 the adjoining hotel was demolished and new premises erected.⁴⁶ The drawing illustrated by Smith⁴⁷ shows the southern end of York Street, not in 1842 but between 1854 and 1887, when the Freemasons' Hall Company sold the York Street property. Beyond the Masonic Hall is clearly visible the first synagogue built in Australia. This watercolour was painted by John Rae, who died in 1900, and though signed and dated 'J. Rae 1842', was obviously produced after 1854. Finally it should be recorded that the Committee of Management appointed to carry out the rebuilding project included Brother J. Aaron W.M.⁴⁸

The decision to build a synagogue in Hobart, capital city of Tasmania, was taken by the Jewish community in Hobart Town in 1842 following the arrival of a number of religious young men who felt the need for a proper place of worship.⁴⁹ Unlike Sydney, where the Governor of New South Wales had in 1840 approved 'the apportion of an allotment' for the construction of a synagogue in Kent Street, which was in the end not used for this purpose,⁵⁰ Sir John Franklin, Governor of Tasmania at the time, refused to grant a plot of land in Hobart for a synagogue, on the grounds that it would be used for 'un-Christian' purposes.⁵¹ As a result, a prosperous member of the Jewish community in Hobart Town, Judah Solomon, an ex-convict who had been transported along with his brother to Van Diemens Land in 1819 for life imprisonment but given a provisional pardon in 1832,⁵² donated a portion of the garden at the back of his house facing Argyle Street for the construction of a synagogue.⁵³ The foundation stone was laid on 9 August 1843,⁵⁴ and the consecration took place on 4 July 1845 in the presence of the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, Lady Eardley-Wilmot, her husband being indisposed.⁵⁵ The front of the building with its entrance faces south-west, and the Ark is located at the north-eastern end of the synagogue opposite the entrance.⁵⁶



Photo of the Hobart Synagogue in Argyle Street, Hobart

Though Gordon, incredibly, claims that the Hobart synagogue has 'little resemblance to Egyptian Architecture',⁵⁷ it is by far the finest surviving example of the Victorian Egyptian style in Australia.⁵⁸ The pylon shape with its tapering sides and cavetto cornice dominates the front of the structure, whose central doorway and window either side all conform to this canon and reproduce the by now customary tripartite layout. The entrance passage is also flanked by two lotus bud columns, while papyriform pillars support the women's balcony inside, and columns with palm front capitals hold up the cavetto cornice above the Ark. In fact the papyrus, lotus and palm motifs pervade the decoration of the synagogue, which was built and furnished with the best available materials and workmanship, particularly the cedar and bronze interior fittings.⁵⁹ Its appearance has evidently changed little over the century and a half, and there is no more evocative Colonial monument in the whole of Australia than this wonderfully exaggerated Egyptianising structure.

The synagogue was designed by an ex-convict, James Alexander Thomson, another Scottish Gentile, who was transported to Hobart Town in 1825 and given a free pardon in 1839.⁶⁰ He set himself up as

an architect, amongst other occupations, in Liverpool Street in Hobart, and over the years designed many commercial, domestic and other buildings but none to rival the synagogue in Argyle Street.⁶¹ Where he derived the idea of using a Pharaonic theme is not at all clear from surviving accounts of the period, but there already existed a precedent for the battered pylon window form in the nave designed by John Lee Archer for St George's Anglican Church in Battery Point, Hobart, which was consecrated in 1838.⁶² Archer, who trained in an architect's office in London, arrived in Hobart Town in 1827 and took up his duties as civil engineer and colonial architect, designing a number of government and church buildings as well as the remarkable bridge at Ross.⁶³ Though Thomson was not one of the four architects ultimately responsible for the final shape of St George's church, it is noteworthy that the tower designed by James Blackburn and completed in 1847 picked up the Egyptian theme of the nave⁶⁴ and that Thomson for a time worked with both Archer⁶⁵ and Blackburn himself.⁶⁶

Nevertheless there is a striking resemblance between the front of the Argyle Street synagogue and the facade of Bullock's Egyptian Hall in London (see above), and Thomson is also believed to have worked from pattern books. In any case a precedent for using an Egyptianising motif had already been established in Sydney, and the Masonic link was even stronger in Hobart. According to his entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Thomson 'had a long record of devoted service as a Freemason and Lodge treasurer, and committee member of the Hobart Mechanics' Institute.'⁶⁷ Thomson was in fact a member of Royal Fusiliers Lodge No. 33 I.C. which was progressively reconstituted in Hobart Town from 1839 onwards after the departure of the Royal Fusiliers Regiment, and Thomson is recorded as Worshipful Master in 1843 and 1854.⁶⁸ By a coincidence the Mechanics' Institute was also the venue for lectures given by Phineas Moss, an English Jew who arrived as a free settler in Hobart Town in 1836. He became not only the first secretary of the Jewish congregation in the town but one of the first Jews to work in the civil service of any colony in Australia.⁶⁹ It is also interesting to note that Gentiles as well as Jews attended both the foundation stone laying ceremony and consecration of the new synagogue and contributed towards the building project itself.⁷⁰

Hobart's successful example was emulated by the Jewish community in Launceston on the north coast of Tasmania, which too had petitioned the Governor, Sir John Franklin, in 1853 for land to build a synagogue on and been rejected for the same bigoted reason.⁷¹ Following the lead of their co-religionists to the south, the Jews in Launceston then decided in June 1844 to purchase a block of land in St John Street and build their own place of worship.⁷² The laying of

the foundation stone took place on 1 October 1844, and the occasion was recorded in the Minute Book of the St John's Freemasons Lodge No. 346 I.C., Launceston, on 26 September 1844 in the following terms: 'It was intimated that it was the wish of the Jewish Persuasion that the Lodge should assist in laying the Foundation Stone of their Synagogue on the following Wednesday.'

According to Cohen, the invitation was accepted, and the following description of the ceremony ensued in the minutes:

In pursuance of the resolution come to last Lodge evening, the brethren met at the Lodge room on the day appointed, at half-past one p.m., prior to the procession taking place therefrom to the building ground of the Jews' Synagogue for the purpose of assisting in laying the Foundation Stone of that place of worship. Shortly after two the Building Committee and nearly the whole of the Jewish Persuasion, residing in and near Launceston, arrived, and at the same time the full Band of the 90th Regiment were also in attendance by the kind permission of Lieut.-Colonel Cumberland and the other officers. The Brethren then proceeded on the following order, preceded by the Band playing Masonic Airs:

The Masonic Banner;
The Tyler, with his naked sword;
The Senior and Junior Deacons, with their Wands;
The Building Committee;
The Holy Bible;
The Worshipful Master;
The Secretary and Treasurer, with Scroll and Bag;
The Senior and Junior Wardens;
The Master of Ceremonies;
The Inner Guard, with a Naked Sword;
The Brethren, two and two;
The Past Master, with the Lodge Warrant;
Members of the Jewish Persuasion, two and two.

On arriving at the ground, suitable prayers were offered up to the Great Architect of the Universe, and a Masonic Anthem expressly compiled for the occasion was sung by the Brethren, accompanied by the Military Band.

The Worshipful Master, after the Stone was laid, touched it with his Trowel, and dedicated the intended Building, on behalf of the Masonic body, to the Service of the Great

Architect of the Universe. On the completion of the ceremony the Brethren returned to the Lodge Room in the same manner as they arrived, preceded as before by the full Military Band playing alternately Burns' 'Farewell' and 'The Entered Apprentice'. The weather was extremely unfavourable and rainy, but a full muster of the Brethren took place, and the streets were crowded with spectators.⁷³

On 26 March 1846 the synagogue was duly consecrated and began its chequered career as Australia's second oldest surviving Jewish house of worship.⁷⁴



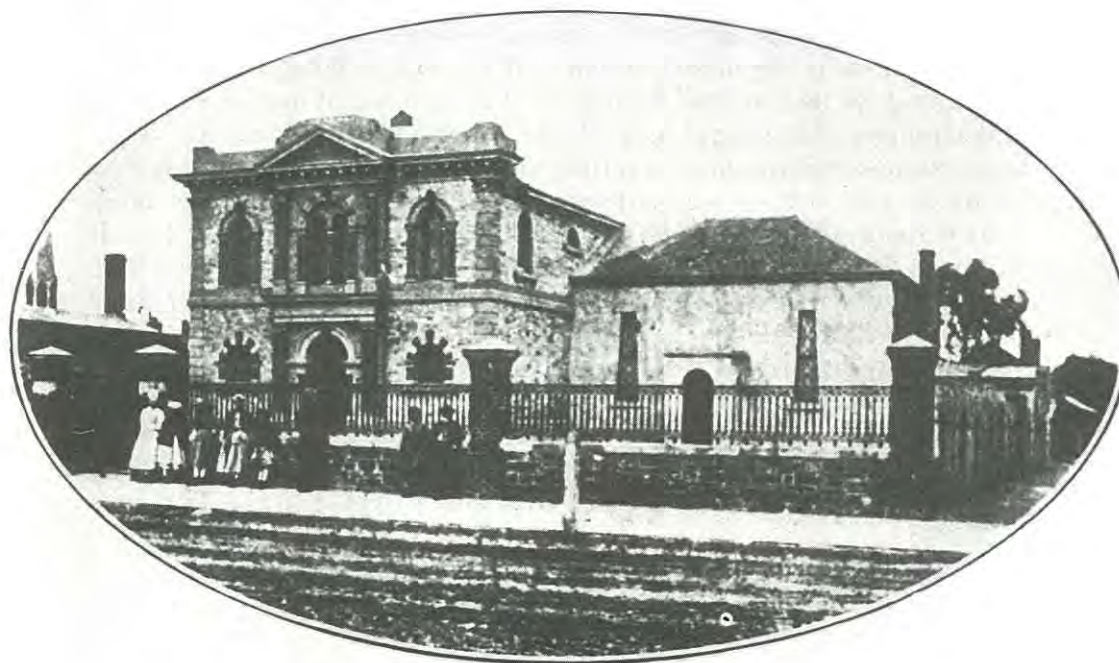
The Launceston Synagogue,

The original appearance of the end of the building facing St John Street towards the north-east was altogether more Oriental looking than the stark though still identifiably Egyptianising exterior visible today. While the present wall still preserves the symmetrical arrangement typical of these buildings and the projecting battered pylon in the centre has a tapering window, all surmounted by stepped cavetto cornices,⁷⁵ the facade at either side originally had a vertical pair of flat and recessed pilasters the full height of the wall, with overhanging cornices and a flattened dome on top.⁷⁶ Even the posts each side of the entrance gate were battered and recessed in the same contour, and the side windows of the synagogue, the doors giving access to the interior at the opposite end to the street, and the Ark, both substructure and superstructure, which had its back to the Egyptianising facade, were all based on the pylon motif. In addition the columns supporting the women's gallery had biconical capitals in a modified Pharaonic style. Though the architect of the synagogue is unknown, the debt to the Sydney and Hobart prototypes is self-evident, and the connection with Freemasonry even more firmly established.

The architect of the first synagogue built in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, was another Gentile, William Weir, who was born around 1811 and died on 3 June 1860.⁷⁷ He had a private practice as an architect and building surveyor in Hindley Street in the late 1840s⁷⁸ and was commissioned by the town's Jewish congregation, which became formally organised in September 1848, to design a new place of worship, as he was well known for the planning of public, religious and commercial buildings in Adelaide. What he brought into existence was a simple rectangular structure, consisting of one room measuring 35 by 20 feet, which was subsequently incorporated into the later synagogue built on the same site, to serve as the latter's foyer. It still exists as the entrance to the Lyricon Bar at 95 Synagogue Place. The original synagogue faced Rundle Street on the north side and occupied land which had been bought for this purpose by the Jewish community. It was consecrated on 4 September 1850 but within 20 years the original structure proved inadequate for the number of parishioners attending and a new one was erected alongside the old to the west and consecrated in 1871.⁷⁹ The southern wall of the original building was blocked up and resurfaced and the Egyptianising features obscured.

Contemporary newspaper accounts of its consecration describe the building as belonging to 'the Egyptian style of architecture'⁸⁰ or 'the Egyptian Order',⁸¹ and a photograph of the front taken from the south in 1879 shows the typical tripartite facade with a central projecting doorway flanked on either side by a tall narrow tapering window of the same kind as those in the York Street synagogue in

Sydney.⁸² The full extent of the Egyptianising features in the older synagogue is not evident from the extant illustrations and descriptions available, and cannot now be determined due to the rebuilding that has taken place around it and the singularly inappropriate commercial use to which both these historic Jewish places of worship are now being put. The first building was originally entered from the west with the Ark at the eastern end,⁸³ and though there is nothing to suggest that the Ark itself or any of the fittings inside were made in the Egyptian style, it is possible that the doors were constructed in the same battered way as the windows on the southern facade. There is no reference to this structure in Apperley et al. 1989 (pp.50f) but it clearly owed its inspiration to the three Egyptianising synagogues which preceded it in Sydney, Hobart and Launceston, all of which were built within the same decade. It is to be hoped that one day the first and second synagogues in Adelaide can be restored to their original grandeur.



View of the Adelaide Synagogue from Rundle Street in 1879.

The consecration of the first synagogue was a noteworthy event in the early history of Adelaide and received a detailed report in the local newspaper, *The South Australian Register*, on 5 September 1850. It gives significant clues to some of the social perceptions of the day. Religious tolerance was taken for granted. The account observes that 'the *coup d'oeil* presented on entrance, though not exactly grand, is most pleasing, and well calculated to inspire reverential feelings towards that Omnipotent Being who is God of Jews and Christians alike . . .'⁸⁴ and that at the reception following the consecration service, 'Mr Morris Marks proposed the healths of their Christian brethren in South Australia, who had not only given their sympathies, but their ready assistance.'⁸⁵ The prevailing sentiment was nicely summed up in a toast proposed to Judah Moss Solomon, who 'was distinguished for that feeling of universal brotherhood which did not allow him to make any invidious distinctions between Jews and Christians.'⁸⁶ The dinner itself was held in the Lodge-room of the Temple Tavern in Gilles Arcade, whose proprietor, E. Solomon, had taken the initiative two years before to hold a meeting in this establishment for the purpose of forming a Jewish congregation.⁸⁷

It is not known whether William Weir, the architect responsible for the first synagogue, was a Freemason, but members of the Jewish community in Adelaide at the time certainly were. Sansom records, in his history of the first Lodge established in South Australia, the Lodge of Friendship, No.613 E.C. (No.423),⁸⁸ that 'on January 31, 1844, Bro. E. Solomon offered the Lodge a quarter of an acre of land for Masonic purposes and 10,000 bricks with which to build a Lodge-room. The offer was accepted, but I have not been able to ascertain whether a room was built or not. The inference is that it was not, as the place of meeting then was not changed for over nine years.'⁸⁹ The second oldest Lodge, Adelaide No. 341 S.C., warranted in August 1844, used to assemble in the Shakespeare Tavern attached to the Theatre Royal. Its proprietor was none other than the same Brother E. Solomon, whose establishment was affectionately known to the locals as 'Solomon's Temple'.⁹⁰ There was also a Brother Marks in the Masonic procession that attended the foundation stone laying of the German and British Hospital in Adelaide on 24 May 1851.⁹¹ Though Levi quotes *The South Australian Register* of 5 September 1850 as saying that in the new synagogue 'the interior fittings correspond with the appearance of *masonic* [author's italics] construction . . .',⁹² Budlender correctly reproduces the key word as 'massive'.⁹³

Various reasons, mostly speculative, have been advanced to account for the rendition of these four mid-nineteenth century Australian synagogues in the Egyptian style. The American architectural historian, Professor Richard Carrott, claimed in 1978

on the basis of two Egyptianising synagogues in Philadelphia dating to 1822-1825 and 1849 respectively, that:

... certainly there was a quest for a Jewish Synagogue style. In the effort to establish the extreme antiquity of Judaism, the Egyptian Revival was more attractive and serviceable than Mediaeval or Classical revivals. And although eventually rejected because of the unhappy associations of the Children of Israel with the Land of Pharaoh, there may be something to be said for the initial logic of this choice. Indeed, as Mrs Tuthill points out, the Jews learned architecture in Egypt, having worked at brick-making and labored to build for Pharaoh. She further suggests that because of this, the Biblical descriptions of the Temple of Solomon recall, more than anything else, Egyptian architecture. Thus to the evocation of great age inherent in the style, is added the argument of plausibility.⁹⁴

The same points were made in a comprehensive classification of Australian architecture by Apperley, Irving and Reynolds in 1989, when they recalled that 'a decorative, Rococo use of Egyptian motifs was well established in Europe by the end of the eighteenth century, but the archaeological basis for an Egyptian revival came from one of the lasting achievements of Napoleon Bonaparte's few short years in Egypt between 1798 and 1802 – the staggering, twenty-one volume *Description d'Egypte*.'⁹⁵

Rabbi John Levi, writing in 1982, noted that:

... the nineteenth century saw the first development of an interest in archaeology. Among the most obvious remains to be seen in the ancient world, that did not require actual excavation, were, of course, the monumental Egyptian ruins. The expeditions of Napoleon, and the dispatch to Europe of treasures for its museums and obelisks for its public squares, must have associated a sense of antiquity with Egypt. In addition, in colonial Australia, many Jews had found a measure of social acceptance through membership of Masonic Lodges. The first synagogues were, therefore, built in the image of the earliest known Temples, ignoring the fact that the style they represented had been created by the earliest taskmasters of the Jewish people.⁹⁶

Georges Rich, an architect resident in Adelaide, echoed the same sentiments in 1987, adding that 'significantly the concept of the

synagogue, able to adapt to enclosure motifs such as rented rooms, Gothic, Moorish, Egyptian, Roman, Shtetl or 12th century pagoda has been one of its historical hallmarks.⁹⁷

There is nothing to dispute in any of these contentions, though their direct relevance to the choice of the Egyptianising style for the synagogues in Sydney, Hobart, Launceston and Adelaide is not at first easy to discern. Nevertheless the single most influential factor that helped determine which architectural theme would prevail seems to have been the relationship that existed between the Jewish communities of these centres and Freemasonry.⁹⁸ The reason for this otherwise unexpected association lies in the early history of Australia, which has been well explained by Robinson in the following terms:

It is well known that its [Australia's] early 'colonization' was by thousands of convicts, but it is not so well known that the army units sent down under to guard the convicts took their Masonry with them in their traveling military lodges. Technically, the convict who had served out his time could avail himself of all the opportunities of a new land, but whether he built a business of his own, or a substantial farming operation, he and his family, perhaps for several generations, had to live with the stigma of penal servitude, firmly fixing them at a lower level of the social scale. All that was required to change that status was for the ex-convict to be accepted into a Masonic lodge, which put him at once in the position of sworn brotherhood with officers of the garrison, leading citizens, and members of the government. This advantage was not available to the many Irish ex-convicts, whose Roman Catholicism precluded the Masonic ladder to social acceptance.⁹⁹

Jews were not, however, debarred from seeking membership (any more than the Papal ban prevented Catholics joining¹⁰⁰), and the Masonic fraternity would have provided a tailor-made point of contact for those with mutual business and other interests.

This link had important implications professionally, conceptually and historically for the way in which a Pharaonic style was selected for the four synagogues built in Australia in the 1840s. Firstly it is evident that all of the architects were non-Jewish. Assuming that Jewish architects would have been preferred, especially for designing a synagogue, if any were available, it can be deduced that there were none to be engaged at the time. It is a fact not only that most of the Jews who settled in Australia after the beginnings of European colonisation were convicts or tradespeople who came from Britain and

Ireland until the Gold Rushes in the mid-nineteenth century,¹⁰¹ but that Jews were not admitted to tertiary institutions in Britain until University College London first allowed non-Anglicans to enrol in 1828.¹⁰² Wigoder is therefore no doubt right when he states in the early part of the nineteenth century the architects of synagogues were all Christians, at least in Europe and the United States – he typically, like most of the writers from the Northern Hemisphere, shows little or no awareness of the synagogues constructed in Australia at this time – but it is misleading if not mischievous to assert that the architects responsible ‘imposed their own approaches and traditions’ on their Jewish clients.¹⁰³ At least where Australia was concerned, there is no evidence to justify this allegation. In fact all the data point to the opposite conclusion, namely to the existence of harmonious co-operation between the designers and their customers.

Both Jews and non-Jews, especially Freemasons, who were in that era as familiar with the Bible as we are today with the TV guide, shared at least one main architectural image in common, the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁴ For Jews this temple had a particular resonance as it was the first Jewish place of worship erected on Mount Moriah about 960 BC and was finally succeeded by the fourth Temple, built by Herod the Great and destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.¹⁰⁵ All that remains of this latter edifice is the Western or Wailing Wall where the Jews come to lament the destruction of the Temple and pray for its restoration.¹⁰⁶ In Hebrew today the synagogue is known as the ‘little temple’. It was King Solomon’s inaugural prayer and the fact that David prayed facing Jerusalem which dictated the orientation of synagogues towards Jerusalem and the requirement that those in the Holy City itself pray in the direction of the Temple.¹⁰⁷ As for the Freemasons, they trace the institution of their craft and order back to the builders of the Temple of Solomon. This belief is first attested in the Old Charges dated to the early fifteenth century AD where it is written that ‘at the making of Solomon’s Temple that King David began . . . Solomon had four score thousand Masons at his work; and . . . Solomon confirmed the Charges that David his father had given to Masons. And Solomon himself taught them their manners [i.e., customs and practices], but little differing from the manners that now are used.’¹⁰⁸ The Temple of Solomon had a profound impact upon the mystical ruminations of sixteenth to eighteenth century Europe and imprinted itself indelibly in the consciousness of Freemasonry.¹⁰⁹ Much more distant in time and space, Transaction No.1 of Lodge Isis, Sydney (No.412 Universal Co-Freemasonry), which was published in Australia in the 1920s, contains *An Outline of Freemasonry* with a special section devoted to the role of the Temple of Solomon.¹¹⁰

Central though this architectural vision may have been to the beliefs of both Jews and Freemasons, the difficulty of translating it into a tangible form lay in the absence of any ancient pictorial or archaeological record of what it actually looked like. If the Christian and/or Masonic architects of mid-nineteenth century Australia and their Jewish clients were agreed that the Temple of Solomon provided the prototype for the new synagogues, then an appropriate design had to be found, and ancient Egypt would have provided the ideal source.¹¹¹ The most telling argument in favour of this association of ideas is the fact that contemporaneous observers found nothing at all exceptional in the use of Pharaonic models for Jewish places of worship.¹¹² Whether these parties were familiar with the civilisation of ancient Egypt is of less importance than the widespread and pervasive influence of the Pharaonic idiom in European buildings and artefacts of the time. Napoleon's expedition to the Nile Valley in 1798 and its accompanying intellectual party had a substantial impact on the authenticity of the Egyptianising elements used in architectural and artistic designs not only in France but in Britain.¹¹³ It is perhaps not without significance that most of Napoleon's officers were Freemasons.¹¹⁴ Early colonial Australia was not immune to this fashion for things Pharaonic, for it had already become so conspicuous in furniture made or imported that the *Sydney Gazette* of 3 October 1812 was moved to comment facetiously on its popularity.¹¹⁵ Several major published works would have been available to inform local taste and craftsmanship, notably Vivant Denon's *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, published in two editions in English in 1802 and 1803, Thomas Hope's *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* of 1807, and others,¹¹⁶ but these need not have been the only sources of inspiration.¹¹⁷

Strangely enough the Freemasons in Australia did not to any significant extent make use of ancient Egyptian imagery for their architecture or motifs.¹¹⁸ The earliest identifiable link between Pharaonic structures and Freemasonry is the obelisk erected by Francis Greenway in 1818 in Macquarie Place, Sydney, under the governorship of Lachlan Macquarie,¹¹⁹ who was himself also a Freemason.¹²⁰ While this monument served the specific purpose of providing the point from which all distances out of Sydney were measured, a less conspicuous but no less necessary service was rendered by the obelisk set up in Elizabeth Street opposite Bathurst Street in 1857 by the Hon. George Thornton, MLC, the second Provincial Grand Master under the Irish Constitution in New South Wales.¹²¹ According to Cumming, Thornton, a former Mayor of Sydney, initially received some acclaim for the obelisk but admiration turned to hilarity when the citizens of Sydney discovered that the elaborate stucco column was a vent for the city sewer.¹²² Much later the

Egyptianising style was used for Masonic Halls in other parts of Australia, but the most remarkable example is the Egyptian Room formerly of the Scottish Royal Arch Temple on the corner of College and Francis Streets, Sydney,¹²³ and now in the Headquarters of the United Supreme Grand Chapter, Petersham.¹²⁴

Finally it should be noted that there was nothing unprecedented in the close association between Jews and Freemasons in the early nineteenth century in Australia for their collaboration was well attested in England at this time.¹²⁵ Wright has established that the admission of Jews dates from a very early period in the history of organised Freemasonry in England¹²⁶ and records that Baron Nathan Mayer Rothschild, for example, was initiated into the Lodge of Emulation, 21, then 12, on 24 October 1802.¹²⁷ The creation of University College London reflected the same relationship and understanding. Not only was this tertiary institution the first in England to admit Jews, as well as Catholics, but one of its founders and original Council member was Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, a millionaire financier who became the first Jew to be made a baronet.¹²⁸ It comes as no surprise that the laying of the foundation stone of the College on 30 April 1827 was undertaken with full Masonic rites by the brother of King George IV, the Duke of Sussex, described as 'the only member of the royal family with any intellectual pretensions, well-known for his liberal sympathies,'¹²⁹ and that afterwards some 500 people gathered for a dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern in London.¹³⁰ A.A. Goldsmid (sic) was one of those who took part in the festivities.¹³¹

And no better demonstration of the British derivation of social practice and colonial architecture in mid-nineteenth century Australia could be found than the orientation of the four synagogues designed in the Egyptian style. Jewish custom requires a synagogue to be so sited that it points towards Jerusalem, with the Ark placed on the side or the end closest to the Holy City, so that the worshippers can enter, face and bow towards the Ark, in the direction of Jerusalem.¹³² In all four Egyptianising synagogues built in Sydney, Hobart, Launceston and Adelaide in the 1840s, the Ark was located at or towards the eastern end, as though the building were situated in England, not Australia, instead of being placed on the western, or more correctly north-western side as befitted the country's geographical location vis-à-vis Jerusalem. Even the first synagogue built in Melbourne between 1847 and 1848,¹³³ which had no known Egyptianising features,¹³⁴ faced east,¹³⁵ but by the time the second and adjacent temple was consecrated in 1858 with its Ark at the northern end, the Jews, and other Australians, had begun to discover where they were in the world and make the necessary mental and physical adjustments. That process is still going on over a century

and a half later, most recently manifested in the re-orientation of our foreign and trade policies towards the Asian/Pacific region and in the push towards a Republic in Australia, and it is not without its symbolic importance for our history that Sir Isaac Isaacs, the first native-born Governor-General of Australia, was a Jew and also a Freemason.¹³⁶

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Editors note

* It had been thought that the smaller ark belonged to the Bridge Street Synagogue, but current research indicates that there is no written extant evidence for this. The smaller ark may simply have been a prototype for the ark.

THE LITTLE *SHULE* OF MOSHE MOSKOWITCH

Morris S. Ochert

Moshe Moskowitch was born in Russia in 1876 and arrived in Brisbane early this century. He died on 4 June 1952 and is remembered by only a handful of Jewish folk and a few people who were his neighbours at the time he built his little synagogue which was added to the back of his home. The only Jewish person who, in recent times, recalled that *shule* (synagogue) was Maurice Doobov, who passed away as I commenced writing these words. Maurice Doobov had told me that Moskowitch came here from Russia and mingled mainly in a 'close' Russian-Jewish circle in South Brisbane. He originally attended the Central Synagogue in Deshon Street; he was unmarried; quite generous and was a hard-working master builder. There are no South Brisbane Synagogue records to tell us more about him as these were lost when that synagogue was destroyed by fire in 1966. His grave is in the Toowong Jewish Cemetery but the headstone inscription gives no more details than the above and makes no reference to relatives.

Around 1928-31, Moskowitch received a contract to relocate a number of homes which stood in the way of the extension of the Sydney-Kyogle railway line to South Brisbane. He moved at least four of those houses to vacant allotments in the suburb of Coorparoo and he lived in one of them. Later, at its rear of this house, he added his *shule*, still known in the area as 'Moscowitch's Prayer Room'. This he built of timbers from houses he demolished under his contract. The photo shows it is high-set on concrete piers, as was the style of most weatherboard homes in Queensland suburbs. One neighbour believed it was the first synagogue in South Brisbane. This is incorrect as the one in Deshon Street predated it by about 18 years.

This *shule* is quite small. By the time an Oren Ha-Kadesh (Ark) and reading desk were installed, and space for access was allowed, it would not have accommodated more than two *minyanim*.¹ It has its own external door leading on to the landing at the top of the stair seen at the right of the photo, as well as a door opening into the residence. Coloured glass windows are fitted to three walls.



Photo of Moscowitch's weatherboard home with the prayer room annexe.

The most significant feature of this *shule* has been missing for about a half-century. Some locals still recall a big *Magen David* (Shield of David – a six-pointed star) made of timber, 'painted white on a dark background, which could be seen from Cavendish Road', that is it was located on the side to the right of the photo – the east side.

In the 1920s and 1930s there was a considerable Russian-Jewish population in that area.² No doubt this *shule* was built to serve some of those Russian Jews who were living in the immediate vicinity to save them walking to Deshon Street. Moskowitch and his fellow-worshippers kept very much to themselves and this may account for the fact that few people recall that this interesting annexe, with its high walls, its steep-pitched roof and its *Magen David*, was in use as a synagogue.

A Jewish lady who lived for a time next door to Moskowitch, on the lower side, was of the opinion that the annexe which he built onto the rear of his house was not used as a prayer room. She held this opinion because: 'He was not so orthodox that he would be likely to do so,' and 'Though I lived next door, I did not know of it.' However, it is not possible to judge the religiosity of another person and it is known that these worshippers kept very much to themselves. They may have chosen not to tell everyone of their *Beth Midrash* (synagogue). This lady was a young person in those days and it is possible her parents knew about the prayer room but she wasn't told. Perhaps it was mentioned but (reasonably enough) she wasn't interested. In any case, the room was added some time after Moskowitch built his home, and this may have happened after the lady's family moved away.³ On the other hand, I have spoken to Jim Bruce who lived for most of his life next door to number 44, in the house immediately uphill. He has confirmed the details I have given, as have other long-time residents who still live nearby. For instance, Bruce recalls the big *Magen David*, while the lady does not. The Coorparoo Heritage Society has satisfied itself as to the authenticity of Bruce's statements and has printed them.

Bruce has advised me that he visited the prayer room when Moskowitch was still living there and clearly recalls the chairs set out for a good number of people and that there were numbers of large books scattered around.⁴ Most importantly, he was told that this was its purpose and he could hear the sound of the *davening* (praying). He described Moskowitch as 'short, stocky and strong'.

Also, if Moskowitch had simply added the room to increase the size of his dwelling, he would not have built it out of character to the rest of the house. The *Magen David*, the continuous run of windows, the high walls, the steeply pitched roof (higher than that of the rest of the house) all contribute to the appearance of a small 'chapel'. Morris was a skilled builder and he had all the facilities and materials to enable him to make an addition in keeping with the rest of his home. As well, he had no need for another room. He lived alone except when he brought his ailing sister from Russia. (She passed away soon after.) For all the above considerations, I am prepared to state that there is almost no reason to doubt that Moskowitch built the annexe to his home to be used as a *Beth Midrash*.

I heard about this fascinating subject only recently. I was told about it by the Old Coorparoo Shire Historical Group, which produces a suggested itinerary for a heritage drive through that area and refers to the building as the 'Moskowitch Prayer House, located at 44 Wylie Ave., Coorparoo.' The annexe cannot be seen from the front of the house, but permission is readily granted by its owners to view it from the rear. It remains in perfect condition.

Moshe Moskowitch left a unique memorial – a little *shule* which he built with his own hands. This was his *Avodah*, his Sacred Service. It is evidence of the many small *shtieblach* (prayer groups) which were established by East European Jews when they arrived in Australia after 1880 fleeing from the pogroms and antisemitism of Tsarist Russia, not only in Brisbane but in other areas where they settled including Melbourne and Sydney.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Minyan* is the minimum quorum of ten Jewish male initiates required for group prayer. *Im* is a suffix denoting the plural.
- 2 See my 'Brisbane Hebrew Congregation', *AJHS Journal*, Vol.IX, Parts 6 & 7, and X, part 1, and S. Stedman's 'From Russia to Brisbane', Vol.V., Part 1, 1959, pp 20 - 29.
- 3 She told me that Moskowitch built their subsequent house.
- 4 As one would see in a *Beth Midrash* – a place of assembly for Jewish religious study, prayer and discussion.

LORD CASEY AND THE 1939 WHITE PAPER:

How an Australian British Minister of State Fought to Keep the Jews out of Palestine

Leanne Piggott

By the end of 1942, the Nazis' intention to exterminate the Jews of Europe was well known in London. While this was condemned in the 'Declaration of the Great Powers', as read out in the House of Commons by the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, the decision was made at the Bermuda Conference held with the Americans in April 1943, that 'no meaningful action would be taken'.¹ However, Churchill was moved at least to reassess Britain's war time policy on Jewish immigration to Palestine. That policy, enshrined in a White Paper of 1939, had restricted Jewish immigration to 75,000 over five years. After that period, no further immigration would be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine were 'prepared to acquiesce in it'.² When the issue was debated by the War Cabinet in July 1943, Churchill argued that the 1939 White Paper was a dishonourable repudiation of Britain's obligation under the Mandate, which had aimed to promote and assist in the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The opposition to Churchill was led by the Australian British Minister of State in Cairo, Richard Casey,³ who warned that lifting the restrictions on Jewish immigration would only heighten existing tensions between Jews and Arabs or worse still, lead to a Jewish insurrection. While Casey's term as British Minister of State in Cairo has been examined as an interesting chapter in Australian-British imperial relations,⁴ his policy in regard to Jewish immigration to Palestine from 1942 to 1943 is to-date a largely untold story.⁵

THE APPOINTMENT OF AN AUSTRALIAN AS BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE IN CAIRO

The story of how and why Richard Casey became a member of the British War Cabinet as Minister of State Resident in the Middle East follows from the relationship between Britain and Australia. Values, interests, and identity were shared. The ruling elites held a

common world view: 'being British', especially for the Anglo-Australian elites, was simply the way of life:

[They] viewed the world through an imperial imagination; ... reacted to the world with an imperial instinct, and the bounds of its policy choices were set by imperial imperatives. In all spheres of life one could find this dominant structure of reference and attitude... Being British was central to their identity and from that flowed their understanding of the world and the policy to be followed.⁶

At a government level, dependence upon Britain had been particularly pronounced in the area of foreign policy, on the assumption that the foreign interests of Britain, Australia (and the other Dominions) were identical. This was especially so in regard to the Middle East, where British and Australian economic and strategic interests were one and the same - namely, to retain control of Egypt in order to ensure freedom of passage through the Suez Canal, and to secure the supply of oil from Arabia, Iraq and Iran.

In a letter to Prime Minister Bruce in June 1928, Casey, the Australian Liaison Officer in London, recounted a conversation he had had with Lord Lloyd, then High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan. It succinctly captured the current Australian position in regard not only to Egypt, but to foreign policy generally:

[Lloyd] asked me what interest had Australia really got in Egypt. I said that we were not interested in the details, although we had to understand some of the background in order to get the situation in the proper perspective. Our only interest was in the preservation of the canal as an Imperial route and we realised that Great Britain was fully seized with the importance of this, and we were quite content to leave it to them and not to meddle with the means taken to achieve it, as they knew the business much better than we did.⁷

There had been little option for the Australian Government to think or act otherwise. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Department of External Affairs had been in existence as a separate department for only two years. Australia's meagre diplomatic representation abroad had consisted of a High Commissioner in London and a representative attached to the British Embassy in Washington.⁸ The fall of Singapore was a very rude awakening for Australia, but only after the war did Australia strive to develop a more independent and assertive foreign policy.⁹

Perhaps more than anyone else at the time, Richard Casey personified the symbiotic relationship between Australia and Britain as played out in the arena of foreign policy. Casey had gone to Cambridge where, as a part of his British education, he was filled with a sense of duty to the Empire. During his term as Australian Liaison Officer to the British Foreign Office from 1924 to 1931, he cultivated links with London's most influential circles. While his appointment had been to make political contacts and to report regularly to his government, it is clear from his personal letters to Bruce before 1929 that his activities were not simply those of the usual 'diplomatic stuff'. He had become well connected with several senior British officials, including the Secretary for State for the Colonies, Leopold Amery,¹⁰ the Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, and Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary to the Cabinet and to the Committee of Imperial Defence.¹¹ Soon after Casey's arrival in London, Hankey (who offered him office space in the Cabinet Secretariat)¹² wrote to Bruce describing Casey as 'a nice fellow [who] has made an excellent impression'.¹³

Also among the circle of Casey's influential friends during his term as Liaison Officer was James Grigg, personal secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill. Grigg was an important conduit for personal messages between Casey and Churchill.¹⁴ This ability to impress eminent men served his country well: trusted and held in high regard, he gained access to information of vital importance to Australia, particularly in the area of defence. Along with copies of all Colonial Office communications affecting Australia, Casey was given access to the contents of the 'Black Box', namely, secret despatches and cables to and from the Foreign Office, which he sent on to Bruce. Hudson, Casey's biographer, notes that Casey 'was not altogether joking when he said that cables were marked 'K. C. & C.' - King, Cabinet and Casey.'¹⁵

In 1931, Casey returned to Australia and entered federal politics. He served as Treasurer in the Lyons Government, from October 1935, and as the Minister for Supply and Development under Menzies, from the end of 1939 to February 1940, when he left to set up the Australian Legation in Washington. Again Casey made contact and maintained good rapport with the ruling elite - this time, American.¹⁶ Casey also made use of his old London connections through the British Embassy. He had direct access to Churchill during the latter's visits to Washington in December 1941, and January 1942. On the latter occasion, Churchill requested that Casey join him on a train from Jacksonville to Washington, a 700 mile trip, in order to discuss Australian concerns in regard to the South-East Asia campaign.¹⁷ Casey did not know it at the time, but this train ride was to have a profound impact upon the rest of his life.

During the journey, Churchill asked Casey what his plans were for the immediate future - not a surprising question in the light of the recent election of a Labor government in Australia. Casey told Churchill that he did not think his future in Washington looked very bright. He represented an Australian Government of a 'different political colour' from the one that appointed him and thus he thought he had 'only a limited tenure' of his present appointment. Casey's account of the rest of the conversation was as follows:

[Churchill] asked me what I wanted to do. I said I had no idea, but with the war on I did not want to be idle. At his request, I told him the sorts of things I thought I could do. He asked a few questions, and we left it at that. I had not the slightest notion that anything would come of this conversation, which I thought was dictated by no more than polite interest.¹⁸

Two months later, a telegram from Churchill arrived in Washington, offering Casey an extraordinary appointment: a place on the United Kingdom War Cabinet as the British Minister of State resident in the Middle East.¹⁹ This was certainly an honour: not only would this make Casey the first Australian to be appointed as a member of the British War Cabinet,²⁰ but an appointment as a Minister without being a member of Parliament was all the more unusual even for a Briton.²¹ Casey had not been the only candidate for the job, but it is not surprising that his name was raised. Close friends from his London years, Hankey and Amery, for example, still had the ear of the Prime Minister. There was even rumour (clearly among those who were not happy with the choice) that Churchill had been persuaded by Casey's 'rich and ambitious wife' during the train trip from Jacksonville to Washington.²² Whatever the reason, it was certainly not the first time that Casey's credentials would have been under scrutiny at the prospect of being privy to 'secret British business'. In early 1925, when questioned by Lord Stamfordham, King George V's secretary, as to why there was an Australian 'at large in the inner corridors of Whitehall', Hankey had replied that Casey was 'an ideal man. . . A keen Imperialist, but also a keen Australian.'²³

Casey replied at once to Churchill's invitation stating how honoured he was, and that he would reply as soon as he had consulted with the Prime Minister, John Curtin. In San Francisco, a few days later, Casey met Dr Evatt, the new Minister for External Affairs, with whom he discussed the offer. Evatt was most agreeable, stating that, 'all things considered, there could be only one answer, and that the filling of the post of Australian Minister in Washington would cause

no real embarrassment'.²⁴ Curtin, however, was of a different opinion. In fact, he was furious.²⁵ The reason for this lay in the way Churchill had handled the matter. Highly sensitive to the manner in which Britain's ruling elite behaved towards their Australian counterparts, Curtin was affronted by Churchill's behaviour on this occasion.

Churchill cabled Curtin on 12 March, informing him that he was thinking of offering the vacant Cairo position to Casey, stating that he had not yet 'opened it' to him.²⁶ Curtin replied, making it clear that it would not be easy to replace Casey and so 'it would be in the interests of us all if the approach was not made at this juncture'.²⁷ But Churchill had no intention of taking no for an answer and so cabled back, emphasising how important the appointment would be for the Empire, and suggested that in his place, Curtin could send Robert Menzies. Churchill could not have been more provocative. Nevertheless, Curtin responded with the implication that Casey was free to choose for himself once he had completed assisting Evatt during the latter's visit to Washington.²⁸ Churchill replied that he was 'greatly obliged' and would now telegraph Casey, implying that he would emphasise the importance of waiting until his immediate business in Washington was completed by insisting that he should 'discuss everything with Evatt'.²⁹ In the event, Churchill wasted no time and made the offer to Casey. Against the express wishes of Curtin,³⁰ Casey accepted the appointment, with some help from his 'friends in high places'.³¹ On the morning of 19 March, Churchill announced Casey's appointment in the House of Commons. This had left no time for the Australian Government to find a suitable replacement for Casey, and Curtin was not favourably impressed. Adding salt to the wound, Casey's appointment was announced in the British press before Casey's cable informing Curtin of his acceptance had arrived in Australia. Curtin first heard of the appointment via the BBC!³²

The conflict between Curtin and Churchill became public when Curtin decided to air his grievances in the Australian press. In the end, it was Casey who suffered most. To his great disappointment, his decision to 'move from Australian to British employment' was condemned by most papers. *The Canberra Times*, for example, editorially condemned Casey's decision by stating that the:

'announcement made by [Mr.] Churchill [in the House of] Commons reveals [the most] extraordinar[y] action ever taken by a Government [of the] British Commonwealth of Nations and appears to be an act [on the] part of [Mr.] Churchill calculated [to] render flagrant dis-service [to] Anglo-Australia relations. ... Casey has [a] great deal [to] explain [to] Australia[n]s. Meanwhile he will sit on [the] British War

Cabinet [without] having [the] slightest right or authority [to] pretend [to] speak for Australia. He may go to [the] Middle East with all the gold braid and accoutrements of office as [the] Minister of State ... but [he] won't go as [an] Australian serving Australia or representing Australians. He goes in our eyes as a man sent to do [a] job at Washington who left his post against [the] wish of the Government which speaks for the Australian people.³³

Thus while some considered Casey's appointment to the British War Cabinet as a great honour bestowed upon Australia by Churchill, others, representative of the growing nationalism in the country, considered Casey's actions as disloyal.³⁴ In a somewhat apologetic tone, Casey sent his last message to Curtin on 28 March: 'While I go to the Middle East as a member of the British War Cabinet, I go, of course, as an Australian, to do the best I can in the common cause'³⁵ And so he left for Cairo on 31 March 1942.

CASEY ARRIVES IN CAIRO: THE WAR AND EGYPT

Following a two week briefing³⁶ in London and a short detour in Malta, Casey arrived in Cairo on 4 May.³⁷ This was at a critical point in the Allied war effort. With the exception of Egypt, all of North Africa was under Axis control. Casey's job was to be the Prime Minister's man in Cairo, to preside over Middle East defence and all related matters; to be the middle-man between the politicians and the military men and diplomats. Dealing with the Service Chiefs would prove to be the easier task.

Casey did not bring with him a great knowledge of the Middle East,³⁸ but he did have a well founded understanding of the strategic and economic importance of the region to Britain - and to Australia. The region was the concern not only of the United Kingdom, Casey wrote in his diary, but also 'the concern of Australia, N.Z. and all British countries East of Suez. It is our affair just as much - perhaps more - as it is of the U.K.'³⁹

While in London during the twenties and early thirties, Casey had been privy to much of the debate over the proposed Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, the issue which had dominated the Foreign Office's Middle East section during those years.⁴⁰ Egypt had gained only limited independence in 1922, as Britain retained control over communications, defence, foreign interests, and minorities. It was intended that in exchange for full independence, Egypt would enter into a treaty that would safeguard British interests in the Canal Zone. Negotiations broke down, however, in respect of the degree to which

Britain should limit its diplomatic and military presence in Egypt while safeguarding its interests in the Canal Zone. The Foreign Office stressed the need for conciliatory measures. Other British officials, including the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Lord Lloyd,⁴¹ argued that the implementation of any treaty that resulted in the reduction of Britain's military presence in Egypt would undermine, not enhance, the security of the Canal, Britain's highest priority in the Middle East.⁴² A treaty was eventually signed in 1936 when both countries were faced with Italy's ambitions in North Africa. The treaty provided for British defence of the Canal Zone, a provision which Britain acted upon three years later at the outbreak of the War.



R.G. Casey (left) with Winston Churchill.

As Minister of State, Casey was Churchill's representative in the Middle East and was responsible for the co-ordination of the allied war effort there.

The dispute concerning the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty witnessed by Casey during his London years provided him not only with a background to British Middle East policy (and to the lack of consensus

on this topic among officials), but also an insight into the way in which Foreign Office officials dealt with appointments of which they did not approve. Lord Lloyd was a case in point. Casey had been disgusted with the Foreign Office's treatment of Lloyd in regard to the treaty business. As he put it to Bruce: 'I am afraid, as I told you last week, that they are out after Lloyd's blood. It is a most underground machination and I think much to the discredit of the Foreign Office.'⁴³

From the outset of his term in Cairo, Casey, too, fell prey to the 'ungenerous' statements of the Foreign Office (and Colonial Office) men. Hudson provides two explanations for this: 'First, he was yet another minister dealing directly with foreign governments and administrators in a region of importance and, worse, he was a colonial, so not a member of their club. Second, their man in Cairo was the respected Miles Lampson, and it was thought unseemly that Lampson should have on his patch a politician who was an ignorant outsider.'⁴⁴ Even in the face of Casey's adept handling of the military emergency that arose within days of his arrival (Tobruk had fallen and Rommel was on his way to Cairo!), which required him to initiate and oversee a successful change in the military command structure,⁴⁵ the Foreign Office officials were unyielding. Upon his return to London after a visit to Cairo in May 1942, Sir Alexander Cadogan, permanent head of the Foreign Office, described Casey as 'a sick man and a failure'.⁴⁶

If there was no love lost between Casey and the British diplomats in Cairo, the hostility was mutual. Casey was outraged by what he saw as their 'scarcely credible snobbery'; they were inhabitants of 'a snob-intellectual world in which they regard themselves as superior beings', for reasons that Casey could only ascribe to their 'public school conditioning'.⁴⁷ Although Casey's fans in Cairo outnumbered his critics,⁴⁸ the obstruction of the Foreign Office made worse his formidable work load, which left him debilitated on more than one occasion.

The antagonism between Casey and the Foreign Office was perhaps nowhere more pronounced than in their conflict over what to do in regard to the 'Palestine Problem'. Ironically, both were pro-Arab in their views on Palestine, and thus saw eye to eye as to what Britain's war time strategy should be, namely, to limit Jewish activity there in an effort to pacify the Arabs whom they believed to be undoubtedly more important to the Allied war effort. Both also agreed that post-war British policy should focus on the fact that Britain depended on oil from the Middle East, and therefore that Arab leaders, who would be more autonomous, should be pacified at all costs. In short, support for Jewish aspirations in Palestine would have to be abandoned in favour of a unitary state with an assured Arab majority. They fell out, however, over short term tactics.

The Foreign Office wanted to keep the Palestine problem away from Cabinet until after the war, for fear of letting discussions be dominated by Churchill, who was well known for his pro-Zionist sympathies. By June 1943, however, Casey had become convinced that debate on the matter was urgently needed in the light of what he considered to be an imminent threat of Jewish insurrection in Palestine. And so Casey lobbied Churchill to have the matter raised at the War Cabinet. Churchill agreed, and the matter was debated on 2 July. In his diary entry for that day, Casey recorded his satisfaction with the outcome of the discussions, at least as far as short-term policy was concerned: Jewish immigration to Palestine would remain limited - in accordance with the 1939 White Paper - and no discussion of a change in policy would be openly canvassed until after the war.

Why was it, then, that Casey fought so determinedly to keep the Jews out of Palestine, especially at a time when persecution in Europe, of which he was fully aware, might have called for a more humanitarian response?

CASEY AND THE PALESTINE PROBLEM: BACKGROUND TO THE 1939 WHITE PAPER

From his earlier years in London, Casey was well informed as to how and why, in 1920, Britain came to accept a League of Nations Mandate to administer Palestine. Britain had acquired control of the territory during the First World War - largely as a result of the efforts of the Australian Light Horsemen! In seeming contradiction to other promises made throughout the war, the British Government announced support for the creation of a Jewish 'national homeland' in Palestine. This announcement came in the form of a letter from Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild on 17 November 1917.⁴⁹ The Balfour Declaration, as it became known, was incorporated into the terms of the Mandate conferred upon Britain by the League of Nations in July 1922.⁵⁰

But the trusteeship of Palestine caused much debate among British officials, a debate that was not resolved until the Mandate came to an end in May 1948. At the centre of the controversy was the Balfour Declaration itself. The wording of the document is, indeed, ambiguous: 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people, ... it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine...' It is not surprising that officials on both sides used the declaration as an argument either for a Jewish 'national home' - later *state* - or against it.

From 1917 to the early 1930s, British politicians who supported Zionism did so not necessarily because they believed in the right of Jews to have a homeland, but because they believed a Jewish homeland in Palestine would be beneficial to British strategic and economic interests in the Middle East.⁵¹ Among the so-called 'Gentile Zionists' were Leo Amery, Colonial Secretary from 1924 to 1929, and his predecessor at the Colonial Office, Winston Churchill.⁵² Both believed that a Jewish homeland, located at the crossroads of the British Empire, could 'check French ambitions and help safeguard the Suez Canal.'⁵³ 'The key position of this whole region is Palestine', Amery wrote in 1928, 'which covers the Suez Canal from the North, and from which start the air route and future railway route from the Mediterranean to India.'⁵⁴

In the early years of the Mandate, those in the government who supported Zionism did not go as far as to argue that *all* of Palestine should be turned over to a 'National Home' for the Jews, or further still, that a Jewish *state* should be created there. Instead, they believed that Palestine would eventually become a bi-national state where, although in the minority, the Jews and their rights would be protected. Arabs and Jews would live harmoniously under British tutelage, they hoped, with 'a common Palestinian patriotism'.⁵⁵ These ideas formed the basis of the 1922 White Paper which qualified the government's position on the Jewish national home being *in* Palestine, and linking Jewish immigration to the 'economic absorptive capacity' of the country.⁵⁶

By the early 1930s, however, those who had originally supported the idea of a bi-national state with an Arab majority and a Jewish minority began to think that such a policy could not be realised. For pro-Zionists, partition of Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states came to be viewed as the only solution. This view represented a definite shift towards the belief that a Jewish *State*, more than just a Homeland, could be a success. This belief was supported by the report of the Palestine Royal Commission, headed by Lord Peel, published in July 1937, which stated: 'An irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country.'⁵⁷

But when, in November 1938, the Peel Commission's Report was scrutinised by a specially appointed 'Palestine Partition Commission', partition was not recommended: 'the political, administrative and financial difficulties involved in the proposal to create independent Arab and Jewish States inside Palestine are so great that this solution of the problem is impracticable.'⁵⁸ It then fell to the Middle Eastern Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence to examine the Peel Commission's recommendations in the context of British interests

in the region generally. The CID stressed the importance of Palestine to Britain's diplomatic position: 'by far the most important measure which could be taken to influence the Arab States in favour of the United Kingdom would be our Palestine policy'.⁵⁹ The dilemma thus facing British policy makers was how to find a way of meeting Arab demands in order to promote British interests, while at the same time meeting the need to protect Jewish rights. In the end, the question was resolved in favour of appeasement of Arab opinion. This was considered, on the eve of a world war, to be by far the higher priority.

On 17 May 1939, the Chamberlain Government laid out its decision on the Palestine problem with the publication of a White Paper. This marked a turning-point in British Middle East policy in attempting to separate the Jewish problem from the problem of Palestine, enabling the government to favour 'the interests of the Arab majority of the population rather than those of the Jewish minority'.⁶⁰ The White Paper, abandoning the idea of partition, provided for a unitary Palestinian state with a large Arab majority. This was to come about following a ten year period of 'peace and order'. The White Paper further restricted Jewish immigration to a maximum of 10,000 immigrants per year for five years - with an additional 25,000 permitted to enter as a contribution to the Jewish refugee problem caused by the anti-Jewish policies of the Nazi regime in Europe. This meant that only 75,000 Jews would be allowed to immigrate to Palestine to 31 March 1944. After that date, no additional Jews would be permitted to enter unless given permission by the Arab majority.⁶¹

This change in British policy reflected the victory of the pro-Arabists in the Colonial and Foreign Office who had argued, as far back as 1917, that support for Zionism was detrimental to British interests in the Middle East, complicating, not benefiting strategic planning in the area. In the Cabinet debates leading up to the 1939 White Paper, they presented the view that a Jewish National Home had already been established in Palestine and therefore all promises and obligations under the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate had been fulfilled. Some British officials went so far as to warn that any more Jews in Palestine would not only threaten the Arabs, but also run the risk of allowing the Jews to establish a 'settler community' such as the one in Algeria.⁶² This was seen as the last thing the British needed in the light of an approaching war. Maintenance of the two-thirds Arab and one-third Jewish parts of the population was thus seen as an appropriate remedy to the perceived Jewish threat.

But for the Jews of Europe, desperately seeking a safe haven from persecution following the Nazi pogrom of 9-10 November 1938, such restrictions could not have come at a worse time in May 1939.⁶³ Initially, most other British officials did not take the warnings of an

imminent Jewish threat in Palestine seriously, and immediate opposition by the *Yishuv*⁶⁴ to the White Paper was discounted. Within two years, however, this assessment had changed. As Jewish opposition to the White Paper increased, evidenced in the rise of terrorist acts and illegal immigration, so, too, did fears that the Jews would work to obstruct British policy in Palestine during and after the war.

By the time Casey arrived in Cairo, the military perceived that the Jews in Palestine, in fighting the White Paper restrictions on immigration, were on the verge of major rebellion. In January 1941, a memorandum on Jewish illegal immigration, prepared jointly by the Colonial and Foreign Offices, warned of the 'largely political' motives of the growing numbers of illegal Jewish immigrants. Jews fleeing Europe were not seen as a genuine refugee movement, but as a Zionist conspiracy designed to fill Palestine with Jews and secure military domination over the country. 'The primary problem', warned the memorandum, 'is an organised invasion of Palestine for political motives, which exploits the facts of the refugee problem and unscrupulously uses the humanitarian appeal of the latter to justify itself.'⁶⁵ The Colonial Office went further. Sir Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner for Palestine, claimed that there could even be Nazi agents among the illegal Jewish immigrants, thus presenting a 'consequent danger to the internal security of Palestine.'⁶⁶ Sir Anthony Eden, Churchill's Foreign Secretary, was another who made his anti-Zionist position very clear - namely, that a strict limit on Jewish immigration was key to maintaining order and must, therefore, be sustained.

Some historians have argued that the attitude of the pro-Arabist officials towards illegal Jewish immigrants often 'bordered on paranoia'.⁶⁷ Wasserstein gives an example of a minute written to Sir Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, by Sir John Shuckburgh, Deputy Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, dated April 1940:

I am convinced that in their hearts they hate us and have always hated us; they hate all Gentiles ... So little do they care for Great Britain as compared with Zionism that they cannot even keep their hands off illegal immigration, which they must realise is a very serious embarrassment to us at a time when we are fighting for our very existence.⁶⁸

In view of the impending Holocaust, the sentiment is macabre.

With the problem of illegal immigration came the perceived threat of a Jewish revolt. Again, one of the key protagonists of this view was Sir Harold MacMichael. In one of many despatches to London

warning of the danger of increasing Jewish violence, MacMichael wrote that '[t]he crystallisation of a Zionist political programme during 1942, the growth of Jewish illegal military organisations and the opening of a pro-Zionist propaganda campaign in the United States all confronted Britain with a new challenge to its authority in Palestine at a time of great uncertainty concerning its own policy there.'⁶⁹ There was also the problem of the size and strength of the Jewish illegal military organisations and its huge traffic in illegal arms. In the first few years of the war, a policy of limited arms searches had been carried out, but MacMichael warned that these were ineffective. The only way to avoid rebellion and Jews imposing their own solution to the Palestine problem, namely, the creation of a Jewish state, he argued, was to dismantle the governing body of the *Yishuv*, the Jewish Agency 'with its palatial offices, its network of Departments, and its powerful international affiliations', all which, in MacMichael's view, 'overshadow[ed] the local Government.'⁷⁰ In another dispatch to London in October 1941, entitled, 'Note on Jewish Illegal Organisations, Their Activities and Finances', MacMichael warned: 'as matters stand now it seems to me inevitable that the Zionist Juggernaut which has been created with such an intensity of zeal for a Jewish national state will be the cause of very serious trouble in the Near East.'⁷¹

Early in the following year, only a short time before Casey's arrival in Cairo, Lord Cranborne, Lord Moyne's successor as Colonial Secretary, presented a Cabinet Paper in which he referred to the radicalisation of the *Yishuv* and the 'inevitability of either a "showdown" with the Jews, or else meeting their demands and facing confrontation with the Arabs instead.'⁷² Casey was to hear many such claims upon his arrival. While at first he was not convinced of the urgency of the Palestine situation, as viewed through the eyes of MacMichael and others, within a year he had become a convert to their position.

CASEY AND THE PALESTINE PROBLEM: A SHIFT IN PERCEPTION

Casey's diary reveals that as late as March, he was not convinced that a Jewish revolt was imminent and that he considered the problem of Palestine to be a matter for post-war policy. On 9 March he wrote:

We have been doing a good deal of thinking about the Jewish-Arab problem in Palestine - and about the problem of the Arab countries generally in recent times although no heaven-sent solution has yet begun to appear. There are those (Col Hoskins from the U.S.A. in particular) who believe there is a

distinct possibility of the Jewish-Arab problem blowing up into a serious outbreak of trouble before the war ends - But I do not personally think that this is as imminent as that. However I do think that we have to have it all thought out and be ready with a considered policy (which can only be the lesser of several evils) before the war ends.⁷³

But by the following month, however, Casey had shifted in his view: 'The possibility of the Jews provoking the Arabs to start trouble will have to be carefully watched,'⁷⁴ he wrote. He had been to see General Glubb, 'Britain's man in Transjordan' who told him that the Jews would not risk an uprising in Palestine until Germany had been defeated. But after that, there would be trouble.⁷⁵

Glubb was not alone in influencing Casey, who was also provided with regular reports from military sources in Palestine as to the increasing amount of arms stolen and sent 'presumably to Zionist secret arms stores'.⁷⁶ And then there was his friend and colleague, Sir Harold MacMichael, High Commissioner in Palestine,⁷⁷ and his friendship with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri as-Said,⁷⁸ who often spoke of his views on Arab nationalism and the Palestine issue.⁷⁹



Richard Casey with Sir Harold MacMichael, High Commissioner for Palestine and Transjordan.

But there was another very important issue which had begun to creep into Casey's world-view. This was the threat of Russian expansion into the Middle East. With this imperative now a part of Casey's thinking on the subject, he began to write of the need to make the difficult, but crucial decision in regard to long term objectives:

I believe that before long we will have to make the sort of choice, here in Palestine, that is so usual in human affairs - a choice between the lesser of two evils. Apart from having an inherent sympathy for the under-dog, I haven't any very pronounced leaning for or against either the Jew or the Arab - but I have a very pronounced leaning in favour of my own British kind - and if we take the wrong turning in this Palestine business, I believe that we may sacrifice the friendly support of the Arab world and so jeopardise the security of the Middle East, on which a good deal depends so far as the strategic interests of the British Commonwealth are concerned. ... [and there is] a new factor coming into the situation - the menacing penetration of Persia by the Russians which may make it all the more necessary for the future to continue to have the Arabs on our side in the M.E. as a whole.⁸⁰

Casey decided to raise his changed perception on the Palestine question with Moshe Sharett, a prominent member of the Jewish Agency. Casey spoke with Sharett on a regular basis when he travelled to Jerusalem:

I said [to Sharett] that I thought he ought to know that [i]ntelligent visitors consistently told me that the Jews would attempt in effect, to seize Palestine by force of arms after we had beaten Germany and while we were still preoccupied with the war with Japan - and that this would be done by provoking the Arabs to attack the Jews and then acting in self-defence. I was told that the Jews had large numbers of trained men and very considerable stores of weapons with which to arm them. ... I said that I believed any such attempt would be most unwise and would set back the cause that he had at heart. I said that there was a lot of latent - and in fact actual - anti-Semitism in the world outside Europe and instanced the two countries that I knew, the United States and Australia - and I gave him examples from my own experience.⁸¹

Sharett denied that the Jews had any plans to revolt against British rule in Palestine, and asserted that the trained men and women that the *Yishuv* maintained, along with some arms, were 'only for defence

of the settlements against aggression and that their experience in the past had shown the necessity for this.⁸²

Irrespective of Sharett's claims to the contrary, the Middle East War Council in Cairo from 10 to 13 May only confirmed what Casey now believed to be 'the main political problem of the M.E. - Palestine.'⁸³ He recorded in his diary those points which had been impressed upon him - among them was: 'That all those who have had any experience at first hand with affairs in the Middle East, have become convinced that the Jews are fanatical in their determination to make Palestine a Jewish State, and that they are equipped and prepared to fight to achieve it.'⁸⁴ He saw the 'sidelights on the story' as being: 'that only a very small fraction of the world's 15 million Jews could find a home - if they wanted it - in Palestine - i.e. the Jewish Home in Palestine can only be a "Token" home at best. The Jews demand that we should estrange the Arab world in order to provide this Token home.'⁸⁵

The Council's final resolutions on Palestine were, in effect, to 'stick to the White paper, and keep enough troops in the country to see that the peace is kept.'⁸⁶ Casey thought this to be a good position to take, viewing the White Paper as a 'middle-of-the-road solution' that would continue to minimise Arab opposition. Resumption of large scale Jewish immigration was, accordingly, out of the question.

R. Zweig reveals that many of the reports sent to London from Cairo concerning the nature and size of the military threat which the *Yishuv* posed to Britain during the war were highly inflated, especially from early 1943, when the German threat to Palestine passed.⁸⁷ It would appear that the intention was to dissuade any changes to the White Paper policy as it was when Casey sent a copy of the resolutions of the Middle East War Cabinet to Churchill and Eden. Along with other pro-Arab officials, Casey now considered it his duty, as Minister of State, to ensure that the War Cabinet in London be convinced of the importance of maintaining the White Paper policy:

I believe we have to be quite frank in putting the [Palestine] situation up to London in simple and unequivocal terms. If we believe that trouble is likely to break out, we would incur a great responsibility if we did not say so. Cornwallis believes that the Palestine problem goes deep into the Arab mind. We have made so many statements which have led the Arabs to believe that the White Paper is still our policy, that we would run a great risk of forfeiting Arab confidence if we depart from it. If we make any further concessions (sops, they will call them) to the Jews, the Arabs will find it impossible to believe that we will not have further concessions wrung from us at intervals - and the Arab world will be restless and on edge. If

we rate highly our friendly influence over the Arab countries (as surely, from the strategic point of view we must) we should think very hard before we depart from the White Paper.⁸⁸

It was this message that Casey brought to London at the end of June 1943, and voiced at Cabinet on 2 July 1943.

CASEY AND THE WAR CABINET: THE WHITE PAPER DEBATE

By the time Casey arrived in London, a debate had already begun among Cabinet ministers as to what the British should do about the problem of Palestine now that it was safe from an Axis invasion. The main concern was post-war policy. The immediate catalyst for the debate was a letter from Chaim Weizmann⁸⁹ to Churchill, accusing certain British Ministers of pronouncing at every possible opportunity that the 1939 White Paper was the government's 'firmly established policy'. He also accused Britain of inaction in the face of the mass murder of European Jewry, by that time well documented by the British and American governments.

Churchill responded to Weizmann's letter by circulating a reprint of his famous May 1939 speech condemning the White Paper, thus making it clear that his opinion on the matter had not changed. The following weeks saw the Cabinet inundated with papers relating to Palestine, among them a memorandum from Casey, dated 17 June. In it he argued that present efforts to counter the Jewish 'invasion' and the alleged threat of a coup were not working: 'It looks probable that the Jews will endeavour to create a situation in which we will be obliged to use force on them in order to maintain our policy, and that they will rely on world public opinion stopping our doing so.'⁹⁰ New initiatives were, therefore, necessary to seal the escape routes and keep the Jews out of Palestine. He then went on to provide details of Jewish secret military organisations and warned that London must maintain the White Paper assurances to the Arabs so as to avoid turning the whole of the Arab world against Britain. He argued - somewhat prophetically - that the Cabinet could not rely solely on military force to maintain order in Palestine:

It need not be supposed that we can safely sit tight and rely simply on retaining a large military force in Palestine to suppress impartially any disorders that may arise. In a complex situation like that of Palestine, military force is an admirable *preventative* against disturbance of internal security, but it is little use as a cure ... The extreme Zionist

leaders would not be deterred by a display of military force alone, lacking any indication of the policy which it was stationed in Palestine to implement. They would rely on the obvious political embarrassment in London and Washington which would be entailed in ordering British troops to "put down a Jewish rebellion" or even to fire on Zionist demonstrations. However inconsistent with the actual facts of the situation today in Palestine, there is a body of opinion amongst members of the British and American public which regard the Jews in Palestine as an "oppressed" and "defenceless" people. The entire force of the world-wide Zionist propaganda machine would be mobilized, in these circumstances, to present events in Palestine in this convenient emotional light and so to paralyse any effective action by security forces whose only *directive* was to "maintain order".⁹¹

Once in London, Casey began lobbying members of the War Cabinet. There was no need to convince Eden,⁹² who of course favoured the retention of the White Paper. But Eden did not want the issue to reach the Cabinet, not with a Prime Minister sympathetic to Zionism.

Churchill had always been open in his support for Zionism.⁹³ In a letter to President Roosevelt in August 1942, he had described himself as being 'strongly wedded to the Zionist policy, of which I was one of the authors.'⁹⁴ Churchill had never supported the White Paper, believing that the changes it brought about in Britain's policy would 'prejudice the final form' that the Palestine dispute would take. Prior to the July Cabinet meeting, Churchill reiterated his position on the White Paper, as stated in a letter to Lord Moyne:

I cannot agree that the White paper of 1939 is "the firmly established policy" of His Majesty's present Government. I have always regarded it as a gross breach of faith committed by the Chamberlain Government in respect of obligations to which I was personally a party. Our position is that we have carried on for the time being in the exigencies of the war the policy of our predecessors and have made no new pronouncement upon the subject. My position remains strictly that set forth in the speech I made in the House of Commons in the debate on the White Paper. I am sure the majority of the present War Cabinet would never agree to any positive endorsement of the White Paper. It runs until it is superseded.⁹⁵

Eden and the other pro-Arabists, however, were concerned not only as to the pro-Zionist sympathies of their Prime Minister, but also of the seeming increase of American support for Zionist political ambitions. This had followed the official acknowledgement, in December 1942, of the death camps and their role in the Nazis' efforts to exterminate the Jews of Europe. They thought that sympathy for the Jews might result in a change in policy, which had to be avoided at all costs. Viscount Cranborne, the Lord Privy Seal,⁹⁶ expressed all of these fears in a memo to Eden: "I venture to suspect the Prime Minister of hankering once more after Palestine as a Jewish state." "Yes," wrote Eden in the margin. Cranborne himself was in favour of a Jewish state in Africa, he wrote, but not for any love of the Jews: "Only thus will we be able to silence the wealthy Jews in America who pay for this agitation without any intention of sacrificing their American citizenship. And only thus will we be able to get some of the Jews out of this country, in which there are now far too many."⁹⁷

Faced with growing political and public opposition to their traditional policy, the last thing the pro-Arabist officials wanted, therefore, was an open debate in the War Cabinet which might risk an official change in policy, supported by the Prime Minister, in favour of the political ambitions of the *Yishuv*. While Casey agreed with his fellow pro-Arabists, he felt the issue too urgent and therefore was not prepared to acquiesce. Instead, he convinced Churchill to put Palestine on the agenda for 2 July meeting.⁹⁸

Amery recorded in his diary that when debate began in the Cabinet meeting, Casey led the charge against a soft Palestine policy: 'Casey opened on the line that the Jews have gone extremist and terrorist, determined to enforce a Jewish State with the secret stores of arms they have collected'.⁹⁹ He proposed that what was necessary was 'a sufficient number of troops to ensure that any outbreak of violence in Palestine could be quickly suppressed.' Casey also suggested that all known arms caches be seized,¹⁰⁰ and endorsed Sir Anthony Eden's plea for a joint Anglo-American warning to the Zionist against violence in Palestine.¹⁰¹

Casey's views were supported by Stanley, the Colonial Secretary, who had also submitted a paper prepared by the Colonial Office for discussion at Cabinet. In it he had described 'the growing military strength of the *Yishuv*, and the crystallisation of Zionist policy around the demand for a Jewish state . . . and that the Arabs of Palestine, although not as well organised as the Jews, also held "considerable number [of] arms and stocks of ammunition".' The paper had concluded that 'there is obviously much combustible material in Palestine and every effort must be exerted to avoid an explosion.'¹⁰²

But Churchill was not convinced by Casey's scare-mongering as to an imminent *coup de main* by the Zionists. Amery recorded his response: 'Winston then took up the theme, dominating and overriding all faint murmurings of dissent with an all out assertion of the Jewish case both as regards Palestine and in its broader aspects, brushing the Palestine Arab case on one side as wholly irrelevant and trivial.'¹⁰³ Churchill insisted that 'the Jews were not to be disarmed for the present, and that any reversal of this decision would have to receive Cabinet sanction first.'¹⁰⁴ The irony, as Zweig, points out, was that while the exaggerated reports on the imminent threat of a Jewish coup had been intended to convince Churchill of the need to rein in the leadership of the *Yishuv* and maintain a strict quota on Jewish immigration, the effect had been to convince him that the White Paper needed to be replaced, and that partition was the only possible option, if not in the immediate short term, at least as soon as the war ended.¹⁰⁵

Churchill was, however, convinced by Casey and others that any announcement of a change in policy while the war was on was not good policy. It would not be in Britain's interest to unnecessarily 'exacerbate either race'. The ministers finally reached a compromise position: 'short-term inaction and long-term decision', namely, that nothing should be done to re-open public debate on Palestine at that moment in war, but that steps should be taken to consider a long-term policy to replace the 1939 White paper. Amery recounted the concluding moments of the meeting as follows:

In the end it was decided, firstly to send a mere message of disapproval of force with no indication of future policy, Winston insisting, with some force, that the first step was to get America with us in however ineffective a declaration; secondly to let in the balance of 75,000 Jews under the White Paper after March next; thirdly to let in 'illegal' immigrants who might escape the German terror subject to the above total. On the whole a great day for the Jews if they had known of it - perhaps some day they may include Winston with Balfour (and to some extent myself too) as one of their real friends.¹⁰⁶

The second point in Amery's record addressed the fact that immigration officials in Palestine had been so successful in rationing the quota for Jewish immigration as given in the 1939 White Paper, that with less than a year to go of the prescribed five years, there still remained nearly half of the full quota of 75,000 permits remaining. The Cabinet thus agreed that Jewish immigration could continue after March 1944, until the legal quota was exhausted. It is important to contrast here the number of Jews entering Palestine - as being way below the official

quota - with the emotive images of a large scale Jewish 'invasion' sent to London by Casey and others in the months leading up to the War Cabinet meeting.

Churchill further ordered a special cabinet committee on Palestine to be formed, its main brief being to study the Palestine problem and to propose a plan to resolve it, first considering the partition plan of 1937. The committee was chaired by Herbert Morrison, and included Oliver Stanley, Lord Cranborne, Lord Moyne and Lord Amery. It reached a consensus by October, though did not publish its findings until 20 December. The recommendation of the Morrison Committee was for partition, concluding that this was the best solution to the Palestinian quagmire. Aware of the Palestinian Arab aspect of the problem¹⁰⁷ and that Arab leaders generally would not respond positively to this idea, as had been the case in 1937, the report further recommended that together with the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Palestine, an Arab federation be formed that would include the Arab part of Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon. This initiative had been proposed by Lord Moyne who believed that it would be easier for the Arabs to accept a Jewish state if Arab unity was also enhanced during the process.¹⁰⁸

This report, which realised the worst nightmare of Colonial and Foreign Office officials, was well received by Churchill, and its recommendation in favour of partition was accepted by Cabinet in January 1944. Eden, however, had counselled the Prime Minister against making any public announcements as there was no need to 'incur Arab wrath prematurely'. Churchill agreed, in line with his earlier determination, to postponing any final decisions until after the war.

As for Casey, the outcome of the 2 July Cabinet meeting had been 'quite reasonable.' He had got all his points accepted, 'with the exception that when we get information about a substantial cache of arms, the Prime Minister wants the matter reported to London before action is taken.'¹⁰⁹ Thus, in the short term, Casey had succeeded in his objective to maintain the White Paper as the basis of British policy in Palestine, and in so doing, to keep large numbers of Jews from immigrating. As for the long-term, this had been taken up in a formal way with the establishment of the Morrison Cabinet Committee.

Though subsequent developments in the proposal for post-war partition moves us beyond Casey's time in Cairo, it is a chapter that is not often remembered, and was overshadowed by the post-war events. Following the Cabinet's decision, Churchill remained committed to partition, even in the face of objections from the pro-Arab elements, including the British Chiefs of Staff. On 25 January 1944, for example, Churchill wrote to General Ismay of the C.O.S.

Committee in regard to its paper on 'British Strategic Needs in the Levant States':

The Chiefs of Staff seem to assume that partition [of Palestine] will arouse Jewish resentment. It is, on the contrary, the White Paper policy that arouses the Jewish resentment. The opposition to partition will come from the Arabs, and any violence by the Arabs will be countered by the Jews. It must be remembered that [Field-Marshal] Lord Wavell has stated that, left to themselves, the Jews would beat the Arabs. There cannot therefore be any great danger in our joining with the Jews to enforce the kind of proposals about partition which are set forth in the Ministerial paper. I therefore cannot accept in any way the requirements for internal security set out in the table, which proceeds upon the assumption that both the Jews and the Arabs would join together to fight us. Obviously we shall not proceed with any plan of partition which the Jews do not support.¹¹⁰

As had been the case in 1937, many of the government's officials, in particular those from the Foreign Office, could not reconcile themselves to the Cabinet decision to partition Palestine and did not give up on their efforts to lobby against it. In his various correspondence with the ambassadors and generals in the Middle East, Eden explained the Cabinet's return to the partition idea of the Peel Plan as having been due 'first, to political changes effected in the Cabinet by Churchill, and second, to changes wrought by the war - i.e. the Jews' tragedy.'¹¹¹

Churchill, on the other hand, had become, by the beginning of 1944, a firm 'partitionist', that was, until his long-standing and intimate friend, Lord Moyne, was assassinated by Jewish terrorists in November 1944. The murder affected Churchill profoundly as John Martin, one of his private secretaries remarked: 'it was impossible to talk to him of Palestine for months after Moyne's death.'¹¹² Those responsible were from a Jewish terrorist group, *Lohamei Herut Israel*. (the 'Fighters for the Freedom of Israel'), known simply as *Lech'i* for its Hebrew initials.¹¹³

This single act was to shatter Churchill's support for immediate post-war partition of Palestine, and as such, marks a great tragedy in the history of Zionist aspirations. Amery, who had worked so hard for partition, was deeply disheartened. He wrote in his diary: 'It is tragic that a man of such devotion to duty and kindness to all men should be murdered by insane fanatics who have inflicted a possibly fatal injury on their own cause. If they had only known how helpful Walter has been in all the Palestine discussions in finding fair and workable

lines of solutions.’¹¹⁴ Churchill never again met with Chaim Weizmann. Partition, while not officially discarded, was now purposely set aside. ‘In this way’, notes Rose, ‘Churchill enabled the anti-partitionists, anti-Zionist forces in the government to gather momentum and kill partition - as they had done in 1937-8. A British-inspired partition, guided by Churchill, was no longer practicable politics.’¹¹⁵ When the war came to an end, the debate on partition was not re-opened. For the meantime, Britain retained the whole of Palestine under a Mandate that Churchill had now come to begrudge as a ‘painful and thankless task’.

CONCLUSION

When the war came to an end, the White Paper was still in force. For his part in the successful restriction of Jewish immigration throughout the war years, Casey’s prescription was vindicated. As late as 1962, Casey maintained his war-time stance on Britain’s pro-Arab policy in the Middle East:

‘The Arabs admitted the persecution and sufferings of the Jews in Europe, but argued that this should not be offset by the creation of another injustice in the shape of a Jewish State in Palestine, to the detriment of the Palestinian Arabs. ... We were anxious to maintain our friendly association with the Arab countries, by reason of the war situation. Departure from the White Paper situation would have been a risk... I can think of no way in which our policy could have been altered for the better in the circumstances that existed. We knew that there was no ideal solution - only the lesser of two evils’¹¹⁶

Among those who had appreciated the choices made and actions taken by Casey during his Middle East tenure were the King and Prime Minister of Iraq, evidence that even here, Casey was able to make ‘friends in high places’.¹¹⁷ Writing to Casey upon his appointment as Governor of Bengal, Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdurrahman Al-Feysal Al-Saud, the King of Saudi Arabia wrote: ‘we appreciate the valuable efforts you exerted for the sake of our country and your sympathetic co-operation in the promotion of the friendly relations which unite our respective countries and for which we will always give thanks and praise.’¹¹⁸

And so it was that Lord Casey, but for a short time, played a key role in the fate of European Jewry. His role had been to fight to keep the Jews out of Palestine in the hour of their greatest need. To-date it is a relatively untold story, contrasting the record of the assistance

given to the Jewish effort to establish a homeland and state in Palestine given by the Labor Minister of External Affairs, Dr H. V. Evatt.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the kind assistance of Dr Alan Renouf who was most helpful in discussions on the contents of this paper.

ENDNOTES

- 1 In April 1943, a conference of British and American officials was held at Bermuda to discuss the 'Holocaust'. Numbers of Jews murdered had been classified by Allied intelligence as early as September 1941. It was formally decided at the meeting that nothing would be done about the Nazis' efforts; all plans of rescue were ruled out. See Cesarani, D. 'Great Britain' in Wyman, D. (ed.), *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p. 607; Laqueur, W., *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's 'Final Solution'*, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1980, pp. 196-208; Wasserstein, B., *Britain and the Jews 1939-1945*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, pp. 183-221; Wyman, D., *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and The Holocaust 1941-1945*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, pp. 104-123, 341-343.
- 2 Laqueur, W. and Rubin, B., (eds.), *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, New York: Penguin Books, 1984, p. 74.
- 3 Richard Gardiner Casey was born in Brisbane and educated in Melbourne and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He served with distinction in the A.I.F. during the First World War, and reached the rank of Major, serving in Gallipoli. He was awarded the Military Cross in 1916 and the Distinguished Service Order in 1918. After five years as a mining engineer, he became the Australian Government's Liaison Officer in London in 1924. Upon returning to Australia, he entered federal politics in 1931 as Member for Corio in the House of Representatives. He became Federal Treasurer in 1935, and Minister of Supply at the beginning of the Second World War. In 1940, he went to Washington as Minister Plenipotentiary. In 1942, he was appointed to the British War Cabinet as Minister of State in Cairo. From 1944 to 1946, he was Governor of Bengal. He returned to Australia in 1949 and re-entered politics. He was Minister for External Affairs from 1951 to 1960 at which point he resigned politics to be elevated to the peerage. As Lord Casey of Berwick, he held the office of Governor General from 1965 to 1969.

- 4 See Hudson, W. J., *Casey*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 137-55.
- 5 As British Minister of State in Cairo, Casey is mentioned in a number of works concerned with Britain's war-time Palestine policy, although no detailed analysis of his position is given. See Cohen, M., *Churchill and the Jews*, London: Frank Cass, 1985, pp. 185-260; Rose, N., 'Churchill and Zionism' in Blake, R. and Louis, W. R. (eds.), *Churchill*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 147-66; Sachar, H., *A History of Israel From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996, pp. 240-48; Zweig, R. 'The Political Uses of Military Intelligence Evaluating the Threat of a Jewish Revolt Against Britain During the Second World War' in Langhorne, R. (ed.), *Diplomacy and Intelligence During the Second World War: Essays in Honour of F. H. Hinsley*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 109-25. Even in Casey's own account of his years in Cairo, only two pages are dedicated to his activities in regard to the 'problem of Palestine'. He makes no mention of the 2 July War Cabinet. Casey, R. G., *Personal Experience 1939-46*, London: Constable & Company, 1962, pp. 93-166. Hudson notes it in passing, *Casey*, op. cit., pp. 149-50.
- 6 Waters, C., 'Conflict with Britain in the 1940s', in Lowe, D. (ed.), *Australia and the End of Empires*, Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1996, p. 73.
- 7 Casey to Bruce, 28 June 1928, in Hudson, W. J. and North, J. (eds.), *My Dear P.M.: R. G. Casey's Letters to S. M. Bruce 1924-1929*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1980, p. 374.
- 8 In 1940, Australian representatives were also appointed to Japan and China and High Commissioners exchanged with Canada.
- 9 Robertson, J., *Australia at War 1939-1945*, Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1981, p. 35. It is important to note that while there was not a significant change in *actual* policy following the election of a Labor government, a shift had taken place in *perception*. The realities of war resulted in an inevitable break down of the perceived commonality of national interests held by the governing elites in the pre-war period and there were, while the war continued, a lot of arguments with Britain behind the scene. One important step taken by the Curtin government towards the realisation of the shift in the common interests of the United Kingdom and Australia even before the war was over the decision in 1942 to adopt the Statute of Westminster of 1931. This formalised Australia's autonomy in a way previous governments had only grudgingly accepted. For a concise discussion of Australian foreign policy at this time, see Waters, C., 'Creating A Tradition: Foreign Policy of the Curtin and Chifley Labor Governments' in Lee, D. and Waters, C. (eds.), *Evatt to Evans: The Labor Tradition in Australian Foreign Policy*, St. Leonards: Allen &

- Unwin, 1997, pp. 35-47.
- 10 Amery held this position from 1924 to 1929. In 1925, he created a separate Dominions Office for which he also became Secretary. Although no longer in this position during the Second World War, Amery retained his particular interest in Palestine and had the ear of the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill (who had been Amery's predecessor as Colonial Secretary). Both had pro-Zionist sympathies, as will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.
- 11 Hudson, *Casey*, pp. 59-60.
- 12 *Amery Diaries 1896-1929*, London: Hutchinson, 1980, p. 392.
- 13 Hudson, *My Dear Prime Minister*, p. xiii
- 14 Churchill is often mentioned in Casey's letters to Bruce including the tale of the 'General Strike' of May 1926. During the nine day strike, Churchill took up the challenge to produce a government newspaper called the *British Gazette*. Casey pitched in by offering his car and driver who travelled 'over a thousand miles during the week in delivering bundles of the Government Gazette to Wales'. Casey to Bruce, 13 May 1926, quoted in Hudson, *Casey*, p. 189.
- 15 *ibid.*, p. 60. Dr Alan Renouf subsequently occupied these same Cabinet offices for three months while in London, representing the Australian Government during the initial period of the establishment of the United Nations. He recalled that, as had been the case when Casey was in London during the 1920s and 1930s, he was treated just like a British official by having access to all secret documentation that passed from office to office in the so-called 'Black Box': 'This gave me an insight into how a Great Power operated diplomatically.' Interview with Renouf, 12 June 1998.
- 16 See Bridge, C., 'Casey and the Americans: Australian War Propaganda in the United States, 1940-1941', Working Paper No. 30, Australian Studies Centre, London, University of London, 1988, p. 12. Bridge concludes that, 'Casey had done an extraordinary job in presenting the Australian case - and through it the British case - and in focusing American attention on the issues of the war'. The latter had been the key reason as to why Menzies had sent Casey to Washington.
- 17 Casey, *op.cit.*, pp. 93-4.
- 18 *ibid.*, p. 94. A somewhat different account of the train conversation appeared in the *London Observer* on 31 May 1942, as quoted in Hudson, *Casey*, n. 55, p. 130. According to this version, it was Casey who broached the subject of his short term future in Washington and when asked by Churchill as to what he might do, Casey relied: "well I fought in the Middle East in the last war, I know my own country and yours and the U.S.A. fairly well; why not some sort of liaison officer in the Middle East?" In response to Casey's suggestion, Churchill 'just grunted'.

- 19 Casey, 'Diary', 14 March 1942, National Library Manuscript Collection: 6150.
- 20 As distinct from the Imperial War Cabinet of the First World War. Australian ministers had attended cabinet and war cabinet meetings but only as guests.
- 21 Hudson, *Casey*, p. 131.
- 22 As recorded in Hugh Dalton's Diary (President of the Board of Trade from 1942) quoted in Hudson, *Casey*, p. 131.
- 23 *ibid.*, p. 61.
- 24 Australian Minister, Washington to Prime Minister, 19 March 1942. AA981, GREa 13. Evatt's opinion on the matter, as stated to Casey, was that since General Macarthur had been transferred to Australia from the Philippines, the military link between Australia and the United States would be more effective than the political link through the Australian Legation in Washington. But there was more to Evatt's compliant response than General Macarthur. The opportunity to remove a conservative from such a sensitive position was key to Evatt's thinking along with his personal dislike for Casey. See Crocket, P., *Evatt: A Life*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 170-1; Edwards, P. G., *Prime Ministers & Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1949*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 160; Hudson, *Casey*, pp. 128-9.
- 25 A reaction well remembered by Alan Renouf, a young cadet at the Department of External Affairs at the time of Casey's appointment to the British War Cabinet. Interview with Renouf, 7 May 1998.
- 26 Churchill to Curtin, 12 March 1942. AA981, GREa 13. The documents relating to Casey's appointment were assembled and printed as a White Paper.
- 27 Curtin to Churchill, 13 March 1942. AA981, GREa 13.
- 28 Curtin to Churchill, 14 March 1942. AA981, GREa 13.
- 29 *ibid.*
- 30 Curtin to Casey, 17 March 1942. AA981, GREa 13.
- 31 Australian Minister, Washington to the Prime Minister, 15 March 1943 AA981, GREa 13. Casey's friends included President Roosevelt. Casey recounts the conversation in his diary: "The President was most insistent and said - "Dick, this is grand, it will give me a direct and personal link with the Middle East that I have never had before. The Middle East is supremely important, the greater part of the war equipment going to the M.E. is American, and yet I have no picture in my mind and no personal link with the M.E. There are no two ways about it, and as you have asked my opinion, I have no doubt but that you should accept this offer in the general interest", Casey, 'Diary', 15 March 1942.
- 32 Curtin to Churchill, 20 March 1942. AA981, GREa 13.

- 33 'Copy of telegram from McCarthy to British United Press, Montreal and to British United Press, London'. AA981, GRE A 13.
- 34 As was the view of Alan Renouf. Interview with Renouf, 7 May 1998.
- 35 Casey, 'Diary', 28 March 1942.
- 36 His brief had been: "to represent the War Cabinet in the area and to act in its name", to co-ordinate our war effort, endeavouring, with the three Commanders-in-Chief, to ensure that we hold Malta and Egypt as far west as possible, and later to ensure that we drive the enemy out of all the southern coast of the Mediterranean. Throughout 1942 and 1943, the task included seeing that the whole of the Middle East was fed and reasonably content, with the employment of the minimum amount of our scanty shipping, so that forces based on these countries might have a quiet and secure base, not a hungry, discontented and rebellious one.' Casey, *Personal Experience*, p. 101. For a full outline of Casey's brief see 'Directive of the Minister of State', AA (Victorian Branch) M2274/1, 1
- 37 The villa Casey stayed in while in Cairo ranked worthy of mention by Churchill in a letter to President Roosevelt, dated 30 October 1943. Churchill was so impressed with the villa that he offered to place it at Roosevelt's disposal during a planned visit to Cairo the following month. The villa, wrote Churchill, 'is beautiful ... a mile or two from the Pyramids, and surrounded by woods affording complete seclusion.' Prime Minister to President Roosevelt, 30 October 1943, in Churchill, W., *The Collected Works of Sir Winston Churchill, Vol. XXVI The Second World War: Volume Five, Closing the Ring*, Trowbridge: The Library of Imperial History, 1976, p. 202.
- 38 Hudson argues that there seemed to be no apparent reason why Churchill would think Casey sufficiently qualified to take on the position of 'political supremo of a region of extraordinary complexity, and a region that was more than a battleground'. Hudson, *Casey*, p. 137. Casey himself admits to not having been an authority on the history and affairs of the Middle East. Casey, *Personal Experience*, p. 140.
- 39 AA [Victorian Branch] M2274/1, 1. This assessment of the importance of the Suez Canal to Australia's defence and trade is recorded in countless official documents and public statements right up until the mid-1950s. In a speech to the Empire Parliamentary Association in May 1937, Sir Archdale Parkhill outlined the importance of the defence of the imperial sea-routes as follows: 'The basis of our security as an Empire is primarily naval. This fact is due to its geographical distribution, and to our dependence upon sea-borne trade for the maintenance of our economic life, even our very existence.' Empire Defence and Trade Routes. Speech by Sir Archdale Parkhill at Empire Parliamentary Association on 3 May 1937. AA5954/69, 1070/1
- 40 The Middle East was the concern of both the Foreign Office (Egypt,

Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia) and the Colonial Office (Palestine, Cyprus and Aden). Those who were responsible for the Middle East in the Foreign Office were 'an elite within an elite. They were called Orientalists or the Arabists. They were all anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish, but very pro-Arab and they were a formidable force within the British Government in London. They were a body of the greatest Middle Eastern experts in the world, in the Western world, and accordingly wielded a great amount of influence.' Interview with Renouf, 12 June 1998.

- 41 Lord Lloyd was British High Commissioner in Egypt and Sudan from 1925 to 1929. His resignation in 1929 followed his fall-out with top Foreign Office officials over the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty negotiations.
- 42 Casey to Bruce, 14 December 1929, in Hudson, *My Dear P.M.*, pp. 217-8.
- 43 Casey to Bruce, 18 July 1929, in Hudson, *My Dear P.M.*, p. 539.
- 44 Hudson, *Casey*, pp. 139-140.
- 45 Churchill wrote to Casey to thank him for his involvement in the successful outcome of events: 'I wish to let you know how much I appreciate the part you have played not only in the main situation, but also in the change of command, which I have long desired and advocated.' Prime Minister to Minister of State, 30 June 1942, in Churchill, W., *The Collected Works of Sir Winston Churchill, Vol. XXV, The Second World War, Volume 4, The Hinge of Fate*, Trowbridge: The Library of Imperial History, 1975, p. 277.
- 46 Quoted in Hudson, *Casey*, p. 142.
- 47 *ibid.*, p. 149.
- 48 One of Casey's fans was the Official War Photographer, Cecil Beaton. 'The Casey's are very energetic', he wrote in June 1942, '[Casey] gives me great pep, and I feel he will do a hell of a lot that is needed here. Quoted in Cooper, A., *Cairo in the War 1939-1945*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989, p. 185. In his memoirs, Harold Macmillan recalled his fond memories of time spent with the Caseys in Cairo and how they had treated him 'with such tender consideration. This was the beginning of a long and close friendship.' Macmillan, H., *The Blast of War, 1939-1954*, London: Macmillan, 1967, pp. 274-5.
- 49 Laqueur, *op.cit.*, p. 18. See R. MacLeod, 'Balfour's Mission: Science and Strategy in the Inauguration of the Hebrew University', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 1998, in print.
- 50 *ibid.*, pp. 34-42. Winston Churchill, as Colonial Secretary at the time, had been responsible for drafting the terms of the Mandate.
- 51 See Rose, N. A., *The Gentile Zionists: A Study in Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy, 1929-1939*, London: Frank Cass, 1973.
- 52 Churchill remained sympathetic to Zionism throughout his years in political office though his commitment to British interests would necessarily take precedence. Part of the explanation for his support

for Zionism lay in his personal views on what he termed the positive 'genius' of the Jews and the contribution that they had made to modern faith and culture, 'in spite of the hardships which had befallen them.' "Some people like Jews and some do not. But no thoughtful man can deny the fact that they are beyond question the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world." After all, "This wandering tribe ... [had] grasped and proclaimed an idea of which all the genius of Greece and all the power of Rome were incapable", the idea of 'a universal God, a God of nations'. This was the most precious of inheritances, and, for a historical mind like Churchill's, it should be preserved and nurtured for the generations to come.' Quoted in Rose, *op.cit.*, p. 147.

53 Louis, W. R., *In the Name of God, Go!: Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill*, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992, p. 22.

54 Quoted in Louis, *In the Name of God*, p. 90.

55 *ibid.*, p. 91. In *My Political Life*, Amery explained his early enthusiasm for a pro-British group in Palestine as stemming from his wish for a lasting separation of Palestine from the Turkish dominions and his doubts as to the permanence of Britain's position in Egypt. He expressed his early ideas of the compatibility of Arab and Jewish aspirations in Palestine as follows: 'Most of us younger men who shared this hope were, like Mark Sykes, pro-Arab as well as pro-Zionism, and saw no essential incompatibility between the two ideals.' *Amery Diaries*, p. 169.

56 Laqueur, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-50.

57 *ibid.*, pp. 56-8. It is interesting to note that when called to testify before the Peel Commission on 12 March 1937, Winston Churchill proposed that 'all Palestine be turned over to the Jews. He spoke of their right to immigrate and Britain's "good faith" toward them.' Quoted in Irving, D., *Churchill's War, Vol. 1: The Struggle for Power*, Bullsbrook: Veritas Publishing Company, 1987, p. 84.

58 *ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

59 Quoted in Zweig, R., 'The Palestine Problem', pp. 206-7. Zweig's article goes on to argue that a change in colonial policy also contributed, along with strategic and economic considerations, to the change in Britain's Palestine policy. See pp. 208-10.

60 *ibid.*, p. 210.

61 Laqueur, *op.cit.*, pp. 64-75.

62 Louis, *The British Empire*, p.41.

63 At the Wannsee Conference of January 1942, the decision was made by German policy makers to build death camps for the mass murder of Europe's Jews. This policy, well documented by the Allied powers by the end of 1942, was efficiently pursued under the guidance of Adolf

- Eichmann until the end of the war.
- 64 The Jewish community in Palestine.
- 65 Quoted in Wasserstein, B., *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, pp. 48-9.
- 66 *ibid.*
- 67 *ibid.*
- 68 *ibid.*
- 69 Quoted in Zweig, 'The Political Uses', p. 111. The Biltmore Programme, ratified at a conference held in May 1942, at the Biltmore Hotel in New York, clearly stated that the cornerstone of the formal policy of the Zionist Organization of America was the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine after the war. This proclamation launched the campaign to win over US public opinion and to gain the backing of US policy makers.
- 70 *ibid.*, pp. 110-1.
- 71 *ibid.*, p. 117.
- 72 *ibid.*, p. 119.
- 73 Casey, 'Diary', 9 March 1943.
- 74 Casey, 'Diary', 8 April 1943.
- 75 *ibid.*
- 76 Casey, 'Diary', 11 April 1943. In March alone, 600 rifles, 22 machine guns, and 3 3/4 tons of explosives were stolen.
- 77 In his diary, Casey recorded fond memories of trips to Government House in Jerusalem: 'Government House ... is always a delight to come to - the house, the garden, the air - and MacMichael himself. Casey, 'Diary', 1 May 1943.
- 78 Nuri as-Said was one of the most important Arab leaders at the time and a keen supporter of British policy in the region, with the exception of Palestine. He was strongly anti-Zionist and against the creation of an independent Jewish state in the Middle East. Along with the Iraqi royal family, he was murdered in a military coup in July 1958.
- 79 In one of Casey's memoirs, he recounts their first meeting after which they became friends. 'He was the only Arab with whom I managed to achieve any degree of intimacy. For years afterwards he used to send me a welcome present of Basra dates each Christmas.' Casey, *Personal Experience*, pp. 140-1. In his letter to Casey upon the latter's appointment to Governor of Bengal in 1944, as-Said wrote, 'It is unnecessary for me to say how sincerely I reciprocate your expressions of friendship and I rejoice that our mutual association in the great work with which we have been entrusted, has led to the establishment of these cordial personal relations. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the high and distinctive honour which has recently been conferred upon you, Great is the honour, believe me when I remember the magnificent work you have accomplished in the Middle

East, I feel that no honour is too great a recognition of your services.' Noury Said to R. G. Casey, 6 January 1944. AA [Victorian Branch] M2274/1, 1. Casey was rated worthy of mention by Lord Birdwood in his biography of as-Said for having been responsible for the latter putting his views on the Palestine question down on paper in the form of a memorandum. According to reports, this had come at Casey's request: 'Casey, who would not have had background knowledge, accordingly asked as-Said to put his ideas on paper so that he could study the problem as a connected story. The result was a neat pamphlet in a blue cover which was despatched to many Members of Parliament all over the world, to countries of the British Commonwealth and to the United States. It quickly became known as the 'The Blue Book', embodying, as it did, the Pasha's conception of a united "Fertile Crescent", in which the Jews would have a semi-autonomous status.' Lord Birdwood, *Nuri as-Said: A Study in Arab Leadership*, London: Cassell, 1959, pp. 202-3.

80 Casey, 'Diary', 1 May 1943.

81 Casey, 'Diary', 2 May 1943.

82 *ibid.*

83 Casey, 'Diary', 10 May 1943.

84 Casey, 'Diary', 16 May 1943.

85 *ibid.*

86 *ibid.*

87 Zweig, 'The Political Uses', pp. 109-125.

88 Casey, 'Diary', 18 April 1942. Well aware of the persecution of the Jews in Europe at the time of the above entry, Casey perhaps felt the need to qualify his position. His support for the White Paper did not necessarily come about as a result of sympathy for the Arabs, he wrote, but merely in regard to British interests: '[S]ympathy with the Jews (arising out of the persecution that they have endured in Europe) causes people to take the attitude that anyone who isn't a full scale supporter of Zionism is thereby condoning the persecution of the Jews.' Casey was sure that he was not - he then went on to make note of his efforts to help the Jewish Agency bring in child refugees from the Balkan countries.

89 Dr Chaim Weizmann, who had been primarily responsible for obtaining the Balfour Declaration, held the position of President of the World Zionist Organisation from 1920 to 1931 and from 1935 to 1946. He was elected President of the State of Israel in 1949.

90 Casey, 'Diary', 15 June 1943.

91 Quoted in Charters, D. A., *The British Army and Jewish Insurgency in Palestine, 1945-47*, London: Macmillan Press, 1989, pp. 84-5.

92 Casey, 'Diary', 27 June 1943.

93 For his earlier support, see Rose, N., *Churchill: An Unruly Life*, Sydney,

- Touchstone Books, 1998, pp. 155-6.
- 94 Prime Minister to President Roosevelt, 9 August 1942, in Churchill, W., *The Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, *The Second World War: Vol. Four*, p. 571.
- 95 Prime Minister to Lord Privy Seal and Secretary of State for the Colonies, 18 April 1943, in *ibid.*, p. 615. Lord Moyne was appointed as Casey's successor as Minister of State in Cairo in December, 1943.
- 96 Cranborne had been Colonial Secretary from February to November, 1942.
- 97 Quoted in Bethel, N., *The Palestine Triangle: The Struggle Between the British, the Jews and the Arabs, 1935-1948*, London: Steimatzky's Agency Ltd, 1979, p. 146.
- 98 *ibid.*
- 99 *Amery Diaries*, pp. 896-7.
- 100 Quoted in Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, p. 253.
- 101 *Amery Diaries*, pp. 897.
- 102 Zweig, 'The Political Uses', p. 123.
- 103 *ibid.*, p. 897.
- 104 Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, p. 253.
- 105 Cohen, *Churchill*, pp. 247-58.
- 106 *ibid.*, p. 897.
- 107 By the end of the 3 year Arab revolt in Palestine, from 1936-9, the strength of the Palestinian Arabs as an independent political factor had diminished, never to recover. Their ability, therefore, to move to independence was greatly doubted. See Katzburg, N., 'The British and Zionist Perspectives 1939-1945' in Almog, S. (ed.), *Zionism and the Arabs*, Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel, 1983, pp. 199-204.
- 108 The idea of a federation of the eastern Mediterranean Arab countries had been mooted by various Arab leaders since the 1930s. In hindsight, it is clear that in 1943, Moyne underestimated Arab disunity and the insurmountable obstacle this presented to any such idea of a Federation. Casey had been aware of the ineffectiveness of Arab claims to unity during his tenure in Cairo: 'There was little unity amongst the Arab States, except in hostility to the Jews. There were sporadic moves in 1943 and 1944 in the direction of Arab unity, but that came to very little by reason of rivalries between the Arab leaders - Nuri of Iraq, Nahas of Egypt, Ibn Saud of Arabia, and Abdullah of Transjordan. They had nothing to contribute towards the solution of the Palestine problem except hostility to any signs of increasing Jewish strength.' Casey, *Personal Experience*, p 139. Most Arab leaders were particularly suspicious of Emir Abdullah as to his intention to expand his territory at the expense of other Arabs' sovereign claims. This fear was indeed realised in 1948 when, as a result of secret negotiations with the leaders

of the *Yishuv* in 1947, Abdullah took the territory on the West Bank of the Jordan allocated by the United Nations to the Palestinian Arabs. Indeed, the primary reason as to why Ibn Saud sent troops to Palestine in 1948 was not to support the Palestinian Arabs, but to stop his rival, Abdullah, from expanding his territory. For an insight into Arab machinations in the months leading up to the 1948 war, see Shlaim, A., *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988.

- 109 Casey, 'Diary', 2 July 1943.
- 110 Prime Minister to General Ismay, for C.O.S. Committee, 25 January 1944, in Churchill, *The Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI *The Second World War: Vol. Five*, p. 438.
- 111 Cohen, *Churchill*, p. 256.
- 112 Rose, N., 'Churchill and Zionism', p. 164.
- 113 *Lech'i* was one of a small number of illegal Jewish terrorist groups that were formed during or immediately after the Arab Revolt in 1936-9. The group was also known as 'The Stern Gang' after the name of its leader, Avraham Stern. The group had only a few hundred members, but included Yitzchak Shamir, a later Prime Minister of Israel.
- 114 *Amery Diaries*, p. 1018.
- 115 Rose, N., 'Churchill and Zionism', p. 164.
- 116 Casey, *Personal Experience*, pp. 138-40.
- 117 Abdullah to Casey, 16 January 1944. AA [Victorian Branch] M2274/1, 1.
- 118 Abdul-Azi Ibn Abdurrahman Al-Feysal Al-Saud to Casey, 23 January 1944. AA [Victorian Branch] M2274/1, 1.

SOCIAL PHENOMENA IN JEWISH AUSTRALIA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Bryan Conyer

The future effectiveness of Jewish education and Jewish day schools in Australia is firmly connected to contemporary trends found in the Australian Jewish community at large. These trends, themselves, have been established through the many years of Jewish history within Australian shores. Australian Jewish education has also been influenced by social trends that have existed in the broader Australian community. These trends have inherently created numerous opportunities and limitations for the on-going development of Jewish education in Australia. This article will identify and examine some of these major trends and how they have served to carve the contemporary shape of Jewish education in Australia. In turn, by identifying these trends, it is easier to determine what the future of Jewish education in Australia could hold.

IN THE BEGINNING: 1788-1820

Education in the newly established colony of New South Wales was a priority from the beginning of European colonialisation. The first fleet governor, Captain Arthur Phillip, instructed all the new settlements to put aside a substantial amount of land, which was to contain a school house and eventually a 'school master'. This system was to serve the white, free population of Australia. The school model that he attempted to recreate was the English model with which he was familiar. This combined Church-associated private schools, usually functioning as boarding schools, with a public day school system. In England private schools were reputed for serving only the elite of the society. Public schools served the rest of the population that could afford to send their children to school. Most of the new settlers, unconvinced of the reliability of this new Australian innovation, rejected the formal British schooling system. Their preference, rather, was to employ dependable tutors to come to their

homes. When their children required 'further' training or education, they would send them back to England to receive an appropriate education.

The Church of England was the mandated Church for every convict in the colony 'as the colonial government was opposed to encouraging religious diversity'.¹ Every child born on the colony, consequently, was expected to be raised as an Anglican. The particularism that this policy promoted, despite its eventual overturning, would have real implications for the emergence and success of Jewish education in Australia.

Of the approximately 250 Jews that were present in the colony, only one was there by choice.² Most came from the poverty-stricken streets of London with neither a minimal Jewish nor secular education. Of all forty-five Jewish men that married in the colony, none married a fellow Jew. Yet, there remained sufficient an awareness of their Jewishness that they formed a society that would collect funds to ensure the proper burial rites for their dead. Presumably, there was also sufficient of a recognition and tolerance by the authorities, of the religious distinctiveness of these Jews, that they were permitted to perform the rites. These, too, would have an impact on the future emergence of successful Jewish educational opportunities within the colony.

THE CREATION OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY: 1820-1920

The Anglo Jews did bring from England a traditional and religious Jewish culture, in conjunction with the desire to become a successful and normative part of the greater Australian society. This desire for integration included a high regard for secular education. The state run public schools provided a strong Christian overtone and their reputations were not well regarded by many segments of the Australian community. Consequently, for most of the Jews, the home remained the primary domain for both secular and Jewish learning. Tutors were periodically brought in especially for this purpose. For many, like the other Australians, later schooling and/or university involved a boat trip back to England.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the state authorities legislated free and compulsory education for all children. Home tutoring was no longer allowed to be the primary place for learning. Public or religious denominational schools were allowed to be established to meet this new demand. This allowed the recognised religious denominations to define the rules, curriculum and time-table for their classes. This was conditioned upon the fact that the curriculum would be approved by the government's Denominational

Schools Board. They wanted to ensure that all children were receiving a standardised secular education. In 1882 the newly established Board of Jewish Education became responsible for overseeing this task within the states of their respective Jewish communities. The Board naturally adopted the Anglo-Orthodox ideology of the community. Some Jewish denominational schools were established, but few survived. The Jewish population seemed to prefer the government schools.³ Integration of Jews into the broader society remained a higher priority.

The Jews participating in the public educational facilities were forced to partake in the Christian education that was a normative part of public schooling. Many Jewish parents, after enrolling their children in these schools, eventually sought alternative educational facilities. Despite the strong desire of these Anglo-Jews for integration into mainstream society, they remained conscious of their Jewish roots.⁴ Jewish education could remain in the domain of the home but the limited Jewish education of the parents and other community members directly limited what could be taught. Secular education, with no religious bias, provided few options. Consequently, 1861 saw the rise of the first Jewish day school in Australia, the Hebrew Certified Denominational school. This was the realisation of an inspiration first raised in 1844.⁵ The head teacher for this new school was brought in from England.⁶ It adopted a policy to accept both Jews and non-Jews alike. The twenty hours of tuition a week, received by the Jewish students, included five hours of Hebrew. This was supported by a *siddur* and a Hebrew primer.⁷ In 1867, seventy-three students, all Jewish, were attending the school. In 1869, the first two Christian students joined. In 1871, 147 out of 260 Jewish children living in the colony, between 5 and 13 years old, were attending this school.

For those children that were either not accepted into the day school, primarily for financial reasons, or whose parents chose not to send them to that school, as they wish to minimise the distinctiveness of their Jewish identity, an alternative needed to be found. The Sydney Jewish Sabbath school was therefore established in 1863, initially only for girls. The classes were soon opened to boys as well. The classroom of the day school became the classrooms for the Saturday school. By 1868, 80 students, with a sporadic attendance record, were registered at the school. Thus, 87% of all Jewish children in the colony were enrolled in formal Jewish educational classes, a tremendous proportion for a community originally concerned with being distinct.⁸

This Sabbath school linked itself with the London board of Jewish religious education. This London based institution was an organisation that had already created and operated a 'Sabbath School' in England. They had already produced books specifically written for a supplementary Jewish educational facility. The tremendous shipping

costs and time factors, required to send these books from England to Australia, eventually encouraged the Sydney community to author their own books. Thus, the popular format of a question-answer style book was created for the school's use.⁹ This book seemed to provide complex definitions of the major tenets of Judaism, information regarding the festivals and a section illustrating Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith.¹⁰ Hebrew does not seem to have been taught. Again, English Orthodoxy became the dominant ideology for this school. The active members of the Jewish community were functioning as a homogenous ideological unit virtually unaware of the religious changes in European Jewry, evoked by the period of enlightenment.

The day school continued to co-exist with the Sabbath school. Its survival was largely dependent upon state funding. In order for it to receive this funding certain requirements needed to be maintained. The school would be inspected on a regular basis by public inspectors to ensure that state text books were being utilised. Thirty students or more needed to be enrolled in the school and the teachers were required to be state employees. While legally entitled, this aid was attained only after a lengthy battle with the secular authorities who were concerned about the non-Christian character of the school in the predominantly Anglican colony. This type of xenophobia, despite government policy, according to Bierman,¹¹ towards non-Anglo Christians, continued to be a characteristic of Australia as late as the 1960s. The government funding was to subsidise solely the secular education costs of the school. It was up to the community to fund the Jewish education. Small fees were demanded of the students' parents to meet these other costs. When financial hardships prevented them from doing so, the state would pay virtually the entire cost for the student's secular studies. The local synagogue contributed a small amount towards the school as well. In 1882, the government withdrew the act that enabled all denominational schools to receive government funding. The government had decided to strengthen the 'right of entry' classes within their public schools. This would be a defining change for the Jewish community of Australia. The school board inevitably decided to discontinue the school, closing the doors for its 112 students. The Hebrew Certified Denominational school ended in 1882, as a response to the budget cuts following the passing of the Public Instruction Act of 1880 and the right of entry classes beginning in all public schools.

Right of entry classes enabled clergy from various denominations to enter government schools.¹² These clergy were allowed to teach during designated times in the school day. Initially, all government schools were expected to provide at least four hours of education per school day. Of these four hours, at least one hour was mandated to be for right of entry classes.¹³

Anglo culture determinedly dominated mainstream life in this colony. This factor served to maintain the homogenous character of the Jewish community and served to link it with the broader Australian society. Events in Europe would soon alter that. The pogroms of Eastern Europe in the 1880s encouraged many Jews from countries such as Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia to seek safer pastures in lands that were far away. Australia was one of their choices. Victoria was their preferred area of settlement, importing with them a non-Anglo strand of traditional Jewish living. At this time, the present Australian Jewish community was experiencing high rates of intermarriage. The low ratio of Jewish women to men made it difficult for Jews to marry one another.¹⁴ Thus, the arrival of new migrants was initially well received by the community. They were happy to integrate them into their communities as long as they also adopted an Anglo way of living.

By the turn of the century, Australia was granted a separate national status by England and became a federation of six states and the Northern Territory. At this time, Australia's European population had swelled to 3 036 000 persons. 15 000 of these were Jewish.¹⁵ Thus, the Jewish community comprised 0.49% of the total population. This percentage is virtually a consistent measure by which the Jews in Australia will be counted in relation to the wider Australian community. At this point, they were over-represented in many areas of Australian white society, as they continue to do so today.

EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY: 1920-1940S

One development that would eventually be an unforeseen influence for the Jewish community began in 1905, in Melbourne. The University of Melbourne established a school's board to oversee public examinations for university entry. While some classic languages were included, Hebrew was not an accepted subject. In 1922, the board decided to accredit Hebrew as a University entry course. The pressure for the board to accept Hebrew came partially from the Jewish community, but largely from Christian ministers who regarded Hebrew as a vital part of their religious training. The Jewish community saw this as an excellent opportunity to encourage more students to remain in Hebrew schools after they reached the age of Bar mitzvah. The board that eventually oversaw this Hebrew education included representatives from at least four religious groups,¹⁶ including Jews. Responding to their suggestion, Hebrew was instituted as a classical text language in the education system. Schools would teach it as such with religious leaders providing the instruction.¹⁷ New South Wales

gained this accreditation only in 1942. Few Jews took advantage of this opportunity. Yet, this would set the platform for future developments within Jewish education.

The period between the World Wars resulted in a tidal wave of migration into Australia. The new arrivals included additional European Jews and Jews from Palestine. Perth and Melbourne became their preferred destination of settlement. By 1933, the 23000 Jews in Melbourne, Sydney and the smaller communities had become the largest minority group in Australia.¹⁸ 1933 brought the Nazi regime to power in central Europe, affecting such countries as Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. The more 'modern' Jews from these countries, more assimilated into enlightenment living and thinking, made their way to Australia, particularly Sydney. Thus, the Jewish community expanded further. There was a resolute air to maintain the dominant Anglo culture of the country, supporting the continuation of the White Australia Policy. The prejudice towards non-English immigrants was sustained by the Jewish community too. They were concerned that the increasing number of 'foreign' Jews entering Australia would compromise the Jewish standing in the community as a whole. This sentiment was even expressed in the New South Wales parliament: 'The people should to be considered in the same light as the Jewish community living within our shores.... They are just as foreign to our Jewish community as they are to us'.¹⁹

The ending of World War Two encouraged many British people, Jews amongst them, to seek 'a new and easier life in the sunshine'.²⁰ When the British released the inmates from displaced person's camps, after World War Two, further population increases occurred in Australia, thereby adding middle Eastern and other Eastern European Jews (and non-Jews) to the community. Amongst this population was 25000²¹ predominantly Polish and Hungarian Jewish survivors from *Shoah*.²² Consequently, Australian Jewry contained more *Shoah* survivors per capita than any other Diaspora community. Accompanying them was a significant influx of ultra-Orthodox Jews. In the 1940s, the Japanese thrust their forces towards and into Singapore, Malaya and what is now called Indonesia. This encouraged an influx of Sephardi Jews into Australia, thus, adding to the changing character of the once homogenous Jewish population. The Sephardi community further expanded with the arrival of Indian Jews, after the British gave India her independence.

The gap between the growing and diverse immigrant Jewish population and the established Anglo-Jewish population soon began to show signs of tension between the various communities. The predominantly homogenous English Orthodoxy was no longer accepted as the sole legitimate expression of being Jewish. The Anglo-Jewish

community continued to prefer to assimilate into Australian society. Their community was characterised by high assimilation, minimal synagogue attendance, a tremendous neglect of the emerging modern Hebrew language and few opportunities for Jewish cultural, non-religious expressions. These factors directly contradicted the experiences and expectations of the newer Jewish immigrants. The newer immigrants retained a public loyalty primarily to their Jewish affiliation. They were familiar with the established European notion of distinct Jewish day schools, responsible for imparting both Jewish and secular curricula to their children. They were comfortable with public displays of their Jewish distinctiveness and familiar with the diverse ideologies now established in European Jewry. These differences between these Jewish groups would impact on the culture that would now be demanded of any Australian Jewish educational facility, the ideology inherent in its curricula, the religious nature of those that would be employed and trusted to impart the Jewish education and the place to where a parent would be comfortable sending their children. The once homogenous community could now be defined by particularistic Jewish groups identifying themselves as Bundist, Zionist, neo-Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox, Liberal and secularist. English Orthodoxy was now merely, despite being the majority, another of these groups.

As a result of these new demands and the population growth, Jewish educational facilities throughout Australia had to expand. In the 1920s, these were comprised primarily of a few 'Talmud Torahs'. By 1940, ten of these schools had been established in Melbourne alone. These part-time, supplementary schools were created by distinct Jewish groups, each representing a particularistic Jewish ideology. The Talmud Torah soon served more Jewish students than were in the right of entry classes in the public schools.

Amongst the other debates being fostered in Melbourne, initially raised in 1934, was the suggestion that a new Jewish day school should be created. This idea existed as a stark contrast to the part-time Jewish education that was available at the time. The initiator of this idea was Benzion Patkin, a Russian migrant who had arrived in Sydney, by way of Palestine, in 1929. Patkin was also a staunch member of the Zionist community. This issue affected every constituency of the Jewish community. The support for the school was almost down ethnic lines. Anglo-Jews enjoyed being regarded as a part of the larger society, including its schooling system. They had no desire to withdraw their children from normative Australian society. Furthermore, they regarded the newer immigrants, the supporters of the day school, as foreigners. Sending their Australian children to a school determined by recent arrivals was regarded as preposterous.²³ The Orthodox Jews

were concerned about the halachic standards of the school. The Bundists fought for the inclusion of Yiddish. The Zionists opposed Yiddish as Hebrew was to be the language of choice. The Liberal Jewish community opposed the idea as they were certain that Liberal Judaism would not be represented in the school at all. The secularists feared the backlash of establishing a particularistic day school, when Jewish integration into the community at large would be undermined.

MORE CONTEMPORARY PATTERNS EMERGE: FROM 1940

Prior to the 1940s, Australia was primarily English in outlook. According to Medding,²⁴ Australia inherited many cultural characteristics from England. These included a particular strand of egalitarianism that cut all people down to the same size. All people were to be regarded as the same. Differences were never highly regarded nor tolerated. As Australia was regarded as an outpost of Britain, only British migration was highly sought. Prior to 1945, 90% of Australia's immigration was of an English origin. Jews, up to this point, were regarded as the most visible, non-British ethnic group in the country. This was despite the fact that its members included fourth generation Australians.

After 1945, the tremendous inflow of migrants, doubling the population of Australia, altered this position. Migrants of a non-British origin comprised about 20% of the entire population and were over-represented in the cities. Consequently, attitudes to both Britain and migrants altered. Australia no longer regarded England to be her sole outpost. Acceptable cultural values were now also more ambiguous. With time, the new migrant was no longer expected to assimilate into normative English-Australian culture. Aspects of each of the ethnic cultures were highly regarded by their respective migrants. By the 1970s, non-Anglo culture was not automatically assumed to be inferior by most of Australian society. Newer migrants, therefore, had no one set of values to which they were to be expected to conform. Jews reverted to being another, smaller of these minority groups. Jewish values were now just as acceptable as any other ethnic group's values. Differing Jewish values, embedded within one's ethnic national origin were also more readily accepted. The Jews, as a single group among these ethnic groups, though, were distinguished by the fact that more Jewish migrants intended to stay in Australia than any other migrant group.²⁵ Immigrant Jews enjoyed what Australia had to offer.

As a consequence of the expanded population, new Jewish communities were established within the same cities, determined by ethnic origin. Immigrant groups maintained that these ethnic ties were a positive way to integrate into the broader Australian society. New

institutions emerged to serve the specific needs of these communities and their members, including many more synagogues. Thus, diversity in Jewish expression became a normative characteristic of Australian Jewry. Jewish Orthodoxy continued to dominate most institutions but the successful emergence of Liberal synagogues and secular Zionist communities played a smaller, but significant role.

This proliferation of communal developments also threatened any sense of unity among the Australian Jewish community as a whole. The larger Jewish communities, divided by states, needed to be better organised. This was facilitated primarily by the establishment, in 1944, of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and the establishment of Boards of Deputies as roof bodies. The ECAJ attempted to coordinate all the activities of the Jewish communities and to develop facilities around the country. The Council and Boards became the formal representatives to the Federal and State governments and to other Jewish world organisations.

An umbrella body of clergy was established in 1952, serving to address the religious problems of the community. It was also an attempt to standardise levels of religious law for the community in areas such as *kashrut* and conversion. This body was exclusive to Orthodox ministers, thus reflecting the distinct division between the Liberal and Orthodox religious Jewish leadership. Furthermore, the *kashrut* body was soon dismantled because of internal conflicts within the diverse Orthodox communities themselves. Eventually, the Board of Deputies assumed responsibility for this role.

The Emergence of Day Schools

Day schools were a decisive factor in determining the shape of the contemporary community of the 1950s. The manner by which they were established was very much a reflection of the communities from which they arose.

A number of private, Church-associated schools, pervaded the education scene in Australia. Many Jewish children were attending these. By the 1970s, public high schooling could not maintain the same standard as the private schools. Thus, most middle class Australians preferred to send their children to these private denominational schools, including Jews. This climate, plus the better organised Jewish communities, eased the way for the economically stable Jewish community to begin the establishment of its own 'Denominational school'. Following the release of the Karmel Report in the mid 1970s, state funding was again available to all educational facilities, government and non-government alike. Yet, fees to be paid by the parents and support by benefactors would have to fund the bulk of

the school's expenses.

The existing part-time character of Jewish education was providing many challenges for the Jewish leadership. It was a voluntary, part-time facility that was not taken very seriously by either parent or student. It seldom continued beyond the age of bar-mitzvah and was an additional fee for the parents to maintain.

Certain private Church schools, with substantial Jewish enrollment, began to suggest that Jewish presence in their schools was having a negative impact on their school. One popular Melbourne school threatened mass expulsion for all its Jewish students.²⁶ Its justification was that the Jewish exclusion from religious assemblies and classes was creating 'a sense of antagonism ... [and] is the spirit that is, to a great extent, responsible for the attitude of the world generally toward the Jews'.²⁷ These types of incidents served to reinforce the need for separate Jewish full-time schools.

The first Jewish day school in Australia of the twentieth century, was established in Sydney during the war years as the North Bondi Jewish day school, but it was very small and lacked community support. The first community school, Mount Scopus College, was established in 1949, in Melbourne, under the auspices of the Victorian Board of Deputies. The dominant religious philosophy of the Melbourne school was based upon Samson Raphael Hirsh's notion of '*Torah im derekh Eretz*'.²⁸ This seemed to be the best middle ground that the Board could determine. Unavoidably, many components of the Jewish community felt excluded by this decision.

The debate that more seriously threatened to divide the community was the process to determine the language policy for the school. English would be the language of tuition, but the choice was whether Yiddish and/or Hebrew was to be taught as well. The Orthodox movement was aghast that the '*lashon haKodesh*' — the Holy Tongue, could be taught as a vernacular language. This, along with the co-educational policy of the school, alienated them further. The Zionists, who comprised much of the impetus behind the school's establishment, had little tolerance for Yiddish, while the Bundist were insistent on Yiddish being a core component of the school's curriculum. The Board of Deputies eventually determined that Hebrew would be the only other compulsory language taught, while Yiddish would remain an option. Hebrew, after all, had already been accredited by the state as a matriculation qualifying subject since 1922. The Zionist orientation of Patkin and his supporters won through, much to the dismay of their opponents. This Zionist orientation would be a determining force for the character of the future school.

The school grew quickly, soon requiring larger facilities and funding. West German restitution funds played a large role in

College, due to locality. The Lubavitch movement, itself, established two other schools. The beginning of the 1980s heralded the founding of Sydney's Liberal Jewish day school, The Emanuel School.

Thus, separate day schools emerged without any combined communal effort or coordination. Independent parties were responsible for establishing each of the Sydney day schools, for example, both The Emanuel School and Masada College grew out of separate synagogue bases.³² Five out of Sydney's six day schools were closely affiliated with the Orthodox movement. In 1964, only 15% of Jewish children were attending a day school in Sydney, while 50% attendance was recorded in Melbourne. By 1986, Sydney could claim that 56% of all Jewish children were attending Jewish day schools. The growing acceptance and popularity of day schools was illustrated by the 12% per annum increase in enrollment throughout the 1980s.³³ The other Jewish students were being reached through right of entry classes run by the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education and supplementary schooling run under the auspices of various synagogues. Three of the other major cities in Australia, Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane also developed their own day schools. The Gold Coast also soon established its own day school. Each assumed a modern Orthodox orientation to their religious education.

This rapid expansion of day schools led to the establishment of the Association of Principals of Jewish schools of Australasia in 1989 following on from a conference on Jewish education in Melbourne organised by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs. Its role was to attempt to provide opportunities for cooperation between schools. Therefore, it concentrates on those issues common to all schools, attempting to avoid issues that emphasize particularity.

Apart from the major cities, the majority of Jewish students continue to receive their Jewish education through part-time facilities. These include right of entry classes, while Hebrew and religious schools are provided either by synagogues or other Jewish institutions. Secular schooling is still widely valued. Thus, many parents prefer their children to go to a public school rather than to a Jewish private school. According to Geulah Solomon,³⁴ most Australian Jewish adults define their Jewishness in terms of their relationship to a Jewish group. Therefore, Jewish education for them means 'group socialisation and identification'.³⁵ Day schools are, therefore, not the only places where these goals can be attained. Furthermore, Solomon maintains that because Australian Jews regard group survival as more important than individual development, day school Jewish education is more curriculum prescriptive than child-centered.

Zionism has been a central pillar in most of the Australian Jewish day schools. After the Six Day War in Israel, the broader

Australian society also became more supportive of Israel. 1968 saw the then Australian Prime Minister, Gorton, open what was then the newest of the Jewish day schools. After praising the Jewish contributions in Australia, his other remarks included the statement that 'you have a country which you can look upon with pride and say that your traditions sprang from there'.³⁶ From the 1960s there was no uncomfortable contradiction for an Australian Jew to have allegiances to two countries. There was an attitude of acceptance that the many migrants in Australia would bring with them a loyalty to their new and old homes. There was minimal pressure for a minority group to conform to the norms of the wider society, as they themselves were not clearly defined. The Jewish community, in turn, responded like most of the world's Jewry. Substantial and successful fundraising campaigns were waged. In New South Wales an organisation, especially for this purpose was established: the Jewish Communal Appeal. These appeals helped to bridge the gap between the multiple Jewish communities that had been developing.

One outcome from this new found energy was the establishment of multiple youth groups, most of which were either affiliated with the Zionist movement or a local synagogue. After World War II, the Zionist groups were developed on the model of European Jewish youth groups with the youth given sufficient an autonomy to define the workings of the movement itself. Each of the ideological camps in Jewish Australia established a youth group of their own. Thus, ideological movements, ranging from *HaShomer HaTzair*, a left wing, secular Zionist movement, to *B'nei Akiva*, Modern Orthodox and Zionist, were developed. The Liberal movement established its own youth movement as well, eventually serving as the impetus to the creation of an international Reform Zionist youth movement, *Netzer Olami*. These youth groups became an added dimension in the education of Australia's youth. It also contributed to the many Australians who chose to make Israel their permanent home, rather than Australia.

THE CURRENT FACE OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY AND ITS EDUCATION

Australian Jews remain a distinct group within Australia. The substantial number of Jews that now attend day schools, approximately 67% of all Jewish school age children,³⁷ further enhances this. 44% of all Australian Jewry lives within four suburbs, divided evenly between Sydney and Melbourne.³⁸ The rate of intermarriage remains relatively low, between 10-15%.

Australian Jewry is still characterised by its ethnic divisions. Jews with an Anglo origin now only comprise 45.65% of the Jewish community. The largest other group is that of the South African born Jews (8.05%).³⁹ Modern Orthodoxy dominates the formal religious affiliation, while the two largest communities, Sydney and Melbourne, differ in their ways of expressing this. Melbourne's community is more active in all regards. Day school attendance and synagogue affiliation are high. Individuals are more actively observant with their Judaism. Sydney's Jews prefer a quieter existence, yet spurred on by immigrant groups, more public expressions of Judaism are being encouraged. Zionism remains a unifying force among each of the communities.

Most Australian Jews identify themselves as having a religious identity, ranging between ultra-Orthodoxy, modern Orthodox to Liberal. Approximately 80% of the active community identify themselves with the Orthodox movement and 20% with the Liberal movement. Approximately 65% of Jews are affiliated with a synagogue⁴⁰ while 94% of Jews stated that they had attended a synagogue at least once within the last year. Despite these high figures, most are nominally observant as few regard their Judaism as primarily a religious expression.⁴¹ Consequently, a variety of secular organisations, such as B'nai B'rith, Maccabi and the Zionist Federation, remain alternative outlets where many secular Jews prefer to express their Judaism.

The religious leadership is still regarded as the accepted voice for the community in matters of Jewish ritual, ethics and law. The larger communal bodies, such as the ECAJ and the Board of Deputies, provide the voice for communal policies and statements. These bodies are represented by elected laypeople of the community.

The first Australian born Jew to attain *smicha*,⁴² was Raymond Apple, in England. In 1973 he became the Senior Rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Sydney. In 1974, John Levi received his *smicha* from an institute in the United States. He became the senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne. The Jewish community's leadership still depends somewhat on other countries for its training. Recently established rabbinical training Institutions, catering to the Orthodox community, are attempting to alter this. But the smaller number of Liberal Jews make it virtually impossible for them to create such an institution to serve their community. Both communities also rely heavily on first generation Australians for their leadership. This can be observed within the leadership of communal organisations and the staffing of Jewish day schools. Many of the Jewish Studies and Hebrew staff are recent migrants from both Israel and South Africa. While much of the leadership comes from Jews born in Australia, there has always been somewhat of a dependence on immigrants. In order to develop both these sources for leadership, Australian born and

immigrant, new Jewish teacher and education training programs, such as the one at the University of Sydney, have been recently established within Australia's universities. These serve to retrain and to acculturate the recent migrants into the Australian school system and to train more Australian born Jews to the professionalism now being demanded of Jewish educators.

The Lubavitch movement, headquartered in New York, has also become a significant force in the community at large, providing many of the mainstream Orthodox synagogues with their leadership. They also strive to influence the Jewish community at large with their regular educational activities that they take to the public. This includes such projects as Sukkah mobiles, where a portable Sukkah is taken to various locations for Jews to enter.

Australians are now generally tolerant of Jewish groups. Forty per cent of the Australian population is now composed of either migrants or first generation born Australians. 50% are of a non-European origin. Thus, Jewish groups are a smaller part of the wider diversity. While antisemitism is evident, it seldom reaches the levels of xenophobia experienced in previous years. Government policy treats Jews as any other minority group. Yet the Jewish community remains highly organised and therefore is able to ensure that it is well represented. The government, since 1982, has had a more pro-Israel stance.⁴³ The Executive Council of Australian Jewry continues to play an important role for the Jewish community in regard to all its representation. Thus, there has always been a close relationship between the Prime Ministers and the Jewish leadership.

The most influential educational facility, through the period of compulsory schooling,⁴⁴ remains the day school. These schools' survival relies precariously upon them continuing to receive government funding. Within these schools, approximately ten 45 minute periods are devoted on average to Jewish studies and Hebrew per week. Hebrew is a core part of the curriculum with most of the States accepting Hebrew as a University entry course. Approximately 91% of all Australian Jewish children have attended, at one time or another, a Jewish day school.⁴⁵ This contrasts sharply with the 70.7% of non-Jewish Australians that attend government schools.⁴⁶ Of those people entering a Jewish day school, 90% remain until their matriculation year.⁴⁷ Secular academic success is the primary determinant by which people choose to enter a Jewish school. Judaic achievements have been difficult to measure. There is a consensus that local resources, curriculum and training still needs to be further developed.

One half hour a week of right of entry classes, varying hours of supplementary schools and other part-time educational facilities provide a Jewish education to the remaining population. Tertiary study

opportunities are on the rise and available for most university students. These courses do provide a primarily academic nuance to the study of Judaism.

The Australian Jewish community is still growing in size with every state showing an increase. Overall, this increase was by 7.7% between 1986 and 1991.⁴⁸ This is due partially to continuing migrants⁴⁹ as well as due to birth rates that are higher than the basic replacement level. The adherence to ethnic groupings and possibly the high attendance at day schools promotes a low intermarriage rate of 8.5% for Melbourne, recorded in 1991.

Australian Jews also tend not to identify themselves as Jews when dealing with a public census. According to Rubinstein,⁵⁰ this figure amounts to 23.4% of the Australia's Jewish population. Some *Shoah* survivors refuse to acknowledge this identity on any public document for fears of personal safety. Some religious Jews also refuse to identify themselves as such. Thus, an accurate understanding of the Jewish community is difficult to assess. This has serious implications for determining which facilities need to be developed and for attaining an accurate reflection of the shape of the community.

Thus, multiple phenomena in the social development of Australia as a whole helped determine the shape of Australia's contemporary Jewish communal and educational construct. The country's original close ties with Britain, Australia's promotion of religious culture, albeit through the Church of England, the non-Anglo prejudices, the subsequent waves of immigration and other significant contemporary social events of each decade, each have left a definitive mark on Australia's contemporaneous Jewish communities. On one hand, Australia is still trying to let go of her Mother country, on the other she is still changing shape as new migrants continue to make their way onto her shores. New social contexts continue to present themselves. The Jewish community has never had time to develop entirely from within. It has constantly been fed with and depended upon valuable resources from the outside world. It has made excellent use of these. But as Jewish refugee numbers throughout the world lessen and migration patterns desist, Australian Jewry will have to reach deep within and create a Judaism that is distinctly Australian. The community can call itself religious, predominantly Orthodox, but the practices of its members continue to reflect something else. While its members ignore the call for halachic living, the expanding Lubavitch leadership insists on more. Australia will have to continue developing resources that can sustain what it has and can help the community to become something new. The leadership and training needs to come from within the community, so that it can respond to the familiar needs of what Australians want. Israel will continue to

play an influential role, even a unifying role, but even that role is changing. Day schools wait for the inevitable withdrawal or lessening of state funds and the divisions between ethnic and religious bounds will not help to sustain the community.

Australian Jewry has an impressive record of its development of Jewish educational facilities throughout the country. This might have the potential to sustain the vibrant and diverse Jewish community that exists. As more Jews reach the inevitable fourth generation mark, without migrants to replenish them, Australian Jews could walk the certain path of higher intermarriage, less involvement in the community, greater disparity between the members and its leadership and the collapse of its primary educational facilities. The educational and other resources contained within the community are plentiful. They need to be developed and claimed. Having students within the facilities must not be a step that is taken for granted. Sustained efforts need to be maintained to ensure that once the student arrives in the schools, they leave them more Jewish. This sense of Jewish, itself, still needs to be defined or redefined from within. It needs to take the synagogue and the multiple cultural and secular institutions into account. The community needs to develop an Australian version of what being Jewish can be. Education also needs to serve as a bridge between the parents of the new migrants and the broader community as a whole. The ethnic divisions add richness but flirt with divisiveness. The infrastructure has been successfully laid, the next steps of building upon them need to be more fully prepared.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Rutland, S. D., *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*. Sydney, William Collins. 1988, p. 21.
- 2 Ibid. p. 218. This was recorded in a report, during the inauguration of the York Street Synagogue, in 1845.
- 3 *Australian Jewish Historical Society, Journal* Volume 4, part 3, p. 125.
- 4 Many would travel large distances to be able fulfill a religious ritual, such as *brit milah*. Rubenstein H. *Chosen: The Jews in Australia*. Sydney, Allen and Unwin. 1987, p. 37.
- 5 *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Volume 4, part 5, p. 241. There is a suggestion that the idea for a Jewish school has its seeds even earlier.
- 6 Hyman Isaacs arrived in Sydney in 1879 to assume the position of headmaster in the new school. Not much is known about him, but it is thought that his prior occupation was as teacher in the Jews Free school in London.
- 7 It is uncertain what the content of the primer was.

- 8 147 students were attending the day school and 80 the Sabbath school, out of a population of 260 Jewish children.
- 9 The first was Cohen, M. *The Principals of Judaism*. Sydney, 1855. This was followed by Davis, A. *Jewish Rites Explained*. Sydney, 1869. The latter of the two was the more successful.
- 10 Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was a leading Jewish scholar of the twelfth century, based primarily in Egypt. One of his many works included a personal statement expressing thirteen underlying principles of Jewish belief. These are often regarded by the Orthodox movement to be fundamental pillars of the Jewish faith.
- 11 Bierman, D. 'From Centralization to Pluralism: Jewish Community Group's', in *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, volume 8, no. 2. Australia. 1994.
- 12 Schools administered under the auspices of the state governments.
- 13 For a more detailed examination of the right of entry system, see Benjamin, D. 'Essays in the History of Jewish Education in New South Wales', Part 2, in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, volume 4, part 3, Sydney, 1955.
- 14 In 1881, there were only 78 Jewish women to every 100 men. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Volume 3. p. 879
- 15 Ibid., 1971, Vol. 13; p. 89.
- 16 For greater detail, see Klarberg, M; 'The Accreditation of Hebrew as a Matriculation Subject', in *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, volume 13, part 1. Sydney, 1995. These included Jews, Presbyterians, Anglicans and Methodists.
- 17 Ibid. Matriculation exams consisted solely of Biblical quotations that the students were required to translate.
- 18 Medding, P. (ed) *Jews in Australian Society* The Macmillan Company of Australia, 1973, p. 8.
- 19 Said by Graham Pratten, quoted in Rutland, op. cit.
- 20 Cohen, L. *Beginning with Esther*; Sydney, Ayers and James Heritage books and the Australian Jewish Times, 1987, p. 35.
- 21 Murphy, D. 'Diminishing Returns' in *The Bulletin*, 15 October, 1996.
- 22 This is the transliterated Hebrew word for what is otherwise called the Holocaust.
- 23 For more details about the particularistic positions of the Anglo and other communities, see Tisher, S. 'The Establishment of Mount Scopus College: A Key to Understanding a Divided Community' in *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, volume 13, part 1, Sydney, 1995.
- 24 Medding, op. cit., p. 256.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 St. Michael's Church of England school, in January 1945.
- 27 As quoted in W.D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, Volume 2, Melbourne, Heineman, 1991, p. 216.

- 28 Hirsh (1808-1888) was a German Orthodox Rabbi who embraced the enlightenment. He is generally regarded as the founding ideologue for what is now regarded as the modern Orthodox movement. As an Orthodox rabbi, he encouraged secular studies for the Jewish community. He was one of the first Orthodox Rabbis to maintain that one could be true to Judaism and an active participant in the secular world.
- 29 Rubinstein, op. cit., p. 222.
- 30 Ibid. p. 229.
- 31 All figures come from Rubinstein, *ibid.*, p. 230.
- 32 The Emanuel School was sponsored by the Temple Emanuel Woolhara; Masada College was sponsored by the parents of North Shore Synagogue.
- 33 Rubinstein, W.D. 'Jews in the 1991 Federal Census: The Welfare Society Survey, The Jews of Melbourne: A Community Profile', in *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, Volume 12, part 1, Australia. 1993. All figures in regard to day schools come from here.
- 34 In Medding, op. cit.
- 35 Ibid., p. 172.
- 36 Ibid., p. 10.
- 37 Rubinstein, W.D., op. cit., p.230.
- 38 Waverly and Woolhara, Caulfield and St. Kilda respectively.
- 39 Rubinstein, W.D., op. cit.
- 40 Rubinstein, H., op. cit., p. 241.
- 41 Rutland, op. cit., p. 396.
- 42 Ordination
- 43 Bierman, op. cit.
- 44 This age varies between states. It usually begins at five or six years.
- 45 Rubinstein, H., op. cit., p. 258. Note all figures used in this last section, unless otherwise stated, are based upon the reports from Rubinstein, W.D., op. cit.
- 46 From Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed on the internet: <http://www.statistics.gov.au/D3110125/23c2.htm>
- 47 Rubinstein, H., op. cit., p. 258
- 48 Rubinstein, W.D. 'Jews in the 1991 Federal Census: The Welfare Society Survey, The Jews of Melbourne: A Community Profile', in *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, Volume 12, part 1, Australia, 1993.
- 49 Particularly Jews from Russia, South Africa and Israel.
- 50 In Murphy, D. 'Diminishing Returns' in *The Bulletin*, 15 October, 1996.

REFLECTIONS ON PROFESSOR W.D. RUBINSTEIN'S VIEWS AS EDITOR

Sol Encel

Professor Bill Rubinstein is well known as a controversialist, so it is not surprising that his article, 'Recollections of an Editor', in the last issues of the *Journal*, is both controversial and provocative. In particular, his remarks about the 'colonial' relationship between the NSW and Victorian branches of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) deserve some comment.

As I was brought up in Melbourne, but have lived for a number of years in Sydney (with an interval in Canberra), I have long regarded the tensions between the two communities with a certain amount of detached interest. I would have thought that Professor Rubinstein, who came to Melbourne from overseas, could have also taken a reasonably detached view of this traditional rivalry. However, he apparently 'went native' and became a fervently patriotic Melburnian. Otherwise, it is difficult to account for his extravagant use of language when he alleges that the Victorian branch of the Society was 'treated by Sydney like an African colony (in the literal sense of imperialist exploitation, given that our dues were expropriated to pay for the *Journal*)'. This is not the language of scholarship, on which Professor Rubinstein lays such stress throughout his article.

I have no doubt that there have been troublesome aspects of the relationship between these two branches of the Society, but from Professor Rubinstein's account it would appear that all the sins were committed at the Sydney end. This strains credibility too far. As a historian, Professor Rubinstein must be well aware that such one-sidedness occurs only in the most extreme cases. The fact that there are generally two (or even more) sides to a question supplies the basis for revisionist history, of which he is himself a well-known practitioner. In the case of Africa, to follow up his reference, the slave trade involved native African rulers who profited from their collaboration with European slave traders. Imperialism can be a two-way street, and I would suggest that the same is true about the Melbourne-Sydney relationship.

There are remarkable, and not entirely unexpected, parallels between the picture painted by Professor Rubinstein and the vicissitudes of the Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) and its journal, described in a recent article by Brian Fletcher, professor of Australian history at the University of Sydney.¹ Like the *AJHS*, its formation in Sydney in 1900 was due to the voluntary actions of a 'small group of public-spirited men with longstanding interests in the past'. After six years of existence, the RAHS was able to produce its journal, which subsisted for a long time on the kind of 'antiquarian' contributions which Professor Rubinstein damns with faint praise. Given the relative strength of the RAHS in Sydney, the contents of its journal reflected a Sydney 'bias' for many years. Branches of the RAHS were established in the 1920s in other States, but none approached the size, resources or popularity of the Society in NSW.

Stephen Roberts, professor of modern history at the University of Sydney for 20 years, delivered a complimentary address at the opening of History House, Sydney headquarters of the RAHS, in 1941. The substance of his remarks bears some resemblance to those of Professor Rubinstein, but without the purple patches. Roberts spoke discreetly about the 'heterogeneous' and 'preliminary' character of the papers published in the *JRAHS*. As Fletcher remarks, the character of the *Journal* reflected the fact that it was 'mainly the preserve of enthusiastic amateurs', and retained an 'eclectic' flavour. It was not until 1954 that a professional historian, Alan Shaw, then at Sydney University, was appointed editor, and Fletcher clearly believes that this led to a significant improvement in the quality of the *Journal*.

Professor Rubinstein is undoubtedly right in stressing that the growth of the *AJHS* in Melbourne corresponds to the fact that the Melbourne Jewish community is 'the most vigorous centre of Jewish life in Australia'. However, he downplays the fact that this growth took quite a long time to come about, despite the undoubted vigour of the Melbourne Jewish community. In the meantime, the *AJHS Journal* provided an outlet for a number of Jewish scholars based in Melbourne, like Rabbi John Levi and the late Rabbi L.M. Goldman. It was in the *AJHS Journal* that Dr Charles Price's seminar paper on Jewish demography first appeared. Apart from Dr Price, the *Journal* was always hospitable to non-Jewish scholars like Dr E.S. Richards, Eric Irvin and Stephen Tazewell. There could have been more examples, but this was not through want of effort by the editors to attract contributors.

Indeed, from its inception the Society has been served by well qualified and dedicated editors, including Sydney B. Glass, David Benjamin, Maurice H. Kellerman and Morris Forbes, who gave many years of service as both president and editor, and since 1991, Dr

Suzanne D. Rutland, herself a professional historian. Amateur historians such as David Benjamin, George Bergman, S.B. Glass, Percy J. Marks, and Morris Forbes have all made worthy contributions to the recording of Australian Jewish history.

Academic historians, like professionals in other fields, are prone to be somewhat patronising about the efforts of enthusiastic amateurs, and Professor Rubinstein's article displays this attitude at full strength. Of course, the *Journal* has improved significantly in quality as the result of increased professional input, both at the level of editors and of contributors. However, the professionals should acknowledge the pioneering work done for them by the amateurs. Professor Fletcher notes that the *JRAHS* has succeeded in establishing a niche alongside the professional journals which have developed since 1940. Much the same is true of the *AJHS Journal* which caters for a somewhat different public than those served by the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* or *Generation*. Professor Rubinstein does, in fact, make this point. However, it is a pity that his article was not written in a more even-tempered, 'scholarly' fashion.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Brian H. Fletcher, 'Australia's Oldest Historical Journal', *JRAHS*, vol.80, pts.1 & 2, 1995.

BOOK REVIEWS

RELUCTANT REFUGE: UNACCOMPANIED AND EVACUEE CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIA, 1933 - 1945

by Glen Palmer, Sydney: Kangaroo Press,
1997, pp.240, \$29.95.

The publication of Glen Palmer's excellent doctoral thesis in book form is a most welcome step and Kangaroo Press should be congratulated for their decision to publish this valuable research project. *Reluctant Refuge* brings to the reading public the fascinating comparison of two groups of orphan and evacuee children who arrived on Australian shores immediately before and during World War II.

The first group of unaccompanied orphans — in reality not all of them were actually orphans — included a group of 17 Jewish children who were selected from Germany and sent by their parents on the boat, the *Orama* to find refuge in Australia. This group landed in Melbourne and most of them were cared for by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society at the children's home, Larino, later renamed the Frances Barkman Home, in honour of the Society's honorary secretary. Frances Barkman was the moving figure behind the children's scheme. Other Jewish refugee children were brought out by the Jewish Welfare Guardian Society, the Polish Jewish Relief Fund and the Gross-Breeseners. The second group were British evacuee children, many more in number (close to 600), who were sent to Australia in 1940 after the evacuation of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain to escape the bombing and devastation.

Dr Palmer's research is exemplary, and is based on thorough investigation of archival materials, not only in Australia, but also London and Israel, as well as extensive oral history. She deals in depth with all aspects of the children's experiences, in their home countries, on the voyage to Australia and during their time in care in Australia. She interweaves her narrative with personal stories from the children which add colour and depth to her overall message. Her work is thorough and shows an excellent insight into issues of child development, especially in the area of fostering orphans and the unaccompanied children who came to Australia before and during World War II.

In her discussion of the two groups, Dr Palmer has chosen to integrate the stories, rather than tell them separately, arguing that

this 'adds immensely to both the individual stories and to the collective story'. (p.9) I believe that this approach has been successful and that by interweaving the experiences of the Jewish refugee children and the British evacuees, one is better able to compare and contrast the two experiences.

The comparisons between the two groups are very valuable. While the Australian government was very concerned about accepting too many Jewish refugee children and only a handful were saved, a fact which Palmer describes as 'dismal', the government was very keen to assist British evacuee children and bring them to Australia during the war. Thus, there was a 'stark' contrast between the two groups. On the other hand, the experiences of the Jewish children once they arrived in Melbourne were, on the whole, more positive since they were well cared for as a group and Hedi and Ferry Fixel proved to be competent and caring foster figures. In contrast, many of the British children had negative experiences and resented being taken away from their parents and families to be shipped to Australia.

The production of this book is also excellent. In particular, Dr Palmer's collection of photos and other visuals adds significantly to the stories. The fact that Dr Palmer was able to put together such a collection of photographs is a tribute to her dedication as a researcher. The inclusion of the various appendices, the selected bibliography and the index adds to the value of the book.

Dr Palmer's contribution to the issue of refugee and unaccompanied children is outstanding and deserves full recognition. I have no hesitation in recommending *Reluctant Refuge* as a vital reference work to anyone interested in issues of the Holocaust, the immigration experience, child development and care of children, as well as to all who enjoy an interesting read.

Suzanne D. Rutland

ORPHANS OF THE EMPIRE

by Alan Gill (701 pp., Price \$39.95 paperback).

Published by E.J. Dwyer (Australia) Ltd.

This book is described as 'The shocking story of Child Migration to Australia'. Shocking it most certainly is, but I believe that books such as this will become landmark documentations which show how close we are – or were 50 years ago – to Charles Dickens' England of 100 years earlier. *Orphans of the Empire* deals with an important part of Australian history, and Alan Gill, formerly the

religious affairs writer with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, relinquishing this position to become a freelance journalist and author of books relating to serious social problems, does us all a great service.

After reading this book, one thing is certain: we – or our leaders – cannot turn our backs on our children of the future. This book intimately touches all of us. It is also important for its clear analysis of the challenges and the opportunities before us, today. It is the result of some four years of painstaking research and investigative journalism. Child migration actually began 200 years ago when youths like Joseph Samuel were sent here as convicts. In 1800, Samuel, aged 15 years, came under a seven year sentence for stealing. The author of *Orphans of the Empire* also deals with the first Barnardo children, brought here in the early years of this century when entire ships were deployed for this purpose. He writes of the Aboriginal 'Stolen Children', and the children who were sent here from England when their parents had to make the heartbreaking decision to spare them the possibility of death, or worse, during World War II, thus denying them parental affection. Often children were sent to Australia to 'provide Australia's population needs.' We read of the Fairbridge Farm Schools, Barnardo's, Christian Brothers and various Catholic women's religious orders assisting in this role. Alan Gill accounts for some 20,000 child migrants who arrived here after 1947. Some of them had their names changed, their dates of birth changed, so that their parents would not be able ever to reclaim them. We need to ensure mistakes of the past are not repeated. *Orphans of the Empire* will help us here, which is why it should be widely read.

Alan Gill writes in strong and unambiguous words about individual cases which makes the reader feel we need, desperately, the courage and the capacity to do something. Just one case in point deals with Peter Woods, a young Jewish lad who was 14 years of age when he arrived in Fremantle in late 1947 aboard the *Asturias*. Reference has been made elsewhere to the child migrants aboard that ship thus: 'These child migrants have been battered and suffered many indignities.' Peter Woods was sent to Australia from Scotland where it was thought his parents had a carpet business. His father served in the Merchant Navy throughout the war and his mother, it was understood, was killed. As a result, it was decided that the boy should join an aunt and uncle in Adelaide. However, when the ship berthed in Fremantle, welfare officers asked him to accompany them to a Christian Brothers Orphanage at Bindoon, north of Perth, where a Catholic Order was expecting a group of child migrants. The ship's captain apparently agreed to Peter Woods being included. When interviewed for the book, Brother Barry Coldrey, the Christian

Brothers' historian, was inclined to deny certain aspects of the story. Gill writes:

The vehemence of the denial seems to go beyond a desire merely to 'tell the truth'. No doubt it is potentially embarrassing that an Order which took migrant children partly to 'build up the Catholic population of Australia' might have knowingly (or unknowingly) taken a Jew. Being 14, Peter Woods was one of the oldest of the new arrivals. He was also clearly less timid, and made light of the numerous beltings he received. He drove the tractor on the Bindoon farm, which added to his esteem.

When Peter was 17 he left the orphanage to become a shearer on a rural property some 300 kilometres north of Bindoon, in the wheat belt. On 2 April 1950, he was travelling between properties when he fell off the tractor and was killed instantly. His body was taken back to Bindoon for burial. The impromptu cemetery where Peter was to be buried is about 1,000 metres from the main building. His grave, it seems, was dug by his best friend, another 17-year old lad.

Eventually, in 1987, a sister of Peter Woods, Helen Sutton, came to live in Australia from England, and she went to find her brother's grave. Gill writes, 'but she was rudely treated by a Christian Brother who told her she was trespassing.' In the course of writing his book, Alan Gill spoke at length with Helen Sutton and learned that she had been in touch with Gordon Grant, at that time vice-president of the Child Migrant's Friendship Society. In 1989, Grant visited Bindoon and saw for himself

... the poor state of the seven graves, including those of Peter Woods and three other child migrants. Two of the graves were unmarked. A letter of complaint was sent to the West Australian Superior of the Christian Brothers, Brother Gerald Faulkner, who, to his credit, ordered an immediate clean-up and designation of the area as a cemetery. The graves are now neat and tidy and bear appropriate inscriptions. Each grave, including that of Peter Woods, has a Christian cross on it.

It is of interest here that Rabbi Shalom Coleman of Perth has been advised of this case, and he is taking steps to have the matter regularised, despite his present indisposition.

Louise Rosenberg, OAM

OUTWITTING HITLER; SURVIVING STALIN

by Arthur Spindler. University of NSW Press, 1997
153 pages \$19.95

The Holocaust survivor's memoir is rapidly becoming a literary genre in its own right. Arthur Spindler's *Outwitting Hitler, Surviving Stalin* follows this tradition, in a highly personalised account of one man's experiences during the Holocaust. As with other *oeuvres* of its type, one cannot help but reflect how extraordinary times make ordinary people extraordinary in themselves.

In Tarnow, a small provincial town in Galicia, Poland, Arthur Spindler grew up in a loving middle class family, trained as an electrician and fell in love. His charmed passage through life came to an abrupt halt with the Nazi invasion of Poland. Surviving the Holocaust in Poland as a Jew, as we all know, represented seemingly insurmountable challenges. Spindler met them, conquered them and survived to tell the tale. And what a tale it is!

Living on false papers as a Pole, he became wheat controller for a German company, Oskar Krause, which collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture to supply wheat and grains to Germany. When two gun-toting soldiers from the underground army appeared in his office demanding a tonne of wheat, Spindler not only obliged, but blithely arranged for it to be delivered by a German army truck, complete with four armed guards. So impressed was the commandant, that he invited Spindler to join the partisans and made him quartermaster of the regiment. This put him in double jeopardy with the Germans, but had either group known he was a Jew, he would not have survived. His blue eyes and Nordic appearance, an abundance of youthful self confidence and zest for life, combined with outstanding organising abilities enabled him both to meet the exigencies and overcome the dangers of his triple life. His contribution to the resistance movement was recognised with the rare award of the Cross of Valour. For the conquering Russians, this same participation earned him two years in Stalin's gulags.

The recurrent themes throughout the book are his touching and abiding love for his wife, Marga and the agony of the loss of every member of his family. This emotional aspect of the book is a great strength, standing juxtaposed to the bravado of the exploits described. It is a stark reminder that the Holocaust is the story of ordinary human beings — victims and survivors — who loved and were loved.

The style is one of transcribed oral history. The simplicity of language, with its liberal use of Australian colloquialisms, makes the book an easy read. For this reviewer, the simplicity of style tended to

reduce the impact of the truly dramatic events described. However, this is probably an unfair criticism. Spindler is a survivor, not an author or historian. *Outwitting Hitler; Surviving Stalin* is one man's story in his own words. His words, along with other testimonies written by survivors, are important and valuable. Firstly, they fulfill the Jewish injunction to remember — *zachor* — and secondly, they bear witness, providing eye-witness accounts of that dark chapter in history.

Spindler's book contributes another voice, another experience and another piece of documentation to that body of evidence.

Sylvia Rosenblum

J.F.S. THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS FREE SCHOOL,
LONDON SINCE 1732

by Dr. Gerry Black, Tynsiders Publishing,
London, 1998 Price: £11 incl postage

Although not central to Australian Jewish history, this book is relevant to the study of Australian Jewry because many English Jews who themselves migrated here or whose descendants live here today, were products of this remarkable establishment. For example, Rev David Freedman of Perth and Rev Ornstein of Melbourne were pupils at the Jews' Free School (JFS) as was my grandfather, Phillip Bass. In addition, its famous headteacher for 55 years, Moses Angel, was the son of Emmanuel 'Money' Moses, a convict transported to Van Diemen's land in 1841 for receiving stolen gold. Emmanuel died the same year and Moses Angel took up his position at JFS the next year.

Dr. Black's excellent book sets in place the background that was London's Jewish East End 56 years before the first Jewish convicts arrived in Sydney. He clearly describes the poverty, the overcrowding and the thievery of the East End community. The *Talmud Torah* opened in 1732; a broader curriculum was introduced in 1788; and in 1822, set amongst the grime and the noise of Spitalfields in Bell Lane as a beacon, was the Jewish Free School, which educated thousands of Jewish children and provided hundreds of Jewish teachers. In 1856 JFS was the largest school in England; in 1900 the largest in Europe. It took in poor immigrants and turned out Englishmen and women. It taught pride in heritage as well as in contemporary society. It fought to remain independent and it made compromises — it was traditional yet it moved with the times. Today, although beset by communal differences, it remains a proud

comprehensive school of 1500 pupils located in Camden Town devoted to developing thoughtful, tolerant, responsible, caring young citizens who have a strong sense of identity with Judaism and Israel.

In the nineteenth century, when many poor East End Jews were being lured by missionaries to convert to Christianity, the school provided a strong Jewish identity. It also played a role in pressing for full emancipation for English Jewry which was finally achieved in 1858 when Lord Rothschild took his seat in Parliament. It was supported wholeheartedly by generations of the Rothschild family who provided funds, and medals to its students to commemorate the 1858 success. We have in the archives a copy of the Rothschild Commemoration medal presented to Joel Moses in 1874, possibly the uncle of Rev. Solomon Phillips. The school today still has a logo and uniform carrying the Rothschild colours.

Since its inception in 1732, 75000 pupils have passed through its doors. As well as Jewish subjects it had a complete curriculum and through communal donations was often the envy of other establishments. In the 1930s it had a model railway and a model house both of which were fully operational!

The book contains a good index and a solid bibliography as well as a glossary. There are wonderful illustrations contrasting the old and the new and lists of exam questions as well as large quotes from annual reports and school magazines. There are many amusing stories as well as tales of serious problems which the school has faced over its 266 year history. Dr. Black has spent many years poring through archival material and other sources to produce this fascinating and detailed account of the incredible success story that is JFS.

Helen Bersten

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Dr Rutland,

I was shocked to read Professor W.D. Rubinstein's letter to the editor (*AJHS Journal*, Vol. XIV, part 1, Nov. 1997) in which he makes ill-informed, unsubstantiated claims in a criticism of Dr Rutland's article, "The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodox Judaism in Post-War Australia" (Vol. XIII, part 4, June 1997).

Dr Rubinstein maintains that:

1. as late as 1930, members of all synagogues in Australia practised an Orthodoxy comparable to that in Vilna, Cracow, or Jerusalem;
2. the term "Strict Orthodoxy" is to be preferred over the more commonly accepted "Ultra-Orthodoxy";
3. the difference between "Orthodox" and "Strictly Orthodox" is seen in the latter's (a) adoration of a rabbinic figure, (b) religious insularity and isolation, (c) garb worn, and (d) meticulous adherence to halachah;
4. there was no pre-World War Two "Strictly Orthodox" community of any significance in either North America or Great Britain.

There was indeed an insignificant number of Ultra-Orthodox Jews in Australia prior to World War Two (I will discuss the term "Strictly Orthodox" below). Yet the post-war influx of the Ultra-Orthodox brought in its wake a gradual revival and shift by the whole Jewish religious community towards greater religious practice and learning. It is ludicrous, though, to suggest that prior to that time, the average congregant in any Australian synagogue was generally as halachically observant as their counterpart in Vilna, Cracow, or Jerusalem. Few kept Kashrut or Shabbat; hardly any had even heard of Taharat HaMishpachah.* There was a general laxity, complacency, and amiable ignorance which pervaded the then community. (Any sociological study considers adherence to Kashrut, Shabbat and Taharat HaMishpachah as the definitive mark of a Torah-observant, Orthodox Jew. Dr Rubinstein himself has apparently never heard of Taharat HaMishpachah, omitting any mention of it in his discussion.)

Not even all the rabbis of the pre-1930s were, despite Dr Rubinstein's assertions, strictly halachically observant. They would most certainly not have been regarded as Orthodox by Satmar or Lubavitcher rebbes. (Even today the Satmar Chasidim do not recognise the smicha and Orthodoxy of many rabbis, especially those who are Zionist and have graduated from a Zionist-oriented seminary.) Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen, despite his ministerial position at the Great Synagogue and as head of the Sydney Beth Din, was known to advocate certain synagogal procedures which are halachically dubious (see Rabbi Raymond Apple's "Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot", *AJHS Journal*, Vol. XII, part 4, August 1995). Rabbi Cohen sought, for example, to introduce organ music into the Great Synagogue on Shabbat, but was overruled by Chief Rabbi J.H. Hertz, and the Synagogue board of management itself was "unanimous in its desire to retain the orthodox status" of the congregation. Rabbi Cohen also wanted to alter the Kol Nidre liturgy and again was thwarted by a ruling of the Chief Rabbi. Cohen did succeed however in diverging from the practice of most Orthodox synagogues by having the Bimah of the Great Synagogue moved from the centre to near the Ark.

Other rather unorthodox views were held by rabbis such as Jacob Danglow, who, in a letter home from the Western Front in World War One, wrote how much he missed Xmas Eve back home: "I can imagine the dear girls' excitement this evening. They will have their ... stockings all ready for the advent of the benevolent Father Xmas" (see Rabbi John S. Levi's "Rabbi Jacob Danglow: the Uncrowned Monarch of Australian Jews", Melbourne University Press, 1995).

Would a Lubavitcher or Satmar Rebbe (or indeed any Orthodox rabbi of either their or our own generation) really condone such behaviour? Would they regard such behaviour as "Orthodoxy"? One can well imagine any *posek* questioning such attitudes as highly improper, unrabbinic and even unhalachic, to say the least.

Professor Rubinstein's definition of "Strict Orthodoxy" also warrants some discussion. Rather than using the standard term "Ultra-Orthodoxy" which is generally equated with the Charedim, Dr Rubinstein sets off on what one might call a fanciful sociological farce. His term, "Strictly Orthodox" is ambiguous and confusing and he himself admits, when coming to define it, that one is unsure whether or not it encompasses groups such as Mizrachi. By way of contrast, the standard term "Ultra-Orthodox" is far less ambiguous: groups such as Modern Orthodoxy have rarely been included under the category, but rather are termed separately as Modern Orthodox, Religious Zionist, Dati Leumi, etc.

To use a self-defined term like "Strict Orthodoxy" with reference to Australia in the first few decades of this century is misleading and

erroneous. Religious Zionism as such did not exist in Australia at that time and a term which could come to include such groupings merely acts to further confuse the Orthodoxy of Jewish Australians in that era.

Furthermore, despite the absurdity in utilising the term "Strict Orthodoxy" at all, one would have thought that the professor would at least have had enough sense to have placed "adherence to halachah" as its *a priori* definition; instead he lists other factors, such as the garb worn, as more significant in defining the term. Are not Kashrut, Shabbat and Taharat HaMishpachah far more important in defining one's Orthodoxy than the garb one wears?

Nor is Rubinstein correct in asserting that there was no "strictly Orthodox community of significance" in America, Britain or Canada prior to 1939. In relation to Britain he has obviously never heard of the Machzikei Hadath, the Adath Yisrael, Munk's shule, the East End Shtieblach, or the Gateshead community. Nor is he cognisant of the organised Chasidic dynasties already established in the U.S. prior to the war, such as Lubavitcher, Gerer, Bostoner, etc. Any student of Jewish life in America would have also heard of major organisations like the Agudath Israel of America (which in 1997 celebrated its 75th anniversary), and the Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, founded in 1896. And what about the vast number of Shtieblach in the Lower East Side - are they also to be dismissed as "insignificant"?

Professor Rubinstein's letter indicates an ignorance of the halachic fundamentals of Judaism and the historical nature of Orthodox communities both in Australia and abroad.

Yours sincerely,

Benseon H. Apple

* Benseon Apple has just completed his degree in Commerce (Marketing and Economic History) at the University of New South Wales. He has written numerous articles for the Great Synagogue Journal, AUJS publications and the Australian Jewish News on Jewish religious, sociopolitical and historical subjects. He is the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Youth Liaison Officer.

** Taharat HaMishpachah means family purity.

ERRATA

Jews In Rural New South Wales. Corrections and Additions

Helen Bersten's article on 'Jews in Rural New South Wales' in *AJHS Journal* Volume 13, Part 4, evoked a spirited response, both from members wishing to correct some errors as well as wishing to add their families histories. In producing this addendum to her article, we are pleased to have the opportunity to add to the profile of country Jewry.

I. With regard to the Cohen families, the following clarifications are necessary:

p.623 David and Samuel Cohen were in Maitland; their brother Abraham Cohen was in Tamworth. The Maitland Cohens were connected with David Cohen and Co., while the Tamworth Cohens were connected with Cohen & Levy.

p.624 Cohen and Levy opened a flour mill in Tamworth in 1867, the firm having been founded in 1846.

p.624 The Port Macquarie Abraham Cohen who married Sophia, daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Cohen is not the same as the Tamworth Abraham Cohen, son of Barnett and Sierlah, brother of Lewis, Samuel, David, George, Henry Emanuel etc. and father of Nathan.

Phillip Cohen of Mosman, who provided this information, has also made the following comments regarding the Cohen families referred to in *AJHS Journal* volume 5, part 8 article by Anthony Joseph 'On tracing Australian Jewish Genealogy':

p.413: 'For example, there was a Jew from Germany called Levy Emanuel Cohen who flourished in Brighton, England, about the year 1820. Several of his children migrated to Australia ...'

Emanuel Hyam Cohen of Brighton was from Germany. Levy Emanuel Cohen was his eldest son. Emanuel Hyam Cohen's two youngest sons, Abraham and Raphael (Ralph), migrated to Australia. Levy Emanuel Cohen (with another brother, Nathan) remained in England and was the publisher of the *Brighton Guardian*. So, it was

Levy Emanuel Cohen's two (younger) brothers (not his children) who migrated to Australia.

p.414: 'As an example of this may be cited the family tree of one of the sons [sic] of Levy Emanuel Cohen whom I have mentioned earlier. This son [sic] Abraham Cohen settled in Tamworth, NSW, where many of his family still live today, including his grand-daughter, Mrs V. I. Cohen...'

The Abraham Cohen who settled in Tamworth is not the Abraham Cohen 'mentioned earlier' in the p.413 example. The one who settled in Tamworth was the younger brother of Lewis, Samuel and David Cohen (of David Cohen & Co); he is the Cohen of the business Cohen & Levy of Tamworth (and the Levy was Louis Levy, the younger brother of Lewis Wolfe Levy). This Abraham Cohen's descendants may well still be living in Tamworth. But, Mrs Victor I. Cohen was not his grand-daughter. Victor I. Cohen was the son of George Cohen (the twin brother of The Hon. Henry Emanuel Cohen, and older brother of Nathan Cohen). Victor married his first cousin, Ida Cohen, who was a daughter of his uncle Nathan (who settled in Tamworth in 1858). George and Nathan were both sons of the Abraham Cohen (who married Sophia, nee Cohen, daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Cohen), who indeed was a son of Emanuel Hyam Cohen (married Hannah, nee Benjamin) of Brighton, England, who, as previously mentioned, was also the father of Levy Emanuel Cohen. So, Mrs Victor I. (Ida) Cohen of Tamworth was a grand-daughter of an Abraham Cohen, but not the one who settled in Tamworth. Ida Cohen's grandfather, Abraham Cohen, settled at various times in Sydney, Port Macquarie, Goulburn, and Sydney. Some of both George and Nathan Cohen's descendants certainly do still live in Tamworth.

II. Harry Lewis provided information about Lewis family in Narrabri as follows:

p.625 Harris Lewis followed his two brothers to Australia in 1907. He came with his daughter, Ettie. His brothers were Abraham (already in Inverell) and Morris (in Moree). He set up a tailoring shop with his son Jack and daughter Ettie in 1907. Jack was not with him on arrival and Dr. Lewis is not sure of the date of Jack's arrival in Australia. In 1909 Harris was joined by his wife Julia, son Maurice, daughters Nancy and Belle and Jack's wife Esther together with her two children.

III. Ruth Barnett added information on the Wagga community as follows and included an article by David Rosenwax on the Brann family:

Abraham Mendes, my grandfather, never set foot in Wagga; Uncles Joe and John never lived there. Abraham and family migrated in 1920 from London to Melbourne. He died there in 1927, aged 86. His widow (Dinah, not Diana) subsequently joined her son (my father, Ephraim George) in Albury where he worked as chief accountant for Maples' country furniture stores, owned by the Melbourne Nathans. My father built his mother a house at the top of Beacon Hill. He was transferred to Maples' Wagga branch about 1932, bringing his mother and Aunt Rachel and, in 1939, starting his own business, the Oxford Furnishing Co. (in partnership with his half-Jewish cousin Maurice Myers, son of Dinah's brother Ike - the families had sailed from England together). Maurice's sister Rose became the wife of Fred Solomon of Melbourne, mother of Keith and mother-in-law of Dr Geulah Solomon. Dolly, another sibling, married Ralph Rapke. They, their daughter and two sons embraced Christian Science. Ike's remaining two children had no connection with Judaism.

If I might digress, my Uncle Joe (mentioned above) was a 'black sheep' who deserted his second wife, Ruby (nee Bran, formerly Goodman). Family lore has it that his first wife, Evelyn, was a member of the Melbourne Myer family but I have never verified this. Ruby was the daughter of Tobias Brann of Chiltern (Vic.), niece of Jacob Brann of Albury, and widow of Sol Brann from Delegate (cf. above AJHS article). The Goodman brothers, Jacob and Sol, had crossed the state border from Delegate to Chiltern to find Jewish wives - the Brann sisters, Rose and Ruby. Ruby's brothers proudly showed us Brann's General Store, which loomed in my ten-year-old eyes as a huge, somewhat intimidating barn. The store and the old house remained standing as local landmarks when I returned and photographed them in 1990. Dr David Rosenwax of Sydney, grandson of Jacob Goodman and Rose Brann, holds detailed histories/family trees of the Brann-Goodman families. He relates that his great-great-grandmother Hyman was once held up by Ned Kelly.

To digress further, and to illustrate the complexity of Jewish inter-relationships in this restricted early milieu, there are three independent connections between the Mendes' and Goodmans. Ruby Goodman married my Uncle Joe Mendes; his brother John married (first) Ruby's niece Amy Goodman of Melbourne; and my great-aunt Rachel (Myers), Dinah Mendes's sister, became a bride at 69 to the twice-widowed (Maurice) David Goodman (Gutman), father of Jacob and Sol, above. Rabbi Danglow officiated on 4 April 1922. Thus David Goodman wed the aunt of the future second husband of his late son's widow! - Sol had died in 1919.

And so to return to Wagga. Its Jewish population has, to my knowledge, never exceeded about 20. But 1954 was not, as stated,

the 'peak'. The population in that year numbered 5 Mendes', 3 Ratners, and one temporarily-domiciled schoolteacher, Harry Kaplan. In addition to the only 'permanents' (Ratners and Mendes') subsequent additions included Harris and Julie Morris with daughters Jeannette (now Tsoulos), Robyn (Lenn), Judy (Dobbie) and Anne – 1952-3; Dr Kurt and Ruth Muller with children Judith and (now Dr) Robert – 1958-60; and Eugene and Rachel Kofman from Shanghai, with children Ronnie and Nora – c.1955-59. Kofman owned the chicken processing factory. The Morrises, Mullers, Kofmans and Harry Kaplan moved to Sydney, where Harry was remarried - to Celia Bell (nee Goldstein).

Frances Koffel, former wife of movie theatre-ad make David Koffel, managed a Wagga fashion store in 1955-56. She came with her son Martin (my high school fellow-student) and a Dr Doctor. About 1958 Suzy Day, a South American Israeli, arrived with husband Norm, a 'Wagga boy' whom she met when he was in Israel with Australia's U.N. peace-keepers. Her son Ramon (later Raymond, of Cowra) was born in Wagga.

The town's Jewish numbers probably peaked in the 1930s, although not all of the following were strictly contemporaneous (one or two may have died or left in the early '30s and others arrived slightly later). They included my father, his mother and Aunt - my mother came as a bride in 1936; ENT specialist Dr Lou and Adele (nee Owen) Ratner; tailor Jack Beirman, wife Rene, twin daughters Kitty and Phoebe and son Basil; Jack Nathan, owner of Maples, his wife and children Brian and Jill; Mrs Nathan's tailor father "Ikey" Lewis and wife; and a Dr Solomon, whom my mother remembered as a kindly, very overweight man who dragged himself around on grossly swollen legs. His wife found him dead in bed one morning, aged only in his late '30s. She returned to Melbourne and later remarried. Just before the war, German refugees Martin and Rosa (?) were given a home by my parents and lived briefly in Wagga. After her husband's premature death she became Mrs Copeland of Sydney. Apparently in line with contemporary custom, the Jewish 'professionals' of Wagga through the 1930s -'40s scarcely mixed with their 'merchant' class co-religionists, probably deeming it socially unwise!

In the 1920s and possibly until later, Jack Nathan's brother-in-law Mr Levy owned the Grand Hotel. My father's diary praises the "typical Jewish beauty" of Levy's young daughter Edna, who played the piano for him in 1927 when he travelled to Wagga from Albury for Rosh Hashanah services at Ikey Lewis's. It would be interesting to know the identities of those 'unknowns' who constituted the *minyán*, and also to know what became of Edna Levy.

I was born in 1940 – possibly the first Jewish birth in Wagga –

followed by my sister Naomi, her contemporary Kitty Ratner and my brother David, and to my knowledge we were the only 'identifying' Jewish births in the town before my family's departure in 1960. As you can see, there is a pattern of transience with only a couple of constants.

When my mother arrived fresh from Golders Green in 1936, Wagga's population was 13,000; now it is close to 60,000. But of all the aforementioned, only Suzy Day (who lost all contact with the Jewish community), Jill and Brian Nathan (who married locals and never had contact) and Adele Ratner (undoubtedly Wagga's most permanent Jewish resident ever, for probably 65 years) remain in the town. I would dearly like to know who, if anyone, has replaced the other ghosts of my past.

Ruth Dinah Barnett (nee Mendes)

IV. Dennis Bluth has supplied information about the Big Brother Movement and the Bluth and Mundstock families in rural farming.

He states that his grandfather was one of the farmers placed at Mooringa. His father and uncle (who were twins) ended up at Glen Innes with Werner Heilbrunn. Dennis Bluth states in regard to footnote 54 of Bersten's article that his father distinctly recalls coming on the *Ormonde* in September 1938 and had not yet left Germany in May 1937, the date given by Walter Brand in 1959 as the docking date of the ship.

With regard to the name Rolf Mandstock, Mr. Bluth suggests this refers to his uncle, Rolf Mundstock who was not part of the Big Brother Movement. The Bluth brothers after arrival sponsored their parents Walter and Hertha, who in turn in 1939 sponsored their daughter Ursel and her husband Rolf Mundstock who arrived in September 1939.

V. Mrs. Marcelle Marks has corrected the spelling of the home of Abraham Pearlman of Boggabri used in Bersten's article. The correct spelling is Herzlton. She has also noted that Abraham's brother Isaac was the prime mover in setting up the hospital at Boggabri.

Some Historic Houses. Corrections and Additions

Since publication of my article 'Historic Houses: Former Residences of Jewish Families in Sydney', in our *Journal*, Vol.13, Part 4, my attention has been drawn by friends to several errors and omissions. Some of these have been due to inadequate research on my

own part, some, by editorial well-intentioned suggestions, and some, because of misleading information. But, as the author of the work, I accept full responsibility for all, and shall try to redress as many as possible here, that further errors will not be perpetuated. For many of the corrections I am deeply indebted to the late Orwell Edward Phillips.

1. Page 663, para.2, line 3: Cleveland House stands on *the corner of Chalmers and Buckingham Streets*, and not as stated on the corner of Bedford and Buckingham Streets.
2. Page 666, lines 3 and 6: 'Rachel Gotthelf' should be *Sarah Gotthelf*.
3. Page 666, line 10: 'Hallenstein-Gotthelf families' should read *Michaelis Hallenstein families*. However, the two families were closely linked with the Gotthelfs, as Moritz Michaelis' wife was the former Rachel Gotthelf.
4. Page 672, last para., line 1: 'Sir William Cowper' should read '*Norman(later Sir) Cowper*'.
5. Page 679, paras. 3, 4: Orwell Phillips senior was *not honorary architect of the Great Synagogue* - he was not an architect.
6. Page 680, first para., lines 1, 2 and 11, 12: 'Royal Institute of Architects' should read '*Royal Australian Institute of Architects*'.
7. Page 680, second para., line 5 *seq.*: *Engadene* was between Onslow Avenue and Billyard Avenue, which did not intersect until after '*Engadene*' was demolished. And, incidentally, the house, '*Engadene*' is the correct spelling. The spelling in the article was due to a proof reading error after the manuscript left the author's hands.
8. Page 681, para.1, lines 4, 5: The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney is now merged with the *National Australia Bank*. The portrait of George Judah Cohen is probably still in the same position as it was when the building was the Head Office of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, but is now a *branch of the National Australia Bank*.
9. Page 682, second last para., line 7 and *seq.*: The two sentences should read: '*Built on its site in 1939 was the Minerva Theatre, designed by architect Dudley Ward. The building was later altered by architects G. Crick and B. Furze to become the Metro Centre, which was a complex including a picture theatre, restaurant, dance floor and cafes.*'
10. Page 683, first para., line 5: The Montefiore Home was on *the corner of Old South Head Road and Victoria Road*.
11. Page 683, second para., last sentence, regarding the homes which the Cohen and Levy families left to the people of Maitland: It

probably needs to be explained that 'Cintra' was given as an orphanage for girls, and 'Bennholme' to the Benevolent Society as a hospital.

Louise Rosenberg

There was a large correspondence concerning the confusion between Samuel Davis, the watchmaker, owner of Sarahville and Samuel Davis, the founder of the Australian Stores. Letters were received from Mrs. Stella Marshall and Mrs. Heather Davis. The latter writes as follows:

I have read with much interest the various articles in the most recent *AJHS Journal*, Vol XIII, Part 4 and after reading Helen Bersten's 'Jews in Rural NSW' and Louise Rosenberg's 'Historic Houses: Former Residences of Jewish Families in Sydney' I feel it is time to correct some previous errors and record formally some details of the TWO men by the name of **Samuel Davis** who for a period both resided in Goulburn NSW at the same time. Helen refers to these men as Samuel Davis (1) and Samuel Davis (2). Regrettably Louise in referring to the house Sarahville has these men confused.

Samuel Davis (1) was born c.1813 in Southwark, Surrey, as were some of his older siblings. He was the youngest son of twelve known children born to Jacob (John) Davis, a hatter and his wife Maria (nee Joel) and possibly twin to his sister Caroline (wife of Benjamin Joel). It is not known how long this family had resided in Britain but it is known that his father was born there c.1751.

Samuel was tried at the old Bailey on 6 January 1831, convicted of stealing and arrived in New South Wales per *Georgiana* (2) on 27 July 1831 when he was assigned to R.M. Campbell in the district of Argyle.

By 1836 Samuel held his Certificate of Freedom and settled in Goulburn. By 1838 he had established the Australian Stores there and became a very successful and respected member of the local community. On 26 February 1840 he married Frances Barnett and they had two children, Sarah (1841) and John (1843), both born in Goulburn.

Various members of Samuel's family followed him to the colony. His eldest sister Dinah with her husband Isaac Levey and children arrived in 1835. After his father's death in 1842 his mother and single sister, Elizabeth, came and resided with the Levey family. By 1846 his nephew, David, was living in Goulburn where he married Rachel Mandelson and for many years operated the Old Commercial Store there. Another of Samuel's brothers, Mark, arrived in 1850 as did

Mark's other two sons, Isaac and Coleman (brothers of David aforementioned) and finally his sister Caroline Joel.

Samuel finally left Goulburn and settled in Sydney where he died on 27 December 1892 at the home of his niece, Sarah Solomon, daughter of sister Caroline.

Samuel Davis (2) was also born in Southwark, Surrey. He was born on 2 May 1828 to Mordecai (Mark) Davis and his wife Hannah (nee Nathan). Mark was a cigar merchant born in Posen, Prussia, in 1796. He left his native country in 1815 and subsequently settled in Britain where he married and had six children.

Samuel's elder brother David arrived in Sydney in the early 1840s, married Eleanor Ellis, and carried on a business in Sydney as a watchmaker and jeweller. His two sisters, Catherine and Annie who both married into the Brodziak family also settled here.

Samuel subsequently joined David in the colony and by 1849 was advertising in the *Goulburn Herald* as watchmaker and working jeweller of Goulburn and 475 George Street, Sydney. On 29 May 1850 he married Sarah Phillips in Goulburn, this being the first Jewish marriage celebrated in that town. They remained in Goulburn for a few years and by 1855 had settled in Sydney. By 1861 the family had moved to Brisbane where Samuel was for many years involved in the commercial life of Queensland, where he became an active member of the Jewish community. He built a spacious home in Brisbane called Rosalie Villa.

By 1884 Samuel and Sarah had relocated to Sydney where in 1888 Samuel purchased land in Challis Avenue and built Sarahville. On 8 June 1900 Samuel and Sarah celebrated their Golden Wedding there with a lavish reception.

Samuel died at his residence Sarahville on 11 August 1903 and his home was then sold.

Thus we can see these two men came from very different backgrounds, yet had much in common. It is unfortunate that earlier historians, confused by the name, took them to be the same person.

(Mrs) Heather Davis

Apology to Dr Anthony Joseph

The gremlins which plagued the typesetting and proof reading of the last Sydney Journal apologise for the errors in rendering Dr. Joseph's name and for certain minor misspellings in his article, as well as for the unaccountable alteration of the degrees after his name.

Dr. Joseph himself apologises for date errors as follows:

p.643 Amelia Hart was born in 1839

p.648 Betsy Gordon died in 1911

Margot Salom, The Honourable Maurice Salom: an Anglo-Jewish Gentleman and a South Australian Pioneer, *AJHS Journal*, Vol XIII, Part 2.

Page 177, paragraph 1, lines 7 - 17: further research has established that the place of birth and early residence of Mordecai Haim Salom was Santa Cruz de Aguer or Saint Croix in Morocco, not St Croix in the Virgin Islands as assumed at the time of publication of this paper. (Notarial Archive NA. 10262, p.877; NA. 10491, p.673; NA. 10247, p.4; NA.10247, p.18, Municipal Archives, Amsterdam.

Morris Ochert, 'Darling Downs Jewry and the Toowoomba Hebrew Congregation', *AJHS Journal*, Vol XIII, Part 4, 1997.

p. 577, line 13. The illness was 'puerperal fever', known as childbed fever which affected women recently delivered of a child.

Re Eliezer Levi Montefiore: Errata from Morris Ochert

In *AJHS Journal*, Vol XIII, Part 4, 1997

Page 695. The sketch is twice named as 'Kenney's...', but the caption in E. L. Montefiore's own handwriting clearly reads 'Kennerbys...' Page 704, Note 35, however, refers both to 'Kenney's and Kennedy's.

"Ned Kelly entered my Great Grandmother's store and said, 'Do you know who I am?'"

The maternal side of my family has been in Australia for almost 150 years. Might I add hastily that none were convicts; as far as I know, I count myself as fourth generation Australian as my Great Grandmother (Johanna Brann nee Hyman) was born on the ship coming out in 1849. The family came from Colmar in Alsace. When Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the Prussians took over. Life became untenable for the Jews and the family fled to London in 1817 where they remained until the late 1840s when half the family went to the USA and the other half to Australia.

They landed in Melbourne and settled in what was then the thriving gold-mining town of Chiltern, where they opened a General Store to supply the goldfields. The Kelly Gang ranged in that area and the family of Kate Byrnes, one of the Gang, lived opposite.

When on the run, Ned Kelly entered my Great Grandmother's Store and said to her, "Do you know who I am?" She warily and quite frightened said that she didn't but asked if he was hungry. He was. As she had just baked two meat pies, she gave them to him. He ate one and took the other with him and disappeared.

My Great Grandfather Maurice David Goodman left Kivva in Poland with his wife and two children and fled across Europe to England. The date is un-

My Great Great Grandmother was held up by Ned Kelly

by David Rosenwax, Bondi Junction GP

known, but it was probably around 1880. His only language was Yiddish. On arrival in London, when asked his name by an immigration official, he said, "Moishe Dovid Gutmann". The Official said, "I can't write that, I'll call you Goodman".

The Goodmans then sailed to Wellington New Zealand but because of storms, the ship was wrecked on the rocks. My Great Grandfather and his family survived but lost all their possessions. In fact they survived so well, they eventually had twelve children. Great Grandfather was a tailor by trade and approached the Jewish Wholesale Tailors in Wellington and asked them to give him money to set up. This they refused but placed him in a little shop and supplied him with off-cuts of material.

Things didn't go so well, and the family sailed to Sydney and settled in Lower George Street, the Rocks, where my Grandfather was born in 1880. At first they prospered and moved to Moore Park and then to a three storey terrace in Roslyn Street Potts Point.

When the Depression of 1889 hit, they lost everything and decided to move south to the country, eventually arriving in Bombala and then Delegate (the last town in NSW). All their goods

were brought by bullock wagon from Sydney. Great Grandfather started a business hawking goods by horseback to the wealthy sheep graziers and eventually opened a General Store in Delegate. With his sons now growing up, he opened stores in Nowra, Milton, Craigie, Bendoc and Bombala as well.

Before Federation, there was excise charged on goods crossing the border between Victoria and NSW. Great Grandfather used to get the Customs Officers drunk whilst his boys ran the goods across from Craigie on horseback. Tobacco Duty was 1 Pound in the Pound.

When my Grandfather decided it was time to get married, he travelled across the border to Chiltern. He had heard of a Jewish family, the Brann Family, living there and they had two daughters. He eventually married my Grandmother. His brother thought it was such a good idea, he married her sister.

Thus, the two pioneering families of Brann (nee Hyman) and Goodman were amalgamated.

GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES

This list represents enquiries made to the AJHS until April 1998. If you did not initiate the enquiry but would like to add information or receive information, please write to our Genealogist, Mrs Rothenberg, at 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington 2008.

JACOBSON, Jacob and Family. Born Tiktin, Lithuania. Married Beile. GUTMAN, Brana, Born c.1938 Romania. Lived in Australia many years.

KURZ, Johann Freidrich, 1827-1893 Married Anna Rosina.

OFFNER, Michael Frederick, 1827-1911. Married Katherina Caroline.

ROSE, Louis. Married to Anne Mitchell, Ballarat 1855. Children Agnes Born 1857, David born 1859.

EMANUEL, Louis, son of Julian and Eva. Died 1903 aged 70.

ZANWILL, Samuel, known as Long Zanwill, granted get to wife Mindla or Minka by proxy of Rabbi Aaron Levy 1830 or 1831.

ZIMAN FAMILY, From Latvia and Lithuania.

BERMAN, Israel, son of Berl and Hana. Born Minsk 1902.

PEAK, Anne Alice, married William Archer Oliver.

JACKSON, Rebecca of Poland. Married Victor Mulholland.

MOLL, Frederick, Born Germany 1837.

AVERY, James (convict) Born 1801 Greenwich, England.

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Anne Andgel, BA, has written a number of works on Australian Jewish history, including her book, *Fifty Years of Caring*, a history of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society.

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Robert Merrillees, BA (USyd), PhD (ULond), his thesis dealing with trade between Cyprus and Egypt in the Bronze Age. He is a former Australian Ambassador to Israel, Sweden and Greece.

Morris S. Ochert, OAM, ASTC, (MechEng), MIE Aust, CP Eng., Queensland correspondent for the AJHS, researcher and author of many articles on Australian Jewish history, specialising in Queensland topics, a retired engineer and honorary life member of the Institution of Engineers of Australia. He is an honorary life member of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

Leanne Piggott, BA, MA, M. Phil (Oxon), lecturer in Modern Israel Studies in the Department of Semitic Studies at the University of Sydney.

Louise Rosenberg, OAM, a member of the AJHS for over thirty years. Honorary Secretary for 25 years, including 11 years as Secretary/Treasurer from 1966 to 1977. She is a regular contributor to three publications: the *AJHS Journal*, the *Great Synagogue Journal*, and the AJWS Jewish Community Services' *Keeping in Touch*.

Sylvia Rosenblum, BA, M. Ed (Hons), Dip Ed, Dip Museum Stud, is a freelance curator, specialising in Jewish museology. Her major credits include the establishment of The A. M. Rosenblum Museum at the Great Synagogue, Sydney, and the Sydney Jewish Museum. She is a frequent guest lecturer on museum and heritage issues.

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