

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL XV



PART 4

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:

New South Wales:

Dr Suzanne Rutland, BA (Hons), MA (Hons), PhD, Dip Ed (Editor)

Mrs Helen Bersten, BA, Dip Lib (Honorary Archivist)

Mrs Judy Shapira, BA, Dip Ed

Victoria:

Dr Rodney Goultman, BA, MEd, PhD, Dip Teach (Editor)

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

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

Rabbi Dr John S. Levi AM, DD, MAHL, MA, Dip Ed

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 Rodney Goultman, or to the Honorary Secretary, Mr Ronald 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: Sir Isaac Isaacs

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Editorial

The year 2001 is the 'Year of the Volunteer'. Since the establishment of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney in 1938 all the Society's activities, not only in New South Wales but across Australia, have been based on volunteer work. Without the hours of dedicated voluntary labour this Society could not function. In this issue of the *June Journal* edited from Sydney, I felt that it was appropriate to pay tribute to those volunteers in Sydney who have maintained the Society over all the years.

Our longest serving volunteer is Louise Rosenberg who was first a committee member, then secretary for twenty-five years and is now continuing as our honorary historian. Louise has received a presentation from the AJHS committee and an award from the Royal Australian Historical Society and was also awarded an OAM in recognition of her service to the Society. Sophie Caplan and Nate Zusman have been on the committee for many years and at the annual election in December 2000 Sophie Caplan was elected senior vice-president following Nate Zusman's retirement from that position. Sophie Caplan has also received an OAM in recognition of her work for this Society as well as for the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, of which she is president. Judy Shapira replaced Nate Zusman as our second vice-president.

Our honorary archivist, Helen Bersten, has been a volunteer since 1978 and has served as honorary archivist since 1979, taking over from historian Dr George Bergman. Helen's dedication to the Society enables our office to run efficiently. She works in the Society's office two days a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and organises the schedules of the other volunteers. A celebratory lunch was held to mark her twenty years of voluntary service in 1998. Another stalwart in Sydney has been Miriam Solomon who has served as honorary treasurer for twenty years since she succeeded Phoebe Davis in 1981. On 20 May 2001 we held a successful luncheon at the Great Synagogue to honour Miriam Solomon for her two decades of voluntary work for the Society. Miriam Solomon

plans to retire from the position at the end of the year. Morris Z. Forbes and Rabbi Raymond Apple, both former presidents, still write for the *Journal* and address the Society's meetings, Mr Forbes has been named as a Fellow of the Society. Morris Ochert continues to give dedicated service as our representative in Queensland and continues to be as productive as ever. Both Mr Forbes and Mr Ochert have also been awarded an OAM for their community services.

Of those who assist Helen with the archives, Les Belinfante has been the longest serving, having started in 1989 at the Great Synagogue. He helps to catalogue the periodical publications. He made the move with us to Mandelbaum House and continues to give dedicated service. Noni Guthrie and Irene Rothenberg both moved with us to Mandelbaum but ill health finally forced them both to retire. Lisa Marx comes to catalogue the books in our library and is another volunteer whose period of service stems from the old days at the Great Synagogue. New volunteers are Joe ben Mayor who is our computer expert; Yvonne Meyers who is preserving our photographs; and Jeannette Tsoulos who took over genealogical enquiries from Irene Rottenberg as well as being the Society's honorary secretary. Our vice president, Judith Shapira, is helping with photocopying of newspaper clippings. We will be thanking our volunteers with a lunch at Mandelbaum House in the near future.

There have also been some significant changes in Victoria. Dr Malcolm J. Turnbull has stepped down as the *Journal's* Victorian editor and has been replaced by Dr Rodney Goultman. I would like to express my personal appreciation to Malcolm for his serious and thorough contribution to the publication of the *Journal*. Working with him was always a great pleasure. I would also like to welcome Rodney Goultman as the new editor and look forward to working with him.

With this issue of our *Journal* I enter my second decade as editor. In June 1991 I took over from Mr Forbes as the New South Wales editor. This issue again encompasses a range of articles covering different issues of interest across various states with contributions from some of our stalwarts including our long time volunteers, Morris Forbes, Morris Ochert and Louise Rosenberg. This being the centenary of federation, Mr Forbes has written a substantial and detailed account of the role played by Australian Jews in the process of federation and their contribution to the first federal parliament. The *Bulletin* was one organ that represented the growing nationalism in Australia. Founded in 1880 by J.F. Archbald and J. Hayes, this paper advocated an aggressive nationalist policy as well as being opposed to foreign capital investment. However, it was this policy which led the *Bulletin* to attack 'the Jew', as being part of

international finance and usury. While most historians, including myself, have tended to concentrate on the *Bulletin's* antisemitism in the 1890s during the period of the depression and the Russian Jewish migration scare, Dr Bernard Hyam's article has studied the first five years of the *Bulletin's* publication, from 1880–1885. His detailed study of these years has shown that these antisemitic attitudes existed in the pages of the *Bulletin* from the beginning of its publication. Morris Ochert has given us a pen sketch of a Queensland Jewish character, Dorothy Heiser, and an insight into life for Jews involved in mining in the second half of the nineteenth century. Dorothy Heiser's life encompassed the period of federation.

Three articles are interrelated, dealing with the themes of Jewish education and publications and the religious leaders and educationists involved in these endeavours. Marcelle Marks has written a carefully researched piece on the life of Rev A.T. Chodowski who served in congregations as far flung as New Zealand, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. Chodowski's most important contribution was his founding of the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* towards the end of his life as a rival to the conservative *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*. The *Chronicle* lasted for less than a decade, but its liberal views on issues such as Zionism and Jewish immigration helped to broaden perspectives in Sydney Jewry. Rev Chodowski also contributed to the founding of the Randwick–Coogee Jewish Education Board whose history is carefully traced by Neville Cohen. This story indicates the desire to promote Jewish education in Sydney's suburbs but also the difficulties of such an undertaking in finding appropriate educators and, above all, finance for such endeavours. With the impact of the depression, the Randwick–Coogee Education Board was doomed to failure. Marcelle Marks has also written the history of the early years of the Eastern Suburbs Hebrew School established after World War II at the old Central Synagogue, situated on the corner of Grafton and Grosvenor Streets, Bondi Junction.

Louise Rosenberg has written an important piece on one of the Society's voluntary workers, Rabbi Shmuel Gorr, who served as the Society's Corresponding Member from Israel from 1979 until his death in 1989. Lee Simmons' article, presented as an oral paper in Sydney in March 2001, traces the history of the Spielvogel and Ballarat registers. Mr Simmons has undertaken a fascinating piece of detective research, reflecting all the skills of historical document analysis, and his article is recommended reading. Dr David Mossenson's piece deals with an historic site, the Perth Jewish cemetery, and the recent efforts to ensure that its memory remains acknowledged with a suitable monument, even though most of the site has recently been redeveloped.

Three of the book reviews deal with Holocaust memoirs — by Harry Fransman from the Netherlands, David Landau who survived in hiding in Poland and Ruth Rack who went to England on the *Kindertransport*. The publication of these memoirs, more than fifty years after the Holocaust, is indicative of the present rush to record Holocaust experiences after the many years of silence. There has been much historical debate and discussion as to why it took over thirty-five years — more than a generation — from the end of the Holocaust for a commitment to remembering and recording to emerge. This was a factor not only in Australia but throughout the Jewish world. As I discussed in my chapter on Holocaust memory in *With One Voice*, co-authored with Sophie Caplan, there were persuasive reasons for the initial low-keyed approach to Holocaust memory. Many displaced Jews believed that the best way to keep their story alive was by having children to replace those who had died. There was a very high birth rate in the displaced persons' camps, with the new arrivals often being named after loved ones who had perished. This link was not a public one but provided a verbal message within the family. Further, Holocaust memories were too painful, and survivors, bent on using all their energies to build a new life, refused to speak of them with others, especially their own children. Many sought to suppress their memories of their recent horrific past. Some did not even tell their children that they were survivors and, even if they did, they refused to talk in detail about their experiences. Wishing to protect their children from the horrors, they felt the best way to do this was by not talking about their past.

This wall of silence and the importance of Holocaust memory has recently been explored by Dr Mark Baker in his prize winning book, *The Fiftieth Gate*. At a recent talk at the Sydney Jewish Museum about his book, Dr Baker stated:

I grew up in a household where there was silence — silence about my parents' stories. I didn't ask, so my parents never answered me. We didn't talk "about that". My parents never spoke, but their dreams — their nightmares — are my dreams. These dreams were inarticulated, they were communicated in silence. I carried their dreams, their pain... With my book, I wanted to know. I wanted us to talk about those dreams. I wanted to break the silence. Why? Part of it was shame; part of it was that I was teaching courses on the Holocaust, but I did not know my own parents' story. I knew something of the pain, but I knew nothing. Therefore, it was time to break the silence.¹

However, it took forty or fifty years before many survivors and their children came to this conclusion. The three books reviewed in this issue of the *Journal* represent the present realisation of the importance of breaking the silence and recording the stories. They will become part of the Holocaust memory in Australia and will offer the coming generations important first hand accounts when survivors are no longer here to tell their stories in person.

Once again, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my *Journal* sub-committee without whose assistance this issue could not have been produced. As in past years Judy Shapira has done the sub-editing and I would like to acknowledge her eagle eye for picking up errors despite the computer's spell check. As always, I would also like to thank Helen Bersten for all her invaluable assistance. I would also like to thank my research assistant, Amelia Klein, for all her help with the *Journal*. She is continuing a family tradition of Jewish scholarship and community service started by her late grandfather, Louis Klein and continued by her father Peter Klein and her aunt, Susan Bures. As I enter the second decade of editing the *Journal* I am delighted to see the ongoing interest in Australian Jewish history. I believe the Society's founding president, Percy Joseph Marks, who died in 1941, just two years after the Society was founded, would be delighted to see how the Society which he helped to found is flourishing sixty years later.

NOTES

1. Address by Dr Mark Baker to the descendants' group, Sydney Jewish Museum, 27 October 1997.

Suzanne D. Rutland

THE FEDERATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE ROLE OF AUSTRALIAN JEWS

Morris Forbes

In 2001, the Commonwealth of Australia is celebrating the centenary of its formation on 1 January 1901. Since that date, Australia has witnessed momentous events on the stage of world history which have influenced its history. Only a little over a century before Federation, white settlement of this vast continent began. By the beginning of the Commonwealth the Jewish section of the whole population had experienced but 70 years of communal life as Jews. Within a further 50 years this religious group was to be transformed by the influx of migrants escaping from the tragic European Holocaust, and by the exciting advent of the creation of the State of Israel and its entry into the nations of the world. At the edge of the diaspora, as it has been described, the Jewish citizens of this land, notwithstanding their smallness in numbers, have contributed significantly to the life of the wider general community as well as to their own group. A key example of the significant involvement of Australian Jews in the general life of the community was the process of Federation. Of the 50 colonial delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1897-1898, two of them were native born Australian Jews: Isaac Isaacs and Vaiben Louis Solomon. Isaacs was to earn the distinction of being among the Federation leaders to become known as Founding Fathers of the Commonwealth.

In 1951 on the occasion of the Jubilee of the inauguration of the Commonwealth, this Society's *Journal* contained an article by Harold H. Glass, entitled, 'Some Australian Jews and the Federal Movement'.¹ The author was then in the early stages of a very successful legal career. Afterwards he became a senior Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. He was well equipped to write that essay in which he selected four Jewish figures relating to the Federation debate, and whom he permitted to speak briefly on the subject in their own words. They were Vaiben Solomon of South Australia, Isaac Isaacs of Victoria, Sir Julian Salomons of New South Wales, and Elias Solomon of Western Australia. The present writer will make further reference

to them, and also to others, all of whom demonstrated the involvement of Jewish individuals in Federation politics. It will also be instructive to consider the participation of Jewish parliamentarians in the first parliament of the Commonwealth. Further, having regard to the records readily available, it is also relevant to write of the celebration by the Jewish community of the achievement in 1901 of the nation's federal constitution.

Federation led to the unification of the Australian colonies and the birth of a nation. The article by Glass serves as a good introduction for those wishing to learn something of the views and attitudes of a few prominent Australian Jews when federalism occupied the thoughts of many. This article stated, that 'one would in any event expect, namely, that there was no such thing as a Jewish contribution to the Federal movement', adding that 'individual Jews took varying attitudes, depending upon their personalities and backgrounds, and particularly, the conditions in the different colonies'.² To the same effect, and possibly with Glass' comments in mind, Rabbi Porush later wrote, 'In itself, this move was of no consequence to Jews as Jews'.³

In a broad sense, these observations are true, and it is clear that colonial Jews shared the political reactions of their fellow citizens. However, on closer consideration, it can be argued that the federal movement may well have affected Jews, whether as supporters or opponents, in their immediate hopes and outlook. Thus, for example, Isaacs, perhaps because of his great ambition, and added at times to a feeling of isolation, pursued that subject almost as an article of faith. He displayed a zeal that was not always acceptable to others. An entirely different example of fervour was that of Sir Julian Salomons. He expressed his unreserved opposition to Federation with an exaggerated and excessive concern for the future of the senior colony to which he was so attached. Further, he even spoke of concern for the future of the British Empire and British traditions which, he argued, were being placed in jeopardy. Both of these Jewish leaders allowed themselves to be moved and carried away by sentiments and emotion displayed by few others. Moreover, other Jews hoped that the move for colonial union would help to bring together, on the new national level, their concerns and objectives as a minority religious group. This Jewish factor will be further examined.

THE DAWNING ERA

Aron and Arndt, the authors of an historical work relating to the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation have remarked simply: 'The

advent of Federation saw the profile of the Jewish community further raised'.⁴ The basis for this comment is not given and there is no discernible evidence to support it, unless it is to be found in the outstanding work of one such as Isaacs. Perhaps the writers were referring to the new opportunities which opened with the changed system of government, though the comments do not read that way. When the Commonwealth first became a formal reality, Rev. J.H. Landau second minister of the Great Synagogue in Sydney, delivered an eloquent sermon. He did not name any Jewish federalist specifically, contenting himself with some general remarks. 'Let our thoughts,' the preacher said, 'revert to those who first took up the cause of the Federation of these colonies, and whose patient labours and unflagging perseverance during a long series of years prepared the way for the triumph which has at last been achieved'.⁵ In at least a decade before the federal movement had gathered momentum, it was Sir Henry Parkes, Alfred Deakin, and Edmund Barton who were the first of the few to advocate colonial union. There appears to be no record of any particular interest by Jews at that preliminary stage of federalism, or during 'the long series of years' of which Landau spoke. However, Isaacs, who entered politics in 1892 representing the electorate of Bogong, mentioned Australian federation in his address to the electors. He further spoke on the subject in meetings of the Australian Natives' Association of which he was an active member.⁶

In retrospect, it would be thought that the union of the separate colonies would have been seen as having an added value for the Jewish communities. In 1901 they numbered about 15,000 only. Australian Jewry had to await the marked changes resulting from the significant influx of migration before and after World War II. In 1944, for example, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry was formed as a representative national lay organisation, and, in 1946, Rabbi Dr Israel Porush convened the first national conference of Jewish Ministers in Sydney. However, the immediate impact of Federation brought no such developments for Australian Jewry which, in the respective Commonwealth States, continued to function as it had in colonial times. When only the final formalities remained to establish the Commonwealth, tentative hopes were expressed that 'the Federal spirit will likewise make itself felt amongst the Australian Jewish communities'.⁷ The editor of *The Jewish Herald* suggested that the larger congregations should assist the small congregations and scattered members of the faith in outlying districts. The paper believed that 'A sort of circuit preaching' would answer the purpose!

However, if the spirit of federalism led to the creation of a new

nation, it had little influence at that time upon Australian Jewry amongst whom a countervailing parochialism was clearly evident. A detailed explanation, based on the events of the day, is to follow. In direct contrast was the stance consistently taken by the Catholic Archbishop in Sydney, Cardinal Moran who, while loyal to the British connection, was very keen to see the growth of an Australian nation. To him, the federal ideal was not confined to politics, and, whenever possible, he took active steps to bring together in Council the Bishops of the Australian Church.⁸ On the other hand, the religious leaders of the Jewish communities, even at the very moment of the consummation of the Commonwealth, were unable to agree to meet in conference. A dispute in fact developed between them, aborting a desire in some quarters for an Australian inter-congregational meeting.

The Jewish Herald indicated that, apart from politics, there were many reasons for Jews to welcome the Commonwealth with satisfaction but it referred only to 'many vexatious anomalies' which henceforth would be removed. Hardly a major matter, it pointed out that hitherto a Victorian minister in Wodonga could not celebrate a marriage in Albury, a couple of miles across the border. The *Herald* wrote:

We are all Jews, and all living under the Crown of Great Britain, but under the old regime we were to treat each other as foreigners. With federation all this ceases, and, for all we know, a much closer union may be brought about between the Jewish congregations in the Commonwealth. At least let us hope so'.⁹

A few months later, immediately before the turn of the century, the *Jewish Herald* hailed 'The Dawning Era'. The paper noted that Australian unity was becoming an established fact, with people on both sides of the Murray River looking upon each other as fellow citizens, and recognising that the ties with the mother country were not being weakened. These remarks, however, were rather vacuous in their terms. They seemed to suggest that there was nothing remaining to be said on the matter, apart from the statement that 'all were sharers of a glorious past and co-workers in what all hope to be a no less glorious future'. The concluding thought was 'that the mother will always be proud of her daughter beyond the seas'.¹⁰ It was but a pious hope to think that Federation was about to promote unity of the Jewish communities. In Melbourne, for example, the two congregations, despite serious financial difficulties, failed in an attempt to agree on a scheme for their amalgamation.¹¹

For the Jewish communities, one of their own, Isaac Isaacs, was at the forefront when the federal movement was at its peak, earning him 'a special place in the front rank'.¹² Isaacs was indisputably recognised as one of the Fathers of the new Constitution. No longer mere colonials, Australians were to breathe the air of a national ethos. It portended changes which could also have been beneficial to the Jewish communities if they had begun to look beyond their state boundaries in addressing Jewish issues. In Sydney, as well as Melbourne, the Jewish press contented itself with a modicum of rhetoric, without consideration of possible advantages which might accrue for the local Jewry under the new political dispensation. For example, in 1900 a leader in the *Standard* lavished some sentiment on the federal theme:

Surely we are living in a unique period and we shall soon witness the consummation of an event which every sincere Australian has for many years longed to welcome. It matters not that opinions are divided as to the equity of the terms upon which the union of the Colonies is accomplished.¹³

Again, in 1901, *The Standard* emphasised the unity which all Australians would enjoy as follows:

We have been united by the cement of national life into a Commonwealth which sank the oppressive barriers and drew the bonds of kinship and brotherhood into unison.¹⁴

Before 1900 there had been few, if any, references to the subject of Federation in the *Standard*. It has to be appreciated that in the period from 1895-1900 the *Standard* was in its formative years, and, that its founder, Alfred Harris, apparently preferred that the readers should resort to the general press for all news and comment on political questions, including the controversial topic of Federation. At the relevant time the Great Synagogue was the central and dominant institution of Sydney Jewry, its leaders being generally of a strong conservative outlook, akin, it has been said, to that of nineteenth century English gentry.¹⁵

CONSTITUTION CONVENTION AND REFERENDA

It was the detailed provisions of the Constitution Bill, some of them very contentious, which were productive of so much argument and delay in reaching final agreement on the part of the several colonies. In September 1897, the Constitutional Convention moved

to Sydney, but the proceedings were not mentioned by the *Standard*. The newly formed Jewish paper broadly reflected the values of the Jewish community establishment upon whom it was largely dependent for its support.¹⁶

Reticent on ordinary Federation affairs, the *Standard* did not hesitate to publish an item, probably paid for, of an evangelical nature by one, Donald Cormack. Cormack drew up a religious scheme in which he urged that the Bible should be the rule of faith and practice, that the relations between Church and State should be defined, and that the system of government should approximate the constitution of the Hebrew Sanhedrin. First, it said, there had to be a recognition of the Creator.¹⁷ This was an unusual contribution to the federal debate, no doubt well intentioned as an exercise in religiosity, though most of it was without practicality.

The constitution makers, however, received many petitions for insertion of a clause in the preamble to the draft constitution, with appropriate words acknowledging and invoking the Supreme Being. Most of the colonial legislatures indicated their assent thereto. Yet, secularist objection was raised by some delegates at the Adelaide session of the Convention, and when a vote was taken on the question, the majority was opposed to it. It is of interest that delegate Isaacs voted with the minority delegates for the inclusion of the proposed words in the Preamble.¹⁸ The attitude of the delegates changed when they met at Melbourne in 1898 when Dr Quick of Victoria supported the original proposal, saying that it 'could be subscribed to by Roman Catholics and Protestants, but also by Jews, Gentiles, and even Mahomedans'.¹⁹ The words agreed to be inserted were: 'Humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God,' and they have ever since remained in the constitution's preamble. There was ample evidence of a public religious sentiment which assisted in inspiring some who looked forward to the Commonwealth. 'One Nation, One Destiny' were the words, albeit a popular catch-cry, expressive of the federal movement. There were some who believed that the words in the preamble would influence a large number of votes for the Constitution Bill.

Matters of passing interest only were noticed by the *Standard* while discussion on substantial federal questions was not raised. It was reported that the Hon Isaac A. Isaacs was the subject of a biography in the 'Catholic Press', and it was stated that it was hoped to give some prominent Catholic a like complimentary notice. The paper went on to refer to the *Catholic Times* which had written that appearances were against Isaacs, adding that Jews were not as a rule handsome.²⁰ In the following year the editor apparently felt to be on safe ground in reporting on a Passover sermon by Rabbi Dr

Abrahams of the Bourke Street Synagogue, Melbourne. The Rabbi claimed, in the course of his Address, to be viewing the federal question through a Passover spy-glass, though he conceded that it shed no new light on the Constitution Bill. He saw the basic object as freedom in providing for the civil and religious liberties of the people, and he mentioned compromise on such issues as railways, rivers, and bounties. He noted that the constitution could be altered, and he drew attention to the words to be included in the preamble. The Rabbi concluded on the Exodus theme, urging that all should walk boldly forward.²¹

Early in June 1898 the first referendum failed to be carried in New South Wales. The *Standard* seized the opportunity to comment that the result was a 'sad disappointment to rabid Protectionists,' while hoping that parliament would pave the way for a more reasonable outcome. 'Opinions are,' the paper said, 'at great variance among our people'.²² One week later there appeared an item, 'Federation at any Price,' reporting on a long letter by S. Harris published the previous day in the *Daily Telegraph*. The letter was described as being well reasoned and a criticism was promised in an early issue. It was an example, for so it was said, that co-religionists might follow.²³ The letter writer maintained that the government had treated the people as aliens, ignorant of the issues, and having to listen to 'frantic billites' only. What was to be gained by the acquisition of Tasmania, South Australia or Western Australia? Would the bill lighten taxation or protect our shores against invasion? To use a phrase of the day, the bill was said to be as dead as Julius Caesar.

When the Reid government in New South Wales was about to face a general election, the *Standard* contained a Leader under the heading, 'Politics'. The editor stated that Federation had become a political party-cry, and he asked for fair play for the Rt. Hon. G.H. Reid, P.C.. He conceded that Reid had fought sincerely and bravely in the Convention to obtain the best possible advantage for the colony, even if he had to agree with the final result of the deliberations. 'The Jew', as the item read, 'knows that unity is strength and knows the desirableness of Federation, but we must not sell ourselves blindly and wildly and follow a party whose sole aim is self-interest'. Rather, it was stated, it was better to postpone Federation forever.²⁴ In other words, the paper reflected the view of many who were against the bill while professing support for Federation in theory. One senses that the *Standard* was more concerned with the return of the Reid Free-Trade government at the election, regardless of Reid's particular stand on Federation.

A professed enemy of Federation, R.H. Levien, the member for Quirindi, introduced in June 1898 an amendment in the Assembly

to the legislation to require what would be an impossible number of affirmative votes for the first Referendum. He was often regarded as Jewish but he was not so in fact. He was the nephew of Phillip Joseph Cohen and the son of Alfred Levien of Maitland.²⁵ It was later agreed that a minimum vote of 80,000 would suffice. In that form the bill was introduced into the Council by Sir Julian Salomons during an all night sitting when it was passed notwithstanding the strong opposition of Barton, O'Connor and other federalists. Towards the end of the federal struggle Salomons began to modify some of his extreme anti-federal views. A modern writer says of him, that he 'attractively combined learning and earnestness with a great sense of the ridiculous', citing the following illustration of his humour in the course of a parliamentary debate when he explained his objection to equal Senate representation for the states:

Not that I have any hostility to Tasmania. On the contrary, I'm very fond of Tasmania. I spent my last vacation there, and liked it so much that I made up my mind that, if I had a good year at the Bar, I'd buy the island.²⁶

Salomons' speeches on the subject sometimes bordered on the fanatical and one went on for many hours in the Council. J.H. Want, the leading opponent in New South Wales of the Constitution bill, referred to Salomons' speech as being one of 'arduous labour'. When the first referendum vote was defeated, Sir Julian was interviewed by the press. Not claiming to be infallible on the matter, he gave his opinion that: 'The colony has escaped a great calamity,' and that it could be some years before the country was ready for federal union. He thought that Sydney should become the capital. He regarded the bill as one of 'dangerous silliness'.²⁷ In another interview he repeated his view that changes to the bill, which were due to become the subject of conferences and negotiation, ought to originate entirely in parliament, adding that he did not believe in the sovereignty of the people, who were not his masters.²⁸

While Salomons was not without some eminent critics, he was highly regarded, even by those who differed from his views. Thus, Bernhard Ringrose Wise, a contemporary leading parliamentarian and a strong advocate of the federal cause, afterwards wrote:

Sir Julian was too large-minded to be a mere parochial patriot, and in fiscal matters was a Laodicean, who regarded both Free-Trade and Protection as political expedients. His unceasing opposition to Federation was due to a reasoned dislike of the inconvenience of the Federal system.²⁹

Early in 1899 Salomons was appointed Agent-General in London, and this appointment may have softened his feelings, towards Federation. He confessed in the Council that it was possible that he may have been mistaken. He commented, that 'Australia has spoken with an undoubted voice in favour of federal union ... and the voice of the people must in the end prevail ... in some circumstances it is wise early to recognise it'.³⁰ The amendments to the bill were agreed upon at a Premiers Conference and the second referendum was successful in June 1899.

However, when Deakin, Barton and others were in England to assist with the progress of the constitution through the British parliament, Salomons came into emotional conflict with Barton who had spoken on the question at a London Club. He took extreme objection to remarks of Barton relating to the changed position of the Privy Council in the constitution.³¹ This clash demonstrated that Salomons was still very much a conservative on such matters and was unhappy to see any change in the status quo.

In the lead-up to the legislation for the second referendum, the Legislative Council of New South Wales was below its normal numbers. The Prime Minister — as he was then designated — secured the assent of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Frederick Darley, to the appointment of 12 new councillors. This action was criticised as an attempt to 'swamp' the Council by appointees pledged to support the Enabling bill for the Referendum. Reid denied these allegations and said that he had only sought to ascertain if the new councillors were in sympathy with the legislation. It is recorded that George Judah Cohen was one of those intended to be nominated, but he declined the honour as he had been asked if he would agree with the proposed legislation.³² Referred to afterwards as 'the most dominant figure of his time within the Jewish community of New South Wales',³³ Cohen was a man of very high standards who would have been concerned if he was thought to be under any obligation to the government in this connection. It may also be surmised that he was not a federalist, a stand which he may well have shared with other Jewish leaders in Sydney.

The federal cause, or opposition to it, was the political issue in the New South Wales election in 1898, but it was not always a 'straight out' question. Not long a graduate in law, Daniel Levy nominated for the Fitzroy Division as a Liberal Federalist and a supporter of Reid. This was his first step in embarking on a long political career. He eventually decided to withdraw from the campaign so as not to split the vote.³⁴ In Annandale, L.R. Cohen, who spoke of being associated with a great leader such as Barton, and referring to Reid as 'a bitter opponent of Federation,' was unsuccessful in attempting to split the vote in that electorate. In Petersham, on the

other hand, John Jacob Cohen was able to split the vote which he won by 44 votes. This was Cohen's first foray into politics. His opponents tried to discredit him, but Cohen asserted that he was always a Free-Trader and a democrat. Barton spoke in his favour at the local meeting and said that Cohen was never a 'rail-sitter'. The vote turned out to be 'a magnificent Liberal triumph'.³⁵ It may be noted that John Jacob Cohen was joined by Dr Cullen and R.H. Garran on a federal committee which was responsible for a prodigious output of articles and other editorial material, liaising with many newspapers to promote Barton's efforts for the bill.³⁶ While a member of the Assembly, Cohen was included in a committee to confer with the Executive of the Federal Association for the purpose of securing the acceptance of the amended bill as negotiated by Reid.³⁷ In an early speech by him in the Assembly he criticised those who 'wore federal garments only, while they spoke in a most unfederal tone,' including the Premier, Reid who had misstated the case. He himself, he said, had advocated both in writing and in speech the acceptance of the constitution bill. He thought that it provided a much freer and democratic constitution than any of which he knew.³⁸

From the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century it was realised that there had to be a strong popular movement. Without this the union of the colonies would have been difficult to achieve. The arguments for and against the constitution bill were complex, and it became clear that public sentiment and opinion required to be stimulated by education and appropriate propaganda. This task fell to voluntary organisations upon which the leaders were able to rely as powerful factors in the federal campaign. In Victoria, particularly, the Australian Natives' Association proved to be an influential body of that kind. Isaacs was a prominent member and addressed its meetings. In 1893 in Sydney Barton helped to form the Australian Federation League which, as a centre for federalists, aimed to avoid class distinction or political party influence. Within the Jewish community of the senior colony only a handful of names are disclosed as involved with such organisations. Foremost of them was J.J. Cohen who has been referred to as 'a hard working supporter of Federation'.³⁹ In a schedule of names in his work on the constitution, Garran listed Solomon Cohen of Cootamundra and Alfred Shackel of Grenfell as delegates or invited members at a Federal Convention held at Bathurst in 1896.⁴⁰ Cohen, it is possible, was identical with the party who had formerly been on the Lachlan goldfields and was a president of the short lived Forbes Synagogue. As to Shackel, he was afterwards a president of the Jewish Literary and Debating Society and a member of the committee of the first Zionist Society in Sydney.⁴¹ He was the mayor of Grenfell in 1896

To the Australian Born.

No people in the world have been so manifestly marked out by destiny to live under one Government as the people of this island continent; but no people with so little reason have been so disunited in their public actions.

The Vote on Tuesday next will determine whether we will continue as we are, a cluster of petty provinces, each waging a wasteful competition with the other by means of hostile tariffs and railway rates; or whether we shall have the courage to accept the responsibility cast upon us by our heritage of this great Continent.

"A Continent for a People, a People for a Continent," was Mr. Barton's fine expression of a noble hope four years ago. If Australians are true to themselves this hope will be realised on June 20th.

All the difficulties in the way of Union vanish if we look at them as **Australians**, and not as the inhabitants of any single province. There should be no more difference between, say **Victoria** and **New South Wales**, than there is in **Great Britain** between **Somerset** and **Yorkshire**.

Australia is our home. Our aspiration is to **make Australia great**.

If this is "sentiment" it is also "hard sense." No Nation has ever played a worthy part in the world unless it has had confidence in its own future.

A Nation's Greatness does not depend upon Acreage of Territory or Material Wealth, but on the nobleness of the thoughts by which its people are inspired; and of all the impulses to noble deeds which history records there is none more universal or more potent than this sentiment of Nationality.

Let us become a Nation

and establish in the Southern Hemisphere a POWER which makes for Peace and Order in the sight of other nations, and which will prove to men of every race that the descendants of Britons in AUSTRALIA HAVE NOT LOST THEIR CAPACITY FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT.

A Federation Referendum Placard, 1898. John Jacob Cohen was involved with the production of such placards.

and represented the town at the Convention. The press spoke of him as an active worker for the Federation movement.⁴²

Goldman mentions several Jews who, he writes, served Australia well by their labours for Federation in Victoria. Theodore

Fink, a member of the Upper House, 1894-1904, was the executive member of the Federal League; Max Hirsch, from the Bendigo district, is referred to as one with considerable influence in political circles, advocating Federation through Free-Trade, and debating the subject at a public meeting in Collingwood. Fink is described as a brilliant speaker and a lecturer in political economy, though he was not naturalised and unable to enter parliament. Another was M.A. Rapken, a member of the General Council of the Australian Federal League. E.L. Zox is noticed as an ardent supporter of the constitution bill — like Isaacs, notwithstanding various objections to it, rather than risk a failure of the bill to pass through parliament. Of special interest must be Louis Horwitz, a non parliamentary politician and a lawyer of Hamilton, Victoria who was interested in Federation. On 26 August, 1891, under the auspices of the Australian Natives' Association, he delivered a lecture in Hamilton which was, later published as a four page supplement to the *Jewish Herald*, entitled, 'Federation: What It Is: What It Portends'.⁴³

The move for Federation had a long history as far back as the 'forties of the nineteenth century. In this context, historians mention an event on 14 June, 1883 which became known as the Albury Demonstration. At the border between New South Wales and Victoria on the Murray River, when the two colonies were first linked by rail, about 1,000 guests were invited to an official celebration to mark the occasion. The function is noticed by Goldman who refers to it as leading to the first Federal Convention in 1884 at Hobart⁴⁴ — not to be confused with the Constitutional Convention some years afterwards. Manning Clark opens his Federation chapter by recounting the rail event at Albury, and Garran writes of it as helping to draw closer the colonial bonds, and as suggesting the greater political union yet to come. The two respective Governors, and others, addressed the guests at a monster banquet. Goldman gives the names of the Victorian Jews invited. They were, F.J. Levien, Minister for Mines, at the official table; B.J. Fink, financier and parliamentarian (Geelong); E.L. Zox, the prominent parliamentarian (East Melbourne); H.(probably, Hirsch) Fink, of Geelong; A. Loel, president, East Melbourne Congregation; Simeon Cohen and Rev Elias Blaubaum of St Kilda Congregation. An official and attractive booklet was issued and contained the details of the proceedings, as well as the names of all the invited guests.⁴⁵ It included the above named Victorian Jews and referred to Blaubaum as the 'Hebrew Chief Rabbi'. It included the names of several who can be identified as Jewish representatives from New South Wales. They were, George Judah Cohen, Hon S.A. Joseph and Hon L.W. Levy, but Joseph and Levy did not attend. Also named, was B.W. Levy, proba-

bly a son of L.W. Levy. It may be presumed that G.J. Cohen was invited in his capacity, in 1883, as President of the Great Synagogue.

The Melbourne Jewish community seems to have been favourable, in principle, to the idea of a union of the colonies. The rabbinate clearly endorsed the proposal. In a sermon in 1898 Rabbi Abrahams remarked that it was 'the duty of Jews to promote and extend their liberty under the British Crown, and what was the great object of this Federal bill but to develop the civil and religious liberties of the people to the fullest extent'.⁴⁶ Jewish opinion in Victoria, in general, no doubt reflected the strong desire of the colonists for federal union. Frank Fletcher's comments in his thesis on Victorian Jews between 1891 and 1901 merit consideration, even if there is no indication of their factual basis. He argued that:

numbers of Jews stood to benefit personally from the economic opportunities for trade and commerce offered by the removal of colonial tariff barriers. Indeed, economic gain may well have figured prominently in the support of individual Jews for Federation as it apparently did for many Gentiles.⁴⁷

There is the possibility that a similar observation could have relevance for some New South Wales Jews, especially, for example, those living in the southern border areas. As already mentioned, the expectation that the federal spirit would advantage the Jewish communities in their organisation, both socially and on a religious level, showed no signs whatever of realisation in those times. This matter receives only passing reference from Fletcher⁴⁸ but Jewish historians have been well aware, with respect to the question of communal unity, of the difficulties that prevented such an outcome in the wake of Federation.

The topic of this essay would clearly be deficient in its content without adequate consideration of the contribution to Federation by Isaac Isaacs. However, it is not proposed to repeat what Glass wrote lucidly and concisely, in some five pages of this *Journal* on the subject of Isaacs whose 'life and works,' as the author said, 'provide material for a biography of first importance'.⁴⁹ Such a biography has since been written by Sir Zelman Cowen, a work which amplified Max Gordon's earlier biography published in 1963. As regards the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Federation has not received special attention apart from Glass' article. The centenary of the Commonwealth is, therefore, an opportunity to attempt to consider the subject, particularly in the light of the participation of individual Jews and the Jewish community.

It was not until the Convention on 1897-1898 that Isaacs came into special prominence as a federalist though he had spoken on the matter before that time. When holding the position of Attorney-General of Victoria, he was elected as the fifth of ten delegates to represent the colony at the Convention. His political outlook was Protectionist, radical, and broadly democratic. Whatever his particular views on important questions debated at the Convention, Isaacs found that he needed to agree to compromises rather than prejudice the final achievement of Federation under the constitution bill. He was appointed to the Constitutional Committee of the Convention, while Vaiben Solomon of South Australia sat on the Finance Committee. It was expected that Isaacs would be included in a Drafting Committee to prepare the constitution bill. Alfred Deakin afterwards wrote of 'a plot discreditable to all engaged in it' respecting Isaacs' exclusion from that Committee.⁵⁰ Deakin, while admitting Isaacs' abilities, did not fail to notice what he described as his 'indomitable will and immeasurable ambition,' stating that he found Isaacs to be 'full of legal subtlety and the precise littleness of the rabbinical-mind'.⁵¹ Of this last-mentioned criticism of Isaacs, Sir Zelman Cowen says that it is an allusion to Talmudic disputation and scholarship. Nevertheless, Isaacs was never a Talmudic scholar, and Deakin was no authority whatever on the rabbinic mind. The latter's remarks are evidence of Isaacs' unpopularity and, perhaps to a degree, of an anti-Jewish prejudice, albeit provoked by Isaacs himself. Throughout the Convention, and during his earlier and later career, and despite his brilliance of mind, there is no reason to question some of the defects of his character. As Cowen's work concludes:

His dogmatism, his appalling conviction of rightness..., which was supported by massive rhetoric, copious citation of authorities and interminable statement, did not commend him to those who had to endure it.⁵²

The final assessment of Isaacs' contributions by his biographer is entirely creditable of him: 'He was big in his qualities, and it is unfortunate that some have dealt so strongly on the defects'.⁵³ Some of the critics of Isaacs were too close to him and too much his contemporaries to be the best judges of his value to the cause of Federation. Even Vaiben Solomon, a co-religionist, had a strong dislike of the tiresome learning to which Isaacs would often subject the Convention.

As Solomon told the Convention delegates, '...it would have been a very good thing if we could have arranged for an exploration

party to go through all the various libraries of the colonies and burn all the works of reference on the American, Canadian, and Swiss constitutions'.⁵⁴ In this regard, Isaacs was certainly unrivalled in the extent and detail of his learning and knowledge relating to Convention issues. His dedication to the federal idea was generally unquestioned and it has to be agreed that he was recognised as a forceful advocate of the cause throughout the Convention debates. Isaacs' later work as a Judge of the High Court for many years followed by his appointment as Governor-General are usually seen as the high points of a distinguished career. Thus, Glass opened his remarks by stating, 'The name of Isaac Alfred Isaacs stands at the pinnacle of the achievement of Australian Jewry'.⁵⁵ However, this essay is concerned with the topic of Federation and it is necessary, therefore, to direct one's concentration on a short span of his earlier career. It was, indeed, a meritorious segment of an outstanding life of service to the Australian nation. Looked at in its proper perspective, it suffices to say, as does Sir Zelman Cowen at the commencement of the Introduction to the new edition of his biography, that Isaacs 'participated actively and significantly,' with reference to the Convention, 'in its debates and decisions'.⁵⁶ Isaacs' efforts, as one of the Commonwealth's Founding Fathers, is worthy of full respect, even though his exceptional life and career was to extend well beyond this phase of his earlier achievements.

THE JEWS AND THE COMMONWEALTH CELEBRATIONS

In January 1901 the inauguration of the Commonwealth was marked by elaborate ceremonial and celebrations in Sydney, where the proclamation of the Commonwealth by the Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun, took place. It was, indeed, a bright and brilliant spectacle. Sydney was transformed for the occasion and the festivities excelled anything previously witnessed in a blaze of colour and illuminations. The great Inaugural Procession proceeded to Centennial Park where special prayers were offered and a choir of 1,000 voices was heard. The general press was fully conscious of a great event in the history of Australia. The *Sydney Morning Herald* Leader observed:

It is not often in history that we meet with coincidences so striking — for it is not often that a nation or a continent takes so momentous a departure, and seldom indeed in the world's history have a people entered into full possession of their heritage under circumstances so auspicious and with an outlook so full of dazzling promise.⁵⁷

The procession included the heads of Churches, in order of precedence. Among them, it was reported, were 'the Rabbis of New South Wales,' Revs A.B. Davis, J.H. Landau, and A.D. Wolinski. Isaac Isaacs, Victorian Attorney-General, attended, as well as J.F. Levien MLA, and Sir Julian Salomons. In charge of the Victorian section of the military forces was Major Monash. Rabbi Abrahams of Melbourne was an invited guest, as were Rev Blaubaum of Melbourne, and A.M. Hertzberg, president of Brisbane Congregation.⁵⁸

On 21 December 1900 an address of loyalty was presented to Lord Hopetoun on behalf of the New South Wales Jewish community. It referred to his 'important and exalted position' as the first Governor-General, to a nation characterised by 'the loftiest traditions' and by ranking among 'the foremost communities of the world'.⁵⁹ To welcome the new Commonwealth a service of prayer and thanksgiving was held at the Great Synagogue at 11pm on 31 December 1900. Rev A.B. Davis composed a special prayer: 'For this most eventful day.' It read in part, 'in the history of these several States we have long waited; we have long laboured. Lo, it has come to pass; the purpose has been achieved, and it seems marvellous in our sight'. The prayer included the hope that the Queen should be granted 'still further length of days,' though a few short weeks later, alas, all were to mourn the passing of the Queen.⁶⁰

The sermon by Rev Landau on the above occasion lacked nothing in rhetoric and sentiment, befitting those times, intermingled with pious invocations for the Almighty's blessings. He allowed himself to be swayed by emotion when he began by remarking, 'For this is a momentous occasion; one of the most momentous, surely, in the memory of man'. He went on, almost in lyrical tones:

The throb of one heart henceforth beats in us, the glory and wonder of the Commonwealth to which we belong now thrills us, the responsibility and meaning of Empire now solemnises and gladdens us. We feel that we are no longer separate provinces, jealous of each other's privileges, but that the State boundaries are lost in the larger line that surrounds the Nationality. Now are we linked together in the golden yoke and federation of hearts and sympathies, 'One flag, one land, one heart, one nation evermore'. Hail to thee, Australia Felix! youngest born of nations; hail, all hail! Spirit of a new birth, Empire of the South, the mighty voice of a great and happy people now acclaims thee 'from where the clear surge takes the Leuwin or the notched Kaikouras rise'. Blessed be thou at thy coming in; blessed be thou through all the cycles of the revolving ages.⁶¹

On an official level in connection with the public celebrations, George Judah Cohen was appointed to the Executive Committee and Ernest Marks was included in a special Sports section. The artist, Joseph Wolinski, was commissioned to paint one of four panels adorning the Commonwealth Arch in Sydney. He took as his subject an allegorical representation of 'The Awakening of the Commonwealth'.⁶²

Commonwealth Sunday was observed by all on 6 January 1901 when a further service was held at the Great Synagogue, the press having already noted its 'gorgeous and elaborate decorations' to mark the celebrations. Special correspondents to the Jewish press were impressed with a service that was grander than the previous one. 'Our large synagogue,' wrote one of them, 'was crowded, and notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion, the air seemed charged with suppressed excitement. The unusual presence of a full orchestra, the knowledge of a beautiful choral service, helped to fill the building as on the great fast day'.⁶³ Some extracts are worth inclusion from a report prepared for readers of the Victorian Jewish press. This correspondent described the service as a repetition of that held for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, the centenary of the colony, and, with modifications, at the time of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The music and the choral items, it seems, would have been enhanced had there been greater opportunity for rehearsals. A fine effect resulted from the interpolation of musical passages in the prayer for the Queen and Royal Family, and the sweet simplicity of an aria from Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book was particularly charming. The choir was conducted by Alfred Hill and the music was arranged by Sidney Moss, a choirmaster who was in charge of the music at the synagogue's consecration.⁶⁴

The second sermon by Rev Landau was referred to as being one of great power and eloquence. Today it reads rather as an oratorical *tour de force*, filled, as it was, with patriotic sentiment and unbridled love of England and the Empire. 'We choose neither,' the preacher said, 'Despotism nor Republicanism. We choose to blend our flag with the glorious *semper eadem* of England, the banner of the free; to link our destiny with the most constitutional of all lands, ...' He appealed to Australians not to falter in their morality, charity, and godliness. His final words were directed towards the Jews of the Commonwealth where, he remarked, 'the Wandering Jew shall be a wanderer no more,' and where, he hoped, they might hold 'honoured places in the high councils of the nation, enjoying its confidence, its golden age and ours'.⁶⁵ In retrospect, whatever else might be said of Landau's thoughts, these latter hopes have been fulfilled in the contributions to their country made by many distinguished

Jews, and by the freedom continued to be enjoyed by Australia's Jewish citizens in common with their fellows.

Rabbi Abrahams was present at one, or both, of the above services but took no part in them. However, Rev A.T. Boas of Adelaide and Rev D.I. Freedman of Perth participated in the service of 6 January. They afterwards wrote to the president of the Great Synagogue to express their 'sense of admiration and appreciation of the very beautiful service held on Sunday last ..., and also to thank you very much for the honour conferred on us by permitting us to take part in the service, an honour, we can assure you, which will be pleasingly recognised by our respective congregations as a mark of respect to them'.⁶⁶

With regard to these services and, indeed, the celebrations generally, the *Hebrew Standard* had very little to say. 'In our columns,' the paper said, 'it is impossible to do justice to the great event now being celebrated, or to do more than add a word of praise to those universally expressed at the brilliant success of all that has been done'.⁶⁷ It seems obvious that the scale of the celebrations together with the extensive reportage of the general press precluded the *Standard* from giving any serious attention to the subject, though it is surprising that even the synagogue service and other Jewish involvement received only brief mention. At that stage of the paper's history, its resources would have been entirely inadequate, editorially and otherwise, to attempt to cover in its pages the fast moving celebratory events.

THE CONFERENCE AFFAIR

Although all of the relevant Jewish histories furnish practically no detailed, or any, information relating to the Commonwealth celebrations, they all mention, understandably, and even discuss, the abortive conference of Jewish ministers originally intended to be held in Sydney in January 1901. G.J. Cohen, president of the Great Synagogue, issued an invitation to the ministers for that purpose, to be attended as well by some invited lay representatives. Cohen believed that it would be advantageous to discuss matters of general Jewish concern, with a view to furthering the interests of Judaism on an Australia wide basis. Two only of the interstate ministers attended this preliminary conference. Rabbi Abrahams declined to attend as he felt that he had been treated with great discourtesy when he attended the synagogue service held in Sydney on Commonwealth Sunday because he had not been invited to participate in the service. The synagogue Board claimed that he had not notified them of his intention to be present. Abrahams was finally

asked to read one of the Psalms, which he refused to do, feeling that he had been slighted.⁶⁸ The fact was that Abrahams was the senior Australian Rabbi, head of the Melbourne Beth Din, a good preacher and scholar, apart from being the son-in-law of Rev A.B. Davis, the minister of the Great Synagogue. In hindsight, it would have been a fine gesture if he had been asked to deliver one of the sermons at the Great Synagogue. There was apparently no consultation with him regarding the conference. Overall, it does seem that the leaders of the Sydney congregation were somewhat condescending towards Rabbi Abrahams, particularly as Sydney was also the focus of the Commonwealth celebrations. They were, perhaps, not unmindful of tensions then existing between the rabbinate in Melbourne and the Sydney congregation which still lacked a fully qualified rabbi.

Further attempts, at a later date, it will be seen, also failed to secure the co-operation of the Melbourne religious leaders in a ministerial conference. Of this, Rabbi Porush has written, 'a beautiful vision of unity and co-operation foundered on the rocks of immaturity'.⁶⁹ The affair, as Suzanne Rutland writes, 'well illustrates the proverbial rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne'.⁷⁰ The conference *contretemps* was first provoked by perceived discourtesy, on a personal level, felt by Abrahams. Today, however, it can surely be said that all the conference arrangements might have been made with much more tact and consideration on the part of all parties. According to Rabbi Abrahams, he was concerned that his name was not included in the printed programme to indicate the ministers participating in the above service. In his explanation given to the *Jewish Herald* Abrahams spoke of 'unparalleled discourtesy' by the lay authorities and he considered that, as he said, 'the whole Victorian Jewish community has been slighted'.⁷¹ The Board of the Great Synagogue contented itself with a denial of the discourtesy alleged against it.

The Sydney conference failed to achieve anything, for, it was not adequately representative of the various Jewish communities, it did not seem to have been properly planned, and it commenced with a serious dispute resulting in the complete abstention of the Melbourne ministry. Nevertheless, even if the initiative for the conference came from Sydney, it was a first step, albeit a weak one, to secure and promote wider co-operation between all the Jewish communities of the Commonwealth. The ministers who attended it were Revs Davis, Landau, Wolinski and Phillipstein of the Great Synagogue, and Boas and Freedman from interstate. They were joined by members of the Synagogue Board, G.J. Cohen, N.D. Cohen, L. Phillips, A. Blashki, J.J. Cohen, N.S. Cohen, M. Gotthelf, and R.L. Moss. The *Jewish Herald* provided a report, in some detail,

of the proceedings.⁷² Landau was careful to say that it was necessary that such a conference should have the imprimatur of the whole of Australian Jewry. As subjects for discussion, he instanced the ritual, the causes of intermarriage, the status of school teachers, interchange of pulpits, charity procedures, the means to be adopted for bringing children to love Judaism, the conditions of the young men, and missionary work. According to Boas, there was a need for unity of procedure by which the communities conducted 'their religious constitutions'. As one of many questions, he mentioned the making of proselytes. Freedman, for his part, thought that Judaism in Australia required 'solidification'. Its future, as he saw it, rested on the question of proselytism, yet, each congregation dealt with it quite independently. Finally, A.B. Davis voiced the hope that the conference might eventually lead to the establishment of a United Synagogue of Australia and an Australian Chief Rabbi.

The conference resolved, that: 'It is highly desirable in the interests of Judaism to hold periodical conferences between ministers and representative laymen of the synagogues of Australia'. It was suggested that the first conference be held in Melbourne in the following May, and that the convenor be the president of the Great Synagogue. The May date was suggested as the first Commonwealth Parliament was to be ceremoniously opened in that city at that time, and it was expected that representatives of the Jewish ministry and laity would be able to meet together on that occasion. The proposed agenda for such a conference, it will be seen, was to lead only to dissension in the minds of the Victorian ministers. Further, Abrahams was still smarting from his treatment in Sydney, and the suggestion that G.J. Cohen in Sydney be the convenor of the Melbourne conference would hardly have been palatable in Melbourne. It has also to be appreciated that the Orthodox ministry was then under pressure from some congregational minority groups for changes in ritual and other religious procedures tending in the direction of Reform Judaism. The prospect, therefore, of lay representation at a communal conference was regarded by some Orthodox elements with a degree of suspicion.

Under these circumstances, Abrahams' personal slight served only to exacerbate the situation. He had already given previous indications, within the Melbourne Jewish community, of his concern over matters of personal dignity and status. However, it might be wrong to be too judgmental on that account. By way of illustration, on a non-Jewish level, Cardinal Moran had encouraged a measure of unity for his Australian Church, and was also an outstanding supporter of Federation. During the Inauguration of the Commonwealth in Sydney, the government assigned him a prece-

dence immediately below that of the Anglican Archbishop. The Cardinal resented that action, claiming that he was the senior religious leader, and he declined to attend the official ceremony. That, indeed, was a precedent, even if on different level, which may shed some light on Rabbi Abrahams' personal stand relating to his actions on the question of the above conference. In general, it is abundantly clear that the Australian Jewish communities were still very provincial in outlook in 1901. Even though there was a federal spirit in the air, it was pure optimism to think that these scattered communities were ready to be subject to unifying influences.

A renewed conference was called at the southern venue in May, to be attended by ministers of the Australian and New Zealand congregations and by three lay members of each of them. Shortly before the date fixed for this meeting it became known that all the Victorian ministers, including all the members of the Beth Din, had withdrawn support for the conference and would not attend. The reason given by the Melbourne Beth Din was that they believed that the tendencies of many of the delegates to the conference were antagonistic to Orthodox Judaism.⁷³ Revs Boas and Freedman were again enthusiastic and similar support for the conference came from Brisbane and even Wellington, New Zealand. President, W.B. Isaacs of St Kilda congregation, stated that there was a lack of approval for the action of the Beth Din, and he was supported in this view by president Mendel Cohen of East Melbourne congregation. The Ballarat congregation disagreed with the opposition to the conference by Rev Goldreich.⁷⁴ At the Annual Meeting of St Kilda congregation in 1901 the president again expressed regret that the conference had been frustrated.⁷⁵ At the Annual Meeting of the Adelaide congregation, its president, L. Isaacs, thought that some of the ministers had done themselves great harm having regard to the inadequacies of the reason advanced for the refusal to participate in the conference.⁷⁶

In Sydney, the *Standard* enabled both sides in the dispute to express its views. From Brisbane, Jonas M. Myers wrote, saying that 'the *non possumus* of popedom has been evinced by the Melbourne Beth Din'.⁷⁷ A letter came from Rabbi Isidor Bramson in defence of Rabbi Abrahams' position, pointing out that a conference on Jewish law had to be constituted by rabbis only.⁷⁸ To the same effect, Elias Green, an orthodox identity prominent in later years, maintained that the conference, if held, would have led to procedures not known to traditional Jewish law.⁷⁹ In his history of the Great Synagogue, Rabbi Porush was probably correct, in his considered opinion that the fears of the Melbourne Beth Din relating to ritual matters were 'somewhat plausible' and motivated its attitude

towards the proposed conference. However, he added that 'personal sensitivities' played a part in the dispute.⁸⁰ Almost a half a century was to pass before any further moves were to be made on a wide Australian basis to bring the Jewish ministry together in discussion on the current and future position of Judaism in Jewish life and well being in Australia. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Jewish communities were still rather small in numbers, disorganised, and far too parochial to begin to consider seriously and debate the broader issues that called for unified action. While some would have welcomed the initiative attempted to be taken by the lay leaders of the Great Synagogue in Sydney, there remained the question why some of the influential religious leaders in Melbourne were so strongly opposed to the holding of a conference. It is far from easy, today, to offer a confident and simple answer to that question.

Councillor Joseph Marks, in Melbourne, as president of the Melbourne congregation, together with representatives of St Kilda congregation, presented an Address to the Governor-General who had been known to them as a former Governor of Victoria. 'Among all the citizens of the Commonwealth,' the Address said, 'Your Excellency will receive no more devoted allegiance than from the members of the Hebrew faith'.⁸¹ Australian Jewish leaders of that time were almost all like-minded in such expressions of loyalty though, with the passage of time, they have come to be regarded as somewhat effusive. In the nineteenth century the allegiance owed to the Crown was considered to be a fundamental principle of colonial society, and for many years afterwards the Jewish communities, in particular, were strong in their profession of those sentiments.

As the time approached for the opening of the parliament by the Duke of Cornwall and York, an Address, described as 'one of the prettiest',⁸² was presented to him by representatives of the Melbourne, East Melbourne, and St Kilda congregations. The Address, in part, said:

When the joyous news reached Australia that our late beloved Queen Victoria had decided to prove her affection for her people in commissioning Your Royal Highness to open the first Federal Parliament in person, none were more thrilled with this indication of Royal goodwill than were our co-religionists...⁸³

The president of the Melbourne congregation, Councillor Marks, reported at the Annual Meeting that he made the presentation to 'our future King and Queen',⁸⁴ When the Royal visitors arrived in New South Wales a further Address was presented on behalf of the Jewish community. It was contained in a silver casket

which was on view in the vestry of the Great Synagogue.⁸⁵ As regards the Adelaide congregation, its president, L. Isaacs, stated that, through a mistake, no similar Address was made by it.⁸⁶

THE FIRST PARLIAMENT

Jewish members elected in 1901 to the first Commonwealth Parliament were, Isaac Isaacs (for the seat of Indi, North East Victoria), Vaiben Solomon for South Australia (then one State wide constituency), Pharez Phillips for Wimmera (Western Victoria), and Elias Solomon for Fremantle, Western Australia. Each of them was an experienced politician, having been a member of a colonial parliament. Both Isaacs and Vaiben Solomon had been particularly active in such politics, and they were both delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Much of the early legislation of the first parliament, which continued until 1903, was of prime importance for the new Commonwealth. The government, led by Sir Edmund Barton, was Liberal-Protectionist in its policies, while the opposition, of which Sir George Reid was the leader, followed a Free-Trade conservative policy. A third political force was the rising Labour party which held a balance of power as neither of the other parties had a majority in its own right.

Isaacs was appointed to the Library Committee of the parliament, Vaiben Solomon to the Standing Orders Committee, and Elias Solomon to the Printing Committee. Against the name of Vaiben Solomon in the first volume of *Hansard* there is an asterisk, signifying his acting at some stage as a temporary Chairman of Committees.⁸⁷ On the election of Elias Solomon, two successive petitions were lodged against his return. Following the reports of the Election and Qualification Committee both petitions were dismissed by the parliament as they did not comply with the relevant law of Western Australia.⁸⁸ In opposition to the censure motion in 1901 by Reid, Pharez Phillips emphasised that he was elected as a Barton supporter. Two candidates stood against him in the election, and he had been placarded, as he remarked in parliament, as a high tariff candidate. He claimed to be cognisant of the government's tariff policy which remained Protectionist whilst also raising revenue, the motto being, as he said, 'Revenue without destruction'. He was anxious for it to be known that he was a consistent government supporter, and that Barton was entitled to supremacy.⁸⁹ Phillips had been an active Free-Trader in Victorian politics, a member of the Upper House, and a Minister without Portfolio in the Turner Government.⁹⁰ Phillips was a lawyer and was also active in local government. He remained a member of the Commonwealth

Parliament until 1906. It is clear from the *Hansard* of the first parliament that he was an infrequent speaker in the debates and proceedings.

It may be of passing interest that the question of a prayer for the daily commencement of proceedings was the subject of some early discussion in the parliament. Reminiscent of remarks he made in the Convention, Sir Edmund Barton mentioned that he had no objection to a prayer which the Unitarians would find acceptable and which 'a member of the Hebrew faith' could readily accept. On this question, seeing that the Lord's Prayer had been mentioned, Vaiben Solomon said that he had no objection whatever to it, though at the same time other views had to be considered, and the particular form of prayer needed to be unobjectionable to all sections of the community.⁹¹ However, at the front of the first volume of the *Hansard* is printed the prayer by the Governor-General when he formally opened the Parliament on 9 May 1901. It concluded with the Lord's Prayer and an invocation of the Christian Deity. It should be remembered that section 116 of the constitution prohibited the establishment by the Commonwealth of any religion or the imposition of any religious observance or test. In deference to the spirit of that constitutional provision, it is rather doubtful that the parliament could adopt prayers reasonably objectionable to members or to sections of the community.

ISAAC ISAACS IN PARLIAMENT

In the light of his later eminent career, the role of Isaac Isaacs in the first parliament invites attention. Prior to embarking upon Federal politics, Isaacs had experienced some nine years in Victorian politics, rising to the position of Attorney-General in that colony, as well as being Acting Premier for a short time. Notwithstanding his manifest abilities, he was not always trusted by his colleagues, and he certainly was never popular in the Assembly or in Cabinet. He seems to have received some consideration for appointment to the first Commonwealth ministry. Deakin and Turner, his former Victorian colleagues, had higher claims than he, and Isaacs had to wait until 1905 when he became the Attorney-General in the second Deakin government. Of his role in the parliament and as a member of the ministry for a short period, it is true to say, as does Cowen, that he 'brought to parliament and government a high legal skill and massive knowledge and learning'.⁹² There were, of course, a few others in parliament at that time with marked legal skills. Isaacs' learning, however, exceeded them all. While he was by no means alone in being verbose, it was the extent of his learning, which he

often introduced into his speeches and brought to bear upon his listeners, that had the effect of wearying those who were obliged to listen to these addresses. This same prolixity of his was evidenced in the lengthy judgments, filled with numerous authorities and learning, later written by him as a High Court judge.

In the parliament Isaacs gave expression at length to his protectionist views, at times, dogmatically and dramatically. Thus, he spoke against the censure motion by Reid who had questioned the Barton government's fiscal policy. 'We stand at the present moment,' he said, 'debating one of the greatest questions which can agitate this or any other community'. While all desired, he explained, to place Australia on the pinnacle of prosperity, the opposition party was asking the government to forget the pledge under which it was elected, claiming that its Free-Trade arguments would result in a 'political cataclysm'. Protection, he insisted, must be recognised as necessary for the country. His own argument must have been very close to that of the Labour party when he proceeded in florid language to condemn the laissez faire fiscal ideas of the opposition. 'Liberty!, why, that is the argument,' he remarked, 'that capital always uses to labour. It is the argument of the man who claims the right, without restriction, to employ any man he chooses, of any sex he pleases, at any price he thinks fit, for as many hours as he can get them to work, under any circumstances and conditions'.⁹³ Remarks by Isaacs, such as those quoted above, as well as other political statements of his, enable one to agree with Cowen's summation, that he 'had a good deal of sympathy for many aspects of the Labour programme without being in any way a supporter of socialism'.⁹⁴ For those times, Isaacs and others in his party, followed policies which were generally described as radical.

It was widely agreed in the parliament that it was necessary to make the 'White Australia' policy secure by restricting immigration, mainly from Asia, of coloured people, and by phasing out the Melanesian kanakas employed in the Queensland sugar cane industry. This was done by the Immigration Restriction bill and by the Pacific Island Labourers bill. While many saw the motivation for the legislation as the protection of Australian wages and the standard of living, there was of course also a strong racial element. By these measures effect was given to what Barton described as the 'White Australia' policy. Isaacs, in his election speeches, had expressed fears, as did many others, that Asia's 'teeming millions' could become a danger to Australia. Out of deference for Imperial concerns, the government included a European dictation test in the legislation rather than the outright exclusion of migrants by reason of their colour or race. Isaacs spoke in the House on the immigration

question in no uncertain terms, as others did likewise. With reference to this immigration policy, it has to be appreciated that the exclusion of a class of migrants, by reason of their particular race and character, came to be universally seen as being essential for the welfare of the nation. While, today, 'White Australia' has been abandoned as national policy, the policy was, however, virtually an axiom of political faith a century ago. A brief quotation from a long speech by Isaacs is appropriate:

I recognise to the fullest extent that here in Australia we have a white man's war; it is a struggle for life; it is a struggle for that higher and fuller life that all progressive nations must feel and share in ... I would resist to the utmost, if it were necessary, any murky stream from disturbing the current of Australian life ... I recognise that all this paraphernalia of the Commonwealth, all the splendour that we see around us, all the officialdom, from the Governor-General downwards, would be a mere nothing if it were not going to better the lot of the workers of Australia, the men who are at the base of the whole structure ... I believe that it is possible for us, while treasuring our heritage as a portion of this Empire, while standing loyally and faithfully to the flag, to rear here without aggression a stalwart and strong race, which will not be degraded or contaminated by any influences such as we fear.⁹⁵

The 'White Australia' legislation, therefore, as Isaacs concluded in common with his parliamentary colleagues, was vital for the Commonwealth and its future.

Towards the end of the South African War, when the government was considering the dispatch of an Australian contingent, the Governor-General, in the course of a speech early in 1902, remarked that he was aware of the government's intentions and freely approved of the delay regarding the proposed contingent. This speech led to a motion by the opposition on the part of Sir George Reid criticising Lord Hopetoun for involving himself in party politics and disclosing confidential government discussions. Reid's action, however, was more of an attack on the Barton administration, and apart from Barton and Isaacs, the few who spoke in the House on the matter were not friends of that administration. This must have brought into question Isaacs' stand in joining, in effect, speakers adverse to the administration of which he was a party supporter. In his opening comments he knew well that his political loyalty might be questioned when he appeared to be defending himself by asserting that the issue raised by the motion was 'not a party

question,' and that it called for an expression of views in principle.⁹⁶ He must have made himself rather conspicuous as a Barton supporter in taking up an independent attitude on a matter which, though focusing on ill advised remarks of the Governor-General, reflected to an extent on the leader of the government. Isaacs, indeed, chose to say that the better case was made out by the leader of the opposition who, as did Isaacs himself, highlighted the Governor-General's apparent intervention on a policy question for which the ministry alone had the responsibility. Sir Zelman Cowen does not mention this particular stand by Isaacs. This issue does serve to illustrate Cowen's statement, that Isaacs 'must have had a very keen sense of standing alone and apart from his peers...'⁹⁷ It was all very well for him to have provided, on that occasion, a brief lecture to parliament on the subject of ministerial responsibility as 'a fundamental principle of the Constitution'. Within the parliament itself he was not a popular or likeable figure.

The status of the federal judges, and of the High Court, in particular, pursuant to the Constitution, was of special interest and concern to Isaacs whose views on the subject will be found in the debate in 1903 on the Judiciary bill. Though Deakin and Barton had fully expounded their ideas on the nature of the new judiciary, it is understandable that Isaacs would not have left the opportunity to pass without adding his own thoughts on such a subject. Here, again, as seems to have become his custom, and continued to be so, matters upon which he chose to speak were declared by him to be of the utmost importance. 'I apprehend,' he said of the Judiciary bill, 'that no legislative proposal has been yet offered for the consideration of the Federal Parliament which was more pregnant with the future of this Commonwealth than in the Bill now before us'.⁹⁸ To those who thought that the legislation was not free of defects, Isaacs suggested to them, as he put it, that 'half the commandments of the decalogue are imperfect obligations'.⁹⁹ If that remark of his was intended as a serious comment, then, even in the present day, there will be found few representative Christians or Jews who would speak of the Ten Commandments of Scripture in like terms. However, there was a minority of parliamentarians who, unlike Isaacs and the leaders of his party, felt that the High Court did not warrant the very special attention envisaged in the bill. Some thought that it would suffice for the chief justices of the states to act also as High Court justices. The majority of parliament was persuaded, as Isaacs insisted, that the High Court had to be the repository of the highest judicial power in the Commonwealth, 'the authoritative expositor and arbiter as to the meaning of the Constitution and of the laws made under it'.¹⁰⁰ He sought to impress

upon the parliament the necessity of reaching a correct resolution of the question being debated. 'We ought to recollect,' he declared, 'that we stand here upon the threshold of our united life. We should remember that the direction which the rivulet obtains determines the ultimate course of the stream for all time'.¹⁰¹ In those remarks he was probably expressing his concerns as to the extent to which appeals from the High Court should be permitted to reach the Privy Council in England. Another 70 years passed before such appeals were finally abolished. Isaacs himself was essentially an Australian nationalist in sentiment, a trait of his which led him into some exaggeration in his estimation of the Privy Council, protesting in the debate if Australians were to be 'ruled by the crude and uninformed arguments of lawyers 12,000 miles away'.¹⁰² As Cowen comments, Isaacs' advocacy perhaps had carried him too far in giving utterance occasionally to a sweeping statement not then expected of a lawyer of his standing.

A bill for Conciliation and Arbitration in industrial disputes extending beyond any one state came into the parliament in 1903. Isaacs had supported such a system in Victoria at the Constitutional Convention. The legislation contained some rather controversial provisions, such as elements of compulsion, and its applicability to public servants, whether federal or state. However, the bill was heralded by Isaacs as being of the greatest significance, and he spoke of it in language which listeners had come to expect. As he said in the debate:

The Bill appears to come to us recommended by the very highest public considerations that could justify any legislative proposal. I regard it as the natural outcome of many generations of development, as providing the substitute that higher civilisation of today demands for what is undoubtedly an archaic, erratic and ruinous personal struggle... it marks an era in our social and economic history... I dare hope that this Bill, which aims at closing every chasm that separates labour from capital and at keeping both on the continuous field of action, may bring to us greater blessings than even the clearest sighted of us can foresee.¹⁰³

The bill had to be dropped by the government and no amount of rhetoric, whether by Isaacs or others, was able to secure its passage at that time.

In 1903 the Seat of Government bill was the subject of debate but because of disagreement between the two Houses as to the future site of the capital the bill was shelved. The constitution required

that the capital should be in New South Wales and distant not less than 100 miles from Sydney. Isaacs voiced his views on the matter, remarking that it was 'a very momentous question, in which is bound up a great deal of the future of Australia'.¹⁰⁴ He indicated his preference for the town of Albury as the capital, and he mentioned that Sir Henry Parkes had been of a similar opinion. While he noted that some desired Bombala for the site, he regarded it as 'the freezing chamber of Australia'. Albury, on the other hand, which was close to his own constituency, had the advantage, he thought, of being on the Murray River, it adjoined three States, and was served by the Great Southern Railway. He conceded that New South Wales could not be robbed of its rights, and he argued that local feeling should not be allowed to determine the matter.

In one sense, it is true to say that Isaacs did not speak too often, and he did not monopolise the course of debates in the first parliament. Yet, as has been seen, whenever he chose to speak, he usually did so with great emphasis, seeking to create the impression that he was an expert on the particular question. Lest there be any doubt as to his views, he often chose to speak at length, introducing references and authorities to add more strength to his remarks. Nevertheless, apart from some of the acknowledged leading parliamentarians, Isaacs' contributions to the debates were substantial, though his style as a speaker would have detracted from the force which he aimed to give to his views. It is no easy task for the reader of today to attempt to plough through the particular pages of *Hansard* which alone provide the evidence of Isaacs as a leading parliamentarian in the formative and historic first parliament of the Commonwealth. In this parliament, as, indeed, in his later career, the power of Isaacs' intellect was beyond question. Yet, the style of his mind, his particular personality and character, did not endear him to those with whom he was associated. As Cowen concludes, Isaacs became a major figure, and it is unfortunate that his defects weighed heavily with some,¹⁰⁵ not least an individualism which seemed to set him apart as a somewhat solitary character, even in the manner of the expression of his political views and ideas.

VAIBEN SOLOMON, ELIAS SOLOMON, AND PHAREZ PHILLIPS

Vaiben L. Solomon was a prominent identity in the first parliament, a popular member of the House, and a forceful and knowledgeable speaker. He remained a member for about two years until the elections for the second parliament when he was defeated at the polls,

his State then being divided into electoral divisions. In 1905 Solomon became active in politics at the state level. He was a practical, pragmatic politician, given to compromise. Though a Free-Trader he saw little difference in the House between that policy and Protection. His experience on that question, he said, was that in South Australia the prophecies of advancement from protection were absolutely belied.¹⁰⁶ With reference to the High Court, he saw it as more than a court of appeal. It would serve also to protect the rights of the different states as against the Commonwealth, and as 'the highest and most intelligent tribunal,' as Solomon chose to say of it, he thought that its judges should be elected. Speaking early in the parliament in the Address-in-Reply, he urged that the Northern Territory should be taken over by the Commonwealth instead of it being the responsibility of a small state such as South Australia. He warned against expenditure beyond the means of the Commonwealth, including old age pensions and the high cost of defence. 'We have no special patent means,' Solomon said, 'of making money. We are not likely to receive showers of gold from the heavens day by day for any extravagant proposals as the children of Israel received by *manna* in the wilderness',¹⁰⁷ The franchise, he stated, should be the same throughout the whole country, and he added that no harm had come from the grant of the franchise to women in South Australia. On the issue of White Australia, he told the House that he had supported the restriction of Chinese immigration, that he was pledged to the White Australia policy, and that it was his duty to help maintain it. At the same time, however, he pointed out that he had lived among the coloured races in the North of the country and had employed them. On the occasion of the Immigration Restriction bill, his general attitude towards the coloured people was in clear contrast to Isaacs who remarked that he 'would not suffer any black or tinted man to come in and block progress' — comments referred to by Cowen as being crude in character.¹⁰⁸ Solomon must have been among the few who did not speak of these people in disparaging language. He feared, so he said, 'their virtues, their industry, their indomitable perseverance, their frugality, and their ability to compete against the European labour'.¹⁰⁹ He instanced the tremendous influx of Chinese into Port Darwin, resulting in undesirable competition with the rest of the population. It will be seen, then, that he had the courage and sensitivity, based on his own experiences, to refer publicly to the coloured migrants in words other than those of the more conventional denigration of that time. At another time in the House, Solomon raised the question of an extraordinary vacancy in that House, mentioning that an expense of £5,000-£6,000 might be incurred in electing a new mem-

ber, which differed, under the constitution, from the simpler procedure in the case of a Senate vacancy. He also referred, more than once, to the Inter-State Commission, provided for by the constitution, but not then set up. He felt that the Commission could deal with rival state railway rates, fair trade and commerce, and the use of river waters.

Overall, Vaiben Solomon was a true federalist, though he strongly argued for the rights of the smaller states, such as South Australia, as against the influence and power of New South Wales and Victoria. As he had said at the Convention, Federation was the objective, and not absorption. In 1898, when the Bill was finally submitted to the voters of his colony, Solomon was one of the select few who successfully urged support for the proposed constitution in an appeal to The People of South Australia. This appeal claimed that Federation would lead to 'a new era full of hope and full of promise'.¹¹⁰ In every way a different personality and figure than Isaacs, Solomon made a worthy contribution both as a delegate to the Convention and as a member of the first parliament.

THE COMMONWEALTH JUBILEE

Sydney's Jewish community, in common with the other denominations, commemorated Federation by special religious services at the Great Synagogue. The *Standard* regarded it as 'an appropriate happy coincidence that the dawn of Australian Nationality should be celebrated on the occurrence of the Festival of Chanukah'.¹¹¹ That festival, on that occasion, had no particular significance or message for the birth of the new Commonwealth. The Great Synagogue was then, and continues to be, a centre to which the state's Jews were drawn to mark important communal events. So it was that the synagogue was the venue for a further historic celebration held on Sunday, 4 February 1951, when the Jubilee of the Commonwealth was commemorated. In the course of the sermon at this choral service, Rabbi Porush began by stating that there was no specific Jewish angle in the celebrations. Upon reflection, some may question that assertion. It was, after all, a jubilee celebration, a national event that was highly significant in Biblical Judaism. Rabbi Porush went on to say that the sons and daughters of Israel had played a worthy part in the development of the Commonwealth, but he added, that 'hysterical flag-waving' was to be deprecated, as it sprang from 'a sense of insecurity or from an inferiority complex'. Of the 50 years past, in summarising his message, the preacher concluded on a note — a Jewish angle — pregnant with meaning:

Count your blessings, count them against the background of world misery; scrutinise the opportunities destiny has placed in your path; beware of the selfishness which is the step-sister of prosperity; be vigilant over the great heritage which has come to you from the word of God and the traditions of your way of life. Above all, be morally and spiritually fortified for the tasks of the future, for, maybe, Providence has entrusted us with a destiny which is great and noble.¹¹²

No conscientious Jew at that time, surveying the history of the past in Australia, and looking ahead to the future, would have not fully appreciated this message from the pulpit of an historic Australian synagogue. It was delivered by one who had served at that time but a decade in the community. He was to continue in the same office for a further 20 years as a religious leader.

The Great Synagogue's *Journal*, in 1951, contained three separate articles relating to the Commonwealth's jubilee. David J. Benjamin, a noted Jewish historian, was then editor of that publication. The first of these articles was headed, 'The Birth of a Nation, The Great Synagogue's Part'. It did not add anything to what is included in the present writer's essay. With reference to the service held on 6 January 1901, the editor wrote: 'For the first time in the history of Australian Jewry, the representative heads of all Jewish communities were present,' and he said further, that 'Most of the visiting clergy took part in the service'.¹¹³ However, this statement of the historical facts is barely significant, having regard to what has already been said by the present writer. Two interstate ministers, apart from the Great Synagogue ministers, participated in the service, whilst Rabbi Abrahams, the Victorian religious leader, was in no way involved other than as a visitor in the congregation. Now that 100 years have passed since the celebrations of the Commonwealth and the failed national Jewish conference, this 'first time' event in the history of Australian Jewry should only be mentioned and discussed in the context of what might have been. It showed only how divided and parochial the Jewish communities then appeared to be. The same issue of the above *Journal* presented a brief account of the Commonwealth Jubilee Service, including an interesting extract from the rabbi's sermon, accompanied by an illustration of the representative official party in attendance.

A JEWISH CONTRIBUTION?

A final *Journal* item was entitled, 'Jews and Federation'. It, too, was short and it can be seen that the editor drew entirely on the data fur-

nished in Harold Glass' account published by this Historical Society. It concluded, again, with the comment, 'The most striking feature of this Jewish participation in Australian public affairs is the fact that there was no such thing as a Jewish contribution to the Federal movement'.¹¹⁴ It needs to be asked, since the lack of such a contribution by Jews, as Jews, has been mentioned by several writers, what there was about it to warrant it being seen as a 'most striking feature'. In fact, throughout the nineteenth century in Victoria, as has been stated by Hilary L. Rubinstein, 'The threat of erosion dogged the Victorian Jewish community,'¹¹⁵ well into the next century. Because of the dominance of Anglo-Jewish leadership, the philosophy of Australian Jewry 'was to eliminate any differences between Jew and non-Jew except in the very narrow religious sense'.¹¹⁶ During those times well known Jews were, or aspired to be, super British in outlook, they were anxious to be seen as great loyalists, and, wherever possible, to be in the forefront of national endeavour. In this more subtle sense — not so obvious to non-Jews — is this not a source of the direction which resulted in the contribution of Jews such as Isaacs, Vaiben Solomon, and others? In New South Wales, for example, the Jewish profile of Julian Salomons tended very strongly against Federation as he led himself to believe, as a staunch Britisher, that the movement would spell the end of Australian ties with the Empire. All of these well known Jews, springing from the small enclave of colonial Jewry, were driven in varying degrees — Isaacs above all — by ambition and a heightened sense of deep pride in their position, in marked contrast to the situation of their co-religionists in other countries. In the case of Isaacs, leading federalist as he was, colleagues such as Deakin and Barton, from their perspective, greatly disliked and distrusted the extent of Isaacs' ambition. As indicated, Deakin had ascribed to him the 'littleness of the Rabbinical mind'.

It is true, of course, that the Jewish reader will reject such epithets. Yet, the fact remains that eminent contemporaries persuaded themselves that therein was to be found a Jewish contribution to the federal movement. Also, in a more subtle sense, whether directly so appreciated, or not, Jewish religious and ethical teachings and principles influenced the actions and thoughts of their adherents. Even today, irrespective of the degree of attachment to traditional Judaism, Jews who have gained distinction in their careers, especially in some of the professions, or, who have earned esteem for their role in national life, are said — almost always by non-Jews — to manifest the effects of the Jewish heritage. The influence of such a heritage, it has to be said, is not easily demonstrated in every instance. However, there has persisted a strong Jewish tradition of

service to one's fellows, often extending beyond the Jewish community. It is barely necessary to refer to any authority for this statement, for, it is too well known and understood, not least by Jews who are aware of their traditions and history. Thus, it can be seen from Cowen's biography of Isaacs that at the peak of his earlier career, and then just over 50 years of age, his correspondence contained discussions on religious themes, enabling Cowen to detect therein 'a strong sense of cultural Jewishness'.¹¹⁷ Taking Isaacs, then, as an example, he was possessed of an underlying Jewish outlook and philosophy of mind, without, it is admitted, being a conformist in all matters of his religion. Salomons, on the other hand, always an opponent of federalism, and also, religiously, a non-conformist, had a marked Jewish profile. This, no doubt, was a factor in his life of service to his profession and to the general community, as well as his passion for the freedoms and justice guaranteed, as he saw it, by the British institutions which Anglo-Jewry valued so highly. Rabbi Dr Hermann Adler, a former Chief Rabbi, speaking in London over a century ago, was able to distil, in practical terms, the religious obligations owed by the Jew to his gentile neighbour. 'We must likewise fully share,' he remarked, 'the civic and political life of our nation, and work zealously for its welfare... We must evince a thorough and vivid interest in all the institutions of our beloved land, in all movements, whether of a philanthropic, social, or educational character'.¹¹⁸ Those sentiments were expressive, indeed, of Jewish values, and they would have been implicit in some of the motivation of colonial Jews, many of them of English origins, towards the federal movement.

It is plain enough that there was no basis, in the case of the Jewish communities, for a Jewish contribution to Federation. Had their members, and especially their leaders, been far sighted and not provincial in their general outlook, they would have realised that the spirit of unification was also beneficial to the interests of Australian Jewry. Their support for the federal movement, however, must have been influenced by considerations unrelated to their position as Jews, and certainly unrelated to the immediate need for the development of unity among Australian Jews. If, therefore, there had been a visible Jewish contribution to Federation, it would be expected to have been motivated by this need. The Jewish attitude at that time was the antithesis of that publicly shown by the leader of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Moran who, as Eris O'Brien rightly observed, 'helped to convince the Australian public that the Federal ideal was possible in politics as well as in ecclesiastical affairs'.¹¹⁹ He was so imbued with the federal cause that he finally, unsuccessfully, stood for election as a delegate to the

Convention from New South Wales. It is recorded that a group of other churchmen set apart a day of public prayer 'to avert from the nation the calamity of electing a Cardinal to fashion the Constitution of Australia'.¹²⁰ The Cardinal's influence would have swayed many, particularly, Catholics, towards Federation. In contrast, the Jewish supporters of the movement did not evidence, directly, a Jewish element or motivation in their work for it. There was, then, no such element disclosed as a contribution from Jews in the public eye. Perhaps, more importantly, the reason for that situation is that the Jewish communities were too disorganised and disunited to introduce a Jewish angle into the federal debate. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, there is to be found, relevantly, a subdued, and not unimportant, Jewish factor in the contributions by the Jewish supporters — as well as the opponents — of the movement.

The notion of the Commonwealth no longer divided by separate units, and forming one nation for the first time in 1901, had, indeed, a spiritual basis in the promotion of national and communal unity. This is referred to in numerous scriptural and other Jewish classical writings as being essential for the welfare of a people and a nation. Jews regarded it as such a *desideratum* that only the advent of the Messianic era would finally achieve and ensure the unity of all humanity. It is true, that this Judaic spiritual concept was referred to, for example, in Rev Landau's above mentioned special sermons when he stressed 'the inspiring sense of national union' represented by the new Commonwealth. The sermons, however, rather dwelt more on other matters, and it may be asked, in retrospect, why the Jewish preachers and others did not take a much more emphatic stand on this religious and ethical important aspect of federation. A possible answer may well lie in the fact that Australian Jewry itself was far from united on many issues affecting its own immediate and future welfare.

In his *Sydney's Jewish Community*, Dr Hans Kimmel, included a note, headed, 'Jewish Jubilee Idea Acclaimed' in connection with the Commonwealth's Jubilee. The author was apparently concerned to mention a Jewish aspect which otherwise would have gone completely unnoticed.¹²¹ He instanced the Commonwealth celebrations in Canberra on the evening of 31 December 1950 when the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Dr E.H. Burgmann stated in his address that the jubilee had good precedent as a Jewish idea derived from the book of Leviticus. Under this, Israel was directed to 'proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants'. It may be mentioned that the Australian Jewish Historical Society held an Exhibition for the Jubilee at which treasures of the

Great Synagogue were displayed. Later in 1951 one of the functions of the celebrations was the special Law Convention in Sydney to which distinguished lawyers from the Empire and America were invited. It was recorded that 'Sabbath, August 11, was a notable day in the history of the Synagogue. At the request of the Law Council of Australia a special service was held...and for the first time judges, barristers and solicitors, officially attended service'. Readers should refer, in this regard, to the Great Synagogue's *Journal* which contained an interesting account of the service, together with an appropriate illustration.¹²² The service in question is now an item of historic significance. Among those in attendance was the late Professor Julius Stone who, as the present writer recalls, suggested to him why some of the judges wore red robes trimmed with ermine. It reminded him, he said, of the Prophet's statement, that though our sins are as scarlet, they should be as white as snow.

At the commencement of Kimmel's volume there is an article, extracted by him from the Jewish press, entitled 'Australia's Jubilee — Some Potentialities,' by Rabbi H.M. Sanger, of Melbourne. The opening paragraphs, short in themselves, merit citation:

At this moment Australia prepares to enter on her Jubilee Year, commemorating 50 years of the existence of a united Australia since the establishment of Federation. Besides such delightful speculations of what might have been, there will be much sober, yet proud reflection of what has actually happened during the last half century.

From an infant nation, Australia has grown to full maturity as a member of the United Nations, her manhood tested in the crucible of two world wars, the chapters of her adolescence closed.

The book of history lies open with a fresh, clean page on which to write the events to come.¹²³

The immediate cause of Sanger's writing was the growing Jewish concern in that period about the government's immigration policy which was allowing considerable numbers of non-Jewish migrants from Germany into Australia, so shortly after the War and the Holocaust. However, the matter, a serious one at that time, need not be further pursued here.

Recent writers on the subject of Federation are agreed that the general public of today is not well informed on the history of so important an advance by Australians towards nationhood. Little is generally known about the actual work of those actively involved,

or about the events that finally led to the creation of the Commonwealth, the culmination of the intense efforts of the founding fathers and many others. In 1901 Australia's total population was barely four million. Popular support had to be mobilised against the opposition. Of about one million people eligible to vote, less than 43% were in favour of the constitutional change. It was a minority only of the electors who accepted it, though a majority of 72.4% was recorded by those who actually voted in support of Federation.¹²⁴ Within the last few months, two books have appeared, both with a popular appeal, rather than as histories, as such, on this topic. They both seem to take their cue from Deakin who wrote that Federation was 'secured by a series of miracles'. Brian Matthews' book carries the title, *Federation, the Federal Miracle*, while the other, by D. Hendon and J. Williams, is entitled, *Makers of Miracles*. Matthews, in his own words, tells of 'a great coming and going of characters, the rise and fall of resounding speeches, a succession of conferences and conventions...in the end, unlikely victory won'.¹²⁵ In the second book, the authors refer to the ANA banquet at Bendigo as a crucial turning point when both Isaacs and Higgins urged delay in further action, and they mention that Isaacs did not then get a good hearing, but that Higgins was better received because of his frankness.¹²⁶ The reader may wish to turn to an authoritative history, such as Manning Clark's, *A History of Australia*, where there is hardly a mention of any contribution to Federation on the part of Australian Jews. In the volume covering this period, Isaacs alone is referred to twice. He comes under notice by this eminent historian as one distrusted as a Jew by Barton, and also for his objection to granting franchise for aborigines as lacking 'the intelligence, interest or capacity as the rest of the people' to vote in federal elections.¹²⁷ The Jewish reader, therefore, will look in vain, with an occasional exception, to learn anything of a Jewish role, whether individual or communal, in the Federation story. For this reason, if for no other, the present writer has endeavoured to compile the relevant data of special Jewish interest. This account of the subject is opportune on this centenary occasion and worthy of the attempt, it is hoped, to present it within this *Journal* at this point of time. The writer, it will be seen, has been concerned not to isolate the Jewish characters on the stage of the events, and not to exaggerate their place and contribution. It is most important that they should be seen in the context, including their own small Jewish community, of the events and the scenario as they unfolded in the progress of the federal movement in the few years before the Commonwealth was established and in its first parliament.

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20. *HS*, 17 September 1897.
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WHAT DID THEY THINK OF THE JEWS?: THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SYDNEY BULLETIN

Bernard Hyams

The subject of antisemitism — hostility or opposition to Jews — has produced a considerable mass of research and writings, both regarding its history and its theory. One of the more recent and interesting studies is that by Kevin MacDonald, in his 1998 publication *Separation and its Discontent: Toward and Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism*.¹ In this work the author reiterates earlier theories of cultural separatism and perceived economic exploitation as part of the explanation of modern antisemitism. The writer's emphasis on separatism also includes reference to Karl Marx's portrayal of Jews as clannish, asocial and an alien group engaged in economic exploitation of gentiles. Indeed, much attention is given to the concept of social identity as a major approach to group conflict in today's social psychology. This provides the picture of Jews appearing as a highly visible and impermeable group, segregating itself from the larger society and giving the perception of a high degree of group homogeneity, and indeed group purpose. The notion of very strong separatism and of strong collectivism within the group has also served to feed the development of negative stereotypes.² When these aspects are applied to colonial Australia it is clear that the Jews were seen as a separate cultural group, and in the context of growing Australian nationalism in the late nineteenth century, surpassed in their separateness perhaps only by the Chinese immigrants. In terms of hostility to Jews exhibited by a particular major colonial periodical, those features indicated above, of clannishness, alien nature, economic exploitation of gentiles and negative stereotyping, are all very much represented by that periodical, the Sydney-based *Bulletin*.

The Sydney *Bulletin* has very often featured in written discussion of aspects of Australian literary history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with particular reference to its nationalistic and racialistic emphasis. Much of the useful study of these aspects is to be found in unpublished higher degree work in the University of Sydney and University of Melbourne. Ailsa

Thomson, for example, emphasised the 'cultural chauvinism' of the *Bulletin*, in its hostility to Britain as the colonising power and to the English-Australian governing classes, while it also attacked non-British elements as dangerous competitors in the economic field.³ A much more recent study, by Michael Hensley, looked at the magazine's racism in the popularisation of Australian nationalism.⁴ Other academic projects were somewhat more specialised in their treatment of the *Bulletin*, with S. Merchant examining the attitude towards the Chinese and M. Rodda studying the role of the *Bulletin* during the depression years of the 1890s.⁵ There have also been numerous publications dealing generally with the *Bulletin*, but probably one of the most relevant for this article is Patricia Rolfe's *The Journalistic Javelin. An Illustrated History of the Bulletin*.⁶

What is surprising about these works is the relative neglect of antisemitism as an ingredient in its nationalism and racism. The *Bulletin*, from its inception, made frequent reference to Jews, usually in the form of attacks, and Jews were certainly the major objects of racist comment, surpassed only, if at all, by expressed prejudice against the Chinese. Amazingly, Hensley's study of racism and nationalism simply ignores the Jewish question. Rodda's work on the *Bulletin* during the depression excludes mention of the Jews, who certainly bore a good deal of the opprobrium in the magazine's search for blame for national and economic misfortune. Even Thomson gives minimal treatment to Jews, simply and briefly suggesting that the *Bulletin's* anti-Jewish sentiment was based on fears of their economic competition with Australians.⁷ Patricia Rolfe does probe further into the issue of antisemitism, but her conclusions, to be examined, are not shared by this article.

The issue of the *Bulletin's* antisemitism has been taken up elsewhere. As to be expected, general histories on Australian Jewry which include the nineteenth century, by Hilary Rubinstein and by Suzanne Rutland, make references to the increasing anti-Semitic vitriol of this Sydney-based periodical and other publications of the past.⁸ There have also been two specialised studies designed to examine exclusively this aspect of the *Bulletin's* prejudice. In the October-November 1983 and February-March 1984 editions of the *Melbourne Chronicle*, Hilary Rubinstein presented 'Manifestations of literary and cultural antisemitism in Australia, 1856-1946'. Somewhat before that time, in 1969, A. M. McLean had written a final year honours essay at the University of Melbourne, which was even more specialised, entitled '*Antisemitism in the Bulletin 1897-1904*'.

Both studies offer useful thoughts and theories about the *Bulletin* and what its editors and professional contributors thought

of Jews at the time. It is what they do *not* include, however, which invites further and more detailed study of the early years of the magazine. In Hilary Rubinstein's case, much of her scholarly comment deals with the *Bulletin* of the 1890s and beyond, except for her citing of the instances of 1881 and 1883, when it championed the cause of the virulently antisemitic literary figure, Marcus Clarke.⁹ The rest of Dr Rubinstein's observations of the early period deal largely with the Melbourne *Punch* (established in 1856) and not with the *Bulletin*, which commenced in January 1880. In the case of McLean's interesting essay, the treatment of the *Bulletin* concentrates on the period 1897-1904. There is scant justification for the commencing date, although a reading of the essay shows that it has much to do with the Boer War and its prelude.

The two authors share two common assumptions. One is that the more extreme, vicious *Bulletin* comment about Jews was the product of economic antisemitism, of the harsh vicissitudes of the late-century economic depression and of the stereotype of international Jewish financial interests as major promoters of the conflict with the Boers. The other assumption is that there is another type of thrust at the Jews which does not at all belong to this category of comment. This is the so-called milder, 'bantering' reference to Jews. McLean makes much of this type of reference, arguing that the *Bulletin* applied such banter to any minority group, including Scots, Irish, Jews, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics and Temperance Unions. The claim is that Jews were treated like any other national group whose stereotypes were the subject of highly humorous cartoons and short paragraphs which contained no obviously deep prejudice.¹⁰ In Hilary Rubinstein's case, there is reference to this bantering, essentially non-malicious type of comment, but attributed to the Melbourne *Punch*. It is not clear whether she would also credit the early *Bulletin* with this milder form of ridicule, although with the exception of the brief quotes on the Marcus Clarke case, all of the vicious *Bulletin* comments in her account are located in the later years of that magazine.

Although Patricia Rolfe's work does not concentrate on the issue of antisemitism, she appears to share with McLean and Hilary Rubinstein the view on the 'bantering' category of the *Bulletin's* comments about Jews. It is worthwhile looking briefly at her comments. Admitting that some of the jokes may have been crude and boisterious, she suggests that we would accept them as good fun, unless we are 'sensitive about offending other races'. In an age when the issue of racism is treated with increasingly critical examination, this is an amazing comment. The view is moderated somewhat a little later with the acknowledgment that in today's more sensitive age

the *Bulletin's* comments may be seen as repellent and ugly. Nevertheless, Rolfe does claim that the Irish and Jewish jokes seem to be mostly of the sort which those people tell against themselves.¹¹ It will be seen, however, that jokes about Jews as revealed in this article are so cruel that they could not conceivably be told by Jews themselves.

Given the context of all these works described, the purpose of this study is, therefore, quite clear. It is to examine the early years of the Sydney *Bulletin* with reference to its antisemitism. In doing so it raises and seeks to answer a number of questions. Does the magazine contain much in the way of the so-called 'bantering' references to Jews which might amount to irritants but are not basically malicious? Is this simply part of the facetious treatment accorded to other minority groups in the Australian colonial community? And are these humorous gibes in fact of a quite different order from the attacks of the 1890s and beyond? This study of the *Bulletin's* treatment of Jews spans the period from commencement of the magazine in 1880 to 1885, the year of involvement of British expeditionary forces in the Sudan, an event which is of relevance to the Jewish question in Australia. The exercise is based on a fairly exhaustive reading of every issue of this periodical for the period under scrutiny.

This examination of the content of successive issues of the *Bulletin*, for a period of a little over the first five years of its publication, yields fairly frequent references in its pages to Jews. The comments are quite varied in type, as indeed is the general content of the magazine itself. Some of the topics are short news items, some dealing with essentially religious aspects, often contained in a regular section entitled 'Denominational Drops'; others are reports of social events, while many constitute part of the attempted humour of the *Bulletin*, including cartoons and supposedly facetious, brief paragraphs dealing with what were then assumed to be innate characteristics of contemporary Judaism.

In its very earliest editions, the *Bulletin* displayed a lively interest in things or people Jewish, with comment that could be categorised as objective or even sympathetic. Some of this was at the international level. For example, there were references to the Rothschild family, to Benjamin Disraeli and to an eminent London QC, identified as being Jewish.¹² There was certainly an awareness of European antisemitism in its more extreme forms, with brief reportage on the persecution of Jews in Russia and on a very large anti-Jewish demonstration in Berlin in 1884.¹³

Most of the interest, however, was with respect to the Jewish presence in colonial Australia. The Jewish press was acknowledged,

specifically regarding a series of articles in the *Jewish Herald* on the Stage Jew, including an analysis of Shylock. To this the *Bulletin* added the question: 'When shall we see represented on the stage a true Jewish gentleman?', and then the mischievous qualification: 'Israel is not composed entirely of blacklegs.'¹⁴ However, there was genuine interest at the start in the Jewish religion — the festivals, for example — and even a reference to a mezuzah at the Princess theatre, owned by the Benjamin family. More profoundly, the basic question of Jewish identity was addressed in all seriousness. A column in mid-1880 reported that mixed marriages were becoming the rage in Sydney, and the newspaper subsequently expressed approval of such a trend. On the other hand, it admonished those Jews who sought to anglicise (which the *Bulletin* interpreted was to deface) their names, arguing that they should never be ashamed of names such as Cohen or Samuel, which were far older than the Algernons or Reginalds and so on of contemporary times.¹⁵

Australian Jews figured in the social columns, often fairly prominently. It is not clear whether this was due to any strong representation they might have enjoyed in the ranks of the middle class, if such was the case, or to their apparently easy identification as Jews. Certainly the *Bulletin* readily so identified them, based on name and appearance. References were made to items such as a Jewish bachelors' ball, to Jewish skaters, to the visit to Sydney of one of Victoria's 'splendid daughters of Judah', and to an attempted duel by two Jewish men competing for a certain lady.¹⁶ Sometimes the notes carried with them the suggestion of Jewish social influence or wealth. An item in July 1880 claimed that there had been a strong Jewish presence in vice-regal circles, specifically of a former governor of New South Wales, because of the patronage of Jews by his wife, Lady Robinson. The writer suggested that the governor's wife had a strong predilection for the 'chosen race', which had been obvious at various functions, and surmised that this might have been due to the fact that she herself had a remote strain of Jewish blood. Over a year later, a similar disproportionate Jewish influence was alleged concerning a certain Sydney official function: 'Judging by the number of the "chosen race" on hand, one would imagine our Government offices were Synagogues...'. Yet another item, in 1882, dealt with a Sydney dramatic club dominated by Jews, elaborating that gentiles were outnumbered when it came to awarding roles in plays.¹⁷

In terms of the strictly religious and even theological aspect, the *Bulletin* in its earliest years seemed to be quite pro-Jewish. Only two months after its inception, the magazine targeted those Christian denominations who had opposed the opening of the Sydney School

of Arts on Sundays. It argued that Jewish people might therefore justifiably object to its opening on Saturdays; the article then went on to refer to the Jewish community as 'the least bigoted of all the religious denominations.'¹⁹ In August 1880, the Jewish religion figured in the *Bulletin's* attack on *Witness*, a Christian religious periodical which had taken Rabbi Davis to task for having asserted that there was neither a hell in the generally accepted sense of the term, nor a personal devil. The *Bulletin* accused *Witness* of inconsistent haggling over worn-out theological dogma and especially of impertinence in attempting to lecture to synagogue authorities. In the process, the *Bulletin* accorded to Jews a superior level of morality, social conscience, tolerance and charity:

By whom are our prisons filled — by those who call themselves Christians, or by Jews? Do we Australians ever hear of a Jew deserting his wife and leaving her and her children to die in the gutter, or live in misery and shame? Is it not a fact that the average Jew is every whit as charitable in purse and much more charitable in speech than are such 'Christians' as those who, caricaturing the writings of the Apostles, scribble absurd letters to those whom they think heathen? Does the Jew ever insultingly obtrude his religious belief on his fellow-man? Judaism, in the light of its results, means, in Australia, at any rate, morality, happiness, and opulence...¹⁸

The concluding reference to 'opulence', that is, to Jewish economic success, could be taken as a compliment or as ambiguous, although succeeding discussions on the Jews in terms of finance usually carried adverse observations, to be discussed shortly.

Having seen that a number of the initial pages of the *Bulletin* were not unfavourable to local Jews, we also need to consider those comments which were critical. In the first place, to what extent were the references to Jews in the early years of the *Bulletin* mere 'banter'? In July 1882, for example, there were two items dealing with the Jewish prohibition on pigs, one in which a starving Jewish sailor succumbed to a barrel of pork, saying 'I don't know whether there isn't something in Christianity after all.'²⁰ It may well be argued that this is the type of joke which Jews would tell themselves and accordingly it could be categorised as harmless. Similarly there were sometimes facetious allusions to matters such as urban concentrations of Jews or to their unpopularity. A November 1880 social column reported a dinner party given by Mark Moses at 'his palace in Judea — we beg pardon — in East Melbourne'. A later item referred to the fact that 'most of us dart

around a corner when we see the beard of any member of a surviving [Jewish] tribe'; another announced 'bad news from Melbourne', that a Jewish Young Men's Association was being formed and that 'we are haunted with the dreadful suspicion that if these young men learned much more than they know at present, there will be a general exodus of Gentiles from Victoria.' Apparently ostracism of the Jews was celestial as well as earthly, for the regular 'Pepper and Salt' column suggested that the life of the Almighty was not much to be envied — 'more particularly as we are led to believe that there are Jews in Heaven.'²¹

While contemporary Australian Jews could probably take such jibes in their stride, it is doubtful if they could receive with equanimity those witticisms which insensitively drew upon the historic sufferings of Jews. One such account referred to the Spanish Inquisition and a Jew who claimed his Spanish ancestors were not in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. The article concluded with the comment 'God help the Spaniards! No wonder they started an Inquisition.' Regarding a much more recent Jewish tragedy, the Russian pogroms of the late nineteenth century, there was a degree of contradiction, for although the *Bulletin* had more than once alluded to the plight of the Russian Jews, it also rather callously referred to 'a Russian roll-up of the chosen people.' It is furthermore doubtful whether local Jews actually appreciated the attempted humour of the Gentile confession, in the section 'Brief Mention', that 'We have studied this strange people long and closely, and can honestly affirm that nothing will kill them. We've tried everything.'²²

An important consideration on this issue of the mere 'bantering' type of humour is not simply whether it was just harmless facetiousness, but whether, as several writers have maintained, it was applied at this level to a whole variety of minority groups. Certainly there were very frequent references in the years under study to the Irish, and less to the Scots. A very few of these items depicted Scots as shrewd and thrifty and a few were representations of inebriated Irish men, and only one or two suggesting an Irish lack of high intelligence. But the overwhelming majority of references constituted very gentle, kind humour, with no sting in the tail, as was sometimes the case with items dealing with Jews. In addition to the Jews, the one other minority group which was frequently singled out as an object of rather nasty humour was the Chinese, but most descriptions, whether in cartoons or articles, were vicious rather than gentle. Apart from the Chinese, however, the so-called 'bantering' references were much kinder to groups other than the Jews and there was far less of the stereotyping of

the Irish and Scots than of Jews. It is therefore very difficult to agree with previous commentators that the humour aimed at Jews was of the same order as that directed at most other minority groups.

Of course, once we put aside this category of less offensive items, the unabashed antisemitism of the *Bulletin* is most palpable. But it assumed more than one form. A minor aspect of the newspaper's prejudice seems to be mainly racial, largely encompassing various physiological and physical-cultural characteristics attributed to Jews. The magazine devoted an article at the end of 1881 to the subject of the longevity of Jews, especially those of the 'better class'. This was, again, a contribution which carried with it a back-handed compliment. The suggested longevity was attributed to temperate living and avoiding eating unclean animals, and there was also praise for the treatment of married women, whom, it was argued, were rarely converted into drudges. But another alleged reason was that Jews never gave themselves up to exhausting work; moreover, they scored on 52 fewer working days per year than Christians, since they used both Saturdays and Sundays as days of rest.²³ Added to the advantage of avoiding hard physical work was the supposed Jewish abundance of food. Hence the joke, 'The three great feasts of the Jews: Breakfast, dinner, and supper.'²⁴ In addition to this, there was more than once the mention that Jewish ladies were stout.

The physical appearance of Jews in general was in fact almost obsessive in the *Bulletin's* treatment of this section of the Australian community. In spite of its generalisation of Jews having an oriental appearance, it did acknowledge one report that claimed that many Polish Jews had light hair and blue eyes. However, the report went on to assert that there was 'probably no race in which the women are so generally attractive when young, and so universally unprepossessing when old'.²⁵ Mostly, however, the Jew was depicted as alien in appearance. There were references to such features as 'bulbous lips', 'the low foreheaded crowd' and — above all — 'dromedary noses', in a variety of articles and almost every time a cartoon appeared with a Jewish content.²⁶ The following article gives some of the flavour of the numerous jibes about the Jewish proboscis:

A little Hebrew, who after the manner of his race, runs a good bit to nose, was sculling his inamorata across the harbour the other day. He had a slight cold in his head. "Ikey, darling, presently murmured the dusky Leah, "There's a fly on your nose. Brush it off." Do that yourself, my dear, was the ready rejoinder, "It's nearer you than me."²⁷

On every occasion the image of the Jew was of great ugliness. This racially-emphasised antisemitism had no equal in racism directed against other groups in the pages of the *Bulletin*, except perhaps for its depiction of the appearance of the Chinese.

The racial prejudice of the *Bulletin*, however blatant, was far exceeded by its social-economic prejudice. It is here where the magazine's antisemitism reaches its most excessive expression. Other writers have of course noted this feature, but there has been a tendency to misjudge its lineage. Some of the works have correctly concluded that the *Bulletin's* antisemitic thrusts were exacerbated by the economic depression of the '90s and further by the Boer War, when Jewish finance was blamed for both developments. However, by overlooking the earliest years of the *Bulletin's* existence, these studies have under-estimated the extent to which local socio-economic issues under-lay its attack on Jews from the beginning.

For a start, the argument that the *Bulletin's* assault on Jewry was focussed on international Jewish finance or financiers, rather than on Australian Jews, is not borne out by the facts. It is quite clear that in its incipient phase of publication, the *Bulletin* quite specifically targeted Jews in Australia. It tended to depict them as essentially avaricious, greedy in terms of making money at all costs and especially in the sphere of money-lending. The accusation of monetary greed is typified by one of the earliest issues of the column 'Brief Mention' in which 'Nat Cohen announced his "talking hand", but some way obliterated the "l" in talking'; another example was provided in the following year, with the story of three Jewish suitors (for the hand of a young lady) prepared to pay the mother money to advance their cause and who were not long in 'grabbing' the difficulty.²⁸ Yet another so-called humorous reference to Jewish greed is encapsulated in an 1883 imaginary incident:

'Why so gloomy this morning, Jacob?' 'Ah, my poor leetle Penjamin Levi — his is tead!' 'Dead? You surprise me. How id it happen?' 'Vell, you see, my leetle Penjamin, he vas at der synagogue to say his prayers, and a poy put in his hed at der toor and gries: "Job lot!" and leetle Penjamin vas gild in der grush.'²⁹

Not long after, a much longer piece was published in the form of a poem, 'Song of Solomon'. This item was apparently based on an actual incident, in which there was a court case over an incident of Jewish marital infidelity, damages being awarded by jury. In the verses were references to Jews assembled at the court and allegedly crying 'Von't someone have to fork the monish over if Horwits vins

it' and then when damages were awarded, 'assembled Judah's smile waxed sickly.'³⁰

More often than not, the alleged monetary greed of local Jews was emphasised in the money-lending context.

Other researchers have noted that nineteenth century Australian Jews were often to be found in the business of money-lending and pawn-broking. What has not been generally noted, however, is that interest rates on loans were extremely high at the time, apparently 60% or even more. It is significant that the opening weeks of the *Bulletin* coincided with the appearance of usury legislation before the New South Wales parliament. This took the form of the Usury Limitation Bill, introduced in the Legislative Assembly by John Hurley on 4 March 1880. Hurley spoke of so-called money-lending societies in Sydney which lent at ruinous rates of 60% and even as much as 160%. It was quite clear from his remarks that local Jews were a major object of his attack. He asserted that 'the law should afford the unwary against these Shylocks who were preying upon society in Sydney', and in the course of accusing money-lenders of being in league together to obtain money under false pretences, he made specific references to two Sydney-based Jews (who were defended during the parliamentary debate by Jewish member Henry Cohen).³¹ Arguments were then mounted in the Assembly that the proposal, to limit interest to 10%, would be ineffective in achieving its purpose, and the Bill was subsequently ruled out of order.

Nevertheless, the issue raised in parliament was pursued by the *Bulletin* with much enthusiasm. The newspaper, in what became its social crusade on behalf of the lower middle classes of Australia, took up the cudgels regarding interest rates. In echoing John Hurley's accusations, it clearly concluded that local Jews were preponderant in money-lending activities, and were unashamedly charging very high rates of interest. The Jewish lenders were so identified by reference to foreign accents, and specifically relating to interest percentages; hence 'per shent' was the expression used with great frequency in various columns. A good example of this emphasis appeared in a very early edition poem:

The Pawnbroker

The Pawnbroker with face and eyes a gleam
 Knows well the pledge they never will redeem
 He knows he's safe to get his 'shent per shent'.³²

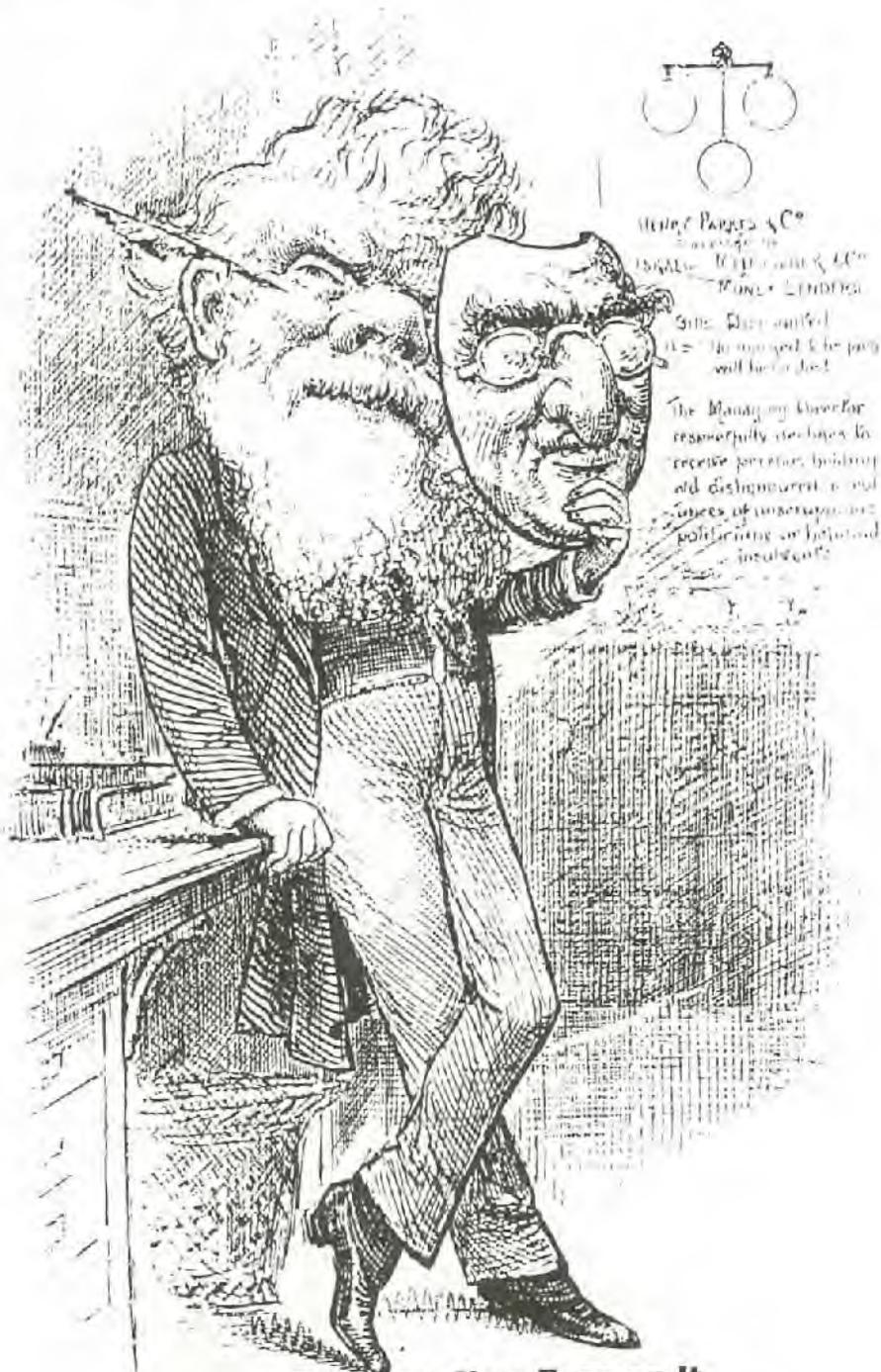
These attacks on money-lenders and pawn brokers, mainly identified as being Jewish through use of phrases such as 'per shent',

'mine uncle' 'the fraternity' or 'members of the order', were not limited to the matter of allegedly exorbitant interest rates. The *Bulletin's* assault on local Jewish finance attributed or implied a high degree of unscrupulousness as well. A central accusation was that in many cases the objective was not merely to charge unfairly high rates of interest, but also to make it virtually impossible for the debtor to honour his or her debt. In this situation the borrowers would forfeit their security, that is their personal possessions, furniture or even property, to the lender. One particularly vicious article in December 1882 claimed outright dishonesty displayed by 'a wily Israelite and his grasping gudgeons.' In this case there was alleged to be connivance between the lender and a valuator: the latter offers an unfavourable report on the furniture of the applicant, who must nevertheless pay the valuation fee; then the co-operating (and even presumably related) lender and valuator are 'both ready for the next poor Gentile'.³³

The *Bulletin's* self-appointed role as champion of the lower classes of Australian society helps to explain in general its emphasis on the impact of usury, which it described as a 'nefarious' trade. However, as Hilary Rubinstein has indicated, the social crusade was also specifically related to defence of author Marcus Clarke, whose indebtedness to Jewish money-lenders and his marked antisemitism was probably no coincidence. In 1883 the *Bulletin* added to its former indignation on Clarke's behalf by claiming that Jewish usurers in Melbourne were endeavouring to prohibit publication of a memorial volume of the writer's works, designed to benefit his 'poor widow and helpless children'. Without attempting to establish the authenticity of the correspondent's report, the *Bulletin* emphasised the hypocrisy of the alleged action in terms of Jewish scriptures. The report proceeded to remind:

the ornaments of their race of the words of their God Jehovah when he imperatively commanded 'Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise and they cry at all unto Me I will surely hear their cry' How is this for the 'Shenters'?³⁴

Whether pleading the plight of borrowers in general or that of particular 'victims', the *Bulletin* had by the mid-1880s moved to accuse Jewish money-lenders of undue financial influence on the state itself. The earliest indication of this development came in the form of a cartoon in late 1884. In the sketch, New South Wales political leader, Henry Parkes, is shown holding the mask of a person with a large hooked nose, while a pawn-broker's sign is seen near-



Messrs. Pagers & Co
Sole Agents for
Messrs. Pagers & Co
London
Sole Agents for
The Managing Director
responsible to receive
and disburse all
sums of money
pertaining to the
interests

Putting a New Face on It.

Cartoon, *The Bulletin*, 1 November 1884.

by. Part of the title announces 'Henry Parkes & Co. Success to Israel.'³⁵ This pictorial assault was soon to be followed by criticism of Jewish linkages with the Sudan War and their financial implications for New South Wales.

Some writers, especially McLean and Rubinstein, have properly linked the *Bulletin's* most strident turn-of-century antisemitism with the Boer War. This stemmed largely from allegations that British actions were motivated by Jewish financial interests, which were to be secured against the Boers by continued British domination of southern Africa. While this emphasis did occur, these accounts of the *Bulletin's* prejudice overlook the fact that journalistic attacks over alleged Jewish financial influence and its relevance for Australia began not with the Boer War, but as a result of an earlier conflict in northern Africa. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Britain had been intervening in Egyptian affairs, even militarily, arising from a combination of British investments in the region (especially with the Suez Canal), Egypt's chaotic government, and that country's international indebtedness. This situation was exacerbated by a Sudanese revolt against Egyptian governance in 1881 and climaxed in January 1885 with the rebels' capture of Khartoum and killing of General Gordon, British commander of the the garrison in that city.

What aroused the intense interest in Australia was the decision to send a New South Wales contingent of troops to assist the British expeditionary force in the Sudan in its attempt to wrest control from the rebel force. On 12 February 1885, the acting Colonial Secretary for New South Wales announced that a contingent would be sent from the colony, 'to testify to the readiness of the Australian colonies to give instant and practical help to the Empire'.³⁶ The troops sailed from Sydney on 3 March. The public debate which ensued contained two opposing arguments, both of which exploited Australian nationalist feelings. On the one hand, it was argued that the participation of Australian soldiers would be an ingredient of a developing Australian nationhood. On the other hand, British jingoism was raised as a spectre and there was an accusation that Australian blood and money would be sacrificed because of 'the machinations of Jewish bond-holders in the Suez Canal Company'.³⁷ The press in Australia focused strongly on the issues being debated, and given its anti-Jewish sentiment in the five years since its inception, the tone of the *Bulletin's* participation in that debate comes as no surprise.

It has been contended in this paper that, contrary to the impression in some other works on the subject, the *Bulletin* mostly directed its hostility specifically towards Australian Jews. This is not to say that it did not also attack 'international' Jewry. In fact, when

acknowledging the plight of persecuted Jews overseas, it embraced the theory of blaming the victims. In March 1882 it quoted uncritically the words of an observer of the 1880s on the oppression of Jews in Poland and Russia, offering the conclusion that their persecution was not a matter of religion at all: 'They are usurers of the most grinding type, and of filthy person. It is as usurers they are maltreated, not as Hebrews.'³⁸ Fairly soon after this report, another followed with similarly callous reference to the victims. On this occasion, mention was made in the section 'Pepper and Salt' to the flight from Russia of many Jewish families. However, an opportunity was also seized to attack so-called Jewish financial exploitation of others, with the comment that connected with the exodus, '21,000 gilt balls have been sent to England, whence 2,100,000 borrowers will in due course go to Hades.'³⁹

With the advent of the Sudan trouble, the *Bulletin* gave full vent to its hostility towards overseas Jewish financial interests. It freely aired, without reservation, the allegation that the Egyptian debt, over which England was apparently fighting, was 'simply Jewish blood-money', and argued that the British had not waged war when other countries in the past had repudiated their international debts. The *Bulletin's* answer to its own question on why the Egyptian situation was different, came with its listing of prominent British families — Oppenheimer, Rothschild, Goschen and Lazarus — all Jewish of course, with their strong bond-holding role. Even more damning, in the newspaper's view, was the fact that the New South Wales government had joined forces with such elements by offering an armed contingent to the Imperial government. It went on to insinuate that, in the process, that offer involved the office of Sir Saul Samuel, a well-known Sydney Jew, who held the position of New South Wales Agent General in London from 1870 to 1897.⁴⁰ A further object of attack on the link between imperial jingoism and Jewish finance was the local financial implication. On 18 March the New South Wales parliament received a motion from Treasurer George Dibbs for the Australian Military Contingent Bill, the purpose of which was to pay for the Australian contingent in the Middle East.⁴¹ To its attack on alleged jingoism and international Jewish finance, the *Bulletin* added its criticism of the debt so incurred by the colony of New South Wales for the cost of the Sudan expedition. This particular complaint was compounded in a savage cartoon in July 1885, depicting Sir Saul Samuel dealing with Jewish financiers over a loan for the colony, with one of the lenders suggesting that they should lend the sum, since the borrower (meaning the colony), although obviously extravagant, 'has plenty property, and ve'll own it all one of these fine days.'⁴²



The N.S.W. Loan.

MR. HAVE YOU ON (VAST ABRAHAM) "SO, SIR SAUL, YOU WANT FIVE AND A HALF MORE MILLION? JOSHUA VAY FOR?"
SIR SAUL: "WELL, I'D PAY FOR KILLING THE SOUDAN GOATS AND THE RABBIT'S, AND FOR MAKING THE RAILWAYS."
MR. ABRAHAM: "WAT RAILWAY?" YOU MEAN THE RAILWAY FROM SLAKIN TO BERRIE?"
SIR SAUL: "NO, THE NEW SOUTH WALLS RAILWAY."
MR. MONTMORENCI ISAACS (under VELL ABRAHAMISH, VE BERTERLET) GM HAVE THE MONISH) "SHORTLY HE'S A WILD EXTRAVAGANT YOUNG
MAN, BUT HE HAS PLENTY PROPERTY AND VELL OWN IT ALL ONE OF THESE FINE DAYS."

Cartoon, *The Bulletin*, 25 July 1885.

From all that has been considered above, it is quite clear that other historians have generally been rather kind to the *Bulletin* in the matter of its antisemitism. The magazine did engage in stereotyping Jews as avaricious exploiters of gentiles, clannish, especially in their money-lending activities, and alien and ugly in appearance. There were initially some occasions of praise of Jews, but in a number of these cases the remarks were qualified, usually with a sting in the tail. The so-called bantering comments about Jews were

almost invariably much sharper than those addressed to all other minority groups, except perhaps the Chinese. The *Bulletin* did indeed subsequently attack so-called Jewish international finance, and it did increase its hostility during the years of economic depression and as a result of the Boer War. However, much of the poison of its comments arose *before* these developments and much of it was directed at the *local* Jewish community. Other treatments of the *Bulletin's* antisemitism of the nineteenth century have obviously not taken sufficient account of the details of its content in its first five years of operation.

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14. *Ibid.*, 10 July 1880, p. 9.
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19. *Ibid*, 21 August, 1880, p. 1.
20. *Ibid*, 15 July 1882, p. 8.
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22. *Ibid*, 20 August 1881, p. 15; 24 January 1885, p. 12; 28 March 1885, p. 12.
23. *Ibid*, 24 December 1881, p. 8.
24. *Ibid*, 13 November 1880, p. 12.
25. *Ibid*, 18 March 1882, p. 5.
26. See, for example, items in *ibid*, 31 March 1883, p. 5; 29 September 1883, p. 12.
27. *Ibid*, 13 November 1880, p. 12.
28. *Ibid*, 3 July 1880, p. 4; 22 January 1881, p. 3.
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30. *Ibid*, 29 September 1883, p. 12.
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DOROTHY IVY 'STRUCKOIL' HEISER

Morris S. Ochert OAM (Brisbane)

In the third portion of my manuscript 'A History of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation'¹, I wrote of the frustration which researchers experience due to a lack of data which should have been archived by previous generations. However one family whose story can be written in more detail is the Heiser family. As I wrote in the article mentioned above:

Mine is not a full history of Brisbane Jewry. This can never be written as much detail is no longer in existence. It has no doubt been destroyed in perennial 'spring cleanings'. In most organisations many papers, which could be of great interest to later researchers, have been discarded, for a secretary must choose between becoming swamped in his own archives or severely pruning them periodically. Also, those who could have recalled many an interesting fact are no longer with us.

On the other hand, I was fortunate to find a cryptic note in the Board's Minute Book which read only, 'Sam Heiser, Struckoil, Mt. Usher.' There are Heiser descendants still in Brisbane and I found that Sam had named his baby daughter 'Dorothy Ivy Struckoil Heiser.' She is known as 'Aunty Dot' and lives near Brisbane and she explained that the slang expression 'he struck oil' meant that 'he had struck it lucky.' Sam had not 'struck oil' but had found gold at his gold leases at Mt. Usher and recorded his luck by naming his new-born daughter 'Struckoil'. She told me she founded the Brisbane Jewish Scout Troop in the 1920s. It disbanded in the 1960s.²

Morris Z. Forbes (now OAM), who was then the Editor of the *Journal*, appended this footnote:

Struck Oil was the name of a play by the American actors, J.C. Williamson and his wife, Maggie Moore. They came to Queensland in 1894 when this play was staged at Mount



Dorothy Heiser.

Morgan. About that time a gold-bearing reef was discovered in the district and a shaft was put down and called 'Struck Oil'. A canvas town of gold prospectors sprang up within this area. Most successful was William Usher whose Mount Usher mine promised to develop as a rival to Mount Morgan. Struck Oil became a small mining field and a village. Today, Mount Usher and Struck Oil are not townships but the area is a rural residential one. See *Mount Morgan: Gold Copper and Oil* by John Kerr (1982); and F.L. Golding, 'An Old Mining Town in Queensland: Mount Morgan', *Journal, The Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 83.

Sam definitely did not find oil, as the name implies, for the nearest oil/gas field is about 400 km to the south east. In this article, I have confined myself mainly to the story of Dorothy. The main body of the Heiser narrative will be written in due course by the family's archivist, Bruce Heiser.

Dorothy, also called Aunt Dollie, told me that her name had a second connotation: 'My initials form the acrostic 'D.I.S.H.' My Dad said that this referred to the metal dish used by alluvial gold

prospectors when they were washing (that is, 'panning') a shovelful of wet sand, pebbles and gravel on the bank of a creek. By shaking it, fragments of gold were exposed.³ The men who did this were called "diggers", from which came the term for the AIF troops in the latter part of the Boer War and in the First World War'.

Solomon Heiser, Dorothy's grandfather, was born in Kempen, Prussia, now Kepno, Poland. He migrated to Surrey in England where he met and married Sarah Hyman. Their first child, Sam, was born in July 1860 and in 1878 he married Rosetta Abrahams. Sam's father passed away and Sarah, Sam's mother, decided to migrate to Queensland in 1883, taking his four younger siblings with her as bounty immigrants. Then, in 1889, Sam and Rosetta followed with their children and were reunited with Sarah in Rockhampton. Sam originally worked there and at Mount Morgan as a tobacconist, stationer, bookseller and fancy goods merchant.

Dorothy was born in Rockhampton on 30 October 1895. She was the third child, born in Queensland, of Sam and Rosetta Heiser.

The question arises as to why did these folk, who surely had never heard of Central Queensland, come from the other side of the world and settle (and prosper) there? The answer is that the Australian immigration authorities wisely did not want all new arrivals to settle in the capital cities. Therefore, the ships would stop at some less settled places along the coast in the hope that passengers would terminate their voyages and settle there.⁴

Though Sam Heiser was involved in the search for gold out from Mount Morgan, most of the credit for the success of those fields must go to William Usher. He discovered gold on Mount Usher, which still bears his name. William developed his formerly tiny claim (originally worked only by him and his son) into a large and prosperous company, which even had a listing on the London Stock Exchange. An area of his earliest claim on Mt Usher was named 'Struckoil Reefs'.

D.W. de Havilland's book *Gold and Ghosts* makes reference to Sam Heiser and his finds, but does not give details of them. It tells of claims in that area, the names of which suggest the frenetic search, such as ... 'Lucky Hut', 'Busy Bee', 'Lucky Strike', 'Struck Oil', 'Last Chance', 'Last Charge', 'Miner's Rest', 'Heartbreak Reef', 'Little Vein'. The following abridged quotation from that book indicates the excitement which the finds engendered and refers to Sam Heiser's involvement in the dig:

Within hours of the Warden's report reaching Mount Morgan and Mr. J.M. Lynch ... bringing in 26 ozs. of nuggets, a rush



This photo, taken about 1903, shows William Usher, seated left, with pipe and Samuel Heiser standing behind him, centre rear. It is possible that the man at the left is the famed Australian poet, Henry Lawson. Henry Lawson had just arrived back from England at this time. Lawson proposed to move into his new home in North Sydney to write a novel but first he travelled to Queensland to seek material for his novel and it is possible that he visited the goldfields for that reason. The gold nugget on the table may have been one named 'The Bottle'.

of diggers headed for 'Peters Rush'. By 18 September, over 380 diggers were costeaning the creekbed and surrounding banks ... a nest of nuggets, over twenty in number, have been found in a patch of ground not more than a foot deep and about 2 feet long and 2 feet wide ...

On the same day, the Warden reported that a Mr. Samuel Heiser showed him ... two pieces of alluvial gold aggregating 74 ozs., which brought the total, found up to that date, to 302 ozs. The Heiser nuggets were located about 140 m. above the original Prospecting Claim and, within days of their first find, they located another 70 ozs. in smaller pieces. The James brothers ... located about 30 ozs. of nuggets ... Mr. Rule ... had a claim ... south of the original find and within days, had unearthed a 62 oz. nugget. News of these finds brought more excited diggers into the area and soon there were over 500

men ... seeking their fortunes. E. Linde and party soon found another patch of small nuggets and won about 4 ozs. of gold every day for some time. By this time, a tent town (containing up to 700 people) sprang up ... but had disappeared within two years.

Struck Oil is about 10 kilometres from Mount Morgan. A contemporary mining map shows it is about 2 kilometres from Mount Usher and quite close to the claim called 'Peter's Rush'. Through this area flows the little Dee River. A badly faded photo, probably taken nearly a century ago for the records of the Mount Morgan Mining Warden, shows several valuable nuggets weighing from 29 ounces to 182 ounces. These were stated to be typical of the finds during what was called 'The Dee River Gold Rush'. Each piece was irregularly shaped like a potato and they were 'large and well-rounded indicating that their original exterior had been eroded, having been washed downstream over gravelly, abrasive creek beds. A total of 4,350 ounces of alluvial nuggets was collected, valued in those days at £18,000 (Aust.). (Currently, that would be an enormous sum of money.) Thousands of fossickers quickly descended on that area but, by 1907, it was played out and deserted. However, to this day, fragments are still being kicked up.' (*The Queensland Mining Journal-November 1990*) Sam's gold finds on 'Peter's Rush' on the Dee River were reported in the press. One of the greatest nuggets found in that era was called 'Peter's Nugget', but it is not clear whether it was found by Sam.

Dorothy told me that, at some stage, the family operated pearling luggers for a few years. They employed descendants of kanakas⁵ and Torres Strait Islanders as divers, based on Thursday Island. These vessels ranged over the Coral Sea and South West Pacific. Much later, other kinsfolk were involved in gemstone mining in Central Queensland and even as far south as Glen Innes and Inverell. They searched for, mined, processed and marketed sapphires, opals, emeralds, rubies, agates and garnets. Rosetta Kingston, Dorothy's daughter, and her husband operated a firm with the intriguing name of Hayrick's Black Opal Mining Co., which operated outside Quilpie.

While many of the Heiser family were involved in gold, gems and jewellery, some were/are solicitors, merchants, plumbers and one is an art gallery manager. In Sam's day (apart from seeking gold) the family was active in what is now called 'the hospitality industry'. The Mount Morgan Council Voter Rolls reveal that Sarah owned the National Queensland Hotel (Roll 1893) and the Metropole (Roll 1904), both in Mount Morgan. The Royal Hotel at Mount



The Royal Hotel, Mount Usher

Usher was built for Sam and he operated it from March 1897 to December 1904. Sam operated the Struck Oil Hotel from 1895 to 1897 when the license was taken over by Zalic Heiser, his younger brother. Zalic was the licensee of the Royal Hotel at Crocodile from 1897 to 1900. In 1900/05 Sam was the licensed victualler at the Commercial Hotel in Mount Usher. Early in 1908, the family visited England, returning in December 1908. About 1913 Sam was in Brisbane, where he died in 1919 and was buried in the Toowong cemetery.

Many years ago Dorothy asked me for a list of appropriate Israel-based and local Jewish funds, which she proposed to include as beneficiaries of her will. We were in touch occasionally after that, until she passed away in July 1988 at the venerable age of ninety-three. Under her will her estate passed to her daughter, Rosetta, on whose death the estate was to be divided between many relatives and organisations, including the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Jewish National Fund and some other local Jewish activities. At the end of 1999, Rosetta passed on and, at the time of writing this article the estate is being wound up.

This short article on Dorothy Heiser, her parents and grandparents on her father's side illustrates the early beginnings of Australian Jewry in the nineteenth century. Many of the Jews who

migrated to Australia settled in country areas. They were the pioneers often connected with the goldfields, but they were usually the shopkeepers or involved in the hospitality industry running inns for travellers. Those who wished to maintain their Jewish heritage often moved later to the capital cities, reinforcing the Jewish community there. Thus it was with the Heisers and it is lucky, in this case, that sufficient family documentation has been preserved to tell the story.

NOTES

1. This Brisbane history was spread over three issues of the *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, i.e. Vol. IX, part 6, 1984; Vol. IX, part 7, 1984 and Vol. X, part 1, 1986.
2. In conjunction with the philanthropist, E.R. Isaacs, Managing Director of the emporium Hoffnung & Co. Pty Ltd, Dorothy provided much of the funds needed to equip the Judean Scout Troop in Brisbane. I was a member in 1933-'34.
3. When panning, no fragment is so tiny as to be rejected. Even little 'flakes' or 'flecks', smaller than a grain of salt (sometimes called 'colour'), are carefully dropped into the prospector's 'specimen bottle'. Being damp, they reflect the sun's rays and this makes them more easily discernable. 'Panning' is also a hobby by which some folk seek to pay for their camping trips, while 'old timers' are still about, who eke out a precarious living with a spade and dish. (Alluvial fragments on creek banks have usually been washed down from a lode or deposit further upstream. Many a 'digger' has spent his life in search of that elusive deposit.) (*See photo*)
4. New York remains one of the world's most populous cities because most migrant vessels made their first, or only, stop there.
5. The kanakas were brought to Australia in the early days, from Melanesia, as impressed labourers, mainly to harvest sugar cane. They were virtually slaves and the practice was outlawed in 1900-'01, with the onset of Federation. Most were repatriated to their home islands, but some chose to remain here and their descendants are hard-working, respected citizens of Far North Queensland.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The late Dorothy Ivy Struckoil Heiser, herself.

The late Rosetta Kingston, (daughter of Dorothy).

Archives of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

Bruce Heiser.- grand nephew of Dorothy Heiser. I appreciate the assistance he has given me in this compilation.

The Oxley Library.

Central Queensland University Library.

The Rockhampton Star.

The Daily Mail (now *The Courier-Mail*).

Carol Davis Stirk, for her valued secretarial services.

Gold and Ghosts by D.W. de Havilland.

Dennis Cleary, formerly of the Queensland Place Names Board.

Mitchell Library, Sydney.

The Rockhampton District Historical Society.

Queensland — Her Past. Alcazar Press.

REV ADOLPH T. CHODOWSKI

Marcelle Marks

Who was the man with the courage and optimism to compete with the 25 year-old long established *Hebrew Standard* by founding a new Jewish newspaper in Sydney, *The Australian Jewish Chronicle*, in March 1922?¹

It was a notable achievement in that the publisher lacked capital. However by his personal efforts he was able to secure advertising support — before a copy of the paper itself was published — which enabled the venture to be successfully launched.² The editor/publisher had had no previous publishing or business experience. Born and educated in Eastern Europe, then graduating from Jews' College, London, he was a Hebrew scholar who had spent a lifetime ministering to small Jewish communities in Australasia.

Now he proved to be an observant and discerning recorder of Jewish personalities and congregations as he found them within Australia and New Zealand. His erudite editorials challenged the apathy of Australian Jews and their leaders. The newspaper was well-written and attractive. He presented topical news, of Jewish interest, both local and world-wide. Jewish history and traditional comments on moral values were not forgotten. All worthy causes were lovingly promoted. Newcomers arriving from antisemitic Europe were welcomed. Zionist ideals were discussed and fostered. For a few short years he was able to influence the direction of Jewish life in Sydney,³ and his work would continue. The man had found his niche at the age of 59.

Adolph Treitel Chodowski, son of Rabbi Isaac Jacob Chodowski (the Wittkower Rav), one of the foremost Talmudic scholars of his day, was born in Posen, Prussian Poland in 1863, a descendant of eight generations of rabbis. Educated by his father up to the age of 15, Adolph attended Posen gymnasium for a couple of years, then travelled around Europe studying with various famous rabbinical teachers in Berlin and other European cities, becoming fluent in speech and writing in several languages. An elder brother had taken up a position as minister of the Sheffield Hebrew

Congregation, so Adolph followed him to England⁴ and added a final language, English, to his talents.

Accepted as a student at Jews' College, London, Chodowski was the first 'foreign' Jew to graduate. A fellow student was Francis Lyon Cohen,⁵ although two more different personalities could not be imagined. In 1905 Rabbi Cohen was appointed rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney. The two were to meet again later in Sydney, but never as friends.

Rev Chodowski married Fanny Phillips in London in July 1887.⁶ His first posting was for a short time in Leicester. Then, on the recommendation of Rabbi Dr Hermann Adler, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Chodowski was called to be minister, headmaster, mohel and shochet at the Canterbury Synagogue in Christchurch, New Zealand. He had been selected from amongst twenty applicants for the position.⁷

Rev Chodowski ministered to the Canterbury congregation from 1889 till 1895. The impressive synagogue was only a few years old. He was appreciated as a fine religious leader there, possessing a tolerant and genial personality, whilst wholeheartedly dedicated to traditional religious orthodoxy in the East European tradition. His wife was busy with young children, but always supportive and strictly observant. Isolated Jewish families in the smaller towns of the South Island often sought his ministerial help. A man of boundless energy, good humour and great generosity, he was invited to sit on every charitable committee within and outside the Jewish community.

When there was difficulty importing matzas in 1890, Chodowsky arranged with a well-known local biscuit manufacturer, 'Aulsebrooks,' to manufacture kosher matzas.⁸ He was one of the leaders of the Womanhood Suffrage Movement in Christchurch, which gained the vote for women there during his sojourn. As a speaker for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, he advocated and achieved New Zealand Government administered and supervised abattoirs in spite of the opposition of private butchers.⁹ The small Canterbury community was once again suffering financial difficulties in 1895 and could no longer afford a full-time minister.¹⁰

Rev Chodowski accepted the position of minister to the Brisbane Synagogue, Queensland in mid 1895. He was engaged as 'Preacher, Lecturer, Teacher, Shochet and Mohel',¹¹ so was obviously capable in all those professional roles. Chodowski arranged a choral service on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in June 1897. With a high proportion of country members in Queensland at the time, it is recorded that he was called upon to perform a wedding ceremony at Toowoomba in 1897.

During his three years in Brisbane he was very busy as a shochet, not only for the Jewish community! The Brisbane Public Hospital was ordering only kosher meat owing to an outbreak of disease among the patients.¹² In fact, it is presumed that the Queensland Jewish community was very lax, and Rev Chodowski was pleased to return to New Zealand's South Island in mid 1898, this time accepting the call to Dunedin where he was already known because of his earlier ministry in Christchurch.

The Dunedin Congregation was the most prosperous in New Zealand, well-endowed with a spacious synagogue and all the necessary Jewish communal, educational and philanthropic societies, even a Choral Society. There was a newly established Chevra Kadisha and a consecrated cemetery.¹³

Rev Chodowski was popular in Dunedin and highly respected for his wide Hebraic culture and his ability to preach, act as chazan, and supervise the Hebrew School. Boys and girls were taught up to Barmitzvah and Confirmation, and beyond. As always, he worked as a shochet and mohel besides. He showed enthusiasm and zeal for all good communal and public causes, and was a man of action as well as words.

Dedicated congregants during his ministry included: Dr Wolf Heinemann, a renowned scholar and pedagogue who was professor in Hebrew and German at Otago University and had been acting as the Hebrew School Headmaster for the three years prior to Chodowski's arrival,¹⁴ the Hon S E Shrimski, the long-standing parliamentary MLC, Barristers Sol Solomon and Ethel Benjamin (the first woman lawyer in New Zealand, probably in the British Commonwealth), eminent medical man, Dr Barnett, and Bendix Hallenstein, Woolf Harris, H Hart, H Hayman, L Hayman, M M Heinemann, Julius Hyman, M Isaacs, G Jacobs, S Jacobs, Maurice Joel, D Lichtenstein, L Mendelsohn, S S Myers, and David E Theomin, many being leading members of the city's commercial and professional scene.¹⁵

Chodowski would have had a stimulating intellectual life in Dunedin and the opportunity to practise his excellent linguistic ability and eloquence. He seems to have been a lively, interesting and headstrong extrovert, good company and on close friendly terms with many of the educated and influential lay leaders and their families, mostly intelligent European migrants. Few members were strictly orthodox, but there was a strong and active Jewish spirit within the mainly prosperous community. At the same time the Reverend was approachable, understanding and helpful to anyone in need, financially or spiritually. His sense of humour was legendary and often eased an uncomfortable situation.¹⁶ Chodowski

showed enthusiasm and zeal for all worthwhile communal and public causes.

A personal friend of many public figures of the Christian faith, he often discussed with them the point of view of Hebrew law, for example, in provision for the aged, which is said to have influenced New Zealand Premier, Dick Seddon, to introduce the Old Age Pension in 1898.¹⁷ He was against prohibition of alcohol. Judicious drinking of wine is a part of traditional Jewish life, and never a problem. He even wrote a pamphlet 'Wines of the Bible: Their Use and Abuse'.¹⁸ Chodowski was recognised as an unofficial employment agent for both Jews and non-Jews.¹⁹ As a prominent Mason he was frequently called upon to lecture on Masonic subjects. He was president of the Otago Chess Club.²⁰ Over the years he was invited to act as master of ceremonies at many happy private celebrations.²¹

A life-long scholar, Chodowski read widely in religious and historical fields as well as keeping abreast of current overseas politics and Jewish affairs world-wide. Occasionally he contributed articles to Australian, continental and English publications including *The Jewish Year Book*.²²

At Rev Chodowski's invitation, Rev Elias Blaubaum of Melbourne's St Kilda Congregation stayed with the family on a visit to Dunedin in 1900. Blaubaum had the authority of the then British Chief Rabbi to form a special Beth Din to define Dunedin Congregation's future policy on proselytisation,²³ a very serious problem for this and most other small, isolated orthodox Jewish communities 100 years ago.

Rev Blaubaum had established and was editor of *The Australian Jewish Herald* from 1879 till his death in 1904. Blaubaum wrote several perceptive articles on his impressions of New Zealand generally — the people and the beautiful and varied countryside and climates — and his visits to the various Jewish communities in particular.²⁴ He wrote that the Dunedin Synagogue was substantial but architecturally uninteresting. The interior was plain but bright, with poor acoustics. The heterogeneous community included a number of well-educated members holding high positions in government, law and other professions, and in commerce. Jewish charitable institutions and the Chevra Kadisha were well provided for. Blaubaum commented that: 'Spiritual affairs are presided over by the Rev Chodowski who is both a good reader and an able preacher, but the (attendance) on ordinary Sabbaths must be very discouraging to him. There is a choir of ladies and gentlemen seated in the gallery and their singing is excellent.'²⁵

It is interesting to note that Rev Blaubaum believed that his *Australian Jewish Herald* exerted more influence than his pulpit.

Besides covering local Melbourne, Australasian and international events and tours, he included instruction on biblical themes and well-written articles on Jewish historical figures.²⁶ Chodowski would not have agreed with Blaubaum's negative Zionist attitude, but I believe that Blaubaum was a great influence in his later entry into publishing.

Chodowski was an excellent organiser. He conducted an impressive Memorial Service at Dunedin Synagogue on the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. In 1903 he set up a successful fund for the victims of the pogroms in Kishineff, and again organised donations for survivors of Russian atrocities in 1906, speedily cabling collected monies overseas.²⁷ He eagerly followed the foundation of the Zionist Movement. A devotee of Theodore Herzl, he was determined to continue promoting the Zionist cause after Herzl's untimely death in 1905. He assisted Dr Wolf Heinemann to found Dunedin's Zionist Organisation.²⁸

Generous almost to a fault, Mrs Chodowski told the story about her husband 'bringing home a down-at-heels starving friend. Instead of giving him a second or third-best suit, (her husband) gave his best,²⁹ a brand-new one, explaining that (the friend) had work to find, and the better he was dressed, the better would be his chances.' This implies Chodowski's older suits were quite shabby.

After 11 years, although very happy in Dunedin, Rev and Mrs Chodowski decided it was time to leave for mainland Australia in 1909. They felt that work and traditional Jewish cultural and social opportunities would be better for their six children, ranging in age from 12 to 19, in Melbourne, Victoria. Rev Chodowski earned his living as a Shochet for Ogdens Butchers besides acting as a teacher and examiner for the Education Board in Melbourne for a few years.³⁰

As a leading spirit in the New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for twenty years, Rev Chodowski returned to attend the 1910 Congress in Wellington. He was able to convince delegates that the Jewish method of slaughter was in fact the least cruel of all. This stopped negative legislation then pending in the NZ Parliament. The Chief Rabbi wrote to congratulate Chodowski on his successful outcome.³¹

In Melbourne, Chodowski immersed himself in traditional Jewish religious and cultural spheres, joining the Kadimah and the Zionist organisation. *The Australian Jewish Herald* reports that he was one of the speakers at a Yahrzeit Memorial Service for Theodore Herzl conducted by Rev B Lenzer at the crowded East Melbourne Synagogue in July 1913. Another time Chodowski publicly challenged Isaac Jacobs to a public debate on Reform Judaism.



Reverend A.T. Chodowski
and Barmitzvah Boy
(Photo courtesy of Lyla
Landau)

An ultra-religious group had broken away from East Melbourne's 'Foreigners' Shul' to form the Carlton Congregation with Jacob Ruschin and brothers Jacob, Isaac and Abraham Dabscheck the prime movers.³² The fledgling congregation was holding services in rented premises. Members were working desperately towards raising funds for a new synagogue following their payment of a deposit for a building site in a suitable position. In 1913 Rev Chodowski was welcomed as Carlton's first minister,³³ reader, preacher and mohel. Hanchen Chodowski, the eldest daughter, married Morris Landau in Melbourne in 1914.

The following year there was a fund-raising fiasco, leaving the Carlton Congregation heavily in debt after the failure, because of poor weather and conflicting wartime functions, of both a Fete and an Art Union. The unfortunate affair, which involved a widely

reported court case, was a great embarrassment to Rev Chodowski as well as to the congregation.³⁴

Later in 1915 Rev Chodowski moved to Sydney where he was appointed Honorary Minister and Headmaster in charge of the Hebrew School of the Newtown Congregation.³⁵ Services and Hebrew classes were being held in the rented Oddfellow's Hall while fund-raising was proceeding towards the building of a synagogue.³⁶

Chodowski sensibly suggested loans from congregants repayable over 10 years. He helped to raise funds towards Newtown Synagogue by organising dances and other successful entertainments.³⁷ He gave unstintingly of his time and effort. No charge was made when he was called upon for kosher killing chickens privately, Chodowski asking that any fee due should be paid to the Building Fund. He arranged for a local butcher to supply Kosher meat for the congregation and acted as Shomer free of charge.³⁸

The Foundation Stones were laid for the new synagogue with due pomp and ceremony on 30 June 1918. Trustee, Isaac Levy, laid the first stone.

Rev Chodowski had been promised the honour of laying the second stone. However, on the day, this honour was given to Rabbi Francis Cohen, causing bitter disappointment and ill-will.³⁹ Rev Chodowski tendered his resignation.

At a Special Meeting of the Board, Mr P Wolfson stated that 'since the Rev Chodowski had been with us, we have always had a good minyon and it is to be regretted that he considers resigning. I hope that the Congregation can see its way clear to keep (the Reverend) with us.' Chodowski was now offered and accepted a contract to be minister, teacher and mohel, for 4 years, at the salary of £4.10.0 per week.⁴⁰

Rev Chodowski continued to work conscientiously with the Newtown Board towards raising funds and planning the actual building of the new synagogue in L'Avenue. His advice on the layout and equipment was often sought. There had been many problems with the structure, safety and appearance of the building.⁴¹ The clerk of works was dismissed. Rabbi Cohen's warning, during his speech at the Foundation Stone Laying, that if the congregation were not religiously observant, 'the Stones would cry out', seemed only too apt.⁴²

World War I had ended. A Peace and Thanksgiving Service organised by Chodowski in the hired Hall in July 1919 was highly praised. Appreciation was also shown at the Hebrew School Prize Giving that year.⁴³ It was gratifying to note the high standards reached by the students and the fact that student numbers had grown from 6 to 42 children.

To supplement his meagre salary, Rev Chodowski taught Barmitzvah boys privately, collected synagogue fees and donations on commission, and worked as a shochet.⁴⁴

Finally, Newtown Synagogue, able to accommodate over 400 congregants, was ready for use. There was a further delay of some months because of the Influenza epidemic. It would be many years before the synagogue was quite complete with the Upper Ladies' Gallery. It was an impressive New Greek Style building. Most of the furniture and furnishings were donated, with the ark and reading desk constructed by congregants. 'Mikva Yisroile' — 'The Hope of Israel' was proudly consecrated on 7 September 1919. It was a great achievement for this struggling community to celebrate.⁴⁵ Once again Rabbi Francis Cohen was invited by the Board to officiate with Rev Chodowski assisting. All the Jewish dignitaries of Sydney attended for the grand occasion.

In 1921 Bertha Chodowski married Aaron Karp. It was the first wedding at Newtown Synagogue, with the bride's father officiating. On Sunday 1 May 1921 Rev Chodowski presided over a splendid welcome to Chief Rabbi Dr J H Hertz⁴⁶ during his pastoral visit to Sydney. A *Conversazione* Reception followed that same evening with all members of Sydney Jewish clergy and lay leadership invited.

While the Chief Rabbi was in Sydney, a delegation from Newtown's Board took the opportunity to report matters to him regarding Rev Chodowski's views and practices connected with Shechita, the Beth Din, Proselytising, and on *aliyot* for calling up more than the usual number on High Holydays. All were traditional East European Jewish customs which Chodowski had followed without complaint throughout all his other ministries, but differed from Newtown's and Rabbi F L Cohen's usual practices.⁴⁷ The Chief Rabbi upheld Cohen's Anglo-Jewish rulings.

These concerns, together with Chodowski's request for an increase in salary commensurate with the office of minister, when some Newtown Board members felt they could not afford a minister at all, led to disagreement over the renewal of Chodowski's contract.⁴⁸ Throughout his time at Newtown, the Board had communicated only by letter with Rev Chodowski. His request to speak at a Board Meeting was firmly refused. This was surely a most impersonal, if not unfriendly relationship! In August 1921 Chodowski resigned from Newtown for good.⁴⁹

Rev Chodowski's ministerial career had been distinguished and productive. He had acted conscientiously as spiritual leader in small, isolated, sometimes impoverished communities. He had met with significant setbacks and had suffered many disappointments but he had met all challenges headlong and provided the religious



Reverend & Mrs A.T. Chodowski & Family (Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Estbergs)

leadership required wholeheartedly and with enthusiasm and great good humour. Christchurch was poor, Brisbane disinterested. Although prosperous, Dunedin was too far from mainstream traditional Jewish life. Carlton was the only strictly orthodox community he had worked for, yet there he had encountered misunderstanding and financial misfortune. Chodowski was not appreciated by the unfriendly Newtown Board. There he had met opposition both to his traditional Orthodox European views and to his Zionist stand which differed from that of the prevailing Anglo, non-Zionist leaders in Sydney at that time.

The Chodowski children were now self-supporting. The elder daughters had married. Ever an optimist, Chodowski was ready for a change of direction. He had long contemplated producing a Jewish newspaper in Sydney with himself the editor. Now he planned this venture carefully.

The Chodowski family had moved to Randwick to reside privately. The newly formed Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board now took the opportunity to request Rev Chodowski's services. Would he conduct Holyday Services for them this year in

Randwick? Chodowski was happy to do so. In fact Rev Chodowski conducted High Holyday Services in the local Masonic Hall for the RCJEB each year from 1921 till 1925,⁵⁰ even during the year he became ill. He also conducted Festival services in private homes in the area for the Board.

The RCJEB was delighted when Rev Chodowski also agreed to work part-time setting up a Hebrew School for the local Jewish children of Randwick.⁵¹ Classes may have been held in the Chodowski home before hired premises were found for the purpose. So long as he could produce his fortnightly newspaper, Chodowski was happy to be involved with this new community as well.

Rev L A Falk wrote that on his arrival to take up the position of Junior Minister at the Great Synagogue in 1922: 'Particularly impressed with (my) library was the Rev A T Chodowski, the editor of the lively and quite literary weekly (sic) *The Jewish Chronicle*. He was a man of wide Hebraic and general culture and a Zionist in the twenties which showed courageous idealism.'⁵²

The first issue of *The Australian Jewish Chronicle* appeared in print in Sydney on 9 March 1922 (9 Adar 5682)...price:3d. Cheerful, literary and attractively presented, *The Chronicle* fortnightly newspaper challenged the long-established *Hebrew Standard*. Chodowski's first editorial reads:

Holding the opinion that free discussion is the most effective means of securing mutual understanding, this journal offers its columns to all sides as a medium for the expression of their views. It is the hope of the promoters that the journal will be a means of assisting in the promotion of unity and kinsmanship between all the scattered communities throughout Australia, and indeed Australasia.

In that very first edition Chodowski wrote of the urgency to proceed with the War Memorial Centre, vitally needed as a community meeting place by young and old.

Each edition included: editorial, current comment, notes on forthcoming Jewish festivals, personal and social news, overseas news, local news, thoughts from the Talmud, the Jewish homeland, the Zionist movement, current Jewish literature and excellent coverage of appeals for all worthy causes, besides paid advertisements. The game of chess always found a place. Sometimes articles on cooking also appeared. There were articles on the need to de-centralise and establish Jewish education classes in the suburbs. Amongst 'Letters to the Editor' were letters informing about the establishment of new Hebrew Schools, such as in Randwick-Coogee.

One issue included articles and photographs of candidates for the state elections, Jewish and non-Jewish.⁵³

Rev Chodowski believed he could present the true picture of Australian Jewish affairs and encourage positive debate to educate or solve many issues. He challenged Anglo-Orthodoxy and Anglo-Worship. Many Jewish immigrants were arriving from Russia and Poland destitute, but dedicated to religious orthodoxy. Initially, they desperately needed help to settle but with time also wanted a voice in the community. Chodowski planned to reach out to them. Jewish youth were now educated to a higher secular level than ever before but Jewish education was neglected, and the drift from the community was growing. Chodowski considered that a progressive pro-Zionist newspaper would appeal even to the less religious and stem the prevailing tide of youth apathy and intermarriage.⁵⁴ Zionism would gradually become a unifying force.

The greatest problem facing Sydney Jewry in the 1920s was intermarriage, with 46 per cent of young people marrying outside the faith. Chodowski emphasised that even in the absence of discrimination, the upholding of Jewish home life, Jewish education and involvement in Jewish communal affairs was absolutely imperative to the community's survival.⁵⁵

Chodowski wrote in *The Jewish Chronicle* of 3 May 1925 criticising the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education. He wrote that less than half the eligible Jewish children were receiving any form of Jewish education.

Rabbi Cohen was well aware of this fact but blamed the parents, not the lack of convenient suburban Hebrew Schools.

The Harris family published the only other Jewish newspaper in Sydney. *The Hebrew Standard* represented the British-style establishment and was greatly influenced by Rabbi Cohen and the Great Synagogue, printing the Rabbi's weekly sermon prominently in each edition. In fact the newspaper was 'under Cohen's thumb' with most of its editors inflexibly non-Zionist in those days as well.⁵⁶

There was an obvious personality clash between Rabbi Cohen and Rev Chodowski. Cohen was the 'passionate patriot' of British ideals. He presented himself as an aloof, distinguished English gentleman of the Jewish religion. He believed implicitly in non-distinctiveness. Cohen was against political Zionism which might be at odds with British loyalty and allow Jews to be accused of dual loyalty.⁵⁷ Cohen was against the formation of a Yiddish-speaking Club. He was actually against the holding of Jewish social club dances on Sunday nights! There might be objections from the Christian community.

On the other hand, Chodowski by all accounts looked positively European and unconventional, was sometimes shabbily dressed and

might be followed by a tribe of children. He was happy to meet with an acquaintance anywhere and ready to converse in any language, even in the street. In response to a worthy appeal, he would empty his pockets, keeping merely enough money to pay his fare home. Once, when he emptied his pockets for an appeal the response was 'Thank you sir, I could see you were a Christian!'⁵⁸

Cohen was authoritarian and paternalistic towards European-educated Jews, being especially intolerant of newcomers whose English was imperfect. Further, Rabbi Cohen was against small, independently-run Hebrew Schools.⁵⁹ He wanted all Jewish education in Sydney, in fact in NSW, to be centrally controlled through the NSW Board of Jewish Education under his personal administration.

The Chronicle did not ignore activities at The Great Synagogue, giving praise to Rabbi Cohen whenever the occasion warranted. For example, a complimentary article appeared with a large photograph showing the Confirmation of Girls there. Although 'Chodowski never wrote disrespectfully about the Rabbi, and on occasion came to his defence, (it) may be that he drew disaffected elements to his side.'⁶⁰

The association of Rev Chodowski and his children with both the Randwick Coogee Jewish Education Board and the Randwick Jewish Social Club was most cordial and happy.⁶¹ His guidance was respected and appreciated. It has been documented by Neville Cohen in a previous *AJHS Journal*. Rose Chodowski served on the Social Club Committee and took part in the very successful 'Mock Breach of Promise Case' performed at the new Maccabean Hall in March 1924. Herman Chodowski was vice president when Rev Chodowski died in 1926. The social event planned for the weekend following the funeral was of course cancelled.⁶²

During 1925 Chodowski became too ill to continue with his beloved and most successful *Australian Jewish Chronicle*. His influence over just four short years contributed in no small degree to the fundamental change in attitude of the Sydney Jewish community with its leaders slowly following the trend.

After a long illness during which he bravely endured much suffering but never lost his idealism, Rev A T Chodowski died on 21 April 1926, aged 62 years. He had spent a full life of committed service to others. His funeral was attended by every Jewish minister and by all the lay leaders of the Jewish community. The unsigned obituary in the *AJC* titled 'A Useful Life' includes:

In the Reverend Adolph Treitel Chodowski there passed a man who through all his days displayed an impulsive energy in good acts and whose hand was ever extended to those in need of help. For his qualities of mind all who met him must have

the greatest respect. The study of the ancient Scriptures was to him a delight; and few men, in Australia at least, had such a knowledge of the Scriptures and the Talmud. But he was a man of action too, and gave his service with ungrudging vigor [sic], not only to the Jewish congregations for which he has labored [sic] but to the general community as well.

M A Lieberman wrote in the same issue:

My friendship with the late Reverend A T Chodowski extends over many years and apart from my (personal) reverence and respect for his scholarship, as President of the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board, I had the best of opportunities of seeing the zeal and earnestness he devoted to the work of instructing the children; work which is the most important from the Jewish standpoint that can be conceived. The late worthy minister paid small regard to the opinions of others as long as he felt that what he was doing was right, and in this carelessness left himself open at times to the censure of the censorious; but those who knew him, like myself, held the highest appreciation of his large heart and his devotion to the cause of Judaism.

The Hebrew Standard merely noted the death of Rev Chodowski, stating that: 'The Metropolitan Daily Press has published a lengthy biographical notice of the deceased'. On the other hand, *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 24 April 1926 reported 'the passing of one of the greatest Talmudic scholars in Australia, the son of a noted Polish Rabbi'. A fine obituary appeared in the *Bulletin* on 29 April presumably written by Harold Mercer. Chodowski had handed the *AJC* over to the growing Zionist Organisation.⁶³ The paper continued to gain popularity under the editorship of Israel Horwitz, K I Sampson and Rabbi L A Falk⁶⁴ until the Great Depression worsened. It was forced to close in 1931 for financial reasons. *The Hebrew Standard* continued only because of underwriting by established Anglo-British individuals and The Great Synagogue.⁶⁵ Suzanne Rutland writes: 'During the long period of ownership of the *Hebrew Standard* by the Harris family, Jonah Marks was the only editor who pursued a policy of independent criticism of the community.'⁶⁶ Although Marks was editor from Jan 1920 to Dec 1924, and even then only in a part-time capacity, during Chodowski's control of *The Australian Jewish Chronicle*, the 'existence for almost a decade of two rival newspapers improved the overall standard of the Jewish press, thereby assisting in the growth of the community.'⁶⁷

Fanny Chodowski continued to reside at 48 Market Street, Randwick, till she died on 9 July 1933.⁶⁸ The Chodowski children were Hanchen [born 1890], Isaac [1891] and Bertha [1893], all born in Christchurch, Marcus [1895] and Herman Philip [1897], both born in Brisbane, and Rosa [1899] born in Dunedin.⁶⁹

Hanchen Chodowski married Morris Landau in 1914 and lived her married life in Melbourne. She died in 1939 aged 49. The Landau children were Samuel, Olga [who married Jack Zach], Lorna [who married Alick Dabscheck] and Arthur [who married Mary Shirley]. Samuel Landau married Lyla Reynolds in 1938. Their children are Marilyn and Naomi Landau. Olga and Jack had two sons, John and David Zach. Lorna and Alick's children are Anne, Pamela and Dr Adrian Dabscheck. Elizabeth Estbergs and Rosemary Landau are the daughters of Arthur. Elizabeth has a son, Llewellyn.⁷⁰

Isaac Chodowski married Miriam Solomons, daughter of Rev and Mrs Solomons of Melbourne. They lived in Adelaide and had one son, Sam. Bertha Chodowski married Aaron Karp in 1921. It was the first wedding at the newly consecrated Newtown Synagogue, with the bride's father officiating. Their only child, Harold Karp married Faye Levi, daughter of Rona and E Y (Teddy) Levi. The Karp children are Berinda and Gregory. Berinda has a son Daniel.⁷¹ Both Marcus and Herman Chodowski lived their adult lives in Sydney, unmarried. Rosa Chodowski married Joseph G Suttonberg at the Central Synagogue on 12 June 1928.⁷²

Lyla Landau [born 1915] has an interesting story to tell about her connection with the Chodowski family and has supplied copies of a letter to her father, and newspaper cuttings. Lyla's father Hyman Reynolds toured New Zealand and Australia with Musgraves's Operatic Company from London when he was a young man. In Dunedin he was invited home by the Chodowskis who were most hospitable. A couple of days later Rev Chodowski contacted Reynolds. He had received an urgent message from Christchurch that Rev Isaac Zachariah was still too ill to undertake the synagogue services by himself on Yom Kippur. Could he obtain leave from the Company to miss three performances in order to travel to and from Christchurch to act as cantor again, as he had done for Rosh Hashanah?

Formerly an active member of Bayswater Synagogue, London, Hyman Reynolds had had a religious upbringing. A copy of a letter to Reynolds from Alf Zachariah states that the doctor will allow his father to sit on the Almamah to help him along. *The Jewish Herald* of 25 October 1901 reported that — (with Rev Zachariah ill) "The Christchurch congregation were fortunate...in procuring the assis-

tance of Mr Hyman Reynolds, a member of the Musgrave Opera Company...Mr Reynolds possesses a fine tenor voice, knows the service well, and is a capital reader.' Another newspaper cutting (undated) reported that Reynolds conducted a synagogue service in Wellington as well.

Hyman Reynolds left the Operatic Company to settle in Melbourne. It so happened that his daughter Lyla Reynolds married Rev Chodowski's grandson Sam Landau, son of Hanchen and Morris Landau in 1938. And Sam's sister, Olga Landau, a granddaughter of the Chodowski's, married Jack Zach, a grandson of Rev Zachariah, tying the three families who had originally met in New Zealand more than 30 years before.

REV ISAAC ZACHARIAH

The marriage of Isaac Zachariah aged 24, born in Asiatic Timor, to Eva Saunders, 17, from London, took place in Ballarat, Victoria, on 14 May 1864 with Rev Samuel Herman officiating. Zachariah had been acting assistant-minister in Ballarat before Herman's arrival.⁷³

Soon Rev & Mrs Zachariah sailed to New Zealand to try their luck at the goldfields of Hokitika on the West Coast of the South Island. Other Jews from Christchurch and from overseas had been lured by this new gold rush. Zachariah joined and ministered to them when requested. Whether successful or not, most of the Jewish miners gradually settled in Christchurch.

The Christchurch community grew and in 1870 Zachariah was invited to be Minister of the Canterbury Congregation acting as teacher, shochet and mohel as well.⁷⁴ When called upon he ministered to the sprinkling of Jewish families scattered around the South Island. Although his English was never good, he was knowledgeable, conscientious and friendly. In 1881 Zachariah was involved with the building of the fine new Sephardic style Canterbury Synagogue on the site of the original building.⁷⁵ Because of ill health and some difference with the Board, Zachariah resigned as Minister in 1886, but continued acting privately as a Hebrew teacher, shochet and mohel. In September 1900 Zachariah was recalled as Minister to the Canterbury Congregation and continued in this role till his death in 1906.⁷⁶

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Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board

Neville Cohen

There was a reawakening of Jewish communal spirit in Sydney in the early 1920s. Jewish servicemen had returned from World War I, a number of young Jews were graduating from university, and there was a growing realisation that the numbers in this small outpost of the Jewish world were dwindling owing to apathy, assimilation and intermarriage. 30% of men and 16% of girls were 'marrying out'. The situation was becoming critical.

The British Chief Rabbi, Dr Joseph Hertz visited Sydney in April-May 1921 and reinforced Rabbi Francis Cohen's urging for greater effort to unite and restore the small but widespread community. During his visit the foundation stone of Central Synagogue at Bondi Junction was laid. Newtown Synagogue was consecrated in 1919. The New South Wales War Memorial — the Maccabean Hall — was built in 1923, and in fact was dedicated on Anzac Day of that year. Moves towards other suburban Synagogues were in the offing, some of which took thirty years or more to bring to fruition.

The New South Wales Board of Jewish Education in roughly its present form was established in 1909 with the aim to serve the Jewish children in Sydney in some manner for the next few years. However, by about 1921 it seems that the Jewish residents of Randwick-Coogee had decided to establish their own local Board of Jewish Education to provide both a Hebrew School and High Holiday Services in a location within walking distance of their homes. If the venture proved successful, they planned to build a synagogue in the area.

On 4 September 1921 a meeting of residents of Randwick & Coogee districts, convened by A. Cliffe, was held at the residence of B. Barnett for the purpose of arranging divine services on the New Year and Day of Atonement. At the meeting about forty gentlemen were present.¹ Rev. Adolph T. Chodowski had indicated that he would be pleased to conduct the High Holiday Services, and the Great Synagogue confirmed that it would provide a Sefer Torah and Yod. An historic advertisement² was placed announcing that:

Divine Services will be held in the Masonic Temple, St. Paul Street, Randwick on the First Day of New Year (Monday October 3rd), Second Day (Tuesday Oct.4th)...Services commence each morning at 7:30 a.m. Efficient readers have been engaged. Tickets at 5/-, 10/6 and £1 each may be obtained from
H. Barnett (asst. hon sec), 96 Beach Street, Coogee,
B. Barnett, 349 Pitt Street, Sydney.
(sgd) A. Cliffe, Hon. Secretary.

Rev. Adolph T. Chodowski and his family had just moved to Randwick after five years ministering to the Newtown congregation as discussed in Marcelle Marks' article also published in this journal. Chodowski was well known to the community, being both respected and popular. He had previously served the congregations of Christchurch and Dunedin in New Zealand, and Brisbane and Melbourne. Himself the son of a Rabbi in a Polish shtetl, he had managed to emigrate to London as a youth, and was the first 'foreign' Jew to graduate from Jews College in London. He was a traditionalist, but at the same time realistically broad-minded. Unhappy with the *Hebrew Standard* as the only Jewish newspaper in Sydney, which represented the British-style establishment views of Sydney's Great Synagogue, he founded and edited the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* as an alternative, especially for the pro-Zionists who were unhappy with the limitations of the British implementation of the Balfour Declaration.

The establishment of a Hebrew and Religious Education School was seriously discussed. 'The Randwick and Coogee Education Board' [*sic*] was brought into being by a special meeting on 2 November 1921. Even though he was already deeply involved in setting up his new publication (which was actually launched in March of the following year) Chodowski said he was happy to organise the new school to teach the Randwick-Coogee children and also to conduct religious services, including those for the High Holy Days. In fact, he did perform these duties for several years while at the same time running his newspaper. He was truly a man of great energy and conviction!

A hall was rented and furniture and teaching equipment purchased. Hebrew and religious classes were held on Sabbaths and Sundays as well as on Wednesday afternoons after school. Additional weekday classes were initiated but failed to continue because of lack of support.

The First Annual General Meeting was held at the home of Ben Morris, one of the prime movers for the establishment of a local Jewish Education Board. This historic meeting officially confirmed the decision to establish a Hebrew School and to appoint Rev. A. Chodowski as Head Teacher.³

Thankfully, the Minute books have survived, and are now in the safe hands of the Australian Jewish Historical Society at Mandelbaum House, Sydney. They are not all that detailed, but at least we can get some idea of what was happening to 'fan the flame' of Judaism and educate the youngsters in the 1920s in the Randwick/Coogee area.

The very first entry is for 6 August 1922, and it tells us that the meeting adopted the Annual Balance Sheet and conducted elections, with the following results:-

President	:	Mr. A. M. Lieberman
Vice-President	:	Mr. A. Cliffe
Hon. Treasurer	:	Mr. B. Barnett
Hon. Secretary	:	Mr. A. Sonnenfeld

The committee comprised B. Morris, J. Levy (who died during the first year), I. Bergman, I. Goldstein, (who also died during the year), J. Solomon, B. Isaacs, L. Sonnenfeld, H. Cohen, S. B. Glass, N. Lewis, M. Marks and M. Salkind.

At a meeting on 27 November the committee decided to hold a meeting 'to discuss the mutual understanding between the Board and the Social Club.'

This meeting was duly held a week later on 4 December, at which it was resolved 'That the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Social Club be authorised to state, and place on their literature (if necessary) that they act in association with the Randwick-Coogee Education Board, and that a further special meeting be called to discuss ways and means of support.' The next meeting, on 22 January 1923 heard complaints of poor attendances by the children 'due to apathy of parents.' It was also moved that Rev. Chodowski be paid £1 per week for his work with the said children. A suitable block of land was sought and on 26 March 1923 the meeting heard that a site in Beach Street, Coogee was available at an asking price of £11 per foot. It was then moved 'That we take no further steps in the matter of purchasing land without the co-operation of the Social Club.' No doubt they saw this 'co-operation' with a profit-making organisation as being for more than moral support alone!

The Committee seemed confident that something would come out of the liaison, and proceeded forthwith to adopt some Rules:-

1. That we recommend to the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Social Club that they affiliate with us in our religious and social objectives, and to further same, both are prepared to mutually render financial assistance.



Education Board, 1922

2. That the first objective of both institutions shall be the purchasing of a site.
3. That one elected representative of each institution be a member of the committee of the other.

By the end of April and after further investigation by a sub-committee, they decided that the Beach Street site was too far up the hill, and the search therefore continued. I have already mentioned in the chapter about the Club that at this time the two bodies were trying to raise the sum of £40 for memorial windows for the about-to-be opened Maccabean Hall. This apparently was initiated by Hymie Goldstein MLA, who had suggested to the Board that Memorial Windows would be a fitting contribution from the Randwick-Coogee citizens to the new Communal Centre.

During a meeting on 6 May 1923 the committee carried the following Motions:-

1. To confine our attention for the present by canvassing all Jewish parents of Randwick & Coogee, especially those whose children do not receive any Jewish education at all.
2. To have a combined Concert & Social at a date to be fixed.



Raymond Cohen

3. All arrangements for this event to be in the hands of Mr. M. Lieberman, Mr. Herman Cohen and Mr. Bernard Cohen.
4. Canvassers to carry out the matters described in Motion 1 above.
5. Rev. Chodowski to come to the next meeting to discuss revised charges for the children attending classes.

A week later Chodowski attended as requested; Herman Cohen (my grandfather) outlined the reasons for inviting him, emphasizing that the number of children enrolled was rapidly diminishing, and inviting him to make suggestions for improving this state of affairs.

By way of response, Chodowski said the reason why attendance was so good at the public schools was owing to Hebrew Education being free. His suggestion was that the Board should adopt the principle of free education, and when that was established, to call for subscriptions. Under these circumstances he would agree to teach the children, whatever the number, for 30/- per week.

In July 1923, Sonnenfeld, the original Hon. Secretary, tendered his resignation and Raymond Cohen was elected in his stead. Without in any way denigrating the efforts of Sonnenfeld, Raymond's Minutes are much more detailed, and have been of

great assistance to me in trying to piece together the story of the Board.

By this time, the Club had secured the lease of Cannon's Hall at 100 Beach Street, Coogee, and the Second Annual Meeting of the Education Board was held there. In commending the Club for its initiative, the Board further cemented the relationship by securing first use of the Hall (after the Club itself), for which privilege they would pay the Club 10/- per week. At a 'Subscribers' Meeting' held on 8 September 1923 the Second Annual Report was tabled. Because it is the only Annual Report I have been able to find, I have decided to reproduce it here in full (See Appendix I).

In February 1924 a committee was set up to handle publicity to the press, and steps were taken to ensure that nothing was sent to the papers without the prior endorsement of this committee.

As can be seen from the second-last paragraph of this Report, no general appeal for funds had been made after two years of operation, but obviously the Board had to look beyond the handful of parents who were actually making use of the facility. The Treasurer said that of the £150 received, only £6/10/6 was subscribed, the balance coming from the High Holy Days Services. In other words, money collected during those few days had to last the school for 12 months. The need for subscribers was seen as urgent. In March 1924 a brochure was prepared and circulated throughout the area in March 1924, and it too is reproduced here in full (see Appendix II).

Apart from organising the School, the Board continued its other important function, arranging services for the High Holy Days. Although the Central Synagogue at Bondi Junction was opened in 1923, and had been preceded by earlier *minyanim* (services with ten men) in Newtown, Surry Hills and Paddington, nevertheless the people of Randwick needed somewhere within walking distance for Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur, and this is reflected in the Annual Report. The Randwick-Jewish Education Board organised High Holy Day Services at 'Leigh House' in 1920, at the Masonic Hall, Randwick from 1921 to 1925 and finally at Alison Hall, Randwick from 1926 through to 1931. Passover, Succoth and Shevuoth Services were apparently held in private homes in the area. I still have an Entry Card for Services in 1928.

The activities of the Board were obviously well received by the community, and were described by the Jewish Press as 'A Strong Force for Judaism'. Still under the dynamic leadership of M. A. Lieberman as President, and ably supported by his Vice-President, Herman Cohen, the Board entered its third year with great optimism. The finances appear to have been more than adequate to meet the running costs, and it is therefore interesting to read that:

Classes for the children are held three times a week, and are well attended; and whilst in the case of the majority of the students a small fee has been charged, free education is provided for those to whom fees of any kind would be a difficulty; poor children have been as eagerly welcomed as the children of the wealthy. Recently to remove any obstacle to the attendance of children it was decided to make the classes entirely free.⁴

No doubt a great deal of thought was given to what Chodowski had told the committee the previous year, and on 25 May 1924 it was resolved 'that the Board initiate the system of Free Hebrew Education to the Jewish children of Randwick and Coogee Districts and that such education should start on July 1 on a three month's trial, and that Chodowski receive 30/- per week.' It was also decided to hold a fund-raising dance on June 26, tickets to be sold for 2/- each, all arrangements in the capable hands of Bernard Cohen. On 8 June there was to be a special meeting of the Club to meet some of the prominent members of the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board.

Three months later the president stated that since the Board had adopted free education the number of pupils had increased to 23. But this was not good enough, and it must have been obvious to the committee that the 'experiment' of free education was not receiving the hoped-for financial support from the community at large, and the writing was on the wall.

Without any preliminary warning (at least as far as the Minute Book is concerned) the axe fell. On 17 November 1924 it was moved that 'This Randwick-Coogee Board of Jewish Education be disbanded as an Educational Board with as little publicity as possible.' A further motion was then carried 'That a letter be sent to Rev. A. Chodowski announcing that Jewish education classes be dispensed with, with regret.' And the final Motion carried was 'That the Board will still hold Divine Services in the District in future'. An Ormolu clock was presented to Ben Morris to mark the gratitude of the Board for his tireless support, and a gold watch was presented to Raymond Cohen in appreciation of his services as Hon. Secretary.

The teaching arm of the Board may have gone, but it managed to fulfil its commitment to arrange services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur for a few more years. We know of a meeting of the committee in November 1925 when various payments and donations were authorised, leaving a balance of £19/2/- which was paid to Chodowski for his involvement in the High Holiday Services for that year.

In October 1926 a similar meeting disposed of the proceeds of the next year's High Holy Days Services, which showed a surplus of

£37/8/-; £20 was given to Nathan Regenstein for his assistance at the Services, the balance going to charity, as usual.

In 1925 Chodowski handed over *The Australian Jewish Chronicle* to the Zionists, and he died in April of the following year after a long illness. The paper continued for a further six years or so, but the financial difficulties of the Great Depression finally brought about its demise in 1931.

Raymond Cohen married Bessie Pearlman on 12 March 1929. It goes without saying that they first met at the Randwick-Jewish Social Club! To mark the occasion he was presented with a wooden Tray with silver trim and an engraved plaque from the Committee of the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board, and a Tea and Coffee Service from the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Social Club, tributes to his work as Hon. Secretary to both organisations for so many years. By 1931 Raymond Cohen was no longer Secretary to the Board, and I have not been able to find any further Minutes.

In the period from 1925 to 1931 the Education Board went into hibernation. It continued to arrange annual High Holiday services in the area until 1931. However, the Coogee-Randwick Social Club continued the search for a suitable site in the area and tried to maintain the endeavours of the Education Board. There had always been a strong link between the Education Board and the Social Club, which had in fact come into being as an offshoot of the educational activities. In the Minutes of the Club for 11 October 1928 we read that Lieberman had again been approached about reviving the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board. In his opinion '...it was a pity that they had let them and the organisations drop during the past two years'. The president, Nat Lewis, said the Club had £150 and would be behind any effort to revive the Education Board and work towards building a Synagogue.

They wasted no time, but immediately took up the challenge. Within two weeks, on 4 November to be exact, a committee was set up by the Club, which included Herman Cohen, with the aim of preparing proposals in connection with the Education Board. I. Bergman was confirmed as Chairman, M. Jacobs as Treasurer and Raymond Cohen as Hon. Secretary. Once again we are indebted to Raymond for the painstaking manner in which he recorded the proceedings of the committee.

The objects of the committee were spelled out in detail:

1. That all present co-operate and seek the support of the Jewish residents of Randwick, Coogee and surrounding suburbs in order to obtain a Hall to be used for social, educational and religious purposes.

2. That the Board of Management of the Great Synagogue and the N.S.W. Jewish Education Board be advised and asked for their moral support, and to send representatives to a future meeting.
3. To canvass Randwick, Coogee and surrounding suburbs to inform the Jewish residents of these Objects and to ascertain whether we have their support or not.

Draft letters were approved and sent to the relevant bodies. On receiving generally favourable replies, a sub-committee was established to liaise with the Club in devising ways and means to establish a Communal Hall. It was resolved to try and find a suitable site and then to call a public meeting, 'thereby revealing to the residents of the Randwick Municipality that the committee had something tangible to offer', to quote the Minutes of 14 April 1929. At the conclusion of this meeting the members went off to view a number of vacant allotments they had already identified as 'possibles'.

One such site was in Dolphin & Mount Street, but this was ultimately rejected. Never daunted, they decided to advertise in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in the hope that something suitable might turn up. They also set up a Ladies' Committee to help with fund-raising. There were some responses to the advertisement and by 25 April 1929 the committee was able to report that they had narrowed down their search and were hoping to find a suitable block of land in the vicinity of the Randwick Post Office. Regular reports appeared in the *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, but they abruptly cut out after October 28, and nothing further is reported about this committee. It is difficult to tell — it may have been because the paper was no longer printing the reports, or perhaps the committee stopped sending them. In any case, the life of this newspaper was drawing to a close, and it went out of existence in 1931.

There is an interesting link between the Board of Jewish Education and this particular newspaper, and I will make a brief diversion to outline the story. As Suzanne Rutland has written:

In March 1922, after 25 years of being the only Jewish newspaper, *The Hebrew Standard* was faced with a rival — the *Australian Jewish Chronicle*. It was founded as a fortnightly publication by the Rev. Adolph Chodowski, who believed that *The Hebrew Standard* was 'ineffectual' and that the community needed 'a real exponent of Jewish affairs'. Chodowski, who had been a minister in five Australian towns, felt that in order to stem the drift away from Judaism and to reverse the prevailing apathy, a more progressive Jewish newspaper was

needed. Five years later the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* was taken over by Zionist leaders, who wanted to strengthen the pro-Zionist voice in the community.⁵

As we shall shortly see, the Zionist movement itself also became involved in the affairs of the Education Board, and no doubt Chodowski was more than a little influential in this.

In 1928 a company consisting of a number of Zionist leaders was formed to continue the management of the newspaper...In 1929 it became a weekly and efforts were made to extend its circulation to other Australian states. The newspaper ultimately failed, however, largely because of the effects of the Depression. It ceased publication in 1931.⁵

Nothing seems to have come of the proposal to build a Communal Hall in Randwick, it must simply have been put into the 'too hard' basket.

The scene now changes to 1930, when something quite electrifying ran through the Board, and the community. The record left by Raymond's meticulously-kept Minute Book and its accompanying correspondence reveal a dramatic new concept in Jewish Education — the Hebrew Model School 'Tarbut' promised to re-vitalise the teaching of Hebrew, and hopefully also to breathe a new spirit into Jewish life in general.

It all seems to have started in far-away Perth; the headline in the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* of 20 February, 1930 elaborated on an earlier news item:

REMARKABLE TEACHING SUCCESS

J. Wardimon?

In a recent issue we published an article on Jewish Education in Perth, which dealt with the inauguration of new methods which have produced surprising results. The changes brought about there were made by Mr. J. Wardimon, who is now in Sydney. Mr. Wardimon arrived from Palestine some 20 months ago, and is an engineer, but his knowledge of and interest in the teaching of Hebrew as a living language was so wide and extensive that he was prevailed upon to introduce some of his methods there.

One of the conditions stipulated by Mr. Wardimon was that a separate school was absolutely essential and the 'right of entry' condition which prevailed in Australian schools was not used by Mr. Wardimon at all.

Beginning with only 25 pupils, the results were so surprising that within a short time the number of pupils increased to 85. At recent public examinations held at the school, at which Rabbi Freedman and the leaders of the community attended, the knowledge displayed by the children was of such a high order that it was immediately decided by a general meeting of the parents of the Perth community that the present system was to be superseded and the new methods introduced by Mr. Wardimon were to be adopted. Mr. Wardimon has no personal ambitions to serve beyond his great love for the Jewish national cause, and he was approached by the communal authorities there to take charge of the whole system of Jewish Education in Western Australia. He has declined to do so on the ground that he was on his way back to Europe.

Mr. Wardimon is now in Sydney, where he is staying for only two or three weeks while on his way back to Europe. He would be glad to interview any of the authorities or any parent who would like to know more about the work that is being done in Western Australia, and what can be achieved here by similar efforts.

Apart from this Notice, I have not discovered any prelude to a meeting called for Sunday morning, 8 June, 1930, when 12 prominent members of the community gathered at the ever-popular 'Grotto Cafe' in Carr Street, Coogee, but no doubt there had been some behind-the-scenes activity, possibly by people who had family in the West and who had heard of the new system being trialed there.

Present at this historic gathering were P. Appleboom, M. Braudo, E. Joseph, M. Lee, H. Lewis, J. C. Lewis, L. Salkind, M. Salkind, M. Slender, S. Solomon, M. B. Steenbohm and R. Cohen.

Maurice Salkind was elected to the chair, and Raymond Cohen asked to act as honorary secretary. The main business of the meeting is pithily stated in the first proposition put to the group, viz: 'That steps be taken to obtain confirmation from the President of the Perth Hebrew Congregation and any other information re the inauguration and progress of the *'Tarbuth'* Hebrew Model School at Perth'. This was carried unanimously, and those present immediately formed themselves into a committee to set the wheels in motion to found such a school in Randwick providing a favourable report from Perth was forthcoming. Max Braudo, who was destined to play a key role in this enterprise, outlined the *'Tarbuth'* system and obviously generated a great deal of enthusiasm. What distin-

guished the *Tarbut* approach from more conventional Jewish Education was its emphasis on Hebrew as a living language, and its concentration on Jewish culture and history rather than on religion. When the meeting closed two hours later, I can just picture the new committee dispersing with a feeling of great accomplishment, and ready to throw their weight behind this new and exciting project.

Two weeks later they met again to hear the draft of the proposed letter to Rabbi Dr. Freedman in Western Australia, and to form a small sub-committee to take their proposal to the Board of Management of Hebrew Education at the Great Synagogue 'with a view of obtaining the Board's moral and financial support in the establishment of a *Tarbut* school in the Randwick-Coogee District.'

A lettergram was promptly dispatched to Dr. Freedman. Strange to say, his reply has survived, and after reading it I wonder that the project didn't die on the spot!. Here it is in full:

16 July 1930

I received your lettergram asking me for full particulars regarding inauguration and progress of Mr. Wardiman's Hebrew School.

I took no part in the inauguration of Mr. Wardiman's school, and consequently am unable to give any particulars.

The school ceased to exist last January

Yours faithfully
(Rabbi) D. Freedman

This is most odd — the Wardimon school had already closed when the *Chronicle* ran the article about its great success and acceptance in Perth!

By 3 August the sub-committee was able to report on a favourable reception from The Great Synagogue, and it was proposed that the new school commence in nine days time! This surely must be a record for the setting up of any school. Each of the foundation members pledged to start the kitty with "an amount not to exceed £2".

Well, it didn't start quite that quickly, but a meeting three weeks later heard that nine desks had been constructed, each capable of accommodating four children. It was understood that Max Braudo was to be the Head Teacher, and he was urged to get the school up and running without delay and for this purpose he was given a free hand to set the date, the number of days each week on which it would operate, and all other administrative details. This meeting also heard that all profit from the forthcoming High Holy Days Services being arranged by the Randwick Communal Hall

37 **Divine Services**

will be held in the
ALISON HALL, ALISON ROAD, RANDWICK

ראש השנה
First Day New Year: Second Day New Year:
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5th SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6th

יום כפור
Day of Atonement: MONDAY, OCTOBER 14th
Services Commence each morning at 7.30 and preceding Evening at
5.45 o'clock.

**MR. NATHAN REGENSTEIN, MR. J. ROSEN, AND
MR. A. EMANUEL WILL OFFICIATE.**

Proceeds in aid of the proposed Communal Hall in the District
GENTLEMAN'S TICKET 7/6.

L. BERGMAN, President. RAYMOND COHEN, B.E., Hon. Sec.
NAT. LEWIS, Hon. Treas. 32 Arden St., Clovelly.

Tickets donated by M. Jacobs, Jeweller, 93 Liverpool Street, Sydney

*Newspaper advertisement for Divine Services, Alison Hall,
Randwick*

Committee would be handed over to the new 'Tarbut' school. M. Lee and M. Salkind were appointed Trustees, and the treasurer was authorised to spend any amount necessary towards the decoration of the school-room. All furniture was to be insured in the name of the Trustees; obviously a very business-like attitude was being adopted right from the beginning.

Notices were distributed throughout the area announcing that 'classes in Hebrew Instruction will be held at Alison Hall, Alison Road, Randwick on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 3:45 pm commencing from Monday next, 1st September 1930', and Braudo was delighted to tell the meeting that on the opening day there were 19 pupils, and the school then settled down with an enrolment of 17, divided into two classes.

The committee were of course anxious to build up numbers and finances; they decided to invite their wives to the next meeting, no doubt with the intention of forming a Ladies Auxiliary for fund-raising. In order to spread the word, and to get the school noticed by the Hebrew Press, they asked Raymond Cohen to act as publicity agent.

A Mr. Zeitlin had been invited to submit designs for a badge, which he now showed to the committee, stating that he was pre-

pared to sell them his design for £2, which would become the property of the committee. Not wishing to deplete the small funds held by the school, there was a 'whip-around' of committee members and the required amount was soon collected. The original printer's block for a letterhead based on this design still exists.

Finances were a real concern, and it is hard at the beginning of the twenty-first century to put these problems into perspective. We are talking here about the Great Depression nearly 70 years ago. As the *Cambridge Encyclopaedia* states:

The Depression created social turmoil and political instability. Responsibility for assisting the unemployed rested with the state governments and at first they provided only meagre handouts of food. By the winter of 1930 every Australian city had witnessed large-scale demonstrations by the unemployed; the states developed new forms of relief, including labour camps, designed to keep them off the streets.⁸

So what is the Committee discussing on 25 September 1930? A budget of £6 per week, to be raised by 24 people each contributing 5/- per week, and only 17 parents to draw on! This was a daunting prospect indeed for a group of high-minded Jews who believe passionately that only Jewish education can preserve them as a people. Braudo, whose generosity is exceeded only by his vision, pledges to work for no salary for the first three months, and refused to accept payment for his out-of-pocket expenses.

Dances and Card Parties were held to supplement the funds collected from the parents, and by Christmas the treasurer was able to report that £14 was on hand with only £4 of outstanding debt. The Committee, therefore, voted to pay Mr. Braudo an honorarium of £10 in appreciation of his past services, and to guarantee him £1 per week salary for the next three months.

To draw attention to the 'Tarbuth' school, the innovative committee decided to write to about thirty prominent Jewish leaders, and not just in Sydney but interstate as well. Despite its idiosyncratic English and punctuation, the message was clear:-

On behalf of the Executive Council of the Hebrew Model School 'Tarbuth', I wish to draw your attention to the issue of an Official Declaration of this body, and supplemented by a special contributed article under the headline 'Hebrew Model School Tarbuth', which appeared in 'The Australian Jewish Chronicle' on January 8th 1931, with a view of expressing in the fullest way your views on the present situation of Hebrew

Education in Australia and the immediate action that should be taken.

I firmly believe and confidently trust that, an ardent sympathiser like you, having been so long connected with the Jewish educational movement and so deeply interested in its work that, it would give you a very great satisfaction to take the opportunity of giving public expression on one of the most important communal problems confronting us at the present time.

The letters went out on 12 January 1931, and by the beginning of February the Secretary was able to report that eight replies had been received. Some of these are quite fascinating, and reveal a range of opinions on Jewish education in general, and 'Tarbut' in particular, far wider, I am sure, than anticipated by Raymond. I would like to quote briefly from some of them: Dr Fanny Reading, President of the National Council of Jewish women wrote:

...in an article 'To Parents' which will be published in our February Bulletin, exhorting parents to give their *children* a Hebrew education, I make special mention of your 'Tarbut' school.

(Rev.) Benzion Lenzer of Newtown Hebrew Congregation wrote:

Our system of Hebrew Education is sadly in need of remodeling, restructuring. I shall be delighted if your new movement will infuse a new spirit and a revival in our system of education.

Another supportive letter came from Zionist leader Max Freilich who wrote as follows:

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that I am giving in the Editorial of next week's issue of The Australian 'Jewish Chronicle' my views on the question of Hebrew Education in Australia.

It is advisable that a controversy in the form of letters to the Editor should be published in our paper which will help create interest among Jewish parents on the subject.

On the other hand, Rabbi Francis L. Levy of The Great Synagogue was much less sensitive; He wrote:

Your letter of the 15th, was the first information I had of the existence of your Society and of course I could not venture to express an opinion till I know more of it.

This was a strange letter indeed, seeing that the Randwick-Coogee Committee had met with the Board of Jewish Education at the Great the previous August, and he must have seen the article in the *Jewish Chronicle*!

Cohen's lack of support was mirrored in his Melbourne colleague's reply — Rabbi J. Danglow, from the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation:

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter, and much regret that, owing to pressure of my work, I cannot undertake to comply with the request contained therein.

Rabbi Jerome Mark, who was one of the initial rabbis of the Reform Congregation, Temple Beth Israel, also expressed reservations as follows:

Your favour of January 12 to hand. Many thanks for your compliments as to my educational qualifications. Although they are entirely un-merited, I will admit that I am deeply interested in the Hebrew Language and Hebrew Education. I shall also be happy to forward the cause of such instructions in Australia to the best of my ability.

Unfortunately I did not see the copy of the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* which you mention. It might interest you to know that I receive only those copies which contain wild outbursts of antagonism against myself and my Movement.

In consequence of this, I do not quite understand what it is you desire me to do. If you want my commitment on the question of Hebrew training, you may quote me as in full accord and sympathy with every movement which will further that cause in Australia.

To endorse the Hebrew Model School Tarbut is another matter. You are aware, of course, that I am ignorant of its work. Under these circumstances an expression of opinion would be most ill advised.

This response was not a very encouraging one, but it did not deter the fundraising venture.

So what was the reaction of these visionaries? Having received the correspondence, they moved on to next business!

MOTION:

Following the precedent set by Hebrew Educational institutions in the Jewish World, the Hebrew Model School 'Tarbuth' resolves that a Grand Public Meeting be convened in Sydney for the purpose of celebrating the Centenary of the birth of the leading Hebrew poet of the Haskalah Movement, Jehudah Leib Gordon.

Two months later we read in the Minutes of the overwhelming success of the public meeting, held in conjunction with the Council of Jewish Women N.S.W., Jewish Club of Sydney, Union of Sydney Zionists and the Young Men's Hebrew Association. There was simply no stopping these people.

The honorary treasurer reported at this time that funds stood at £7 and they voted unanimously that Braudo should receive £6 on a/c. Nevertheless, and despite their hearts being in the right place, their heads were also, and the Committee faced the reality of the situation; the next meeting was scheduled to discuss how the school might survive.

Braudo had done his homework, and addressed the meeting at length. He explained that he had discussed the future of his school with 'prominent Jewish people, and came to the conclusion that the committee should affiliate with the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education.' A sub-committee was delegated to interview personally the individual members of the Board of Jewish Education and apprise them of the proposal to affiliate with that body. They also proposed to attend a forthcoming meeting of their Board.

The Board responded on 2 July 1931 by sending its headmaster, Abraham Rothfield, who had served in that position since 1924 and Sol Goulston to inspect and report on the operation of the 'Tarbuth' school. They reported that 14 children, separated into both junior and senior grades, were doing very well under the capable tutorship of Braudo. They recommended in their report dated 7 July, 1931, that an immediate grant of £10 be made as a gesture of encouragement from the New South Wales Board. Goulston himself donated a guinea.

Things were drawing to a head. The Board's Report was favourable, but at the same time it was contemplating not merely accepting affiliates but of actually taking responsibility for *all* Jewish Education, although they did not state this quite so baldly. It was resolved to write to the Board stating that the 'Tarbuth' committee was financially embarrassed and unless it received immediate monetary assistance at the hands of the Board, it would reluc-

tantly be compelled in the very near future to close the school. On 24 July 1931 the Board wrote to the Committee 'I regret to inform you ...that the Board is unable, owing to lack of funds, to provide tangible assistance, but has promised to reconsider the matter at a later date'. Significantly, the letter continued: 'Further I should like to add, although it is hardly necessary, that any statements of individual members of the Board are not in any sense binding on the conduct of the Board as a whole'.

During a meeting at the end of July, Max Freilich suggested that 'Tarbut' approach the Union of Sydney Zionists, of which he was a prominent member. He thought they might be prepared to subsidise the school until such time as the Board would take over the school. He felt sure they would pay the rent for the next few months. The committee thanked Freilich for his generous offer, and Braudo appealed to the Committee to have a little more patience and keep together for a little longer.

Three members of the Committee went to the next meeting of the Union of Sydney Zionists. They were warmly received, and given an assurance of £1 weekly for the next three months. Subsequently, and in order to foster closer ties between the two bodies, Max Freilich was elected onto the 'Tarbut' committee.

Meanwhile, the New South Wales Board had called a conference for 27 August, saying in their letter inviting two Delegates that:

The Council of this Board is anxious to foster closer cooperation in finance and instruction between all Jewish educational bodies in the metropolitan area with a view to avoiding that waste of energy, effort and expenditure which results inevitably from even the appearance of competition or only overlapping.

I don't think the 'hidden agenda' is very hidden behind these bland words. Unwisely as it turned out, the elected delegates, Freilich and Lee, were given an absolutely free hand to negotiate with the Board, but their efforts were in vain. The story of this fateful meeting has been told by the chief protagonist, Max Freilich himself:

Rabbi Francis Cohen of the Great Synagogue called a conference of Hebrew schools in Sydney for the purpose of co-ordinating Hebrew religious education and spoke at some length on the necessity of co-ordinating the work of the schools with a view to avoiding overlapping. The Rabbi then asked for comments and called on me first as I was the youngest present. I

opened my remarks by saying, perhaps a little facetiously, that the Rabbi spoke of overlapping in teaching Hebrew but in my understanding overlapping denotes doing a job twice, while here in Sydney the job of teaching Hebrew was not being done at all. The Rabbi jumped to his feet and did not allow me to continue. Rabbi Cohen was highly respected within and without the Jewish community and enjoyed a fine reputation as a scholar; but he was also known for his obvious dislike of those who spoke English with a foreign accent, a dislike which was even more accentuated if the speaker was a Zionist. The Rabbi hardly ever spoke to me afterwards.⁹

A month later a letter came from the Board giving the outcome of the conference which had taken place on 23 September. A new body was being set up, to be known as the Jewish Advisory Council, on which each present educational institution would be allowed one delegate. The purpose of this Council was to prevent overlapping, unify curricula, organise the financing of the general educational system, and to examine and vouch for the qualifications of teachers. By way of response, the 'Tarbuth' Committee advised that it would hold an extraordinary general meeting to discuss a motion to wind up the Hebrew Model School 'Tarbuth'. It also noted a request from Braudo to 'liquidate' the liability to him of £29.

The meeting duly took place on 6 October 1931. So disheartened was Raymond that the Minutes were never transcribed into his beautifully detailed Minute Book, but thankfully his pencilled notes have been preserved. The Treasurer reported that £21/5/- was owing to the school by some of the foundation members, and that the school in turn owed £29 to Mr. Braudo. The six foundation members agreed to share this debt among themselves. They also agreed that as a mark of appreciation to Braudo, all the property of the school, including the furniture, be sold and the entire proceeds given to him.

After mutually thanking each other, and particularly the office bearers, for their dedication, enthusiasm and commitment to the ideals of the school, it remained only formally to pass the motion to wind up the enterprise. The very last matter voted on was to inform the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education that they were no longer in a position to avail themselves of its kind offer to participate in any scheme to amalgamate the various educational institutions as they no longer fell into that category.

Thus ends the short, sad history of the Hebrew Model School 'Tarbuth'. I certainly have not done it justice, nor have I been able to say anything about the pupils and the tuition they received, but at

least its memory will be kept alive. My regret is that the New South Wales Board itself, in its official history of Jewish Education in this state, did not even mention its existence.

One thing however I have been able to discover is where the name '*Tarbut*' comes from. In my young days there was a Zionist club-cum-restaurant of that name at 333 George Street, Sydney, but I never realised that it was connected with education. It all goes back to the rise of the national movement in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Peretz Smolenskin and Eliezer ben Yehudah realised that a truly Jewish State could only come about when Hebrew became a secular rather than a sacred language. In Palestine in 1883 the first attempt was made to introduce Hebrew as the language of instruction in the Jerusalem boy's school of the Alliance Israelite Universelle. As stated in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia, Jewish People, Past and Present*:

The earliest endeavours to introduce modern Hebrew instruction outside Palestine were made in Galicia in the Baron de Hirsch schools (founded in 1895) where Hebrew was taught in addition to the general, State-approved curriculum.....At that time 41 schools were in existence and nearly all of them had begun to teach Hebrew.

In Russia the Hebrew school movement gained momentum after the legalisation in April 1907 of the *Hovevei Sfat Ever Society* (Lovers of the Hebrew Tongue).

With the spread of the Hebrew school system a controversy arose among Jewish educators as to the methods of instruction. Should Hebrew be taught by way of translation into another language, or by the system known as *Ivrit-be-Ivrit* (Hebrew in Hebrew)? This question arose in a different form at a Conference of Russian Zionists held prior to the eleventh Zionist Congress (Vienna, 1913). Vladimir Jabotinsky urged the establishment of schools where all subjects could be taught in Hebrew, whilst others demanded that the Hebrew school devote more attention to the Yiddish language.

Following the March Revolution in 1917 the Hebrew movement in Russia expanded rapidly. The Conference of the *Hovevei Sfat Ever* in April 1917 resolved to found kindergartens, primary schools, trade courses, high schools, colleges, evening classes, yeshivot and seminaries for teachers and kindergarten instructors. At this Conference it was decided to change the name of the Society to '*Tarbut*' (Culture).

From its inception the *Tarbut* movement was able to produce substantial results. The Union of Jewish teachers, mean-

while, was wracked in the unceasing struggle between Hebraists and Yiddishists.

The decline of the Hebrew school movement in Russia set in after the October Revolution. In 1919 a law was passed by the Soviet Government, recognising Yiddish as the language of the Jewish working class...In August 1919 a new decree, issued by the Commissariat for Education declared that, since Hebrew was not the vernacular of the Jewish masses it should not be regarded as the language of a national minority, but as a foreign tongue.¹⁰

Thus the *Tarbut* system has a long history, full of educational and political controversies, but driven by a burning desire to ensure that the Jewish religion, and especially its language and culture, be preserved and spread throughout the Diaspora.

Neville Cohen
February 2001

Author's note: I am indebted to Marcelle Marks (née Cohen) for much valuable research and criticism during the preparation of this Paper.

**APPENDIX I
RANDWICK-COOGEE JEWISH EDUCATION BOARD.
SECOND ANNUAL REPORT.**

For presentation at the Annual Meeting, 1923-5683.

Executive

President:	Mr. M. A. Lieberman
Vice-President:	Mr. A. Cliffe
Hon. Treasurer:	Mr. B. Barnett
Hon. Secretary:	Mr. Raymond Cohen B.E.

Committee:

Mr. Ben Morris	Mr. Sydney B. Glass
Mr. Isaac Bergman	Mr. N. Lewis
Mr. J. Solomon	Mr. M. Marks
Mr. L. Sonenfeld	Mr. A. Sonenfeld
Mr. Herman Cohen	Mr. M. Salkind
Mr. P. Appleboom	Mr. Bernard Cohen
Examiner of Classes:	Mr. Sydney B. Glass
Visiting Examiners:	Mr. M. Marks
	Mr. J. Solomon
	Mr. Herman Cohen
Teaching Staff:	Rev. A. T. Chodowski

The President and Committee of the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board have pleasure in presenting to Members, subscribers and Donors, its second Annual Report covering the activities of the Board from August 1922 to date.

Hebrew Classes.

The Hebrew classes established in connection with the Board continue to be held at premises No. 40 Bream Street, Coogee, on Wednesdays, Sabbaths and Sundays. The attendance of pupils during the year, though spasmodic at first, has shown a steady increase until at the present time there are twenty-seven pupils on the roll and regularly attending the classes. Necessarily all do not attend on the one day. Actual figures show that from October 29th, 1922 up to and including the 19th. August, 1923 forty Sunday classes were held, the average attendance at these classes being nineteen pupils. During the same period thirty eight classes were held on Wednesday the average at such classes being thirteen pupils. During the same period forty Sabbath classes were held and the average attendance of pupils at such classes was fourteen. It may

safely be forecasted [*sic*] that the attendance at classes will increase proportionately during the ensuing year.

During the year in review the school premises have been made more attractive for the children by the provision of new and strong seating accommodation and trestles, kindly donated by Mr. M. Marks. These have added to the comfort of the scholars and the convenience of the Teacher, the Rev. A. T. Chodowski. In order that the system of instruction may be thoroughly up-to-date the Board has on behalf of the school ordered through the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education the latest educational manuals recommended by the Director of Education in England.

During the year the classes have been visited and reported on by Mr. M. Marks, Mr. J. Solomon, Mr. Herman Cohen, the President and Mr. Sydney B Glass at different intervals. Mr. Glass on behalf of the Board has recently conducted an exhaustive examination of the pupils and the prizes to be distributed at the Annual Meeting have been awarded on the results of his examination. The reports of all examiners agree in drawing attention to the steady progress evident amongst the scholars, particularly those whose attendance has been regular throughout the year. From experience during the year the Board feels satisfied that the examining of the children at intervals by private examiners provides the greatest incentive to progress.

On the occasion of the Barmitzvah of Master Louis Morris, one of the first of the pupils attending the School to be Barmitzvah, the Board took the opportunity of presenting him at the school premises with Tallith, Tefillin and Machzorim.

At the special invitation of the Board the Rev. Rabbi [*sic*] Cohen, President of the New South Wales Board of Education and Head of Jewish educational activities in New South Wales, has kindly consented to present the prizes to the children at the Annual Meeting.

Festival Observances

Following the precedent established during the previous year, divine services were held under the Board's auspices on Rosh Hoshanah, Yom Kippur and Simchas Torah at the Masonic Hall, St. Pauls Street, Randwick. The services in each case were well attended and were conducted by the Rev. A. T. Chodowski, ably assisted by Mr. Rosenberg as Second Reader. Services also were held during the Passover Festival at the residence of Mr. M. Marks. On the occasion of the Tabernacle Services the late Mr. I. Goldstein acted as Choson Torah and Mr. B. Morris as Choson Bereshith, the members of the Board and their wives being entertained by these two gentlemen at

the residence of the former. Mr. Sydney B. Glass entertained the school pupils at a Succoh [*sic*] erected in the grounds of his residence during Succoth.

Educational And Social

Recognising it as one of the unfortunate incidents of Australian Jewish conditions that Hebrew scholarship too often ends with the ceremony of the Barmitzvah, the Board has endeavoured to fan the desire for Hebrew culture and religious instruction among Jewish 'children of a larger growth'. Its efforts in this direction have received yeoman support and assistance from the recently formed Society of young people known as the 'Randwick and Coogee Jewish Social Club' [*sic*] with whose members the Board has been pleased to cooperate in very many functions and social activities. Under the joint invitation of the two bodies the Rev. L. A. Falk delivered in the course of the year two excellent and instructive lectures entitled respectively "Some Ghettos I have known" and "Systems of Hebrew Education in all ages." Both of these lectures were listened to by large and appreciative audiences of young and old alike. The Board desires to place on record its deep measure of thanks to Rev. Mr. Falk for his excellent discourses and especially for the ready manner in which he has throughout the year responded to every request for assistance.

The Randwick and Coogee Jewish Social Club has given evidence of many and varied activities among other branches, possessing a Debating Section and Dramatic Section. The vigour of the younger society has throughout the year served as a wholesome tonic to the spirit of the members of the Board. Amongst other obligations the Board and the Junior Society have jointly undertaken to raise the sum of forty pounds to provide two windows for the Jewish Communal Hall as a memorial to Jewish Returned Soldiers of Randwick and Coogee.

General

During the year at the request of the Council of the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education delegates from this Board have at various times attended conferences with delegates from that body, also from the Newtown Education Board and Bondi-Waverley Congregation. Wisely avoiding the laying down of any set system either of control or tuition the delegates under the able presidency of Rabbi Cohen have endeavoured to assist one another in grappling with the different problems confronting all alike. The

Board and its delegates gratefully acknowledge assistance of the Council in all matters, particularly in the matter of the recommendation and provision of prizes and educational manuals.

Mr. A. Sonenfeld having recently resigned from the position of Secretary, Mr. Raymond Cohen has been appointed Secretary. The Board thanks Mr. Sonenfeld for his services in the pioneering work necessary in connection with the functions of the Board. It is intended to acknowledge his services by means of a suitable presentation at the Annual Meeting. The Board also places on record the excellent services Rev. A. T. Chodowski as Teacher and also the Jewish Press for support. Members are each personally under a very deep sense of obligation to Mr. B. Morris and also to Mr. I Bergman and Mr. B. Barnett for permitting the use of their residences for the Board's Meetings.

During the year in review there has been a revival of the agitation for the erection of the Synagogue in the Randwick-Coogee District and some very handsome offers have been promised by several gentlemen. While as yet nothing concrete has been done the Board intends during the coming year to set aside a sum as the nucleus of a fund for this purpose. Fully appreciating the large commitment required to build a Synagogue worthy of Randwick-Coogee Jewry the Board has no desire to commit itself to any rash or ill-considered undertaking. A start, however, must be made, and the time is not far distant when the rapidly increasing Jewish population of these suburbs will easily be able to support a Synagogue worthy not only of itself but also of Australian Jewry as well.

The hand of death has been busy in our small band during the past year, two members of the Committee having passed away, Mr. I. Goldstein and Mr. J. Levy, both of them ardent workers. The services of these deceased gentlemen will undoubtedly stand as an example to the younger members of Randwick and Coogee Jewry. The President and many of the Members of the Board attended to pay a last tribute at the funerals of the departed. The Board extends to the bereaved relatives its sympathy and condolence in their loss.

Financial

The funds under disposal of the Board during the year have been raised from seat rentals and offerings at the services on the High Festivals, subscriptions from Members of the Board and Subscribers and patrons. The expenditure during the year has been chiefly in the direction of supplementing the fees paid by the parents of the children attending the classes in order to ensure the Teacher a min-

inum of remuneration in return for his services and the use of his premises. The call made upon the purses of individual members of the Board during the past year has been very heavy but no appeal for funds has so far been made either directly or indirectly to the public.

Relying on its record in the past the Board now confidently asks for the support of the public in carrying on the good work — the training of our children in the most priceless possession in our keeping as Jews and Jewesses — our incomparable Jewish faith. The Board sets before itself the ideal of ensuring that with the cooperation of the parents no Jewish child in the Randwick-Coogee area shall grow up wanting instruction in the principles of the faith. Every subscriber to the funds can confidently assure himself that the amount of his subscription will be expended in the furtherance of Judaism by educating properly to-day the Jewish men and women of tomorrow also in assisting in the ultimate object of the Board—the provision of a Randwick-Coogee Synagogue.

M. A. LIEBERMAN,
President.
August 1923,

ADDENDUM TO APPENDIX I

Present-day readers might be interested to see the list of students enrolled in September 1923; no doubt many names will be familiar:

Senior Students

Joseph Jacobs	Harry Morris	Benjamin Isaacs
Abraham Bern	Louis Morris	Henry Isaacs
Herman Selig	Joseph Solomon	Louis Isaacs
Stanley Morris	Henry Solomon	Joseph Levy

Intermediate

Neville Phillips	Sydney Morris	Neville Solomon
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Junior

Claire Court Rice	Betty Nelson	Lionel Alexander
Shirley Court Rice	Joan Nelson	Simon Alexander
Rosalie Phillips	Willie Phillips	

APPENDIX II

March 21, 1924

Doubtless you are aware that a Jewish School is established for the purpose of educating the children of your district in Hebrew Language, History and Religion. This School was inaugurated by the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board on November 21, 1921, and is now in full cooperation with the Jewish Central Education Board.

Apart from its religious value, the convenience of having a School close at hand must undoubtedly appeal to the residents of the district who have the interests of their race at heart.

For over two and a half years since this School has been established the progress of the pupils has been most marked. Several of the boys who were prepared for their Bar Mitzvah were warmly commended by our respected Rabbi Cohen, on their Jewish Knowledge. Our local efforts to impart a Jewish training to our young is in keeping with the larger movements now prevailing in all English speaking countries. It must be obvious to all our Co-religionists that unless our children are taught some knowledge of Hebrew, it will only be a matter of time when our ancient and glorious National Language and Religion will fade into insignificance.

A very small fee is charged to the pupils attending the classes, but to those who unfortunately are not in a position to pay, tuition is given absolutely free. During the whole time of the School's existence, the upkeep and all the expenses in connection therewith, have been borne by the individual members of the Board. Within the last few months permanent School Rooms have been secured at the Randwick-Coogee Jewish Social Club Rooms (late Cannon's Hall), Beach Street, Coogee, which is conveniently situated, and in the healthiest part of Coogee. These expenses add further to the already heavy responsibilities of the Board, who have so far refrained from appealing to their Co-religionists outside the Board for financial assistance in carrying out the all-important and noble work of our forefathers.

The Board now feels that the weight of the burden falls rather heavily and makes, with some reluctance, an appeal to members of the Jewish Community. Being confident of its past record of deeds, and of its earnest desire to strive for something even greater in the future, it sincerely hopes that this appeal will not go unheeded by our warm-hearted people.

The Board will be grateful for your Subscription, however small which will be duly acknowledged through the Jewish Press.

*Raymond Cohen, The Hon. Secretary,
Randwick-Coogee Jewish Education Board.*

NOTES

1. *Australian Jewish Chronicle* Sept. 21 1922, p.10
2. *Hebrew Standard*,30 September 1921 p. 11
3. *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, 10 August 1922.
4. *Ibid.*,7 August 1924
5. Suzanne D. Rutland *Pages of History: a century of The Australian Jewish Press* Sydney: Australian Jewish Press Pty. Ltd. 1995, pp. 70-71
6. *Ibid.*
7. It appears that this is a mis-spelling and that the correct name was Wardiman.
8. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Australia* CUP 1994, p. 107.
9. Max Freilich *Zion in Our Time: Memoirs of an Australian* 1967, pp 14-15
10. Freely adapted from *The Jewish People Past & Present* Volume 2, Jewish Encyclopedic Handbooks Inc. New York 1948

EASTERN SUBURBS HEBREW SCHOOL PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Marcelle Marks

With the pre-and post-World War II immigration of refugees from Nazi Europe, Sydney's Jewish community grew enormously, especially in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. As families settled in the east, parents sought Jewish education facilities for their children closer to their homes than the Great Synagogue Centre in the city. The development of a good Jewish education program at Central Synagogue became a necessity.

Rabbi Dr Israel Porush arrived in June 1940 to become senior rabbi of the Great Synagogue and immediately took over enthusiastically as honorary director of the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education (NSWBJE). M. H (Harry) Kellerman BEc, and Sidney Sperling were elected joint chairmen with Porush, and the three worked well together. Kellerman was an outstanding and experienced educationalist who served as president of the NSWBJE for nearly twenty years. Sperling, a successful businessman and a Great Synagogue Board member, was also dedicated to the cause of Jewish education.

Bringing fresh modern ideas and a special interest in youth education, Rabbi Porush encouraged the opening of a new Eastern Suburbs Hebrew School (ESHS) Education Centre in the existing Classrooms behind the Central Synagogue, Bondi Junction.¹ Abraham Rothfield BA, MC&Bar, who had been an excellent headmaster for the NSWBJE for twenty years, was still in his prime. However, it was impossible for one man to cope with the rapid explosion in the student population, the wide expansion of educational venues and the supervision of the extra teachers.

In April 1944 Rev Caesar Stanton (Steinhof)² was engaged as NSWBJE joint headmaster to assist Rothfield. Born in 1909, Stanton had been educated at both a Yeshivah and a Teachers Seminary in Europe, and taught at the Jewish High School in Hamburg before the war. Rev Stanton wished to relocate to Sydney after serving several years as minister to the Dunedin Congregation in New Zealand.

Rothfield continued to administer the important and ever-expanding Right of Entry Classes in primary and high schools and supervise the Great Synagogue Classes, leaving Stanton teaching and in charge of the ESHS, now the main after school centre, and the busy Sunday School Classes held at Central. In addition Stanton supervised other eastern suburbs classes including 'The Annexe', held in an empty shop in Old South Head Road between Strickland & Blake Streets, rented and used as a classroom for a number of Rose Bay children. Miss G. Sundheimer (PhD) taught there.

An excellent administrator, teacher and organiser, Rev Stanton soon earned the respect and love of the pupils at Central. His wife, Hanna Stanton, a very capable teacher in her own right, and Rev (later Rabbi) Ernst Wolff were on the staff. Rev (later Rabbi) Chaim Gutnick also taught at the ESHA during the first year or two. The boys and girls, aged 7 to 15, enjoyed the happy atmosphere learning under the fine young teachers, whilst at the same time making life-long friends among their fellow Jewish students.

In 1946 the Board published Abraham Rothfield's simplified and useful *Outline of Jewish Religious Knowledge*³ in note form, and later that year an interesting children's Modern Hebrew primer, '*Dan & Gad*'⁴ translated from the original German by Rev Stanton. Both were well received by the students. From Chanukah 1949 and for a few years in the 1950s, Rothfield, assisted by M H Cohen as editor, produced a widely circulated and popular student monthly magazine — '*Ittoni*'⁵ — with contributions from some of the youngsters.

The NSWBJE was well aware of the limited reach of Jewish education in Sydney. In 1950 the Annual Meeting of the Board was informed that only one in three children⁶ attended a Hebrew School, and for most it was the weekly 35 minutes attending a Right of Entry Class in a state school. For the survival of the next generation as Jews, all after-school and Sunday School classes must succeed.

Rabbi Porush and others, especially those immigrants who had escaped and later those who had survived the Holocaust of Eastern European Jewry, envisaged a Jewish day school for Sydney in the not-too-distant future.⁷ But, for the present, the Board was continually seeking financial support just to survive. No student tuition fees were charged till the 1950s.⁸ The Education Board's income was directly from synagogues and other institutions, and from legacies. At the instigation of Sid Sperling, in 1948 the Great Synagogue voted to increase its annual subsidy from £400 to £2,000 by raising seat-rentals, but there was still a financial shortfall.⁹

A new P&C came to the rescue in November 1944, when the

Eastern Suburbs Hebrew School Parents & Citizens Association (ESHS P&C) was formed. It aimed to support the new Hebrew School by creating a family spirit where the children would be happy and enjoy learning, to encourage and support the teachers, to arrange appropriate Festival functions, to provide books and educational equipment and to do whatever else was needed towards education for the Jewish way of life.

The extra funds raised by the P&C Associations and the personal voluntary assistance of members, were essential for the survival of the NSWBJE.

ESHS P&C Foundation Committee Members were: *President*—Jack Davis, *Vice Presidents*—Sol Einfeld, Israel Green and A Selby, *Hon Treasurer*—Aaron Lazer and *Joint-Hon Secretaries*—Raymond Cohen BE AICA and (Mrs E Y) Rona Levi.

Stalwarts, Jack Davis as *President*, Sid Sperling as *Vice President* and Rona Levi as *Joint-Hon Secretary*, served on the ESHS P&C Committee for nine years. Raymond Cohen acted as *Joint-Hon Secretary* for six years and finally as *Hon Treasurer* during the remaining years of the P & C's life, another four years. Cohen also represented all the P&C Associations on the Committee of the NSWBJE itself from 1946 to 1948, and ESHS P&C specifically in 1949.

As outlined in the article by Neville Cohen, also published in this Journal,¹⁰ Raymond Cohen had served as *Hon Secretary* of the Randwick—Coogee Jewish Education Board, starting as a young man of 21 in 1923 until its dissolution in 1931. Most of those years he was also *Hon Secretary* of Randwick—Coogee Jewish Social Club.¹¹ A graduate civil engineer, Cohen was involved with Bradfield's team draughting the plans for Sydney Harbour Bridge. After that he worked for the NSW Government Railways. He devoted much of his private life to the support of committees for education, both Jewish and secular.¹²

An annual P&C subscription of ten shillings was asked of parents at after-school centres,¹³ but was not always forthcoming, and was never enough, so the committee continually needed to plan fund-raising entertainments. Many families were still struggling financially after the Great Depression and wartime difficulties. This was especially the case for the Jewish refugees and survivors who were struggling to establish themselves in a new country. Labour saving devices at home were rare, and few women went out to work.

From the beginning, the ESHS P&C provided milk and bread rolls for the children arriving straight from their various schools on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, before lessons began. Students reached Bondi Junction from all directions, many

travelling on regular school buses.

During the first year a Gestetner copying machine and stationery were purchased by the P&C. Textbooks were bought and £100 was set aside for the purchase of suitable Jewish books ordered from overseas, to provide the nucleus of a lending library. Bookcases to store the new books were the next priority. At the prize-giving function near *Simchat Torah* in 1945, book prizes, donated as memorial prizes or supplied by the P&C, were presented. An unexpected and very pleasant surprise was the gift of a silver *Magen David* (Star of David), donated by Ruben and Esther Lilienthal, to each of the 77 pupils who regularly attended classes.

In 1946 a special service was held to inaugurate the lending library. Rabbi Dr Porush and Rabbi Dr Eliezer Berkovits attended. A group of boys instructed by Rev Wolff read from the *Haftorah* and the children's choir, trained by Rev William Katz, sang during the ceremony and rendered 'Hatikvah' at the end.

By 1947 the library had acquired about 200 books. Hanna Stanton served as honorary librarian. It was decided that use of the lending library should be shared with the Jewish children in Broken Hill and books were sent 'outback' every month. In that year three new radiators were purchased for the classes. The cost was borne equally by Central Synagogue Ladies' Auxiliary and the P&C.

The annual Purim Party and Concert was a happy affair with the children singing Hebrew melodies and presenting a Purim Play. In 1947 this coincided with prize-giving day, and Mary and Aaron Lazer and Mr and Mrs I Finklestein generously donated prizes for Hebrew School progress. From 1948 the very popular Annual Combined P&C Associations' Purim Party was held each year at the Maccabean Hall with about 500 children and parents attending. The children re-enacted the Queen Esther story, enjoyed a Fancy Dress Parade and partook of the *Hamantashen* and fruit provided at the party afterwards.

The Maccabean Hall was also hired by the P&C each year after 1948 for the excellent annual demonstration seder conducted by Rev Stanton. Each child brought a hard-boiled egg from home to eat at the meal.¹⁴ Sometimes gifts of fruit, wine and matzos were contributed by generous donors. Otherwise everything was provided by the P&C, including the Haggadahs. Over 200 children participated in 1948, 250 in 1949, 300 in 1952. Rev Wolff and Rev Joseph Kleerekoper conducted the 1954 demonstration seder attended by 220 children with Rabbi Dr Porush, Rabbi Isaac L. Swift, Rev Aaron Kezelman and David J. Benjamin guests of the Association that year.

"The strong moral support as well as tangible assistance in the



Rose Bay ESHS P&C picnic, Parsley Bay, 1945. Around the table, from left: Rev. Wolff, Anne-Louise Lenzer, Simeon Lenzer, Merle Lenzer, Ben Altshuler, Claire Lenzer, John Michelin, Florrie Michelin

provision of equipment, holding of regular functions and other amenities provided by the P&C were gratefully appreciated by Rev Stanton¹⁵ and his staff. In April 1949, on NSWBJE letterhead, Stanton wrote to all ESHS parents praising the outstanding work of the P&C.¹⁶

The popular annual Hebrew School picnic was held at either Parsley Bay or Fullers Bridge Picnic Grounds. Transport was generously supplied by those parents with motor cars. Not all families had cars in those days! 150 children would attend and at least as many adults. Ice creams (stored in a container of dry ice) were a special treat. Soft drinks were also provided. Sporting events were arranged with special prizes for the champions. Often the picnic and other functions were arranged in conjunction with Rose Bay and Strathfield P&Cs. A donation was always given to the St John's Ambulance officer on voluntary duty at the picnic spot that day.

An original aim of the ESHS P&C had been to raise additional funds to donate directly to the NSWBJE to help toward teachers' salaries. But this was done only in 1945 with the amount of £25, and again in 1950 with £50.

The foundation P&C committee members were beyond military age or ineligible for armed services call-up because of their occupa-

tions. Most P&C members were small businessmen or government-employed professional people on limited incomes. In 1947 there were 110 P&C members subscribing. Each year committee members and their spouses devoted much of their social life to collecting subscriptions and raffle prizes and especially to organising weekly card parties in private homes to raise small but regular amounts for the cause. If they were not friends already, they soon became close friends. (The now elderly children of those committee members still remember the happy round of weekend card parties.)

Occasionally, weekday Card Parties attracting retired older folk living near Bondi Junction, were held in the Central Synagogue Rooms in conjunction with Central's Ladies' Auxiliary. In 1950 an evening card party at the home of Mr & Mrs Sid Sperling raised £50. In 1951 another very successful card evening at the home of Mr & Mrs Rooklyn realised £68.

Other fundraising methods also contributed to the P&C coffers. In 1947 £53 was raised by the P&C grocery stall at the NSW Board's *Simchas Torah* Fair and £33 was raised in 1949. Raffles in 1950 earned £65. In 1951 the grocery raffle organised by Sophie Glover raised £56. Rona Levi personally donated three first aid kits for emergency use at the classrooms in 1950.

A ball organised at Florida House in 1950 was a social success and included a sketch performed by Millicent Braham and members of the Henrietta Irwell Dramatic Group. Much work went into the organisation of the ball, but the disappointing sum of only £25.7.6 was raised after expenses. The dance at White City in 1951 was more successful financially, raising £63.8.6. Maurice Katz was very helpful, while Tony Robb and David and Leonard Karpin provided bright entertainment during that evening in their youth at White City!

Over the ten years vice-presidents B. Stricke served for four years, Sol Einfeld and A. Freeman each three years, and Israel Green and Leon Mishkel each two years. Aaron Lazer served as honorary treasurer for six years; Ted Levi and Jack Abadee acted as honorary auditors for the life of the P&C.¹⁷ In 1953 A. V. (Aaron) Alexander succeeded Jack Davis as P&C president for the P&C's final years. Vice-presidents were Louis Masnick and L. Peters. Honorary secretaries were A. Rothman, with Mrs P. Bogan for a short time, then with Mrs Marie Dinnen. Ray Cohen continued as honorary treasurer. Boaz Rosalsky, Louis Masnick, Nathan Marmot and L. Peters took turns as the P&C Association representative on the NSWBJE from 1950 until 1954.

Wonderful workers for the cause, not otherwise mentioned, were Mesdames Florrie Michelin, Rae Morris, Merle Lenzer and Becky Dobson. All committee members and their spouses worked

tirelessly over many years. Many were involved in other aspects of communal work at the same time. For example, Sid Sperling was president of the NSWBJE itself and served on the board of the Great Synagogue, whilst Israel Green was on the Education Board and a board member (by 1948, president) of the Great Synagogue.¹⁸

After World War II ended in 1945, the number of children attending the Eastern Suburbs after school classes grew rapidly. The NSWBJE began an ambitious fundraising drive towards the establishment of a communal day school, hoping there were now sufficient parents interested in a more intensive Jewish education for their children in a totally Jewish environment. With the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel on 15 May 1948, there was renewed pride in Jewish culture and in the now recognised spoken Hebrew language. When the necessity of providing financial assistance to Israel took over as the fund-raising priority, hopes for a communal day school run by the NSWBJE languished.

With the passage of time, the Central Synagogue classrooms became quite inadequate. By the late 1940s, the ESHS consisted of nine classes. Four classes were taught in the partitioned non-sound-proof hall, three in the synagogue, one in the choir gallery and the remaining class in the vestibule of the stairway leading to the ladies gallery. Clearly there was an accommodation crisis.¹⁹ In 1949 the NSW Board purchased an old house of nine rooms on an acre of land in Old South Head Road, Bellevue Hill, which they confidently named Hillel College.²⁰ While fundraising continued very slowly towards the proposed communal Jewish day school and kindergarten, the ESHS after school classes were moved to the old house on the Hillel site.²¹

Abraham Rabinovitch, a dynamic but autocratic personality,²² had established his ultra-orthodox North Bondi Jewish Day School and Kindergarten in 1942. In 1952 Rabinovitch purchased the Mark Foys estate and in 1953 Moriah Primary School opened on that site. Following this, the plan to develop Hillel College as a full Jewish day school lapsed.²³

During the 1950s a few of the conscientious older Eastern Suburbs boys were trained with some success during weekday Hebrew school classes to conduct Children's Sabbath Services at the Central Synagogue. But this level of education could not be expected generally, in the limited time spent by most youngsters at the ESHS.

The Eastern Suburbs Centre had started with just ten pupils. By 1953 the numbers had reached 241 Sunday and 107 Weekday students.²⁴ It was still the largest Hebrew School Centre in Sydney although Lindfield numbers at the North Shore Synagogue were

catching up. With the introduction in 1951 of a small fee for tuition of each student of the NSWBJE after school classes, parent interest in raising funds for the extras supplied by the P&C waned and soon came to an end. The sudden death of Rev Caesar Stanton in 1954, at the early age of 45, was 'a grievous loss' to the Eastern Suburbs Centre, and to the cause of Jewish education in New South Wales.

ESHS P&C president, A. V. Alexander's 1954 Annual Report reads:

The year 1953-54 proved to be a very unsuccessful year for the Association and its willing workers. A lot of work was done by the few for negligible results. During the year eleven monthly meetings were held with an average attendance of ten persons. The majority of these were not parents of children attending the Hebrew classes.' (Some had children already married.)

An extraordinary general meeting was held on 25 May 1954, when it was decided by a unanimous vote to disband the Association, as little or no support was forthcoming from the parents or the community at large.'

The remaining P&C funds were donated towards a projector and prizes in memory of the late Rev Caesar Stanton, towards library books for the Central Synagogue Centre and towards playground equipment for Hillel College Kindergarten.²⁵

When the Rabbi Porush Kindergarten was built at Hillel in 1953, following demolition of the old house, the Hebrew School Classes returned to Central Synagogue and to Mizrachi. The Central Synagogue located at the corner of Grosvenor and Grafton Streets, Bondi Junction, was in use until completion of the new synagogue in Bon Accord Avenue in 1960.

With the Jewish population spreading across Sydney, new suburban synagogues were built in the 1950s and 1960s. A number of these new centres opened their own Hebrew Schools under the auspices of the NSWBJE. In the Eastern Suburbs and elsewhere, keen parents established P&C Associations and worked hard for a few years to support the NSW Board whilst their own children were able to benefit.

The NSWBJE was a vital player in the continuing community expansion, but its efforts continued to be hindered by lack of finance. Ever more funds were needed to properly train suitable additional teachers and to pay acceptable current remuneration. By the mid 1950s, 36 full and part-time teachers were employed by the Board, although some were voluntary. Again faced with bankruptcy in

1956, the Board conducted yet another special appeal. From 1958 all synagogues co-operated with the *Kol Nidre* Education Appeal.²⁶ Harry Kellerman wrote in his history of the education board about recurrent financial crises occurring in funding Jewish education until 1967, when the Jewish Communal Appeal (JCA) came into existence and assumed an important share in the responsibility.²⁷

Several private Jewish day schools are now running independently, with each receiving communal support through the JCA. However the NSWBJE is vitally important to the Jewish community today. Besides Sunday School classes as previously and Special Religious Education classes (SRE, formerly known as Right of Entry Classes) for state primary and high schools, and offering Hebrew as an elective subject in many primary and high schools, the NSW Board provides encouragement, advice, training and the actual professional staff for the teaching of the Hebrew elective. Times have changed dramatically. Yet it is still important to remember those who volunteered their time and effort towards supporting Jewish education in Sydney in less affluent times fifty years ago.

ADDENDUM

Rose Bay P&C was formed in late 1944. Foundation members included Merle Lenzer and Sophie Glover. At the end of 1945, this P&C amalgamated with ESHS P&C. The Rose Bay ladies and their friends effectively became the social and functions committee during the life of the ESHS P&C.

In 1949 and 1950 the Rose Bay children were more happily accommodated, without charge, at "Dunara", a residence owned by the YMHA at Point Piper. For a time, a bus was hired to take the children to and from the overcrowded Central to three classrooms at the Maccabean Hall.

Rev. and Mrs Stanton organised and supervised a very successful summer camp for 80 Hebrew School children at Otford on the South Coast of NSW in January 1951.

REFERENCES

Unless otherwise stated, information for this article was drawn from the Annual President's Reports of the Eastern Suburbs Hebrew School Parents & Citizens Association, together with the P&C Income & Expenditure and Balance Sheets, contained within the Annual Reports of the New South Wales Board of Jewish Education, in the appropriate years. These are to be found on file with the original P&C Treasurer's Ledger and other papers at the Australian Jewish Historical Society Archives, Mandelbaum House, Sydney.

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SHMUEL HALEVY GORR — 'MY TIMES BE IN THY HAND' [BEN EZRA]

Louise Rosenberg

Preamble: What follows is largely based on correspondence written over a quarter of a century — from the 1960s to the 1980s — between myself when I was the Honorary secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and Shmuel Halevy Gorr. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance and advice I received from Chaim Freedman, Reeva Gorr, Tony Helm and Ken Symonds. Photography is by Ken Symonds.

INTRODUCTION

21 September 2000 [*Ellul 21, 5760*] marked the twelfth *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Shmuel Halevy Gorr. He died on 3 September 1988, at the age of 56 years, just as the Jewish world was preparing to celebrate Rosh Hashanah 5739.¹ He was buried after Shabbat that same night in the ancient cemetery on the Mount of Olives, the scene of so much of his research. His death was mourned by a great number of people who recognised his worth. It is true that he had a volatile temper, he was rough in his manner, his appearance was often unkempt and he lived without the comforts or graces which most Jews enjoy. His manner could be abrasive and his language often unrefined. But, as a scholar, an historian and a genealogist, he was without peer.

Rabbi Gorr made provision in his will for his unique archive to be housed in an institution in Jerusalem where it would be accessible to all scholars and genealogists. Today, Shmuel Gorr's vast archive on Australian synagogues is held in the Ezra Gorodesky Collection of the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem and is used by researchers and authors all over the world.

We must go back to Shmuel Gorr's antecedents in order to understand what could have motivated this man in his relatively short life to become what one journalist in 1985 described as 'the world's most eminent genealogist'. At the time of his death, Shmuel



Gorr was known throughout the world as the founder and director of the Jerusalem Research Institute for Jewish Genealogy. His original family name was Gorielov, changed from Segal by edict of Nicholas the First in 1840. At that time all Jews were instructed to take Russian names. Then, when the family came to Australia in the early years of the twentieth century, the name was changed to Gorr. Shmuel's mother was probably his inspiration. He had always been fascinated by her stories of the *shtetl* life in which she grew up. She was born in the Lubavitcher colony of Dujdin, and she remembered her great-grandfather, Reb. Lazar Agranat, who, before his death at the age of 105, imparted a wealth of oral tradition to his grandchildren and the other young members of his family. One of these was Shimon Agranat the grandson of Reb Lazar's younger brother. Shimon subsequently migrated to Eretz Israel in 1930. Later, he was appointed the third President of the Israel Supreme Court.

Shmuel never forgot his mother's stories of her ancestry, and thus began his lifelong search to complete his family tree. He managed to chart almost completely six generations of his mother's family. He was unable to go further back than that because the Monastirshene cemetery in which his mother's ancestors and their kin were buried, was savaged by the Nazis and most of the tombstones were destroyed. On his father's side of the family he was able

to go back eight generations, but the chart was not as comprehensive as his maternal ancestry. However, he was able to trace accurately his family's roots back to the Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Yehuda Lowe [1525 — 1607] and discovered that five generations back his parents had mutual ancestors.

Shmuel Gorr was born in Melbourne in September 1931, to Russian immigrant parents, Chaim and Chaya Sarah Gorr. As a child he was a gifted violinist and might have had a successful career as a concert artist. But he was destined to become a Talmudic scholar. In 1947, at the age of 15, he was sent to study at the prominent Telz Yeshiva in the USA. Later he pursued studies at Gateshead Yeshiva in England, before returning to Australia in 1951 with his rabbinic ordination. When his father died in 1952,² Shmuel took over running the family business in Melbourne, Victoria.

His father's brother was named Sinai ben Gershon Ha-Levy Gorielov. Sinai Gorr of Shepparton was born in a city in White Russia in the district of Mohilev. The city was Malastovka and it had a second name — Krasnapol. Sinai Gorr came to Australia in 1911. After a short period in Melbourne he joined three other Jewish agriculturists and settled in Shepparton. The other families were Feiglin, Rosenblum and Berezsinski. The four families signed an official contract with the government for the acquisition of the land. Shmuel kept the complete documentation of all the original "Lands' Purchase" from the government. He also gathered together what he called "this whole history of Shepparton Jewry". But, in a letter to the [then] Secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society he wrote, whimsically: 'I ain't giving it to no one. It shall rot and die with me...'.³ He had his reasons for writing this. He had been at that time — April 1983 — the Society's Israeli representative for six years.

EARLY ACTIVITIES

Whilst he was still in his teens Rabbi Gorr became passionate about Australian Jewish history. His father, Chaim, had been a well-known artist, whose portraits of Jewish personalities hang in many Jewish centres in Melbourne. One of these is a portrait of the Reverend Marcus Einfeld which hangs in the Great Synagogue in Sydney. He also found time during these years to write articles on Australian Jewish History for publication in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* in Sydney. In one of these articles he wrote: 'We are History as we live — and the past is our own extension slipping away into eternity. Jewish History means Jewish identity, and Jewish Essence, Existence'.

Another area of interest was Rabbi Gorr's concern for Jewish

Art. In 1961 he became the founding director of the Ben Uri Art Society and Galleries at 105 Commercial Road, South Yarra, Melbourne. He was able to give support and encouragement to a number of young Jewish artists. Often his exhibitions of their work helped promote them to make names for themselves in the art world of Australia and in some instances overseas. Such artists include Ruth Faerber, Judith Pinns [now living and working in Carmelia in Israel], and the late Joe Rose, to name a few. These young artists were able to gain much experience in the preparation and presentation of exhibitions thanks to Rabbi Gorr's support and sponsorship. All of Shmuel's published works were illustrated with original woodcut prints or relief etchings.

Around 1960, Rabbi Gorr inherited an ancient hand printing press of 1840 design. It bore the number 1730. He was able to ascertain from its provenance that it was at that time about one hundred years old. He started to print in limited editions [not exceeding 100 copies] much of his own poetry. He believed he had inherited an artistic talent, and wrote to a friend:

I have proved myself in the poetic field, besides having founded the Ben Uri Jewish Art Museum in Melbourne ... I printed and published my own work of poetry by hand on an ancient press. Copies of these are in the National and some State Libraries in Australia. Also in America, the State Library of Congress has copies, as has the 5th Avenue Library in New York. My poems are quite special in their typography and binding, and are extremely handsome editions. They contain original woodcut prints and etchings by two of Australia's top graphic artists, Franz Kempf of Adelaide and Sydney Fetter of Melbourne.

With the aid of the ancient printing press, Shmuel was able to publish five books of poetry and prose, most of which reflected the depth of his religious philosophy. In 1978 he published, as Editor, a periodical called 'Light'. As a youth, Gorr had travelled and written articles about many far-flung Jewish communities. They were initially serialised in a London Jewish monthly for teenagers, and subsequently published as a book entitled 'Half-way round the World with Shmuel Gorr.'⁴

PERSONAL LIFE

On 6 February 1966, Shmuel Gorr married Rahel Winkler. Almost from the start it was apparent that the marriage was destined to fail. After three months he walked out of the marriage, a complete-

ly angry, utterly alienated young man who was using his brilliant gifts for scholarship and his devotion to the Lubavitcher movement of Judaism. In 1968, he and his mother, Chaya Sarah, made Aliyah. They settled in Kiryat Yovel, a suburb of Jerusalem. There he worked initially for the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, contributing articles on rabbis and communities. In 1977, he succeeded the historian, Cecil Roth, as the Israeli corresponding representative of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney/Melbourne. He only ever made one return visit to Australia: in 1980 to attend the Bar-Mitzvah of his son Michael. (he was conceived shortly before he left Rahel. At the time, he did not know she was pregnant.) With his sister, Reeva Gruna [Gwen] and his mother living in Israel, there was no personal reason for him to make physical contact with Australia.

In 1973 he served in the Israeli Defence Force in the Yom Kippur War which commenced on 6 October. He was based at Refidim (see Exodus 1:1 and Numbers 23:14-15) in the Sinai desert not far from the Suez Canal. For the first ten days, his family did not know where he was. He was serving in the camouflage unit in the airforce, Binui (Building). When he was eventually permitted to let his mother and sister know the details, he told them how the Egyptians almost daily strafed the unit. Although we know that the war ended after about three weeks, Shmuel was there for several months.

RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Shmuel was a staunch adherent of the Chabad movement, and often turned to the late Lubavitcher Rebbe for advice. He obtained special permission from the Rebbe to dedicate his life to research rather than the pursuit of a more traditional scholastic career.

During 1969, he worked with the Graphic and Illustration Department of the *Encyclopedia Judaica* in Jerusalem, as a contributor to the project. The editors, through Dr. George Bergman of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney, with Shmuel Gorr's cooperation, made a substantial grant for this project. This enabled the Society to collect pictures of Australia's earliest synagogues and other communal establishments for inclusion in the *Encyclopedia* to accompany the articles by the society's president, Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush. Shmuel believed he was the one who first suggested the publication of the *Encyclopedia Judaica* when he mentioned the idea to Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky in Melbourne in 1963.

While undertaking his work with the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, seeking out data on 'shtetls', rabbis and 'yeshivot', as well as "every community in the Diaspora", he became shocked at the dearth of properly classified material. He decided to make it his life's work to

collect as much genealogical material and other data relating to Jewish communities around the world. It was in this way that he was able to collect odd bits of information relating to our Jewish heritage, building up specific categories. Thus, he initiated his own research programme. One of his major projects was to chart all the major Hassidic dynasties which have developed from the Baal Shem Tov in the 18th century. Because of the *Encyclopedia's* publishing deadline, he had to confine himself solely to their specified criteria; but he had become so intrigued by the subject that he continued to explore it after completing his research for the *Encyclopedia*. The more he became immersed the more troubled he became by the lack of recorded history. This lack he felt particularly evident in Australian Jewry. Much of Shmuel's research was done at Yad Vashem [the Holocaust Memorial Authority] and in the manuscripts department of the National Library in Jerusalem.

In an obituary essay, Chaim Freedman wrote [Elul 24, 5748, 6 September 1988]:

In addition he personally collected 15,000 photographs of famous rabbis. Rabbi Gorr was a contributor of many articles to a number of journals of the Jewish Genealogical Societies in the USA as well as the orthodox Hebrew Press in Israel. In particular he wrote on the derivation of family names, which was a particular field of his expertise. He addressed a wide range of groups including Yeshiva students and women's organisations. He also participated in several conferences on Jewish genealogy as well as a number of overseas lecture tours.

In 1974 he founded an archive of 15,000 photographs of rabbis of many communities over the last 200 years. This led him into his enquiries into genealogy and Jewish history in general. He was blessed with an intuitive skill in tracing rare sources, and he amassed a large private collection of printed texts and copies of manuscripts. He prepared thousands of family trees based on these sources and on information provided by people around the world who sought his assistance. As his friend and colleague, Chaim Freedman said of him. 'He had a phenomenal memory for sources and his colleagues could always be confident of receiving sound advice on where to further their research.' He always found time for anyone requiring his help, with his total physical and mental dedication. He believed strongly that history should inform one's sense of identity, 'make one culturally sensitive, provide us with insights and make us competent citizens.'

In Israel, Shmuel Gorr found that the productive interaction

with his colleagues gave him a life that resulted in a rich scholarship. Some people found him somewhat eccentric, whilst others have been known to describe him as a 'crank'. But in Israel his colleagues, friends and clients greatly respected his tenacity in seeking out far-flung leads of sources. His early researches gave him data on such emissaries and Australasian pioneering rabbis as Abraham Eber Hirschowitz, Isaac Zacharia, Yehuda Leib Assure, Reverend Bezalel Mandelbaum, who was for 15 years minister of the Ballarat congregation, and Jacob Saphir.

Chaim Freedman wrote in a foreword to Gorr's posthumously published: *Jewish Personal Names — Their Origin, Derivation and Diminutive Forms* thus:

The subject of the Holy Land and its settlement by Jews in the 19th century was particularly dear to him and bound him body and soul to Jerusalem. He became intimately familiar with the last resting-place of those Jews whose yearning for the Holy Land brought them to the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives. He developed special techniques for locating, restoring and photographing old tombstones.

In the book *Jewish Personal Names ...* Shmuel examines the differences between the Ashkenazi names and the Sephardi names, and the traditions surrounding these differences. He gives translations and pronunciations of both personal names and family names — male and female. He attempts to trace the origins of family names. Here are just two examples of how the [male] origins of personal names might be established:

Yeshayahu [Isaiah]: *The Lord Saves*, Prophet of God. The Biblical Isaiah, Chapter 1, Verse 1.

Amotz the prophet was a brother of *Amatzyah*, King of *Yehudah*. He authored the book carrying his name.

Yonah [Jonah]: Biblical — Book of *Yonah*, A dove. In the Hebrew form this is mostly a male name; A Prophet of God whose message was to the Gentile population of Nineveh; swallowed by and later thrown up by a whale on refusal to accept the mission the Almighty had sent him on. After his ordeal with the giant whale, he accepted his mission and carried it out.

This is a fascinating book indeed, inspired by the words of Rabbi Don Yitzhak Abrabanel [1437–1508] in his Commentary to the Haggadah of Pesach:

Because of four merits, our ancestors were redeemed from the Egyptian bondage. They did not change their Hebrew names; they did not change their Holy tongue [Hebrew]; they did not change their religion; nor did they change their specific Jewish clothing.

One of the last articles Rabbi Gorr wrote was published originally in the Orthodox Daily Newspaper *Hamodia*, on the 200th anniversary of European colonisation in Australia, with emphasis on the Jewish-Religious aspects of Australian Jews. By that time, January 1988, Jewish historians had identified sixteen Jews who were aboard the First Fleet — fifteen were convicts and the sixteenth was the baby daughter of one of the women convicts, Esther Abrahams. This article is written in Hebrew. It contains illustrations including a map of Australia with the main centres of Jewish presence picked out in Hebrew. Shmuel was so excited because the article appeared in *Hamodia* on Friday 17 Shevat, 5748 — the exact Hebrew date which coincided with 26 January. This is the precise date in 1788 that the First Fleet arrived in Australia. This, he pointed out, made the Australian Jewish Community the *only one in the Diaspora* which can exactly identify its historical genesis.

YIDDISHKEIT

As Chaim Freedman once wrote:

Shmuel Gorr radiated a love of Yiddishkeit which was the driving force behind his researches. He believed that the conducting of research into one's family and ancestry was a holy task and mission. Shmuel himself had recorded that just as we perform certain time-honoured rituals and observe festivals in remembrance of the Act of Creation, so the discovery of the links in the long chain of Jewish existence was 'yet another affirmation of faith in the act of creation of the world by God'.

Here is another example of this man's thinking — from a communication to a friend in 1983:

What word, more than any other stirs a person to immediate reaction? What word normally stays with one throughout one's life? ... When a Jew is called to the reading of the Torah, he is called up by his full Hebrew/Yiddish name, but on a regular basis he is known by his non-Jewish name. The purpose of my book was to elucidate the origins and meanings of as



Shmuel Gorr — February 1978 on the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem, at the double graves of Rachel bat Yosef (d. 23 Iyyar 1869), with her daughter Hayyah bat Shmuel (d. 23 Iyyar 1869), Ken Symond's great grandfather (Yehuda Leib ben Asher, 1840–1908), aunt and cousin.

many Jewish names as is possible. It is an attempt to share with our fellow-Jews and Jewesses the results of my research into the origins, form-developments and eventual diminutive forms of many Jewish names.

He went on to write of his intention, admitting it was not going to be exhaustive, but 'with the Almighty's help it may eventually turn out to be the preview to a larger and more in-depth research.'

GENEALOGY

Shmuel Gorr laboured tirelessly in his search for primary sources of genealogy and the subject of the Jewish settlement in the Holy Land in the nineteenth century, locating ancient tombstones on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. He was known to brave the elements with a personally developed kit of restoration materials, preparing stones there to be photographed for his clients.

He was also a familiar figure in the libraries, archives and

Chevra Kadisha in Jerusalem; he often discovered precious documents, letters, diaries, minute books of societies and manuscript family trees. In the streets of Jerusalem as he walked 'downtown', he would be greeted by acquaintances on nearly every corner. Many of the anecdotes told by his friends, even today more than a dozen years after his death, keep his memory fresh. After he died, someone wrote: 'Shmuel Gorr was an idealist. His fellow Jew was a constant delight and mystery to him, which led him into investigating the history of many families, even tracing them back to the Bible.' In Jerusalem he found the raw material which might help him solve these mysteries. He already valued the rich culture and heritage of the Jews, which helped him become famous in his field. However, he never sought worldly recognition.

In his quests he often found frustration, anguish and lack of appreciation, or at most grumbling, patronising praise. He could work himself into a rage and use inelegant expletives. At heart, however, he loved deeply all Israel. He also had moments of ecstasy, such as when he discovered facts and connections that no one bothered to seek out. Just one example was in 1983 when he worked out that the date on which the convict Joseph Samuel became 'the man they couldn't hang' in Sydney Town on 26 September 1803 at 9 am — with its corresponding Hebrew date — had happened on Yom Kippur. [See Appendix 1].

When asked by the present writer if this extraordinary fact — which he declared to be an 'act of Divine Intervention', might be used by tour guides, and as an item in the *Great Synagogue Journal*, he replied:

If you can assure me that making public at this stage by Rabbi Apple or yourself during your conducted tours, would not detract from my 'fascinating discovery', then I would permit its public dissemination [with full credit to myself] to both; and provided that I receive *three* copies of the *Great Synagogue Journal* in which Rabbi Apple would record this act of Divine Protection which I uncovered to have happened on Yom Kippur. Orally, you may recount the story during your guided tours as often as you want. But it is not to appear in any other published form except for the *Great Synagogue Journal*, and then only once.

GENEALOGICAL

He believed that conducting research into one's family history and ancestry was a sacred task. He published a learned treatise drawn

from Biblical and Talmudic sources. He concluded that just as we performed certain rituals and observed festivals [*zecher lemaaseh bereshit*] in remembrance of the Act of Creation, so was the discovery of links in the long chain of Jewish existence 'yet another affirmation of faith in the act of creation of the world by *Hashem*'.

In January 1985, Shmuel was able to report to the AJHS that 'I am over my head with Genealogical Commissions, thank G-d. That's what gives me my daily bread. I am gradually breaking into the Australian Market, and have already quite a number of Aussie clients.' Shmuel Gorr probably handled twenty-eight or thirty enquiries every year from Australia, invariably with successful outcomes. In a letter to the present writer, three months before his death, he wrote with undisguised pride:

I am receiving more and more commissions from Australian Jews to research their genealogy and to draw up their family trees. It is very gratifying. This is not the time or place but I can definitely identify more of the First Fleet convicts who were Jewish. One of these names is Burdo. I am currently researching a family Burdo of Lithuanian Jewish background whose London-born descendant is my client.

He was always on the lookout for connections between Australia and the Holy Land, particularly the genealogical paths of nineteenth century rabbis who went from Jerusalem to Australia on fund-raising missions. Much of his writing concerned the derivation of Jewish Family names.

In the course of his researches, Rabbi Gorr visited the United States and lectured there. In 1982, he was Scholar in Residence at the Second Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy held in Washington DC, and likewise at the fourth Seminar in Chicago in 1984. He also lectured to a wide range of organisations including Yeshiva students, women's groups and Jewish cultural organisations. He was a vibrant speaker, sure of his subject, full of vigour.

AJHS REPRESENTATIVE

When Shmuel Gorr was putting forward his credentials for consideration as the Israeli Representative and Corresponding Member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society he offered to:

... do any research here that the Society requires ... but only in the historic and religious areas [not in political areas]. I humbly suggest that I become the Society's Jerusalem [Israel]

correspondent for these matters. I am in constant touch with the Institute for Contemporary Jewry, for whom I worked for a year and a half in other areas of research.

He attached to this letter a family tree of Rabbi Hayyim Zvee Schneersohn going back to the early eighth century and concluding with Schneersohn's death in Jerusalem in 1882.

One of Shmuel Gorr's earliest undertakings for the Society was to introduce its work to Professor Yehoshua Arieli, president of the Historical Society of Israel. As a result, and at the instigation of Rabbi Gorr, a letter was received from Professor Arieli relating to the proposed establishment of:

...an International Association of Jewish Historical Societies for the study of Jewish History to be affiliated with the CJSH [Comite Internationale Des Sciences Historiques] and be a part of the division which comprises international historical associations and commissions that specialise in certain aspects of the study of history.

In later years, this aspect of the Australian Jewish Historical Society's work lost momentum.

His pride in the office prompted Shmuel to invest in the complete set of the Society's *Journal and Proceedings* — 75 copies, unbound — from 1939 to 1977, at that time costing \$113. In the Society's *Journal*, Volume 8 part 6, 1979, Shmuel Gorr's article 'Notes on Early Emissaries from the Holy Land to Australia' was most enthusiastically received by serious scholars of Jewish history. Rare pictures of Rabbi H. Z. Schneersohn's work [1861], and Shelter Houses for the poor of Mount Zion accompanied the article. Rabbi Schneersohn was identified as one of the famous Lubavitcher Dynasty. He came as an emissary to Australia in December 1861.

On 16 August 1981 Shmuel represented the Australian Jewish Historical Society at the regular four-yearly World Congress of Jewish Studies, and the Foundation Meeting of the International Roof Organisation of all World Jewish historical Societies. He was invited to attend by the organisers of the Congress; and at the same time, he represented his own Central Archives and Research Institute for the History of Gedolei Israel. It was about that time that he founded the Jewish Genealogical Institute of Jerusalem.

In July 1982, Rabbi Gorr represented the Australian Jewish Historical Society at the seminar on American Jewish Genealogy in Washington USA. The report he wrote to me as honorary secretary was glowing. Here are several excerpts:

They expected maximum 100 delegates to come. One hundred and fifty five turned up. It was an unprecedented success. I was invited from Jerusalem to be The Guest Speaker at that Seminar. The seminar paid for my return passage and all expenses. It was a great personal triumph for me, and gave me a platform whence I established my reputation as the World's leading Jewish Genealogist. They have invited me to expand my lecture into a full book, and they will endeavour to have it published in the States. One of the highlights of the Seminar was when I suggested that there should be organised an International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy here in Jerusalem. It was unanimously accepted, and voted on. In the spring of 1984 there will take place [with God's help] such a *Seminar*. The Greater Washington Jewish Genealogy Society is hosting it and organising it. We hope to have a few hundred delegates from all round the world — including from *Australia* and perhaps also from *New Zealand*. You will be contacted in due course from Washington to formally invite the Australian Jewish Historical Society to participate and to organise those from Sydney who wish to participate. Beverley Davis [Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Society] will also be contacted. I have done much Publicity and Public Relations for the AJHS in America.

His report continued:

I had the pleasure of eating with and meeting Dr. Isidore Meyer [AJHS Representative and Corresponding Member in USA]. He sends his regards to you. He is a scholar and a gentleman and our many years of correspondence was crowned with those wonderful personal meetings. On the basis of my lecture in Washington, I was also invited by the New York delegates to speak to their Society on my return to New York. It was very successful also. Dr Isidore Meyer honoured me by coming to my New York lecture. You have no idea how broad-based and enthusiastic American Jewish Genealogical Research is. And it will get bigger and better.

Following on from Rabbi Gorr's suggestion at the seminar in 1982, the International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy was held in Jerusalem in April/May 1984. This was obviously another triumph. Rabbi Porush, who opened the conference, gave full inaugural tribute to Rabbi Gorr for the idea. Rabbi Porush lectured on 'Learning to Discover one's own Jewish Roots'. His report on the conference

noted: 'I spoke for an hour and could have spoken for two more. My audience was fascinated and wanted me to continue.' Shmuel made himself available to take a party to the cemetery on the Mount of Olives which is itself an important archival source in Jewish Genealogy.

The above suggests that Shmuel Gorr was doing good work for Jewish Genealogical study, was enjoying his work and finding fulfilment in his research. His overseas appearances did seem to be making an important difference. His own enthusiasm and his commitment certainly inspired and encouraged others in this field. However, he continued to experience frustration at the fact that there was some reluctance to proceed with publications of two of his articles at that stage. Shmuel often became impatient with the way he was treated as official representative of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. After the death of Cecil Roth in 1970 it took seven years before the Society appointed Shmuel Gorr as the official representative in 1977. He was able to represent the Society at the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem between 7 to 14 August of that year. The Chairman of Division 11 of the Congress, Professor H. Beunarty, publicly welcomed Shmuel's representation.

One matter which distressed Shmuel was that his name, status and office were initially not included on the inside back cover of the Society's Journal, stating that he was the Israeli Correspondent after he had been confirmed in that office for over two years. He pointed out in his correspondence to the Secretary that "other Corresponding Members have their status recorded."⁵ Also he was often impatient with me as the Society's secretary not responding to his letters as soon as he felt they should have been. He also complained that his letters to other members of the Executive received no reply whatever.

By 1983, some six years after accepting the office of Israeli Representative of the Jewish Historical Society, Shmuel was beginning to feel that his work was not being adequately appreciated. Because of his disappointment with the Society's treatment of him, he decided not to donate his material to the Society's archives. In a letter dated 25 Shevat 5742 [1983], he gave details of the work he was currently involved in stating 'I am now making my living from full-time Genealogical Research. There was a nearly full-page article on me in the local *Jerusalem Post* and in the *International Jerusalem Post*. It has brought in its wake many commissions from all around the world. Things are moving.' Greer Cashman, formerly of Melbourne and Sydney wrote the article he refers to. At that time also he was assisting *Beth Hatefutsot*, the Diaspora Museum,

with its exhibition *Jewish Agricultural Settlements in the Diaspora*. He wrote of this project:

It seems that they are desperate with the Australian exhibition — and they are finally willing to pay me. They have rung me a number of times. [You would be amazed at the amount of information, documentation and photographic material I have on the subject.]

In the same letter he appeared rather stressed that two articles, 'From Kelme to Melbourne' and 'The Pitkovsky 'Brit Milah' Ledger', which he had sent for publication in the Society's *Journal* had not been published. Despite his understandable frustration he concluded that letter of 1983 on a more relaxed note when he acknowledged the material the Society sent him by courtesy of Ken Symonds who was travelling to Israel for the wedding of his daughter, Charmaine, to Rafel Ruderman. He wrote: 'Thank you for the material which Ken Symonds brought me — the wedding of his daughter was an event never to forget. He is a man blessed by God for both his children coming full swing into a full Jewish Torah life. May they all be blessed'.

In August 1985 Rabbi Raymond Apple of Sydney and his wife were in Jerusalem for the wedding of their elder son Simeon [Shmuel]. Rabbi Apple contacted Shmuel Gorr and told him that in future his articles would be published in the *AJHS Journal* — he personally would see to it. This assurance prompted Shmuel to write that he was about to embark on 'two major and very important works for the *Journal*. Both are on the subject of Old Palestinian Jewry and Old Australian Jewry.' He was most gratified that Rabbi Apple and Terry Newman [a Committee member of the *AJHS*] had both visited him and seen 'somewhat of my vast Australian Judaica holdings'. He has been hoping and trying to encourage members of the Society to embark on an *Encyclopedia/Dictionary of Australian Jewry*. He felt he could contribute to it, and repeatedly offered his help with such a project.

In 1991, his article 'From Kelme to Melbourne' was published in the *Journal*, in Volume 11 part 2, three years after his death. The only other article of his to be published in the *Journal* appeared in 1979: 'Notes on Early Emissaries from the Holy Land to Australia', Volume 8 Part 6. This was written in direct response to an article published in Volume 3 Part 7 [1952] 'Palestinian Appeals in the Fifties and Sixties', by M. Z. Forbes. Mr Forbes had observed in a footnote that it would be interesting to know the exact site and subsequent history of these rooms (built in Jerusalem with funds



Ken Symons, with grandsons Hudi and Avi Ruderman, 9 April 1999. Hudi's full name is Yehuda Leib, named after Shmuel's favourite rabbi. All the Symonds grandchildren are fascinated with the family story supplied by Rabbi Shmuel Gorr.

raised in Australia). Shmuel's paper, 27 years later, satisfactorily responds to this observation.

MORMON GENEALOGY

The Mormon Church realised what Rabbi Shmuel Gorr was doing and wanted his work and his scholarship made available to them. It would have been a vital asset to them in their efforts to include in their genealogical archives, already the most comprehensive in the world. They needed his information to enhance their own collection. In 1982, Shmuel was approached by Harold Salway, Director of the Jewish office of the Genealogical Society of Utah, who attempted to persuade him to release Jewish genealogical material — birth certificates, family lineage books, community records — rescued from many small towns in Eastern Europe. The Central Archive for the Jewish People at the National Library in Jerusalem contains most of this information; but rights of reproduction of material, including copying pages of microfilm, are reserved for very few. Rabbi Shmuel Gorr was one of those few. The Mormon genealogical representa-

tives in Jerusalem were persistent in their attempts to persuade Shmuel to change his mind. His answer was always the same: There is still a Jewish sensitivity about the idea of non-Jews having complete control of Jewish vital statistics.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was also approached by the Mormons for access to their records, and those of the Great Synagogue in Sydney, and their response was exactly the same as Rabbi Gorr's. However, Jews the world over do make use of the Mormons' genealogical research centres, a fact which caused Shmuel Gorr great concern. This caused him to send a halachic question to the head of the rabbinic court of the *Eda Harachedit* in Jerusalem. The answer he received was an emphatic 'no'. The reasons were biblical, Rabbi Gorr would explain to his clients: 'It is forbidden to supply information to the centre as that directly aids their projects whose end purpose is to missionize; and using their facilities gives indirect support'.

As it happened, Shmuel would differentiate between the Mormon centres of genealogical research and church libraries like those of the Vatican. He would elucidate:

Every project of the Mormons is a vehicle for missionary activity, and they are the best in the world at that. There was talk of their opening a reading room in Tel Aviv, which so far has not gotten off the ground, but the new centre on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem will no doubt incorporate a public reading room with genealogical information into their library.

This was how he tried to discourage Jews from cooperating with the Mormons, or even making use of their facilities. He had been part of the heated controversy when the building of the Mount Scopus campus was discussed. Opponents feared it would become a major missionizing centre, but the Mormon authorities claimed faculty and students would refrain from all missionary work in Israel while at the centre. Shmuel feared that with the increased international interest in Jewish genealogy, the Mormon reading rooms and the main centre in Utah would become more popular than ever. Because of his feelings in this matter he did not attend the 1984 convention which was held in Salt Lake City.

AUSTRALIAN VISIT 1980

As mentioned above, Shmuel made his one and only return to Australia in mid 1980. His son Michael was Bar Mitzvah, and this was the main reason for his return. He stayed for over three

months, taking the opportunity to spend time not just in Sydney but also doing intensive genealogical research into a number of early communities gathering much genealogical data. He explored the possibility that there were Jewish pioneers in every quarter who should be researched and recorded. He spent time in Melbourne, Hobart, Broken Hill and New Zealand. His achievements during the few months that he was here were really an inspiration and an encouragement for the developing of the sense of urgency needed to look for and record the story of Jews in Australia thoroughly.

Shmuel's visit to Sydney re-awakened his desire to find more information on various families' genealogical antecedents. He told the Secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society:

I want all possible data on the family of Israel Green of Sydney;

All possible information on the family from which Rose Bertha Gotthelf of Sydney — who married Yitzhak Emil Isaac Halstead of Dunedin — came. Also, further information on Moritz Gotthelf's family — if possible the family tree.

He wanted, as well, details of the *Dialectic*, a magazine published in the late nineteenth century and of which he knew there were issues in the Percy Marks Collection, held at the State Library. He most particularly wanted an obituary published in the *Dialectic* Vol 1 no 3 on page 40 [June / July 1875] of one Reverend Gedaliah Isaac Friedman. He also wanted copies from other Jewish newspapers of that period which contain the obituary of Rabbi Shmuel Herman of Ballarat, Geelong, who, he said 'had been the Av of the Beis Din in Victoria.' Rabbi Herman had died on 27 February 1879. Further, he required photo-copies from the *Hebrew Standard* of 25 August 1899, on page 7, which recorded the obituary of Jeanette Davis, wife of the late Zachariah Davis, a brother of Wolf Davis of Melbourne. Shmuel knew that the lady had died 'on the previous Monday'. But he wanted precisely:

- a) The exact date of her death;
- b) What her Hebrew name was;
- c) What her father's and mother's Hebrew and English names were.

And 'all the information available, as well as how old Jeanette Davis was when she died; when her husband died; what his Hebrew name was, what were his father's and mother's Hebrew and English names and how old he was when he died and from where in Europe they came.'

As a result of his visit to Melbourne, Dr. Serge Liberman, editor of the *Melbourne Chronicle* and author and literary editor of the *Australian Jewish News*, wrote two enthusiastic reviews in the *Melbourne Chronicle* of June/July and August/September issues about Shmuel Gorr's work, although without any specific reference to the man whose vision and crucial inspiration was responsible. These were respectively entitled 'Recording the Past for the Future' and 'On History and Archives'.

In the former, Dr. Liberman wrote:

The Jew is endowed with a dual talent that borders on the realms of genius. The one is survival; the other — memory. With respect to survival, history furnishes evidence in plenty to render that fact beyond dispute. As for memory, this is less emphatically remarked upon, perhaps because it is not perceived — understandably — to be so pressing ... History — for the Jew, even more than language — becomes something shared, both vertically through and horizontally across time. It is the cement that binds the Yemenite to the Australian Jew, the Italian to the English Jew, however different and mutually exotic everything else — their customs, dress, behaviour, world outlook, folklore and even synagogue ceremonies — may be. Accepting oneself as a descendant and carrier of the Jewish people's past — allowing for *halachic* rulings — is what distinguishes the Jew, more than his language, his physiognomy, his culinary tastes and even more than his belief in God [an atheistic Jew still remains, legally, a Jew]. Through knowledge of one's history is one's identity the more likely to be consolidated, and through the consolidation of that identity is his survival as a Jew more readily assured.

Dr Liberman was greatly impressed with Shmuel's work. He concluded his editorial of the June/July issue thus: 'Given the success of the enterprise of recording history and thereby storing memory ... survival as a community may the more readily be realised.'

The following issue of *Melbourne Chronicle* further elaborated that theme, 'On History and Archives'. It began 'the subject broached in the editorial article in the preceding issue ... 'Recording the Past for the Future' lends itself to further elaboration ... The most obvious source of material for history is the self.' These editorials gave new momentum to the study of Australian Jewish history, not only in Victoria but all over Australia. As a result, the Victorian Branch of the Society became more viable. Shmuel's own

workload increased markedly. He was charging \$100 Australian for preparing Family Trees, and orders were coming to him 'thick and fast'. He wrote to the secretary of the society in Sydney that he believed 'all Israel are brothers, and if there is a deficiency here it will be met and compensated for there.'

PERSONAL FAMILY TREE

The year 1981 was an extremely busy and fruitful one for Rabbi Shmuel Gorr in various ways. He devoted a considerable amount of his research into the connection between his own family and that of the family Slutzkin. He discovered, as he had always suspected, that there was a link with the historian Immanuel Velikovsky.⁶

As far as the relationship was concerned it pleased him to note that Velikovsky's father, Shimon, had been, with Albert Einstein, the prime mover in the establishment of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In a letter to the present writer, as well as to Gael Hammer [nee Slutzkin], his 'third cousin once removed' — he outlined his discovery. [see Appendix 3] He was very proud and excited about this 'discovery', but at the same time he stressed:

No one who lacks in knowledge of Jewish history, Hebrew and Jewish Language and specifically knowledge of Jewish personal and family names, can possibly hope to research properly a Jewish family tree. It was and still is a custom for Rabbinic Scholars to introduce a learned publication by stating their pedigree, etc. They are always in Rabbinic Hebrew. Personal names of Jewesses are impossible for non-learned Jews or non-Jews to master. Enough said on the subject ...

In that letter also he reiterated that he was the Jerusalem Representative of the Australia-Israel Society for Cultural Exchange. 'Just last Friday I sent to the Chairman, Mr Moshe Ramar of Tel Aviv, a list of twelve Australian participants in the forthcoming Book Fair to be held in Jerusalem. There is no time left to write to Rabbi John Levi [of Melbourne] for inclusion of his *Australian Genesis* for the Book Fair'.

In the same letter he was able to report on his findings on another early rabbi to have visited Australia:

Rabbi Yechiel Cohen [or in full Rabbi Yechiel Bechor Cohen of Hebron] was in Melbourne on September 9th 1858. I know he was also in Sydney, Hobart, Geelong, Ballarat and New Zealand. According to Goldman's [Rabbi L. M. Goldman]

History of the Jews in New Zealand, he was there roughly about 1866, and he seems to have disappeared in the 1870's ... He has no connection with 'Reb Chatze Coehen' of Sunderland, whose photo I have and who was an Ashkenazi. Our 'disappearing Rabbi' was a Sephardi from Hebron...

The letter went on to request further information in relation to his research: 'He asked: 'Is the Baron De Hirsch Synagogue Rabbi Branson's? Tell me about the Druitt Street Synagogue...'. The two latter matters were dealt with in the Secretary's report in the Society's *Journal*, Volume 8 Part 4 (1977) and had apparently caught his attention. Both of these *minyamim* may require outline here. This is what I wrote to Rabbi Gorr:

The information available on the synagogue at No. 60 Druitt Street, Sydney, reveals that the building was a converted grocery store. It operated as a synagogue during the 1880s, and was known as *Mikva Israel*. The congregation negotiated with the Reverend A. D. Wolinski to be brought out from England to be its minister. But when he arrived in Australia he decided to accept the office of Second Minister at the Great Synagogue, which also offered him accommodation on the premises.

The title of the synagogue, *Mikva Israel* is important because when the synagogue at Newtown was being built some 40 years later [a number of the Druitt Street congregation lived in Newtown], its executive and members wanted it to carry the same name. They transferred to the new synagogue the two Sifrei Torah and cash in the bank amounting to some £300. When the earlier congregation disbanded in the 1890s, the Trustees were its Treasurer, Mr. Henry Zions, Mr. Jacob Selig and Mr. H. H. Solomon. They admitted that the appurtenances of No. 60 Druitt Street, including the Bimah, Chuppah, Book Case, which was used as the Ark, as well as two pairs of brass candlesticks, the Yod and Besumin box, had all disappeared.

Shmuel's request for information on Rabbi Isidor Bramson and the Baron De Hirsch Congregation is of special interest. I wrote the following:

It had been formed in 1897 by *foreign* Jews who preferred their own way of praying to that of the local style of services. It met in a room at the back of Quinn's Boot Shop, in a lane behind the Crystal Palace off George Street Sydney. Rabbi

Bramson, Polish-born, Yeshivah-trained, called his congregation *Nidchei Yisrael*.⁶ He was a strong supporter of Zionism long before it was 'fashionable' to be so in Australia. He performed marriages and accepted proselytes. He left Sydney in 1901. When the congregation disbanded soon after this, three Sifrei Torah were given on 'permanent loan' to the Central Synagogue.

MISCELLANEA

When new information came to him, Shmuel's delight and enthusiasm literally knew no bounds. In 1982 when he requested the Australian Jewish Historical Society to try to find out as much as possible about the synagogue in Toowoomba, Queensland, and the forthcoming data was sent to him, his excitement was like that of a child who had discovered hidden treasure. When the information was placed in the Ezra Gorodesky Collection of the National Library, its accompanying data read:

The synagogue's foundation stone was laid in August 1875 and the synagogue *Beth Yisrael* was ready for Rosh Hashana 1876. The building, capable of accommodating 150 worshippers, was designed in the Greek *Doric* style. By 1917, the congregation had diminished to just a few Jewish families, and the building fell into disrepair. Although no longer used, it was restored and maintained during the 1920s. In 1928, the building and adjoining property was sold to the Lutheran Synod. Today, a plaque in the Jewish Section of the Toowoomba cemetery records the history of the synagogue.

He often found something to gladden his heart, making him forget his many disappointments. One such occasion was his uncovering of the story of David Blumberg of Queensland, the collector and owner of 'a vast library of Judaica and Hebraica' now held by the Brisbane Hebrew congregation. Shmuel 'discovered' the story of the Blumberg Collection in the American Jewish Year Book of the year 5674 [1913-1914]. Shmuel was so delighted to follow up this story that he wrote a paper, 'A Prenumerant in Australia' [see Appendix 2].

Another activity of his was the publishing of an Official Gazette. In January 1985, he wrote to the Secretary of the Society of having 'just completed five years of researching a subject and having already written it up as a major book. With G-d's help, it is to be published shortly in New York by Jason Aaronsohn Inc. Publishers'.

The title was to be 'The Origin and Development of the Diminutive forms of Jewish Personal Names'. As has been previously stated, this was the work which was published posthumously by his friend and colleague, Chaim Freedman of Petah Tikvah, through *Avotaynu* Inc., Teaneck, NJ USA in 1992.

One prediction from Shmuel Gorr which luckily did not come true was his view [in September 1986] that *Avotaynu*, the Jewish Genealogical Magazine and Organisation in Teaneck, New Jersey, would be unsuccessful. He wrote to the Secretary of the AJHS on 3 Tishrei 5746 [January 1986]:

Avotaynu is very pretentious and I do not think it will last. The reasons are:

- There are very, very few professional Jewish Genealogists in the World who can maintain a steady flow of novel articles with new insights and revelations on the subject of Jewish Genealogy.
- There is not that much that can be written on over a period of many years.

He continued: 'A previous high-standard journal called *Tolodot* also closed down after a number of years for the same reason. Additional to all this, *Avotaynu* has rehashed so much of what has already been published in many other Jewish Genealogy journals. The editors there seem not to know the difference between *History* and *Genealogy*.' He went on to point out that the early issues of *Avotaynu* carried articles by Australian, New Zealand, Belgian and German contributors which he had recommended to them. Perhaps he felt that there was no room, even on different continents, for them and himself.

In May 1988, five months before his death, Shmuel Gorr wrote to the present writer: 'I know that it is many moons since I last wrote to you ... Much is happening with me. I am involved in so many research projects that it is quite staggering. First of all, I was commissioned by the Orthodox Daily Newspaper *Hamodia* to write an article in honour of the 200 years Celebration of Australia, stressing the Jewish-Religious aspect.' The article appeared in their Erev Shabbat Literary Supplement, dated 17 Shevat 5748. This is the coincident Hebrew date of the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney Harbour — 26 January 1788 = 17 Shevat 5548! He sent a copy of the article to his friend Rabbi Laibl Wolf of Melbourne to publish it in the Lubavitcher Magazine a new forum which was published in Victoria. He suggested the article be translated and used. Shmuel stressed in his letter to Rabbi Wolf that 'unless the option to use it

as it is ignored, it *cannot* be used either in full or in part in any other media — printed or orally or by recording or by any copy method'. He wrote that Rabbi Wolf had the final decision as to whether he would be publishing the article.

Although he continued to feel his treatment by the executive of the AJHS was often unjust and unwarranted, he did not allow his personal feelings to deter him from doing research which interested him. When a member of the executive requested of him genealogical information on the Goldstein Family, he enthusiastically embarked on research into this family. He went back to 1826 when one Yehudah [Leib] Yitzhak ben Shelomoh Ha-Levi Goldstein, known in English as Isaac Lewis Goldstein, was born in Tiktin, Poland. This man became a shochet and second Reader of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation from 1861 to 1876, and assistant minister/shochet for the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. He died on 20 Shevat 5636 [1876].

Shmuel was particularly interested in the Australian section of a major war cemetery on Mount Scopus, near the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. There were many non-Jewish as well as Jewish graves of soldiers from both the First and Second World Wars. He wrote an article on those interred there and something of the cemetery's background history. He was deeply disappointed when this article was not published in the *AJHS Journal*.

Nevertheless, he embarked on the writing of an article which was to record all of the English Jews who were buried on the Mount of Olives in the nineteenth Century. He was doing this in conjunction with Dr Anthony P. Joseph, the Australian Jewish History Society's representative in Birmingham, England. When he discovered twenty-three memorials he sent the information to Dr Joseph requesting information about the people buried there. It was his intention to send this article for publication in the *English Jewish Historical Society Journal*.

The five books Rabbi Gorr was working on at the time of his death were:

- 1) *A History of Judaism in Australasia from the beginning of Australian Jewish History — 1788;*
- 2) *"Who's Who of every Rabbi, Reverend, Shochet, Chazzan, Reader, Scripture Teacher and Hebrew Teacher till the First World War.* He had acquired a complete index of those people, and much biographical data on each where it concerned their activities in Australasia. They now included Isidore Meyer, Shmuel Herman, Isaac Zachariah, Abraham Eber Hirschowitz, Rev. Z. Mandelbaum and

Yehudah Lieb Assure. The descendants of some of these are active members of today's Australian Community.

- 3) *The History of all Rabbinical Emissaries from the Holy Land who visited Australia from the beginning of European civilisation until the Second World War.* He had found thirty such Rabbis and he was proud to have acquired photographs or portraits of thirteen of their tombstones. This book was well advanced when he died.
- 4) *A History of the Synagogue and Religious Edifices in Australasia.* He had acquired over a thousand photographs to illustrate that book — most in black and white but many in colour. He believed he had photographs of every synagogue except those of Western Australia's Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie; he was hopeful of obtaining these through contacts he had in the Perth community.
- 5) *The History of Aliyah and Yeridah⁸ between Australasia and the Holy Land from the inception of Jewish presence in Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.* Here he had the valued cooperation of Professor Charles Price of Canberra. He described him as '... extremely helpful ... He is a gentleman and a scholar'.

None of these books were published.

He also suggested to Rabbi Lubofsky in Melbourne the possibility of an annual synagogue Youth Picnic to Bendigo, during the summer holidays, when there would be the opportunity for the youth of the community to make a special event each year to clean up the tombstones there. He was very disappointed that this project never did eventuate. He wrote in one of his letters: 'I love Australian Jewish History and it is always with me ... I have a mountain of original researched information on the connection with Old Australian Jewry and its connection to Jerusalem and other Holy cities of the Holy Land...'

In January 1982, Rabbi Gorr agreed to assist *Beth Hatefutsot* — the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv, Israel, with its major exhibition of *Jewish Agricultural Settlements in the Diaspora*. The AJHS was, through its member Marcelle Marks, doing a major project on this subject as part of Australia's contribution to the Exhibition. While Shmuel Gorr wanted to be paid by the Museum for his work on the exhibition, in the end, he did not receive any remuneration. He wrote to the AJHS in this regard: 'You would be amazed at the amount of information, documentation and photographic material I have on the subject.'

CONCLUSION

Shmuel Gorr's dreams were to venture much further into the history of Australian Jewry in its relation to Eretz Yisrael. There was a genuinely optimistic and life-affirming side to his life and work and to what Judaism stood for, for him. He was able to give expression to this in his writings and in his relationships with most of his fellow Jews, having channelled all his abundant energies into his work. When a lax Jew admitted that he'd made a difference to his understanding, Shmuel felt that his life's work was justified. All he wanted in life was to show the world the relevance and value of Judaism, and the essential need for its continuity.

NOTES

1. From obituary by Reeva Gorr, published in *Australian Jewish News*, Sydney, Friday 11 September 1998.
2. Shmuel's father Chaim died on 2nd November 1952, 15 Cheshvan 5713.
3. Footnote — 12 Iyyar 5743 (25 April 1983)
4. From Reeva's obituary, op.cit.
5. His name finally appeared in the issue Volume 9 Part 4 1982.
6. Velikowsky was the author of several books including a series called *Ages in Chaos* of which there were four volumes covering the period from The Exodus to post Exile.
7. *Mikva [Mikveh] Israel* = Hope of Israel.
8. *Nidchei Yisrael* = Israel in exile
9. Aliyah — Pilgrimage; Yeridah — Emigration.

Editor's Note: Re p.649, an article by Morris Ochert on Toowoomba appeared in *AJHSJ*, Vol VIII, Pt 4, 1997. Morris Ochert also wrote about David Blumberg in The *AJHS Newsletter*.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

An Act of Divine Intervention, As Revealed by Shmuel Gorr in 1981

Preamble: See Dr. G.F.J. Bergman's article: Two Jewish Convicts Joseph Samuel and Isaac Simmons, *AJHS Journal*, Vol 5 pt 8 1963. [see page 7 line 5]

Joseph Samuel [sometimes spelt Samuels], an English Jew who began life as a juvenile delinquent, was tried in Middlesex Gaol Delivery by the First Middlesex Jury before the Recorder on 20 May 1795. His indictment was for "feloniously stealing a large number of objects, bed- and table linen, some pieces of cloth, a silk cloak, two silver tablespoons, of the value of approximately 70 shillings." He was found guilty of "larceny only" and sentenced to seven years' transportation. He sailed from England on 21 June 1801, in a transport of convict ships comprising the *Minorca* and *Canada* and a female ship *Nile*. They arrived in Sydney Cove on 14 December 1801. As with many other convicts he was probably employed as a Government servant on road and other works in and around Sydney. [He was 15 years of age when sentenced.]

On 28th August 1803, the *Sydney Gazette* reported the particularly brutal murder of a constable, Joseph Luker, after a robbery of [among other things] a desk, had been committed. Samuel and another Jew, Isaac Simmons, a Constable, were among those suspected of both crimes. A witness testified that: *one of the men had a straw hat and in other respects resembled Samuel*. Both Joseph Samuel and Isaac Simmons were lodged in a cell together. They pleaded *not guilty* but later Samuel admitted that he had committed the robbery, but vehemently denied having anything to do with the murder. However, his story did not convince the judges and he was found guilty and sentenced to death. Dr Bergman wrote in his article;

At half past nine on Monday 16 September 1803 the NSW Corps got under arms and proceeded to the place of execution. The gallows were then standing near the village of Brickfield Hill in Lower George Street, Sydney. There were two prisoners to be executed, James Hardwicke and Joseph Samuel, and they were accompanied by the Rev. Samuel Marsden, in horse carts to the gallows.

The *Sydney Gazette* of 2 October 1803 takes up the story:

Both prisoners conducted themselves with becoming decency ... When the Rev. Marsden turned to Samuel [who being a Jew

was prepared by a person of his own profession] and questioning him on the subject of the murder of Luker, he solemnly declared that during the interval of his confinement in the cell with Isaac Simmons, nicknamed Hickey Bull, they in the Hebrew tongue exchanged an oath, by which they bound themselves to secrecy and silence, in whatever they might disclose.

Conjured by that God before whom he was shortly to appear not to advance anything in his latter moments that would endanger his salvation, he now repeated with an air of firmness what he had before declared; and appearing deeply imprest with a becoming sense of his approaching end, appealed to Heaven to bear him testimony that Simmons had, under the influence of his oath, by which they were reciprocally bound, acknowledged to him that Luker had accidentally surprised him with the desk belonging to Mary Breeze; and that he, in consequence thereof, had knocked him down and given him a topper for luck, adding at the same time that if he had not been kept in the dark with respect to the concealment of the money that had been taken out from it, that catastrophe would never have happened, but as it was that he would hang 500 Christians to save himself.

Simmons, who was purposely brought from George's Head to witness the awful end of the unhappy culprit, heard what he advanced and repeatedly endeavoured to check the declaration, which was delivered with mildness and composure and which, as it appeared, wholly untinged with acrimony, gained credit among the spectators in whose breasts a sentiment of abhorrence was universally awakened.

Oidium and suspicion were attached to Simmons from the very day on which the dreadful crime was perpetrated and every eye was fixed in doubt upon his countenance, when he assiduously assisted to lower the mangled corpse into the grave...

The account continued to describe how the troopers had to shield Simmons from the fury of the crowd. By then about ten o'clock the criminals reascended the carts and were "about to be launched into eternity" when word came through that a reprieve for James Hardwicke had been issued by the Governor, commuting his sentence to life imprisonment.

The mode of hanging then was not by trapdoor. Samuel was to swing into eternity when the dray moved, leaving him dangling.

Samuel devoted the last awful minute allowed to him to the most earnest and fervent prayer; at length the signal was given, and the cart drove from under him, but by the concussing, the suspending cord was separated at the centre and the corpse fell

to the ground on which he remained motionless with face downwards ... Cursing, the hangman called back the dray.

"The cart returned and the criminal was supported on each side until another rope was applied in lieu of the former. He was again launched off, but the line unroved and continued to slip, until the legs of the sufferer trailed along the ground, the body being only half suspended. All that beheld were also moved by his protracted sufferings, nor did some hesitate to declare that the invisible hand of providence was at work in the behalf of him who had revealed the circumstances above related. To every appearance lifeless, the body was now revived, and supported on men's shoulders while the executioner prepared a new work of death. The body was gently lowered, but when left alone again fell prostrate to the earth, this rope having also snapped short close to the neck.'

The *Sydney Gazette* observed in conclusion:

Compassion could no longer be restrained; winged with humanity, the Provost Marshal sped to His Excellency's presence in which the success of his mission overcame him. And a reprieve was announced. Samuel, when the Provost Marshal arrived with the tidings which diffused gladness through every heart, was incapable of participating in the general satisfaction. By what he had endured, his reasonable faculties were totally impaired, and when his nerves recovered from their feebleness, he uttered many incoherences, and was alone ignorant of what had passed. Surgical assistance has since restored him. And may the grateful remembrance of these events direct his future course.

The ropes used were later tested, and it was found that each supported seven weights of 56 pounds without breaking. It was regarded as an act of Divine Intervention, as Governor King said when commuting Samuel's sentence to life imprisonment. The gallows were removed from Brickfield Hill in 1804 to the corner of Park and Castlereagh Streets.

Almost one hundred and eighty years later, Rabbi Shmuel Gorr, Corresponding Member in Israel for the Australian Jewish Historical Society, was visiting Australia in 1980. He had always been intrigued by this story and decided to do a little basic research into the story for himself. This research led him to discover that the day of the scheduled execution, Monday 26 September 1803, was *Yom Kippur 5564*. (The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia has a perpetual Hebrew-civil calendar covering the years 1800 to 2000.)

APPENDIX 2

A PRENUMERANT IN AUSTRALIA

By Shmuel Gorr © 26 Tishrei 5746 [January 1986]

Many stories can be told about poor rabbinical scholars who were not in a financial situation to publish results of their many years of deep research and scholarly labour.

Today it is comparatively easy. The contemporary publishing world accepts the fact that the average author of scholarly Rabbinical works is not in a position to pay for the cost of printing, binding and distribution of his own book. Hence, contracts are written, percentages are agreed upon (and the author is usually allotted a number of gratis copies.)

Many such authors have access to rich friends who defray the complete cost of publication on condition that their names are printed in the book with appropriate recognition. A more tactful manner is to state that so and so (the financier of the publication) has done so in memory of his/her departed parents. If the subject matter of the book is of interest to some academic Institution or organisation, than that body would back the publication and a suitable dedicatory statement would be printed therein.

There are today many foundations which subsidise the publication of imported works, with special grants — either covering the whole cost or part thereof.

But in bygone years this was not the case. Some of the greatest Rabbis had to go from town to town seeking a sponsor to defray the cost of publication of his Responsa or homiletic work — with greater or less success.

These days, we often see in the beginning or end of a publication, a list of people who have contributed money to the author to assist him in defraying the costs of publication. Usually these are friends or bibliophiles.

According to the Halakhic definition of the Rambam [Maimonides], the greatest manner of giving charity is to help the recipient earn his own living [in business], and thus prevent him from needing to accept donations.

A truly Jewish answer developed among old European Jewry:

This system was called **PRENUMERANTEN** [Yiddish: Pre-Numbered].

Instead of soliciting donations for its publication, the author pre-sold the *number* of books that would realise the capital needed to have the book printed. (The books were not

actually numbered. It simply implied that a certain *number* of books were pre-sold and actually had owners already.) To express his gratitude, and to list the *number* of people to whom books were owed, the author published the list of names of the pre-numbered owners of copies of the book in the opening pages of the work. Those who had pre-bought the *number* of copies needed to raise the money for publication were called in Yiddish — the *Prenumeranten*.

Some books carry pages and pages of names of the Prenumeranten, together with the city in which they lived. Actually, most of the Prenumeranten were grouped according to their cities of residence.

For works of high scholastic value, the authors used a clever stratagem. They enlisted as Prenumeranten renowned Rabbis who often also wrote an approbation for the book. Therein, they would exhort all who would be approached to join the ranks of the Prenumeranten for the said work.

These hundreds of books which contain Prenumeranten lists are treasure troves of information — for historical and genealogical researchers. They are akin to Jewish City Directories. It must be remembered that every book carries its date of publication and, hence, puts each Prenumeranten into a time and place slot.

Today, one is often pleasantly surprised to find one's great-grandfather listed among bibliophile Prenumeranten.

'A classic contribution to Prenumeranten literature is Berel Kagan's 1975 book *Sefer Haprenumeranten*. Therein he lists some 900 Hebrew books, mostly 19th and early 20th century. The result of Kagan's work was a list of over 8000 European towns and for each town the titles of the Hebrew books in which there appeared the names of residents who were Prenumeranten.'

These last words are a quotation from the Introduction of Chester G. Cohen's work *The Shtetl Finder* (Periday Co. Los Angeles, 1980). Cohen has made his own excellent contribution by translating hundreds of the names of Prenumeranten in dozens of *shtetl* entries.

Now, let us leave Europe and emigrate to the New World. There is ample evidence that many authors turned to compatriots in America and other countries and enlisted them as Prenumeranten, but did any author enlist a Prenumerant from the Australian countries?

This writer can happily write of at least one Australian Prenumerant. That honour goes to the late David Blumberg of Brisbane, who was the owner of a vast library of Judaica and Hebraica (see: *AJHS Journal*, Vol 9 Part 7 page 515.)

In the opening page of the Hebrew book *HaYehudim BeUngariah* (*The Jews in Hungary*) by Yehutiel Yuda (Leopold) Gruenwald, of Sziget in Hungary, printed at the Press of Reb Moshe Eliyahu Kohn, Weitzen (Hungary), 1913, (the price of the book was 2 Kronen), there is a list of the Prenumeranten, who pre-bought a *number* of copies of this book. The 13th name listed reads in English as follows: 'The well-known philanthropist Ha Rav Moreinu (The Rabbi our Teacher) D. Blumberg, in the city of Brisbane, Australia.'

To this writer's knowledge, this is a unique Australian Prenumerant.

N.B. One can presume of course that the author was acquainted with David Blumberg back in Hungary, and hence wrote to him in Brisbane notifying him of this intention to publish his work. It would be interesting to check the library of the late David Blumberg to see if the copy that was pre-bought is to be found amongst the other books.

APPENDIX 3

The Velikovsky connection.

[see page 13 line 11]

I have solved the whole problem. Ety Velikovsky [mother of Rachel Zalmonov] was born a Slutzkin and was the sister of Shalom Judah and Elazar Moshe Slutzkin's father. Rachel's sister, Shesha Beilah Gorielov (Gorr) was my great grandmother; we now have the connection properly worked out. I have almost finished the 'family tree' of Velikovsky [Velik and Kosky are the same family]. I know exactly how I am related to the late Professor Immanuel Velikovsky. Immanuel's father was Yehiel Shimon AND HIS father Yakov Meir was a brother of Yitzhak Velikovsky, the father of Rachel and her sister Shesha — my great grandmother.

Analysis:

Velikovsky — Slutzkin

Yitzhak married Ety. They had two daughters: Rachel and Shesha Beilah.

Rachel married ? Zalmonov

Yitzhak's brother was Yakov Meir [Velikovsky]

His son was Shimon, who was the father of Immanuel.

Velikovsky — Gorielov

Shesha married ? Gorielov. Through three generations, Shmuel Gorr was born.

Therefore, Shmuel was first cousin twice removed of Immanuel.

PERTH JEWRY'S MEMORIAL CEMETERY

David Mossenson

Western Australia's Jewish Community has lately acquired a Memorial Cemetery which commemorates Perth's original Jewish burial ground. The new memorial is a conspicuous and attractive addition to the community's existing public memorials.¹ Unlike the other two this one relates to Jewish experience which occurred early in the history of Western Australia.

The Perth Jewish Cemetery commenced in the year 1867 when Western Australia was a convict colony whose entire European population was below 25,000.² Jewish numbers at the time were quite tiny reaching a total of 60 three years later. Nearly half were transportees from England several of whom were still serving their sentences. Credit for initiating the Jewish burial ground belonged to three ticket-of-leave men, that is convicts under sentence who were permitted to operate in society. They were Abraham Rosenberg, Isaac Harris and Henry Seeligson. When a young Jewish convict, David Joseph, died in Perth and was buried in the Church of England portion of the town's cemetery, the three ticket-of-leave men petitioned the Governor seeking a separate burial ground. Governor Hampden responded positively by designating Perth Town Lot E76 to be "a cemetery for members of the Jewish persuasion". The allotment was almost half an acre in extent located on the western side of Plain Street stretching between Wickham and Wittenoom Streets close to the town's general cemetery.

The origins of the Jewish Cemetery were outlined in an open letter which two of the petitioners had published in the *Inquirer and Commercial News* of 9 December 1867.³ In addition to thanking the Governor and his officials the ticket-of-leave men announced that they had fenced a portion of the grant and had consecrated the area in accordance with Jewish requirements. They also revealed that they had removed David Joseph's remains and re-interred them in the Jewish Cemetery. They concluded their epistle in the following terms:

It is our earnest wish that Western Australia may become a large and prosperous colony, and that those Jews who may make the colony their home in after time will ever remember the great kindness of His Excellency the Governor and his officials of Western Australia.

The Perth Jewish Cemetery operated for thirty-two years till 1899 when Karrakatta Cemetery came into use and burials ceased in the East Perth area. For the first twenty years few burials occurred in the cemetery as the Jewish population of the town remained quite small. The situation changed dramatically after the mid-1880s when gold discoveries produced the influx of men and money which transformed the 'Cinderella Colony'. By the end of the century Western Australia had a Jewish population in excess of 1,200.⁴ In 1891 the cemetery was consecrated a second time, on that occasion by Rev. Abraham Tobias Boas, the chief minister of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, during the pastoral visit he made to the colony.⁵ In 1902 the Perth Hebrew Congregation was established, and for the following seven years conducted burials in the Jewish Cemetery. The number of headstones in place when the cemetery closed is unknown, but a marginal note on a Lands Department file indicates that twenty headstones were standing in 1916.⁶

Only two developments of any consequence affected the abandoned cemetery block during most of the century which followed its closure. In 1932 the Crown resumed the site and by 1953 the twenty headstones of 1916 were reduced to eight in varying degrees of deterioration.⁷ With the concurrence of the Perth Hebrew Congregation these headstones were removed and relocated in an unused area in the Old Perth (Pioneers) Cemetery. The Congregation buried the rubble of disintegrated headstones in Karrakatta. In the decades which followed proposals to use Governor Hampden's grant were advanced by various interested parties from time to time but nothing eventuated. The former cemetery remained a derelict block of vacant land.

In 1990 a new proposal was formulated and, after considerable delays, culminated in the creation of the Memorial Cemetery. The recent bicentenary celebration in 2000 generated interest in Australian history which in turn directed attention to local and family histories. Unwittingly, the National Trust (WA Division), while engaged in upgrading the Old Perth (Pioneers) Cemetery, initiated moves which were to lead to the Memorial's establishment. The Trust, wishing to shift the eight Jewish headstones to a less central position, sought reactions to their proposal from the Perth Hebrew Congregation, the Chevra Kadisha and from Dr Karen

Margolius the Government forensic pathologist. When Dr Margolius informed me of what was under discussion my interest was immediately aroused because many years earlier I had found the public newspaper letter of 1867 whilst undertaking research in Western Australian educational history. Without exception all Jewish individuals who were aware of the Trust's plans insisted that the only acceptable destination for the headstones was for them to be returned to the original burial ground notwithstanding the fact that exact locations for individual headstones could no longer be identified. Acting initially in my capacity as president of the small Perth Jewish Historical Society, and presently authorised to speak as well on behalf of the Perth Hebrew Congregation, I commenced discussions first with the National Trust and presently with the East Perth Redevelopment Authority who now controlled the vacant former Jewish burial ground. At the same time I began a search for the names of persons who had been buried in Perth Jewish Cemetery between 1867 and 1899. This task was facilitated by access to the records of the firm, Chipper Funeral Directors, which had commenced its operations in the mid-1880's and has since been used continuously for Jewish burials. For the earlier years records are virtually impossible to locate and only a few names have been found for the first two decades of the cemetery's existence. However, for the period 1888-1899 the Chipper records provided a complete record. As a result a total thirty burials were identified as having taken place in the Perth Jewish Cemetery.

The application to the East Perth Redevelopment Authority to sanction the return of the eight remaining headstones was considered over many months. The Authority had already made considerable progress in its charter of re-vitalising the East Perth area by converting it into a modern high quality residential suburb. The Authority derived its revenue from the sale of crown land within its locality, which of course included the abandoned cemetery block. By this time Hampden's 1867 grant had become a piece of valuable real estate estimated to be worth between \$500,000 and \$750,000. An important consideration favouring the restoration of the headstones to their original site was the sensitivity which surrounded any commercial development on abandoned burial grounds. This question had received widespread publicity a year or two earlier when a development project on Rottnest Island precipitated vigorous protests from Aboriginal spokesmen. Another, and in the final analysis crucial factor, was the discovery of old maps which identified Perth Lot E72 with hachures indicating a small fenced section of the block at the corner of Wickham and Plain Streets where the burials had occurred.⁸

Information concerning the Authority's protracted consideration of the restoration issue was contained in the memorandum which Michael Tooby, that body's Planning Consultant, submitted to the Authority late in 1995.⁹ Of the two agencies whose advice had been sought the National Trust supported the proposal emanating from the Jewish community. The Heritage Council proffered a more substantial response.¹⁰ The Council stated that, as all visible elements had disappeared the site had lost its heritage value, but it still retained historical and archaeological qualities. The Council also reminded the Authority of the precedent set by the Rottneest experience. Tooby recommended that as burials had taken place only in the fenced corner of the block, that section, comprising, 360m² could be excised, leaving the remaining 1440m² for commercial development.¹¹ The East Perth Redevelopment Authority made two decisions along those lines. First it would vest the corner section of fifteen metres fronting Wickham Street and twenty-four metres fronting Plain Street to the National Trust to be utilised for a Memorial Cemetery whose construction would be the responsibility of the Jewish community. The second resolution was to sell the remainder of the block for commercial development. Today a large edifice of Homeswest units occupies the bulk of the original Perth Lot E76, while the remaining smaller section has become the Jewish Memorial Cemetery.

Once the Authority's decision became known a committee embarked on the varied tasks of raising money, restoring the eight headstones, planning and supervising the construction of the Memorial.¹² Funds were forthcoming from individuals and from the Chevra Kadisha and the Perth Hebrew Congregation. The architect's design surpassed all expectations and the completed Memorial has elicited widespread commendation. Its principal feature is an imposing tower placed centrally in a circular tiled area which is approached from the Plain Street entrance. The eight restored headstones are located on the edge of the paved area. The ground is fenced with wrought iron and is pleasantly landscaped. A feature of the Memorial is its series of plaques which convey historical and other data. Two pedestals designed to facilitate reading contain plaques, one reproducing the open letter of 1867, and the other a summary of the major facts outlined in this paper. Four plaques are attached to the base of the tower, the one facing the Plain Street entrance listing the names and details of the burials known to have occurred in the Perth Jewish Cemetery. The remaining plaques list the committee members names, the names of donors and organisations which contributed to the creation of the Memorial, and finally, the details of the land's consecration including the rededication per-



The Memorial at the Perth Jewish Cemetery

formed by Rabbi David Freilich at a largely attended public opening ceremony held on Sunday 25 March 2001.

The significance of the latest public memorial which WA Jewry has acquired can be stated briefly. As already indicated the burial ground which is commemorated commenced operation in the early days of the Swan River Colony. The old cemetery had other special features. It represented the first manifestation of traditional Jewish values in Western Australia. It was also the first non-Christian cemetery in the State. In this respect it actually preceded two Christian denominations — Presbyterian and Congregational. The Memorial Cemetery is a tangible reminder that Jews have been an element in Western Australian society from the early pioneering days. This fact, which non-Jews could do well to recognise, is important to all Jews. It is particularly significant to youthful members of the community who can draw some pride and satisfaction from the Memorial and what it symbolises.

NOTES

1. The War Memorial in Kings' Park and the Holocaust Memorial in Stirling Gardens.
2. Census of Western Australia, 1870.

3. David Mossenson: *Hebrew, Israelite Jew* pp 14-16.
4. Census of Western Australia, 1901.
5. Mossenson: *Hebrew, Israelite Jew* p 44.
6. Lands and Surveys File 2996/88.
7. *Aus. Historical Society Journal, P.H.C. Centenary Issues* 1992 P853
8. Lands Dept File 4509/1922.
9. East Perth Redevelopment Authority Board Paper for Meeting on 23 Oct. 1995 (Item XX Hebrew Cemetery).
10. As above.
11. As above.
12. The membership was Dr D Mossenson, chairman and researcher; Mr H Atlas, treasurer and business manager, Mr J Silbert, honorary architect, Dr N Hoffman, PHC representative, and Dr K Margolius, forensic pathologist.

The Ballarat Hebrew Congregation and the Spielvogel Register

Lee A. M. Simmons

This paper concerns itself with what one might suppose is a straight forward question: how did the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation and Spielvogel Register come to be lodged in the Sydney Archive of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Inc? However, investigating this question has proved to be a complicated process, and one that has occupied much of my time and travel, on and off, over the past nine years. This article is the result of my endeavours.

The subject presented here concerns a little black book, known as *The Spielvogel Register*, and a Letter Book, both concerning the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation and its Members. Both of these books were, up until a few years ago, housed in the Archives of this Society in Sydney. In order to appreciate fully the circumstances surrounding the location of these two books, it is necessary to take into account an unpublished work, 'The Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation', 1927, and its revised 1934 edition, together with material in the Percy Marks Collection.¹

The people involved in the history of the Spielvogel Register and the Letter Book were:

1. Newman Freidel Spielvogel, the registrar of that Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, that in time bore his name;
2. His son, Nathan Frederick Spielvogel, the author of 'The Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation';
3. Supposedly the Reverend Benzion Lenzer, one-time minister of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation;
4. The first President and co-founder of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Percy Marks;
5. His brother Ernest Samuel Marks.

My paper is not strictly a work developed along the lines of setting out a history of the early days of Judaism in Ballarat. Rather, it is an account of historical detective-work that arrives at an

answer to a set of peculiar circumstances, which may very well have been left unnoticed and unanswered without this research.

From its humble beginnings the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation was led by true and pious men and women. They saw their congregation make its mark in the emerging history of the then Colony of Victoria, and later the state of Victoria. Indeed this congregation was afforded much honour when their spiritual leader, the Reverend Samuel Herman was appointed *Ab Beth Din* with the formation of the Melbourne *Beth Din*, the first Ecclesiastical Court authorised outside London.

An important member of the congregation was Newman Freidel Spielvogel, born in Galicia, c. 1830. He was a devoted and observant Jew, and a great scholar with an international reputation for Jewish learning and knowledge of Jewish philosophy. He was the Australian correspondent for the weekly Hebrew journal *Hamagid*, that was first published in June, 1856 in Lyck, which was part of Poland before the Third Polish Partition of 1795. After settling in Victoria, Spielvogel remained with the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation for the rest of his life, despite a falling out with his fellow members in the 1870s and a one year return to the country of his birth, in 1864.

In my years of reading and finding my way through the maze of paperwork of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation I came to like Newman Spielvogel. I admired his scholarly hand, for he wrote in beautifully precise copperplate script. I liked his serious nature and his devotion to Judaism, and admired just the smallest hint of his enthusiasm for correctness. He married Hannah Cohen on 25 December 1867, Christmas Day -when he did not open his book shop out of respect for his Christian neighbours. Of course, he never traded on the *Shabbat*. Getting married on *Good Friday* was out of the question, so it had to be Christmas Day. This then was the man who gave his name to the little Births, Marriages and Deaths Register, which first bears his beautiful copperplate penmanship in 1857, and continues through the years until 1881.

The letter book of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation covered the years 1900 to 1920. It is a bound volume consisting of carbon copies of the official letters. Both the Spielvogel Register and the Letter Book became issues of some lengthy contention in the early 1990s. At this time, representation was made by the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, represented by the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Victoria, to have the two books returned from this Society's Archives to the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. I was part of that mediation that saw the two books returned. There is no value in referring to the above matter, which caused some difficulties. I

believe that amicability should be seen to stand in its stead, between us all.

In his letter dated 14 August, 1995, to Dennis Bluth, John Abraham, the President of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, wrote (in part) that the two books had been removed from the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation without authority. In the same letter he made mention of the proposed housing of archival material in a permanent display. The two books are on permanent loan to the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, but they are shelved in the archives room of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (Vic. Inc.) in the Jewish Museum of Australia, where access is somewhat restricted.

Reverend Benzion Lenzer became minister to the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation upon the death, in 1905, of their long serving minister the Reverend Samuel Goldreich.

In 1908 dissatisfaction among the congregants saw the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation split into two communities, for almost the same reason that the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation divided, when the Jews of Eastern Europe considered the English and German Jews not devout enough. Those that left named their religious party, The Central Synagogue, with the Reverend Levy as their rabbi.

In 1912 a derogatory remark was made by one of the members of The Central Synagogue, about the Rev. Lenzer. Lenzer issued a One Thousand Pound Writ for libel, but it was withdrawn with the issuing of a printed public apology. This rift lasted for another four years, settling down somewhat, but matters were never really the same. Rev. Lenzer left the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation on 31 December, 1921, to take up a new position with the Newtown Hebrew Congregation, in Sydney.

Years later it was claimed that Rev. Lenzer had removed the *Spielvogel Register*, a Letter Book and some papers from the congregation when he left Ballarat and that he later placed those books in the Sydney Archives. It is true that the *Spielvogel Register* and the Letter Book were in our Archives, but no papers, concerning the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation (directly) were uncovered. I for one, could not understand why it was supposed that the Rev. Lenzer would have done such a thing.

As to the *Spielvogel Register* itself, it served no practical purpose. The Register, as beautiful as it was, was not a true and accurate account of the life cycle of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. After 1881, all further entries were made in varying and very poor penmanship which spoilt an otherwise beautiful piece of Pioneer Historical Art.

The theory behind Lenzer's supposed removal of the Register

was the dissatisfaction that the minister felt with that gentleman who had once defamed him. But that had been in 1912, nine years before he left Ballarat. The only other piece of supposed evidence was the fact that there had not been any further entries in the Register after June of 1921. I have yet to discover any remark made by anyone that this occurrence was proof enough. That evidence is merely coincidental, and I had, up until some time ago never come across any proof for the accusation, only rumours that had been handed down. There was not one strand of proper undeniable evidence to suggest that Lenzer was the perpetrator of such an act.

So how did these two books make their way to the Sydney Archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society?

Here I need to turn to the Revised Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation and its author Nathan Frederick Spielvogel, son of Newman Freidel Spielvogel.

In 1992 I had begun to look into the history of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation for a completely different reason. I was researching the life of my great great grandfather, Moses Simmons, who was intermittently a member of the Ballarat Congregation. In 1861 he left Melbourne and the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation to live in Ballarat. My journey led me first to Beverley Davis of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (Vic.) Inc. I shall always be thankful to Beverley Davis for her teaching me the importance of substantiation of written documents. She also introduced me to the late Leila Stone, custodian of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, with whom I developed a most charming friendship, albeit of short duration, up until the last few months before her death.

Through Leila Stone, I came to meet Sister Dr Marianne Dacy of the Archive of Australian Judaica, Sydney University. Marianne Dacy supplied me with a photostat copy of the 1934 revised Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. Not surprisingly, my next call was to this Society and Helen Bersten, from whom I have gained much knowledge and to whom I will always be indebted for her constant support and advice. By coincidence, my first visit to this Society took place just prior to a return visit to Ballarat.

At the suggestion of Mrs. Stone, I had arranged with the General Manager of the Ballarat Cemetery trust to audit the burial records of the Jewish Portions in the Old Cemetery, and the New Cemetery of Ballarat. It was a lengthy task which took me about eight working days and I enjoyed it immensely, particularly as I was given access to all of the original burial orders. With the completion of my task I was able to list all of the burials in alphabetical order, and then by date, and again by Section, Row, and Plot. I have handed this list on to Helen Bersten for inclusion in this Society's

Archives. I stayed in Ballarat for nearly three weeks, by which time I had visited the synagogue, and had come across a large bundle of papers on a shelf in the synagogue's vestry.

The *Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation* are a summary of the life of that Ballarat community through its letter files. Nathan Spielvogel had found them in a black iron box, in a cupboard, in 1928. He refers to this in the opening pages of his history of Ballarat Hebrew Congregation. The papers that I had found in the vestry were those same letters, but were no longer in the black iron box. They were heaped in plastic bags, were not in any order, and were in great danger of becoming mouldy in the damp atmosphere. I did what I could to rectify the situation and purchased the nearest best thing to archive envelopes and boxes and resorted all of the letters. There were hundreds of them. It was a task that took countless hours.

By then I appreciated the value of Spielvogel's *Annals*. The only down-side of the work, was his reluctance to supply full explanations of various events. Usually it was because the person was still living. None of the subject matter was controversial, from what I could see. I have never quite understood why he could not have asked permission of that particular man or woman, for it left his work somewhat incomplete.

In 1994 Helen Bersten brought the subject of the Spielvogel Register to my attention. I had completed quite a great deal of investigation into the history of the Congregation, and I suspected that the Spielvogel Register, and the Letter Book had not come into this Society's possession by any devious means as a result of actions of Rabbi Lenzer. All I lacked was the proper proof. The question of the Spielvogel Register, however, had to be put aside until I had time to devote to it. I was in rather poor health from 1996 until the middle of last year. With time I overcame my health problems and found the energy to start my detective work.

It was always going to be difficult to sort out the matter of the Register, when no-one could say, let alone prove when the Register came to Sydney. It was not that I was ever interested in when the Register came to our Archives. I was much more interested in how they came to be there.

From the pages of the Register it is revealed that the first births entry, in Newman Freidel Spielvogel's writing was 16 March 1868 and the last entry in that section was 14 May 1873. In the Marriages section, the first date was 30 September 1857; and the last date, in Spielvogel's writing was 11 November 1874. In the Deaths section, Spielvogel makes his first entry on 25 December 1857, and his final entry on 24 October 1873. From these facts I asked myself why had

Spielvogel ceased to make his entries in the little register? He was still in office until early 1878 when he was voted out.

In addition, the register is not consistent. Marriages were recorded in the synagogue's Official Marriages Register, as required by the State Laws of the Victorian Government, but not entered into the Spielvogel Register. It had ceased to be reliable, and it was almost as if someone occasionally picked it off a shelf; remembering it only in passing. Likewise, the Burial Register is incomplete.

Here I return to Nathan Spielvogel's 'Annals' for a little clarification, and probably the closest answer as to how the Register came to Sydney, along with the Letter Book. On page 53 of the 1934 revised 'Annals', Nathan Spielvogel makes mention of the Marriages Section of the Spielvogel Register. It is the only place in his 'Annals' that he refers to the Register's existence. However, it is clear that he read from it in Ballarat and not in Sydney!

There are further puzzling questions. On the front page of the 1934 revised Annals the following is written: 'Compiled by Nathan F Spielvogel in 1927 and revised in 1934'. What happened to the original version written in 1927? The matter had started to become too complicated and here I left it to one side, while I took on other research.

For all of that I still had nagging doubts. Nathan Spielvogel writes with great excitement, on page 1 (1934 Annals), of the discovery of that black iron box, which contained all of the letters bound in bundles dating from 1855 until 1877. Then on page 39 he describes how his father delivered the box and the letters and the files to the new honorary secretary in 1878. Nathan Spielvogel then surmises that the books were most likely taken out and the box closed until he opened it in 1927. Nathan Spielvogel also made mention of the Marriages Section of his father's Register. Yes! I had read that many times, but had missed the connection. These events took place in the mid-1990s, and, as I have said before, everything about the case was becoming complicated, and I had missed a valuable point.

Then in July of last year, I made a discovery. I was at the Mitchell Library, in the Dixon Reading room researching another matter relating to my own family. The papers I was going through were in The Percy Marks Collection. I began working through that collection in 1992. At that time there was only a rough index. My task was made easier by the Curator and Archivists. They had some knowledge of the collection, and helped me as much as their time permitted. The then Curator told me that she was hoping to start indexing the collection.

Time passed and in 2000 the indexing was complete. It was then, while reading through the lengthy index, that I noticed a title: 'The Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation'. My immediate thought was- 'Oh another copy of the Annals! perhaps this might be the original 1934 Revised Edition.' I was wrong. It turned out to be the 1927 Annals, and it was the original: a small book in Nathan Spielvogel's own handwriting. I knew that it was his script, for later notations in his hand are on the photostat copy that I have of his revised 1934 edition. Immediately I asked myself how the Spielvogel Register came to Sydney?

I had other questions as well. Why was Nathan Spielvogel's 1927 Original Annals in the Percy Marks Collection? I knew that the Australian Jewish Historical Society had held its first meeting in August of 1938, with Percy Marks as its first president. On the other hand, the Victorian Branch was not formed until after 1949.

On the inside page of the 1927 book was written the following, in Nathan Spielvogel's handwriting:

A revised 2nd edition of the Book was presented to the Congregation by its author *in 1933* [sic]. (1934?) It is in the possession of B. Stone Esq.

I then went back to my copy of the 1934 revised Annals. On page one, Spielvogel writes of his discovery of the iron box and its contents: no books, just neatly tied bundles of letters. Then I remembered page 53 of Spielvogel's 1934 revised edition He writes the following words: '*The first entry in this book was made on September 30th 1857...*' This is a direct mention of the Spielvogel Register, and it was the connection that I had missed.

From this I surmise that the Spielvogel Register was still in Ballarat as late as 1934. Therein lies the absolute irrefutable truth that the Reverend Benzion Lenzer had not removed the Register and taken it to Sydney in 1921. This fact becomes even more believable when it is taken into account that the Australian Jewish Historical Society was not formed until 1938. Here, and this made me more the happier, the Rev. Lenzer, wronged these many years, has this shadow of doubt lifted from his character. Further on I will explain why the register could not have come to Sydney before the years 1936 onwards.

My next reference was on page 49, where Nathan Spielvogel writes in a melancholy way of how the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation grows smaller each year, and it becomes more and more difficult to collect enough worshippers for a *Minyan*. Still further, on page 51, in his own handwriting Nathan Spielvogel

adds an addendum that the congregation was in a poor way. With the death of their minister, the Reverend Mandelbaum, the committee decided not to appoint another minister. The number of their congregants was so small that Nathan Spielvogel, himself, led *Shabbat* services.

So what was the fate of the Spielvogel Register, the Letter Book, and the 1927 original Annals? I think that had already been decided in 1938. In this, the evidence is circumstantial, but I can find no other evidence to refute the explanation I now wish to describe.

With the departure of Rev. Lenzer in 1921, who else might have brought the material to Sydney? I believe that Nathan Spielvogel, himself, brought the three books to Sydney and handed them over to Percy Marks, as president of the newly formed Australian Jewish Historical Society. As fellow historians, the two men knew each other. Nathan Spielvogel was president of the Ballarat Historical Society, but those three books were concerned with the lives of Jews, and there was no other place to house them except in the archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, which was the only Jewish Historical Society at that time. Then and now this Society's Charter was and is to collect all material concerning the life of Jewry in Australia and the surrounding regions.

Nathan Spielvogel, on page 49, of his 1934 Annals goes on to decry the fate of the Geelong and Bendigo Hebrew Communities, which had ceased to be. In particular I mention the fate of the Bendigo Hebrew Community. They sold their synagogue, it was torn down, and the records were thrown away. This was no secret, and seeing the way the Ballarat Congregation was going Spielvogel writes: '*...I pray that the Almighty will see fit to keep alive the beautiful shool and not let it follow the melancholy example of Geelong and Bendigo.*' He was a historian and wanted some records saved. Though there was no purpose in using the Spielvogel Register, he would have wanted it preserved above all cost, given the love he bore for his father. The Letter Book, seemingly, was of no further use, and he had handed over his revised edition of his Annals to Mr. Stone in 1934. Who would appreciate his original little book of the 1927 Annals, other than fellow Jews, especially historians concerned with emerging Judaic history in Australia?

This is how I believe the three books came to the archives of this Society. Nathan Spielvogel became president of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation in 1938 and he served in that capacity until his death in 1956. As presidents of other congregations and Societies are wont to, he made a decision of his own and took a trip to Sydney to see his friend Percy Marks.

Now, I turn to the Percy Marks Collection. Percy Marks collected all manner of works, books, periodicals, newspaper cuttings, scrapbooks. It truly is a vast collection. Percy Marks was 73 years of age when he died on 23 June 1941. His brother Ernest Samuel Marks, a collector in his own right, continued to add to Percy's collection until his own death on 3 September 1947. He bequeathed the collection to the then Public Library of New South Wales, with the provision that it be dedicated in memory of his brother Percy. The collection was received by the library in 1948.

And what of the original 1927 Annals by Spielvogel, that I found listed in the 1995 index? This is a curious thing. I went sifting through the entire collection of manuscripts and notes. It took me two days. I found a typed notation by Percy Marks. He referred to an index he had made in 1930 and a further index in 1936, made, with the encouragement of Rabbi Falk. I studied both indices as a matter of elimination, for I did not expect to find mention of the 1927 Annals, or the Spielvogel Register, or the Letter Book. There were no such entries and no further indices, and Percy Marks died five years later in 1941.

Here, I considered some facts: Nathan Spielvogel refers to his father's register in his 1934 Annals, so I knew the register was still in Ballarat. He was president of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation in 1938. To this I considered what I already knew to be written fact. By 1934 Nathan was worried by the decline of the congregation, and the fate of the Bendigo and Geelong Congregations. By 1941-42, he made an addendum, in his own handwriting, in which he described how he despaired of his congregation. By then, however, Percy Marks is dead. Yes! Spielvogel could have handed the three books over to Percy's brother Ernest, but it was Percy who was the president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and Ernest Samuel Marks Collection was concerned with sporting life in this country. That is also a Mitchell Library Collection.

So, some time between 1938 and before June of 1941 Nathan Spielvogel brought those three books to Sydney, to Percy Marks. Why then, did I find just the original handwritten account of Nathan Spielvogel's 1927 Annals, in the Percy Marks Collection, and not the Newman Spielvogel Register and the Letter Book? I found it strange. It was quite an interesting challenge!

I surmised that here was the 1927 book concerning the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation in Percy Marks' personal collection; and two other books, concerning the same congregation that we knew were definitely housed in our archives. Why separate them? That didn't make any sense at all.

The presence of the 1927 original work, in the Percy Marks

Collection, is by chance. I think that Percy Marks simply took the 1927 original home to read at his leisure. He didn't have a copy of the 1934 revised edition. Certainly, this Society has never had a copy, up until today, of that 1934 revision.

After Percy Marks died, his brother Ernest would not have known of the presence of the 1927 edition in the collection, because the 1936 index would not have revealed the work. Even if he would have had the time to go through the collection (but it is so vast it would have taken weeks) he would not have known it should have been in the archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. Had he found it, he might have surmised that it was a recent acquisition.

Until last year, there was no connection between the 1927 Annals and the Spielvogel Register and the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation Letter Book, and I am personally saddened by the thought that the Spielvogel Register and the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation Letter Book are no longer as accessible as they once were. I am pleased, however, that a more reasonable assumption may now be made as to how three (not two) books came to Sydney.

I was never convinced that Rev. Lenzer could have been responsible for the books' removal, and I am further relieved that those two same books that were said to have been removed without permission, were more than likely not so taken. Now, as with all hindsight debates, where there is no winner or loser, and one may very well say: *'It all happened so long ago, and there is no-one to say otherwise.'*

As to the 1927 original Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation: that book was definitely the personal possession of Nathan Spielvogel. He was free to do with it as he wished. If Nathan Spielvogel wished to give his own hand-written account to Percy Marks then that is how it should be left. Yet, I am still convinced that his father's Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and that Letter Book, all came into the Archives of this Society, otherwise all three would have been in the Percy Marks Collection. Be that as it may, the 1927 *'Annals'* is now carefully conserved by the Mitchell Library, and is there for all to see.

The Percy Marks Collection along with our own Archives, and other Archives devoted to our history, helps to tell the story of Jews in Australia: How we came to this wonderful country which welcomed us, and how we found here the freedom that we had, for so long sought. How we, in return, helped to weave the history of this land. The Spielvogel material which in all likelihood was given by Nathan Spielvogel to Percy Marks in the late 1930s is an important part of that history.

SOURCE MATERIAL

Australian Jewish Historical Society:

File A 175 Ballarat Hebrew Congregation
Facsimile The Spielvogel Register

The Percy Marks Collection:

ML MUSS 2718/1-3 Personal Papers of the Percy Marks Collection
JAY/26 Vow I Jews of Note
JAY/27 Vow II Jews of Note
JAY/35 Australian Judaica Catalog
JAY/41 Spielvogel, Nathan
JAY/63 Marks, Hollywood
Japan 262.21/1 Ballarat Hebrew Congregation

Author's Archive

Letters of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation (Photostat Copies)
1855-1877
Annals of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation 1934 revised Edition
(Photostat Copies)
Burial Register of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, Author's Edition
Indexed First One Hundred Years History of Ballarat, Author's Edition
The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century — Goldman, L. M.
Formula for Survival — Rosenthal, N
Stanford's Map of the Kingdom of Poland- past and present extent,
and the successive seizures of its Territory by Russia, Austria
and Poland Pub. London Thea April, 1863

Other Source Material

Burial Records (Original Slips) Ballarat General Cemetery Trust
Various Papers — The Supreme Court of Victoria The Public
Records Office, Victoria

NOTES

1. This is located in the Mitchell wing of the State Library of New South Wales

BOOK REVIEWS

CAGED: A STORY OF JEWISH RESISTANCE

by David J. Landau, Pan Macmillan Australia, 2000

This is a second edition, the first having been printed for the family only. David Landau's daughter, Miriam, has written a second introduction explaining the publishing history of her father's intimate and passionate account of his experiences as a ghetto fighter in Warsaw.

David Landau tells his story in a very easy style which contrasts starkly with the hardships and terrors endured in the ghetto. His vivid descriptions place the reader with him at every moment of his struggle and his survival. Every page flows like hot lava as he recalls in detail situations and conversations of years ago. He hints at future resolutions of events in a way to keep the reader glued to his narrative. He does not just tell his story but comments on the effect of the dehumanising of a whole society. His descriptions of ghetto life for both the wealthy and the poverty stricken are in chilling contrast. The normality and the horror live side by side as did the Jews and other Poles, only separated by bricks and mortar.

His title, *Caged*, refers to a question asked in chapter 8 — "Does the ghetto live in me?" "Sometimes I know quite clearly that I have remained caged in that ghetto, in the war years. At other times I am just as sure the war years have remained caged in me."

David's father was an astute and generous businessman whose fur business set the family up before the war and whose gold resources kept them and others alive after the German invasion. Once in the ghetto we see a story of amazing resourcefulness and incredible luck as David saves his own life and that of his future wife by smuggling furs and gold which have remained hidden in their attic. The friendship of former employees is highlighted as well as the helping hands of Poles who would hide Jews. He does not suggest all the help was altruistic, but pays tribute to those who risked their own safety even if it was well rewarded.

The question arises as to why some survive and others do not. Here is a man who was a hero. He did not play the part of victim, but carried a gun to protect himself and took enormous risks to save

his own and others' lives. But again as so often happens in miraculous survival stories, luck held his hand along the way. The love he felt for his young wife certainly supported his resolve; the comparative comfort that his wealthy background gave him buoyed him against the worst hardships, but he expresses the opinion that young people who were committed to a cause survived better mentally. His membership of and support of resistance groups gave him an edge. His non-Jewish looks helped in his dealings with the Poles and Germans but it was his own quick-thinking and self control which saw him through. He played several pivotal roles in the ghetto battle from bringing Jan Karski through the tunnels to meeting the ghetto activists and he provided the Polish and Jewish flags which flew from the ghetto for the first days of the resistance.

His care and love for his wife, Luba and her family saw him risk so much but he could not save his mother-in-law, who instead saved him. His marriage to Luba in the cramped ghetto was fraught with foreboding. His life with her after on the Aryan side was a constant battle for survival both in hiding and in fighting with the Underground.

In chapter 11 he describes Dr. Emmanuel Ringelblum's *Oneg Shabbat* organisation which collected and preserved archival and historical items from ghetto life. (I have seen the collection in a special display in the Holocaust Museum in Washington and it is a remarkable achievement.)

Paying tribute to the courage of young Jewish women smugglers, Landau writes "They travelled elbow to elbow with the Angel of Death to bring information, materials, encouragement and hope to the dying ghetto."

His children can rightly be proud of such a man and their decision to expose his story to a wider audience serves to let future generations know that humanity and courage can triumph over evil if given the right nourishment. Many stories have been told of the Warsaw ghetto — this one, by someone intimately associated with its every pulse, — thrusts the reader into the very cage which held David Landau in its grip.

Helen Bersten

BOOK OF RUTH — MEMOIRS OF A CHILD SURVIVOR

*By Ruth Rack (Southern Highlands Publishers, Dickson ACT)
226 pp, Introduction by Prof. Konrad Kwiet, Syd.Uni.
Holocaust Studies Lecturer*

Of all survivors of the Shoah, the group which has received least attention is made up of the child survivors many of whom were part of the Kindertransport sent to England. Ruth Rack (nee Landesberg) was one of these children, who, at the age of ten, experienced the ravages, horrors and displacement of Kristallnacht (9th November 1938).

The youngest of a family of three girls and a boy born to a German Jewish father and Polish Jewish mother, Ruth's first ten years were spent in the German city of Leipzig. Her father, possessor of a beautiful singing voice, was the Chazan of the local synagogue, as well as being a successful businessman. Her mother was the elder daughter of a large and close extended family which enjoyed the full German Jewish life of pre-Nazi Germany.

After their compulsory expulsion from the local German school, Ruth and her sisters and brother attended the Carlebach Schule until it was destroyed and the full horror of the Nazi persecution of German Jewish life was unleashed on Kristallnacht. Ruth was perhaps too young to understand the implications of what was happening around her. Her father was taken to a concentration camp, and her mother and her aunt arranged first for the two older girls Lottie and Esther to fly to England. Later, Ruth and her brother, each carrying a small suitcase, left by train as part of the Kindertransport for England, where they were met by their paternal aunts. Ruth's diary at this time, written especially for her mother who was expected to arrive shortly, contains the most poignant and telling writing of the whole book. The rest of Part One describes Ruth's struggle for education while living in a series of houses supplied by the Evacuation Authorities of wartime England. She lost almost complete contact with her older sisters and brother and also her aunts who had sponsored her in the first place. Perhaps this is why her story becomes so egocentric, with little of the emotions of the young teenager alone in a strange land and among an alien people. Perhaps Ruth remembers little of these times, but for the reader emotions always make the most interesting reading, and certainly they are the most difficult parts to write. Even the daily grind to clothe and educate herself while being moved from pillar to post around the south of England arouses little compassion because of this lack of emotion. Her family (sisters and brother) seem to have

retained none of the warmth and love which they had absorbed apparently in their childhood, a sad and serious loss.

Part Two, which deals with her life in Australia and subsequent tours to various parts of the world, had little interest for me. Guide books do not need to be quoted, and the memories of most people's trips, like slide shows and trip books, are best kept to themselves. We rejoice with Ruth on her late development as a singer, and on her warm and emotional relationship with her children and grandchildren.

As an insight into the horror of *Kristallnacht* and how it impounded on the Jewish life of Germany, the *Book of Ruth* is a powerful account and for this we thank her.

Judy Shapira

"THE DEVIL'S GREED"

By HARRY J. FRANSMAN Typeset by MC Graphics, Sydney, 2000.

On the inside of the back cover of this handsome book is the explanation for its unusual title:

"Hitler was a greedy person. First he invaded Poland and Austria and then the rest of Europe. He took all their wealth and possessions. He brutally murdered six million Jews — hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

He was the Devil."

This book is the record of the life of a young Jew, aged seventeen at the outbreak of war, who survived nearly four years of the worst type of concentration camp, through starvation, illness, extraordinary strokes of luck and chance, to find safety and security at long last in Australia. The book is not merely an account of what happened to Harry and his family, though that alone would merit its publication, but demonstrates and describes, with the benefit of hindsight and maturity, the course of World War II and the history of European antisemitism. The height and depth of human suffering caused by the Shoah (Holocaust) makes the account not one for the squeamish. There are no holds barred in Harry's description of camp life and particularly the punishment meted out by the sadistic and inhuman Nazis on their hapless victims.

There are some lighter sides to his story also, such as the adventure as a fifteen-year-old, filming in France and Switzerland, with an older man of dubious intent. Harry's story is as faithfully documented as it is possible to be, with dates and places recorded from his meticulous research. The German bombing and virtual annihilation of Rotterdam on 14 May 1940, rendering 75000 people homeless, was experienced by the Fransman family, resulting in their moving to Den Haag where his father quickly established a baker's shop. The gradual introduction of the anti-Jewish Nuremberg laws in the Netherlands culminated on 14 June 1942 with Harry's deportation together with all other youth of the same age to a work camp at Ybenheer, Germany, and the last time he saw his parents. This was the beginning of his suffering.

The book is well interspersed with photographs of his family and friends, probably every photo he managed to save or borrow later, as well as those of documents and papers which were similar to Harry's. A criticism I feel I must make is that there are far too many chapter headings and tiny chapters which, by careful experienced editing, could have been re-arranged in order, making the flow of the story easier to follow. In addition, some grammatical constructions are awkward, to say the least. However, this is Harry's story, and this is how he wrote it and all credit must go to him.

The spirit which never completely failed him is shown by one particular incident, Harry on a working party, met by chance with a fellow Dutchman, and told him the name and address of a friend at home in Den Haag:

About two months later a Dutch prisoner I had never seen before handed me a parcel, saying he had got it from a Polish prisoner. There was no indication of the source or of the sender, but I assumed that it must have been Jacque Fetter, from Den Haag. That not one of the hungry men through whose hands the parcel had passed kept it, vindicates my unshatterable belief in humanity.(Page59)

The Devil deprived Harry Fransman, as a nineteen-year-old Dutch Jew of 19 members of his immediate family — parents, brother and sisters and their spouses, nieces and nephews, uncles and aunts and cousins. Harry has never forgotten nor forgiven — nor, of course, should he. He has told his story in his own way, and that sometimes includes some extraneous material which others have asked him to include, such as the story of Babi Yar. This reviewer feels that Harry's story is enough in itself.

Finally, Harry's statement to his fellow survivors and to all historians bears quoting:

We, the survivors, who promised the victims not to keep silent, but to tell all, in order to prevent any repetition, still witness the denial of human rights in country after country, to this or that minority, year after year. Perhaps this is the answer to our question of 'Why?' This is our mandate. To unite the mainstream of Jewish life with the mainstream of all life, to seek out every decent ally and cry out for justice; to proclaim the preciousness of life; to restore humanity to this earth.(Page 166)

Judith Shapira.

STRONGER THAN FICTION — JEWS AND CHRISTIANS ARE NATURAL ALLIES

By Mark Braham, 417 pages, Sydney: Minerva Press, 1999.

Recommended retail price: \$38.95.

S*tronger than Fiction* has been variously described as an extraordinary book which 'charts the journey not just from one continent to another, from one culture to another, but from a life relaxed ... from its cultural roots, to one infinitely strengthened by a return to the founding principles of Judaism'; 'an important and timely book'; 'a journey through a remarkable life' with 'fascinating diversions', as Major Peter Phillips, the national president of the RSL, said at the launching of the book on 22 February 2000. He added: 'Although a practising Roman Catholic and with a reasonable grounding in my own faith, my knowledge of the Jewish religion was lamentably limited. This book gave me a whole new perspective... [It] is a powerful call for a stronger alliance between Christians and Jews to resist the moral decay of our times'. The book is intended to be autobiographical and an overview of Anglo-Jewry and Australian Jewry during the twentieth century.

Stronger than Fiction is a challenging mosaic of the author's life, his marriage of over fifty years, and his series of dramatic metamorphoses. Mark Braham appears to have 'discovered' Orthodox Judaism in his forties, when he passionately committed to the preservation of our faith. There is no doubt that Mark Braham believes any Jew who is not as totally committed as he, is unworthy.

Reading of Braham's experiences in India from April 1942, under the British Raj, it is understandable why the subtitle of his book is 'Jews and Christians are Natural Allies'. Although there are a number of examples of non-Jews who exhibit blatant anti-semitism, the two men to whom the book is dedicated 'embodied the highest traditions of Christian Britain: honesty, integrity, tolerance, moral and physical courage of the highest order'. They are Lt-General Sir Dudley 'Pasha' Russel, CB, CBE, DSO, MC, commander of the Eighth Division in World War II, and former military adviser to the Indian government, and Lt-Colonel John Whitty, DSO, MC, commanding officer of the Fifth Battalion, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment in World War II, who was killed in action in Italy in November 1944.

In 1949, at the age of 28, Mark Braham arrived in Australia from England with his wife and they became citizens in 1951. He wrote for a number of communal newspapers and, at one stage, published his own magazine, *Commentary*. His column, 'Sydney Newsletter', in the Melbourne based *Australian Jewish Herald* ran from 1964 to 1968. He also published a column in the *Australian Jewish Times*. During these years he conducted a successful business as an importer, agent, wholesaler and retailer.

Often his writings, particularly the column in the *Australian Jewish Herald*, gave rise to criticism within the community and irate letters to the editor. The Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies was frequently disapproving, openly attacking the columns. The editor and managing director of the *Australian Jewish Herald*, David Lederman, was fiercely pro-Israel, but he continued publishing Mark Braham's views which often appeared to run contrary to his own. When one of Braham's columns included the charge that some members of the community 'blatantly traded on their communal positions to further their business, political or professional interests', the situation was further exacerbated. Business people began boycotting the *Herald*, advertisements were withdrawn and sales dropped. For various reasons, the paper in the ninetieth year of its publication decided to close and on 2 August 1968 its final issue appeared. Some people blamed Braham's column for what they called this 'forced closure'. After this, Braham returned to England and wrote *Jews Don't Hate — How a Jewish Newspaper Died*. The thesis of that book was that Jews — and Israel — can only exist with our Torah.

Stronger than Fiction emphasises the strength of the return to Orthodox Judaism, and is based on Braham's belief that the Torah is the only way for both Jews and Christians. He states categorically: 'The Jew is the living witness to Sinai and through him shall all

the nations be blessed. That is a Jew's primary function in this world and if he fails in this task his life has been a failure'.(p.93)

The book contains a number of appendices which cover topics such as the debate about conversions in Reform Judaism, the 'Robert Manne Affair', in relation to Helen Darville's book, *The Hand that Signed the Paper*, and the appearance of the One Nation Party in June 1998 'from nowhere'. A comprehensive index would have added much value to the work.

Louise Rosenberg

GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES

This list represents enquiries made to the AJHS until May 2001. If you did not initiate the enquiry but would like to add information, please write to our genealogist at 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW, 2008

ASH, Gary Zadock (Ronald David) born Sydney 1951, parents Julius (Yehuda ben Reuben) and Ruth (nee Hertz).

FREIDLANDER, Samuel Wilhelm d.1879.

HAMBURGER family — Mathias, Julius, Charles, Leontine, Adolph, Lepopold. Germany 1830s to Sydney 1914. Some members known as HAMILTON.

HART, Hyam (father Lieb) m. to Brendal aka Elizabeth (father Lazarus) 7 children b. London.

ISAAC, Annie of Goulburn married Joseph Darragh.

ISAACS, Aaron, father of Rachel Leah (married to Isaac Davis MARKS), wife sought.

MAGNUS, Morris Moses and family.

OSTERMAN, Edward, writer. b. Poland, lived France and Australia late 1940s early 1950s. Wrote as Edward BROOKER.

PHILLIPS, Elias Adrian and wife Mary (previously Crannis).

PHILLIPS, Harold Cecil and wife Muriel.

PHILLIPS, Iris, daughter of Arthur and Isabel (Cohen) b. after 1915

SILVER, Isaac married to Leah Rodgers, 1870. Child born 27 July, 1871.

SILVERTON (SILVERSTEIN), Joseph b.1872, d.1956.

WEISSBRUNN/WEIZBRUN, Gyula aka BE'ERI, Aharon/Aron. b. Hungary, migrated to Palestine 1930s, Australia 1950s.

NEW MEMBERS 2000-2001

NEW SOUTH WALES:

BRAHAM Mark & Pamela
BURES Susan
COHEN Neville
DOBIES John
FREEDMAN Bernard W.
GRYNBERG Robert
HUGHES Anthony
INDYK Itka
KLEIN Amelia
LEVI Esther
MORA Ms A.
PLATUS Evelyn
ROSENBERG Ron
ULIEL E.
VAN ROOIJEN FAMILY
WAHLHAUS FAMILY

QUEENSLAND:

YOUNG Julie

SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

PEARLMAN John
SHARP Jeffrey & Rachel

WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

URBAN John

CONTRIBUTORS

Helen Bersten, BA, Dip Lib, a member of the AJHS Committee and its honorary archivist since 1979.

Neville Cohen worked in the family furniture business for 30 years. He is now a para-legal in his wife Totti's law practice. He is at present researching his family's history.

Morris Forbes, OAM, BA, LLB, Fellow of the AJHS Inc, previous past president and editor of the *Journal of the AJHS*.

Bernard Hyams, PhD, formerly reader in Education, Flinders University of South Australia, having authored or co-authored six books and many journal articles; now retired and resident in Melbourne. Author of *Surviving: A History of the Institutions and Organisations of the Adelaide Hebrew Community* (1988) and *The History of the Australian Zionist Movement* (1998). Current research is for a commissioned history of WIZO Australia.

Marcelle Marks, former committee member, has an ongoing interest in Australian Jewish history and has worked on a project on Jews on the land for the Museum of the Diaspora (*Beth Hatefutot*) in Tel Aviv, Israel.

David Mossenson AO, ISO, PhD, D.Litt (Hon), FACE, former Director General of Education in Western Australia, author of *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew: The History of the Jews in Western Australia* and *State Education in Western Australia 1829-1960*.

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.

Louise Rosenberg, OAM, a member of the AJHS for over thirty years. Honorary Secretary for 25 years until 1990, including 11 years as Secretary/Treasurer from 1966 to 1977. She therefore dealt with all of the Society's correspondence in that period and is totally familiar with the work that Rabbi Shmuel Gorr did for the Society and in his other capacities during his last 20 years while he was in Israel. Her article is based mostly on her correspondence with Rabbi Gorr in her official capacity as the Society's Secretary. She is a regular contributor to three publications: the *AJHS Journal*, the *Great Synagogue Journal*, and the AJWS Jewish Community Services' *Keeping in Touch*.

Judy Shapira, BA, Dip Ed., English/History teacher, who has been most involved over the last few years in Holocaust education, and in that capacity has read a lot of survivor stories. She was also very involved in the Anti-Defamation Unit, B'nai B'rith, New South Wales, of which she is past president, and especially the Courage to Care Exhibitions. She is a vice-president of the Society.

Lee Simmons, a fifth generation Jewish Australian living in Adaminaby, and is a descendant of a founding member of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. He spends his time as a historical detective specializing in Jewish pioneers on the Victorian goldfields, including compiling an index of all Jews buried in the Ballarat cemetery. He also intends to publish a two volume 'factional' family history that he has been researching for the last ten years.

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25 Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3TX England

BENEFACTOR MEMBERS

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M.Z. FORBES, OAM, BA, LLB

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