

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL XIX 2009



PART 3

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

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

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

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

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Mrs Helen Bersten, OAM, BA, DipLib (Honorary Archivist)
Mrs Judy Shapira, BA, DipEd (Newsletter editor)
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Victoria:

Dr Howard A. Freeman, OAM, BSc, LDS (Editor)
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A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed on both sides of 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 publication in the Journal should be sent as a Microsoft Word attachment. References should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes. Illustrations should be submitted as a PDF file. No payment can be offered for any contribution. No handwritten submissions will be accepted.

Communication regarding publication should be sent to The Editors of the respective Journals:

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Front cover: The NSW Swimming Team, first JASA Sports Carnival held in Sydney in 1926. Team members (from left to right) Allan Cohen, Issy Brodsky, Rupert Michaelis, D. Nathan, Julius Cohen, from *Pages of History: a Century of the Australian Jewish Press*, Sydney: Australian Jewish Press Pty Ltd, 1995, p 95.

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EDITORIAL

The 2009 June issue of the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* is again a rich collection of articles, providing perspectives from both the personal and the academic points of view. Last year we decided to introduce the option of full academic refereeing and this has taken place for this issue when requested. This decision enables us to publish work from academics, which will allow us to maintain the high standard of the journal and to include contemporary academic research.

Our first piece is the comprehensive address given by Dr Anthony Joseph for the Society's 70th anniversary luncheon held in September 2008 at the Great Synagogue, Sydney. The Society was formed in 1938, with the late Percy Joseph Marks as its first president. Following his death in 1940, his brother, Ernest Samuel Marks, assumed the presidency. Since then the *Journal* has been published continuously, and provides us with a very rich repository of Australian Jewish history. In 1989 the late Morris Forbes published a history of the Society's development in Sydney, and twenty years later the Society continues to thrive, as seen with the high attendance at the luncheon with over ninety people present. Dr Joseph's address provided an overview with reflections on the span of Australian Jewish history, which are important to keep as a permanent record in this *Journal*.

Following on from Dr Joseph's article, Rabbi Apple has written two different articles. The first provides a survey of the different synagogue names in the various Jewish centres in Australia. These names reflect attitudes and provide us with a different set of lenses with which to view Australian Jewish history. He has also written a detailed discussion of the issue of holding sporting events on the Sabbath (*Shabbat*), which challenged Melbourne Jewry in the interwar period. Issues relating to Jewish sport continue to be controversial, as can be seen in the recent 'Letters to the editor' in the *Australian Jewish News* over the issue of Maccabi not permitting non-Jewish membership.

Laura Stocker's article gives a different and personal perspective as she takes excerpts from her great grandmother's autobiography, and compares and contrasts what her great grandmother wrote with her own experiences. This piece takes us from life in Eastern Europe, to New York, then New Zealand and finally Western Australia. The approach is autobiographical and literary, and provides insight into the radical changes in both demography and life style that have occurred in Jewish life over the last century. Thus, through the story of one family, we can gain a broader insight into the challenges which modernity has provided for the Jewish people. This article was refereed and I would like to thank the two reviewers for their willingness to assist in this process. It is their voluntarily giving of their time, thereby setting a precedent, which will enable the *Journal* to continue to publish academic research.

My article was first presented as a paper at the conference of 'Beyond Camps and Forced Labor', held in London in 2006. It was later published in 2008 in the proceedings of the conference. I would like to thank the conference convener and editor, Johannes-Dieter Steinert, for so willingly agreeing for my article to be republished in this edition of the *Journal*. The level of antisemitism, and subsequent discrimination experienced by Jewish survivors wishing to leave Europe is not just an Australian story, but is part of the broader picture of post-World War II DP migration experience. However, given the specifically Australian content of my article, it is good that it can be included in this publication.

Finally, Dr Geoffrey Tofler has written about his experiences in 1974-1975, as part of the Australian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS) campaign against the Australian Union of Students (AUS) in regard to the latter's efforts to pass anti-Israel resolutions by universities across Australia. AUJS managed to campaign effectively and rally non-Jewish supporters to their side of the campaign. As Dr Tofler points out, this is also a contemporary story since, with the failure of the Oslo Accords, left wing groups on campuses across Australia are again trying to introduce anti-Israel resolutions, this time demanding the boycott of Israeli students and academics. Dr Tofler argues that lessons can be learnt from the 1970s, which could assist students in the 2000s to again resist these resolutions that attempt to delegitimise the Jewish state of Israel.

A number of books dealing with different aspects of Australian Jewish history have been published recently and are reviewed in this issue. There are three new books dealing with the convict era — two relating to individual convict stories, one on the history of Esther and George Johnston, reviewed by Helen Bersten, and one on the

odyssey of the Cohen family, reviewed by Gary Luke — and the third by Jeremy Pfeffer dealing with the London *Beth Din Pinchasim*, also reviewed by Gary Luke. Pfeffer's study is a groundbreaking work, which adds significantly to our knowledge and understanding of the convict era. Helen Bersten has reviewed the oral history publication of the ACT Jewish Community and Sophie Caplan has reviewed the autobiographical novel, *Alva's Story*, by the late Alan Collins, published posthumously. Finally there are two reviews relating to books dealing with Holocaust memory: *The Memory of the Holocaust in Australia*, edited by Tom Lawson and James Jordan, reviewed by Professor Robert Aldrich; and *Testifying to the Holocaust* book, edited by Pam Maclean and Michele Langfield, reviewed by Avril Alba.

The Sydney edition of the *Journal* again has published our president's annual report. It gives me great pleasure to present to you in this journal Sophie Caplan's annual report for 2008.

Once again, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my *Journal* sub-committee without whose assistance this issue could not have been produced. I would like to thank Helen Bersten for all her invaluable assistance both in the sub-editing and in supplying information and photos from our archives and also Judy Shapira for her careful sub-editing. Philip Moses has joined the *Journal* sub-committee and his assistance has proved invaluable.

As always, I would like to acknowledge the financial assistance we receive from the JCA (Jewish Communal Appeal), which enables the Australian Jewish Historical Society's archives in Sydney to function effectively, although its funds are unable to be used for publications.

Suzanne D. Rutland

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS FOR THE
SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON
OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 7 SEPTEMBER
2008, GREAT SYNAGOGUE, SYDNEY**

Anthony Joseph

In the March 2006 issue of *Shemot*, the Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain,¹ I used my presidential column to reflect on a question: 'What is it about the human mind that attaches almost mystical importance to some numbers?' The underlying reason for my rhetorical musing was the remembering then in United Kingdom of the 350th anniversary of Cromwell's readmission of the Jews to Britain. The number '350' as such has no more innate significance than '349' or '351' yet the British Jewish Community chose to romanticise it as a cause for junketing, celebration and producing commemorative events.

The first, tenth, hundredth, thousandth etc. anniversaries of an event capture the imagination as logical implications of the most-used secular numerology system (in Western Society), if we ignore the massive much more recent infiltration of the binary system so important for the IT and computer world. They are joined by other time-markers of perhaps more questionable significance. Milestone dating that parallels traditional human experience such as silver, ruby, gold or diamond wedding anniversaries is also popular. As Jews we tend to throw in a few other dating concepts peculiar to our own culture such as thirteenth (*barmitzvah*), nineteenth (basic Hebrew calendar cycle), forty-ninth (jubilee), seventy-sixth (more refined Hebrew calendar cycle) and one hundred and twentieth (alleged life span of Moses).

The days of your life are threescore years and ten, the Psalmist says: and then adds that if you are able to muster sufficient '*koach*' (strength), an extension on that span is sometimes possible. For this latter dispensation I, no doubt in common with quite a few of

you here today, am unfeignedly grateful. If it were otherwise this group of us would already be on more than mortgaged time. However, since we are collectively celebrating a seventieth birthday I thought it a useful starter to remind ourselves of this piece of our folklore.

I am very privileged and I feel deeply honoured to have been invited to give this address today: such a prestigious occasion. It is graced by the presence of so many people who have both supported and actively led the scholarship and intellectual questing necessary for a Society such as this one to justify its existence. I bring with me greetings, congratulations and the warmest best wishes for your future from the Jewish Historical Society of England (JHSE). Indeed, as an example of our positive association with you I would like to read to you a letter from Edgar Samuel, a distinguished Anglo-Jewish Historian, a former President of the Jewish Historical Society of England, and the son of an equally distinguished Anglo-Jewish historian, the late Wilfrid Samuel. It is also relevant that Edgar's mother was a member of the Australo-Jewish Blashki family and his brother, Andrew Samuel lives in Sydney. Edgar has sent the following letter:

Dear Anthony,

I well remember my late father telling me that he attended an Australian Jewish Historical Society meeting in Sydney in April 1952 where, as a veteran Jewish historian, he was invited to speak and that he told the audience that they ought to do serious research on the history of Australian Jewish convicts. This was taken up most thoroughly by Dr. George Bergmann and Rabbi John Levi with excellent results, which were later supplemented by David Mossenson in his history of the Jews of Western Australia.

We in the Jewish Historical Society of England have had the benefit of recruiting Professor William and Dr. Hilary Rubinstein from your Society to ours, as well as the Anthony Joseph connection. Since you [Anthony] are representing us at the Australian seventieth birthday celebrations please convey our Council's congratulations to their Society, especially in the New South Wales and Victorian branches, and to offer them every good wish for a flourishing future,

Yours sincerely,

Edgar[Samuel]

Vice-President of the Jewish Historical Society of England

As might have been expected I too am a member of the JHSE (and I have been so for over fifty years and of which I was its president 1994-96). The JHSE regards itself as your slightly older brother but, as in many sibling situations, the older can be usefully instructed by the younger. Wearing my JHSE hat for a moment we salute your splendid progress and we warmly admire your contribution to scholarship. It is also my great pleasure to thank the president and officers of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) for your generosity to myself and my wife (Helene) for your hospitality. I shall have occasion towards the end of this presentation to say a few more specific words of thanks.

I make no claims in this presentation to you today to neutral objectivity or to value-judging historical merit. It offers only my own 'take' on the significance of this milestone birthday. I have selectively chosen to reminisce over some aspects of Australo-Jewish history which have been of particular personal interest to me. They are culled from a wealth of available data and are only the stories in which either I have been to some extent involved in their researching; or for whatever reason, captured my imagination. Inevitably there is a bias towards the history of the Jewish experience in New South Wales rather than Australia in total. This is partly because when I was working amongst you all those years ago it was in Sydney and partly because New South Wales is itself the 'senior partner State' both in the making of Australo-Jewish history and in the inception of creating machinery for studying it. Inevitably too there is a bias towards seeing history through a genealogical perspective because this has always been my own particular interest (from childhood even and with some sixty years involvement in the activity).

My own personal connection with the AJHS has been continuous since January 1963 when I first touched down at Kingsford Smith airport. That journey from United Kingdom had been unexpectedly eventful and could form a 'traveller's tale' in its own right. Suffice it to say that I had set out initially by boat on the maiden voyage from Southampton of the *Canberra* but engine fires occasioned a Mediterranean rescue operation, onward transmission by chartered airline, an enforced night at Darwin in torrid humidity — we learnt that flights were not permitted to land at Sydney before the resident population of Mascot had had sufficient sleep. I was then a recently United Kingdom qualified doctor and my then wife was a young talented musician with the appropriate maiden name of Mindelsohn. We had sailed out of a desperately cold United Kingdom (even by its own winter standards) and we were suddenly introduced to the Australian Northern Territory at the height of its

summer. This culture shock (both physical and home sickness-inducing) was luckily soon dispelled. We found a comfortable apartment at McMahon's Point and both began our professional work; Jane as a music teacher at Trinity Grammar School where in due course she found herself writing music for a Nativity Play. This amused her colleagues that a Jewish girl should exhort her pupils to be joyful as they celebrated the birth of Jesus! I became an intern for Obstetrics, and it is my great pleasure that my first mentor in this specialty, Dr. Steven Kovacs, is here (with his wife) today. Early in our association he also expanded my consciousness by telling me about his childhood life as a young Jewish boy surviving in Hungary throughout World War II. Now retired, Steve has had a distinguished career in Obstetrics and Gynaecology skilfully assisting the continuity through new generations of human (and Jewish with it) history. He introduced me to his close friends, the late Dr. John Celermajer (and his wife) with whom we too rapidly developed another close friendship. John told me about his early life as a young Polish Jewish boy in World War II. Much of the present day Australo-Jewish community has sprung from immigrants such as these and I learned from them, as well as professional training, important aspects of historical perspective. Unfortunately John Celermajer died in mid life and his widow is not now in good health. However, it is a great pleasure to me that their son, Professor David Celermajer and his wife are with us here today. David, only in infancy when I first met him, now (as his father before him did) makes a distinguished contribution in medicine to the care of the population of New South Wales.

Within a week of arrival in Sydney my (already well honed for some years in United Kingdom) genealogical foraging techniques unearthed a cache or two of kinsfolk with whom we developed the closest possible friendship and bonds of affection. Sadly, but inevitably over time, the earlier generations of this clan have now departed. It is a matter of particular regret for me, however, that at the untimely age of forty-five the first of these deaths was my first wife. She left me in 1984 an unwilling widower, a father at that time of three teenage children but, more positively, who have now become fine citizens in their own right and they have presented me with a magnificent clutch of grandchildren. It should be added, *en passant*, that I have two other splendid sons, just now on the cusp of adulthood (albeit the marriage to their mother did not stand the test of time). On an equally positive note one survivor (the sole person of that generation) from the time period of my arrival in Sydney is here with us today: Beryl Kennedy, aged nearly ninety-two. I shall have more to say on Beryl's family background and my

own genealogical connections with it later.

Shortly after settling in Sydney I began my cultural exploration of the southern hemisphere. I joined (as a Life Member in each case) the Australian Jewish Historical Society and the Society of Australian Genealogists (to whom I am speaking in two days time). It has been a rich delight for me, and immensely fulfilling to have had such longstanding and positive association with both learned societies. Although my interest in history has always been expressed primarily through a genealogical mediation, the genealogy boom had not started in 1963 and the creation of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society was an adventure then way in the future. When it was called into existence I joined it immediately. At this time I feel both reflective and forward looking. It is acceptable on the occasion of a 'milestone' birthday to be a little congratulatory. In my opinion the Australian Jewish Community has been exceptionally fortunate in having repeatedly over many generations nurtured some of the finest creative talents. Three knights immediately spring to my mind as examples: Sir John Monash (1865-1931), Sir Isaac Isaacs (1855-1948) and Sir Asher Joel (1912-98). All of these personalities have their admirers and detractors but of their contribution to the fabric of Australo-Jewish history there can be no question. Still living of course, and almost a legend in his lifetime, is Sir Zelman Cowen; another shining example of Australo-Jewish exceptional ability. Then there is Judge Henry Emanuel Cohen (1840-1912), born in Port Macquarie but with many family links to several Cohen families in Tamworth whom I shall discuss a little later. The solid achievements of the men and women of past (and the present) generations, including biographies and appraisals of the 'quintumvirate' just mentioned, have been carefully chronicled, also by many fine intellects, in the eighteen volumes to date of the *Journal* published by our Society. My own occasional articles that have appeared in issues of the *Journal* have brought into the public domain most of the material that I am presenting here today and I cannot claim to offer you in this talk the fruits of much new and original research. Other important publications picturing the Australo-Jewish community are also available and but a small selection of these that come rapidly to mind include *Australian Genesis* written by George Bergman and Rabbi John Levi, *These are the Names*, by Rabbi Levi aforementioned, various important publications by Bill and Hilary Rubinstein and Suzanne Rutland, Lysbeth Cohen's delightful portraiture, *Beginning with Esther* (the inspiration for which, Esther Abrahams, I shall refer to later) and Rabbi Apple's latest *magnum opus* on the Sydney Great Synagogue as well as Louise

Rosenberg's many published contributions. It is fitting at this point to pay an appropriate tribute to Louise, here today and one of the most sprightly nonagenarians I have ever met! Her services to the AJHS have been and are continually incalculable. For about twenty-five years she and I maintained a continuous almost weekly correspondence dialogue on topics of Australo-Jewish historical interest. I should not forget the work of Rabbi L.M. Goldman and Nathan Spielvogel; and many others. I pay tribute to the leadership of the AJHS, the management Committees and the *Journal* editors that has been so consistently successful. Today's scholars are worthy successors who build constructively upon the foundations of their predecessors.

At this point I am led to speculate on possible reasons that may have motivated you to allow me, a semi-outsider, to make for you this survey of the Australian Jewish historical researching scene. There are many other people, much more gifted than myself, who could be standing here totally appropriately and talking to you today. It is not for me to provide an answer to my speculation and yet, and yetI am reminded of a dialogue, which was conducted both in private and (sometimes) in public through letters to the press. It involved myself and that impressively wise leader and distinguished incumbent of the Great Synagogue, the late Rabbi Israel Porush whose personal friendship to me remains a very cherished memory. The question had been posed as to why there had never evolved a totally autonomous Chief Rabbinate in Australia but that in the event of an intractable religious dispute the ultimate authority to resolve it was vested in the London such office. Even forty years ago, and much more emphatically so now, it smacked of an outdated colonialism for any Australian institution to have to defer in the final analysis to London. We agreed with each other that it was not due to a lack of experienced and well qualified individuals available to live in Australia and who would honourably serve in such a capacity. And yet and yet ... I made the point that Canberra had too little religious infrastructure to underpin such an office. Similar arguments would have excluded all other State capitals except Sydney or Melbourne. Both these cities individually could handle the situation but the rivalry between them would always be a destabilising factor. Whichever of them hosted such an authority would always be at risk of being challenged by the other simply 'because'. Notwithstanding the anomaly of it being vested in London it seemed to me then (and still does) that this might be the best compromise solution.

The inaugural meeting, leading to the official foundation of the AJHS, was held on Sunday 21 August 1938 at the Library of the

Maccabean Hall in Darlinghurst, Sydney. Reading the names of those present or involved with that occasion is like reading a roll call of 'the great and the good' of Australo-Jewry. So many well known people from families who had been the backbone of the community over generations. Many of them were destined to play a significant developmental role in the new Society's activities, with many of their papers published in due course in the *Journal*. The range of topics covered was healthily diverse and reflected the energy of the authors and the enthusiasm they displayed in chronicling the annals of the Australian Jewish Community. For me personally I was intrigued to see data about Herbert I. Wolff and Victor I. Cohen (1851-1941), a son of that foremost pioneer in Sydney Jewish life, Philip Joseph Cohen. The former I met in Sydney in 1963 by which time he was an 'elder statesman'. He was the uncle of Adolph Walford (1912-2000) who had married my mother's sister and this lady, the senior of my two remaining aunts, is still quite vigorous at ninety-three. Another of Herbert Wolff's nephews, Herbert Walford, lives quietly in Andorra at the age of ninety-six. This Victor Cohen is not to be confused with a Tamworth Victor Cohen (d. 1935) who married his first cousin, Ida Louise Cohen (1868-1970). This Cohen family was much associated with the Jewish community of Tamworth and I visited her there while also seeing my own Joseph relatives in the town. It is where Beryl Kennedy (nee Joseph) was born. The Jewish community of Tamworth has always held for me a special place in my affections. It was the cradle area of such families who gave rise to personalities as Judge Henry Emanuel Cohen (already mentioned). Beryl's great-uncle, Solomon Joseph (1837-1900), was a pioneer in the development of Australian provincial journalism and newspaper production. Beryl's grandparents died young and her father was nurtured by his uncle Solomon and, in due course succeeded to the senior role in the production of the *Northern Daily Leader*. Solomon Joseph did not neglect his responsibility for Jewish newspapers and was involved in the production of *The Australian Israelite*. Browsing through this publication I was struck by the somewhat technical quality of its columns: where else could the religiously observant Jew find so comprehensive listings of the times of Shabbat inauguration in so many parts of the enormous continent that is Australia!

Solomon Joseph's maternal grandmother, Rebecca Woolf (1781-1853), was one of the twelve children of Moses and Sarah Jacob who raised a Jewish family in Falmouth, Cornwall. The story of the Cornish Jewish community, with special emphasis on its Australian links, has also been published in our *Journal* and in English

publications (such as told by myself, in an issue of *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*). The fascinating story of Cornish Jewry as a whole is brilliantly encapsulated in *The Lost Jews of Cornwall* by Keith Pearce. However, for our purposes today, the important point is that of Rebecca and her eleven siblings, descendants of no fewer than nine of them settled in Australia over time. (One such is Helen Whitmont whose upbringing and local family story appeared in the *AJHS Journal* a year or two back. Another is Simon Marks-Isaacs of this city and here with us today.) I have discussed this phenomenon several times elsewhere (such as in the articles to which I have just referred) and it was no coincidence: it was part of a pattern of kinship migration that led many nineteenth century Anglo-Jewish families into encouraging it. The Cornish Jewish community was, indeed, colourful and their descendants have likewise coloured Australo-Jewry. Rebecca Jacob's brother-in-law, Rabbi Barnett Asher Simmons (himself and his wife, Rebecca's sister, Flora, themselves ancestors of many Australians) is said to have fought at the battle of Trafalgar and lost a finger in the process. It seems more likely that the damage occurred in a boating accident in Penzance harbour. Whatever, he was a turbulent character with himself at the centre of many a communal *broigas* (conflict). He was also the local *mohel* for the West of England with a clientele as extensive as that of Isaac Lincoln's. (I discuss Lincoln's part in our story a little later today). It is to be hoped his deficient hand did not upset his prowess at circumcision! Most Falmouth Jews, and for that matter the Jews in similar small English country towns, made their living by hawking and peddling. Many of them travelled their rounds on horseback, were away most of the week, but always returned to base for *Shabbat* which was observed strictly. One of Rebecca Jacob's brothers, deeply religious, did not like to lose time on his rounds so he *davened* his prayers while astride his horse. He trained the animal to take the requisite three steps backwards at the end of the *Amidah*. Unfortunately for him one day it stumbled and threw him into a ditch!

Another familiar story involving descent from Rebecca (Jacob) Woolf but worth repeating here is the connection with the English royal family. Rebecca's daughter, Eliza (1808-51), married Abraham Joseph (1799-1868) and this couple were the parents of Solomon Joseph aforementioned. One of their daughters, Rose (1829-87), and so a sister of Solomon Joseph, married Leon Solomon (1811-79) of Dublin (and later Dawlish, in Devon United Kingdom). This couple's immediate claim to fame was fecundity: they became the parents of at least fifteen children but one of these, Ernest Solomon, has made a niche for himself in history. He was the father of Ernest

Simpson (1898-1957) whose divorce from Wallis Warfield had repercussions for the English throne when she wished to marry the then Prince of Wales. The next steps in the story of 'Mrs Simpson' are so well known that I need not further comment on them here.

However, this episode was not the first nor the last time that the English royal family has been tangentially connected with Jewish ancestry. Rumours suggest that Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, may have had biological Jewish antecedents in that his father's parentage may not have been as claimed but may really have been from a liaison with a Jew attached to the Court of the Saxe-Coburg Germanic State at that time. Long before the era of DNA technology, this claim can never be proved. However, a generation after Edward and Mrs. Simpson another member of the House of Windsor, Princess Margaret, married Anthony Armstrong-Jones (now Lord Snowdon) whose Jewish antecedents from the Messel family of Darmstadt are well known. Then, a generation later, the present Princess Royal, has also made a marriage, which has a tenuous Jewish connection. Anne's second union is to Timothy Lawrence who is a direct descendant of Zachariah Levi, an elder of the Bevis Marks, London (Sephardi) congregation. A few years ago, Helene and I had occasion to meet Princess Anne when she opened a building in central London in which I now work regularly. A disused Church, it has been adapted for medical service to homeless people in central London. I shall have a little more to say later about this professional aspect of my life but my clientele include sometimes displaced Australians and Israelis. The Princess was quite relaxed and made us feel much at ease, almost to the point where I was sorely tempted to ask her to put aside her public persona and give me a frank appraisal of her private life as linked to a man of partial Jewish ancestry! I wanted also to tell her of my blood link with Ernest Simpson, her 'step-great-uncle', but reluctantly I decided this might not have been quite the appropriate occasion for a discussion of such genealogical whimsy. It might not have been well received! One small additional snippet about my distant kinsman who was once linked by his divorce to Royalty: he married four times in total and his only son by his last marriage has converted to Judaism and reverted to the surname of Solomon. He lives on an Israeli kibbutz but his link with the mainline of the English royals is so remote that neither Prince William nor Prince Harry need worry that he is a threat to their potential succession!

Nearly three months after the seminal meeting of the 'interest group' in August 1938, on Monday 7 November 1938 the then newly established AJHS held its first meeting proper. A paper was

read by Hirsch Munz, a foremost historian of the South Australian Jewish community. His theme covered the Montefiore clan, its involvement with the early life of Adelaide and the family's links with other States. Again this topic resonated with me personally because I knew of another collateral distant relative of mine, and early South Australian pioneer, Nathan Philip Levi (1791-1842) who had arrived in the town on the *Eden* in 1839. With the help of a non-Jewish colleague and very good friend of the AJHS, Kingsley Ireland, I was able to trace an immense posterity of N.P.Levi. I have met many of his descendants and none of them today are Jewish. N.P.Levi was also collaterally connected with another Australian relative of mine, Isaac Lazarus Lincoln, about whom I will have more to say later as I have already hinted.

The background history of the European perception of the 'southern land' or *terra australis* is fascinating. Mediaeval philosophers ('flat earthers' for whom the sun revolved round the earth) predicted such had to exist. Many explorers set out to locate it including the famous Dutch navigator, Abel Janszoon Tasman. His voyaging touched upon New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and the island that is eponymously dedicated to him but the largest land mass of all (Australia itself) eluded him! Captain Cook charted much of the eastern seaboard so that by the 1780s, when the American colonies were becoming increasingly restive about accepting British convicts, it was decided to settle a penal colony in Botany Bay. The story of the First Fleet (arrived January 1788) and subsequent Fleets, the growth and development of (initially) New South Wales, and then other areas of the continent are well known and do not need a detailed repetition here. The pattern was of course essentially colonial, followed by independence but with some areas, such as Adelaide, having no convict experience. The Jewish presence and development has to some extent mirrored that of wider society. There were a dozen or so Jewish convicts on the First Fleet but their English roots were minimal. Subsequent fleets brought a few Jews and their stories are largely in the public domain already. There was no organised Jewish life at such an early period but occasional mention of Jewishness appears. For example in June 1791 Reverend Richard Johnson noted that Solomon Bockarah, who died, was 'a dissenting Jew' but would have to be buried with Christian rites. Then there is the controversy surrounding New South Wales Governor Arthur Phillip whose family hailed from Frankfurt. My good friend and foremost historian, the late George Bergman, could never satisfy himself of Phillip's Jewish origins but others hold it to be so.

Perhaps the premier pioneer Jewish personality was the convict

girl Esther Abrahams (or Julian) who, with her daughter Rosanna, came out on the First Fleet. Rosanna married Isaac Nichols, the first postmaster general of the Colony, and father of George Nichols who was to plead so eloquently the cause of Jewish equality with Christians after his election to the New South Wales Legislative Council. Another well known descendant of Esther in recent times was Rear Admiral Sir David Martin (1933-90) who became a Governor of New South Wales and was always immensely proud of his ancestress.

The establishment of Australo-Jewry as a self-perceiving and identifying community began in the 1820s. By that time there were sufficient Jewish free settlers to form a cohesive nucleus. Enough convicts and emancipists (freed because their sentences had been served or commuted) were prepared to declare themselves although most of them had, by then, non-Jewish spouses. They wanted their children to be included, with the inevitable clashes this caused the small community. The first quorate religious services were organised in his own home in 1828, by P.J.Cohen, already mentioned, (allegedly an emissary of the Rothschild family) who did his best to resolve many difficulties. I judge Cohen as a role model in aiming for communal unity. I should declare my family interest here. In the 1830s my great-great-great uncle, I.L.Lincoln (already mentioned) settled in Port Philip and became the first *mohel* (ritual circumciser) for Victoria. He too took an inclusive approach to his duties and was willing to circumcise children of Jewish fathers but non-Jewish mothers. He then told the families the children were Jewish which of course upset Chief Rabbi Adler in London. Children were brought to him from vast distances and the traditional eight days became elasticised in some cases almost to eight years before Lincoln could perform his art on them! Lincoln also exemplifies a naming principle well known to genealogists. He was born the son of Jonas Lazarus (1771-1851) but took his surname from his birthplace (Lincoln, England). A brother, David Lazarus Lincoln, did likewise and settled in Maryborough, Victoria. I have met the descendants of both brothers and none of them are now Jewish. David's still live mostly in Victoria but Isaac was a more restless character. After bankruptcy in 1852 he set out with his family for California. The ship was wrecked and he (and all his family) drowned except one son, Jonas Lincoln. Young Lincoln survived because he had elected to stay with English contacts in Hawaii where the family had broken their journey and he was not aboard the ill-fated vessel on which his parents and siblings were continuing to travel. They were attempting to reach the west coast of United States of America where gold rush fever was the magnet.

Later Jonas sailed successfully on a more seaworthy boat to San Francisco where he then settled and where his descendants still live. I owe my making contact with them to the vigilance of Louise Rosenberg here. She took a call from the Mudgee Historical Society, which had received a letter from a Californian (now known to descend from Jonas Lincoln) looking for his roots. The Mudgee group thought the names mentioned might be Jewish, and passed it to Louise who recognised immediately the likely significance of this enquirer for me. She telephoned me in United Kingdom with strong advice to delay not a moment more and ring the San Francisco number she gave to me. I accepted her suggestion and spent the next hour or so catching up on a hundred and fifty years worth of family gossip. Subsequent visits to San Francisco allowed me to meet these distant cousins; the only survivors on the direct male line from Jonas Lazarus of Lincoln.

The year 1828, mentioned as the date of P.J.Cohen's establishing Jewish religious services, is important in another context for Australian researchers. It is the year in which a comprehensive census of the population was taken and which has survived. Many undoubted Jewish names appear but many of these also describe themselves as affiliated to the Church of England. Such people were soon to be found actively involved in the affairs of the fledgling Jewish community calling into question the authenticity of the census' description. However the census, flawed as it may be in some respects, was a great improvement in terms of accuracy and ethnic delineation compared with the musters taken between five and fifteen years earlier. These very early records of course have great historical value but rarely identified Jews as such. They are also more comprehensive for convict data because free settlers could not be compelled to be listed.

There are so many early stories and some of them so remarkable but they have been told so frequently already and they cannot all be repeated here today. One personality, however, that has always appealed to me is that of the Hebrew Melodist, Isaac Nathan (1790-1864), and his rôle in the development of musicianship in Australia. He was said to descend from Stanislaus Poniatowski, the last King of Poland. He was a friend of Byron, an ancestor of Sir Charles Mackerras and the first Jew in the Southern Hemisphere to be killed by a tram! Then the convict Ikey Solomons, allegedly the model for Dicken's character of Fagin, is another charismatic individual in the tangled skein of Australo-Jewry. Or the convict, Joseph Samuel, sentenced to death in 1803. He had a remarkable escape from hanging: the rope broke three times which was interpreted as a sign that he must be allowed to live. An analysis of the date of the event

showed that it was Yom Kippur 5564 so make of that what you will! Or the bushranger, Edward Davis, known as 'Teddy the Jew Boy' who was finally caught and hanged in March 1841. The Australo-Jewish community, while always tiny (never more than half percent of the total population) has been a vibrant one and consistently punched above its weight. The activities of the AJHS, and now joined in many respects by its more recently formed partner in interests, the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, have made sure that the chronicling of the peoplehood is well advanced. However, there is much research still to do and it is a *mitzvah* (commandment) to be involved and support it. Judaism is reluctant to proselytise but affirms passionately the equality of all people, Jew and gentile alike. Everyone has a valued place and there is no elitism inherent if you yourself are Jewish. A heart-warming story is the life of the nineteenth century Australian gentile, Caroline Chisholm, who did so much to help the Jewish community. Deservedly she has been sympathetically treated in our *Journal* and I think she must have been a remarkable lady. As has been noted in a different context while many faiths judge who shall receive punishment or reward, and while it is also true that examples can be found in the Torah of that type of approach, it is additionally stated in the Torah that YOU do not make that judgment. That is God's business and meanwhile you do not stand aside idly and refrain from helping while your fellow man is suffering. Perhaps not yet given much publicity in Australia and hopefully not experienced here but disturbing examples have been reported in United Kingdom recently of some medical students opting, if they can, not to be involved in the care of patients with alcoholism or diseases that are frequently sexually transmitted (including Hepatitis C, HIV infections and/or full blown AIDS). Such a discriminatory practice is not only grossly unethical but Judaism emphatically rejects such a judgmental attitude. (I speak with some emotional passion in this respect: two days a week my current medical practice, as I mentioned earlier in discussing the episode of my interaction with Princess Anne, is to the care of Homeless People in central London and amongst this group many harbour just such health issues. If I were to demand to be excused from handling this trade I would have very few patients!)

We are perhaps the most historical a people of any on earth. 'Remember the days of old' [the AJHS motto] is enshrined in the fabric of our philosophy and has been taken as the 'alter ego' for the Jewish Historical Society of England. The book of Genesis (*Bereishis*) describes in detail the generations of the Patriarchs and the book of Numbers (*Bemidbar*) starts with a recapitulation of the

placing of the tribes in their genealogical context. Throughout our long *diaspora*, dispersed to so many lands, we have retained our identity and cohesion by a sense of historical linking with each other. Why else should you, thousands of miles from the cradle of your birth as a people, have formed this very Society whose birthday we are celebrating now, if it were not for your consciousness of 'belonging'? You have proved yourselves worthy links in the chain and your Society is a prestigious formal statement of this concept. You will continue to produce quality scholars who will continue to make interesting discoveries of the Jewish contribution to Australian life. Even modern genetics confirms what we know intuitively. For example, the evolution of the laws of circumcision showed a remarkable understanding by our ancient forefathers of the risks of bleeding disorders. Had Rasputin been similarly aware of haemophilia and its problems the course of early twentieth century Russian history might have been very different. The 'Cohen DNA project' also sheds scientific light on the linking of a people to a common early ancestor, compatible with descent from the First High Priest, Aaron (the brother of Moses). The duty of involving yourself in supporting the recording of all this (and much more) history is summarised in the well known quote (and used frequently at Jewish funerals) from Rabbi Tarfon in the *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers): 'It is not your duty to finish the task but neither should you desist from it'.

I have talked for long enough and it is time to finish. I hinted much earlier that I wished to thank various people in a little more detail. Helene and I have a particular debt of gratitude to Sophie Caplan who 'brokered' this invitation to me. Helene is an only child and her mother was an only child too. Her father had three brothers but only one had also a singleton daughter who is actually therefore genealogically Helene's nearest kinsperson. She and her parents settled in Melbourne when Helene was a child and the two first cousins had not seen each other since then. Thanks to Sophie's perseverance and that she enlisted the help of Lionel Sharpe of Melbourne who carried out excellent genealogical detective work, Ruth and her husband were found and they too are with us at this gathering. Perhaps even more remarkable, although not able to join us today, Ruth's 107 year old mother (Helene's aunt whom she has not seen for so many years) is alive and in reasonable health. We are seeing her in Melbourne next week. To my family and friends in Sydney who have put up with me all these years and provided superb hospitality on my visits here. Especially Bev Clarke, also here today, whose home has been like a clearing-house for all of the United Kingdom Joseph extended tribe for a

generation or more. Last but by no means least to my wife, Helene, who has come into my life at 'reel 9' and has had to cope with a multiplicity of strands of my former existence. She has separated the necessary from the irrelevant and placed into perspective so many Australian connections. It is her first ever visit to the southern hemisphere and hitherto her iconic image of Australia equalled Bondi Beach. For me time spent there would be almost as potent a penance as the Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) fast. Luckily she took that worry of mine to heart and instead she has been able to expand her already formidable talents as a professional florist by an appreciation of the outstanding qualities of Australian plant life. We shall both retain vivid mental images of this most memorable trip and again my thanks to all of you who have contributed to making this visit so worthwhile for us.

ENDNOTE

1. Anthony Joseph, 'Presidential Column', *Shemot, the Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain*, Volume 14, part I, March 2006, p.19.

AUSTRALIAN SYNAGOGUE NAMES

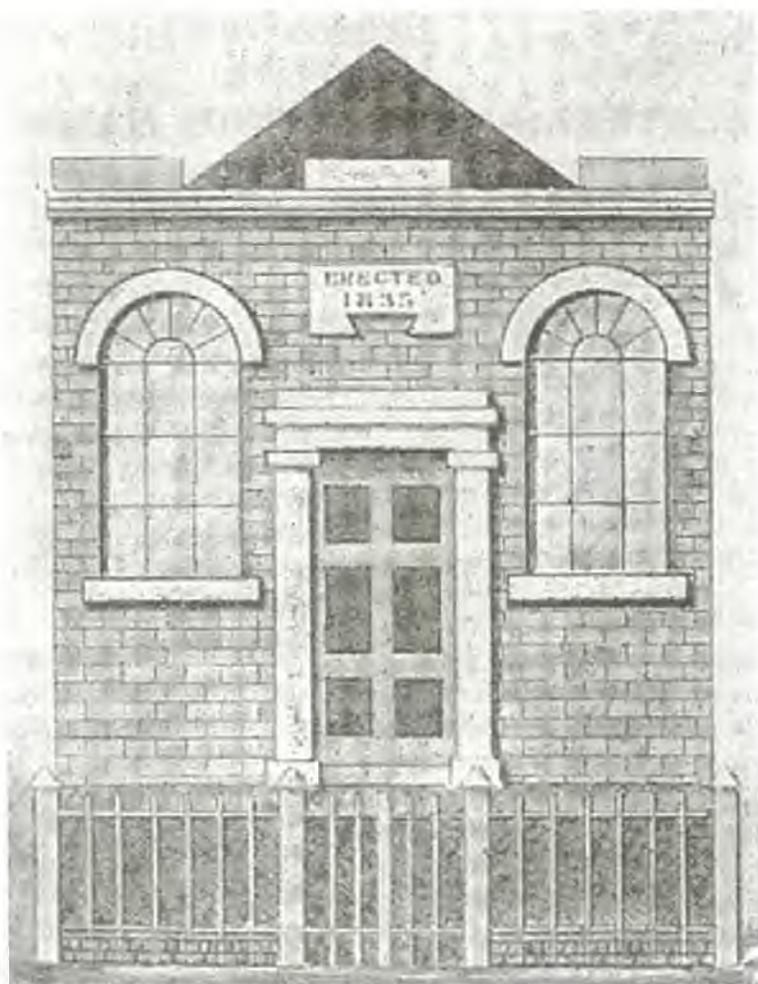
By Rabbi Raymond Apple

Synagogues – their demography, geography, ideology and social history—tell us a great deal about their congregations. Australia is no exception. Even the mere names of Australian synagogues—both in English and in Hebrew – are a fruitful source of history. This paper argues that over and above their value as a historical resource, synagogue names have a history all of their own.

English Names

In the early years of Australian Jewry, each synagogue had both an English and a Hebrew name. Two traditions developed in regard to English names. These traditions were largely geographically based, with one tradition emerging in New South Wales and the other in Victoria and the other Australian states.

In New South Wales, the name 'The ... Synagogue' became the norm. The precedent was London Jewry, from which most congregations in the Empire and Commonwealth took their lead. Hence the names Great Synagogue and Central Synagogue in Sydney reflect 'the English usage' and the formative period of *Minhag Anglia* (that is, 'the English usage'). The original Great Synagogue in the City of London – founded in the early eighteenth century – was the first, the largest and the pre-eminent Ashkenazi synagogue of the Empire. 'Great' signified 'large', but the name carried with it a significant element of self-pride. In Sydney, it appears that the large synagogue in Elizabeth Street created out of the union of the York Street and Macquarie Street Synagogues in the 1870s was called 'Great' for three reasons: its size, deference to London and self-image. There were similar Great Synagogues in a number of other leading cities of the Empire. Not that the communal elders expected to emulate the learning of the *anshei k'nesset hagedolah*, the 'Men of the Great Synagogue (or Great Assembly of Scholars)', referred to in *Mishnah Avot* ('Ethics of the Fathers'). It was not thoughts of learning or piety but of prestige that motivated these nineteenth century worthies.

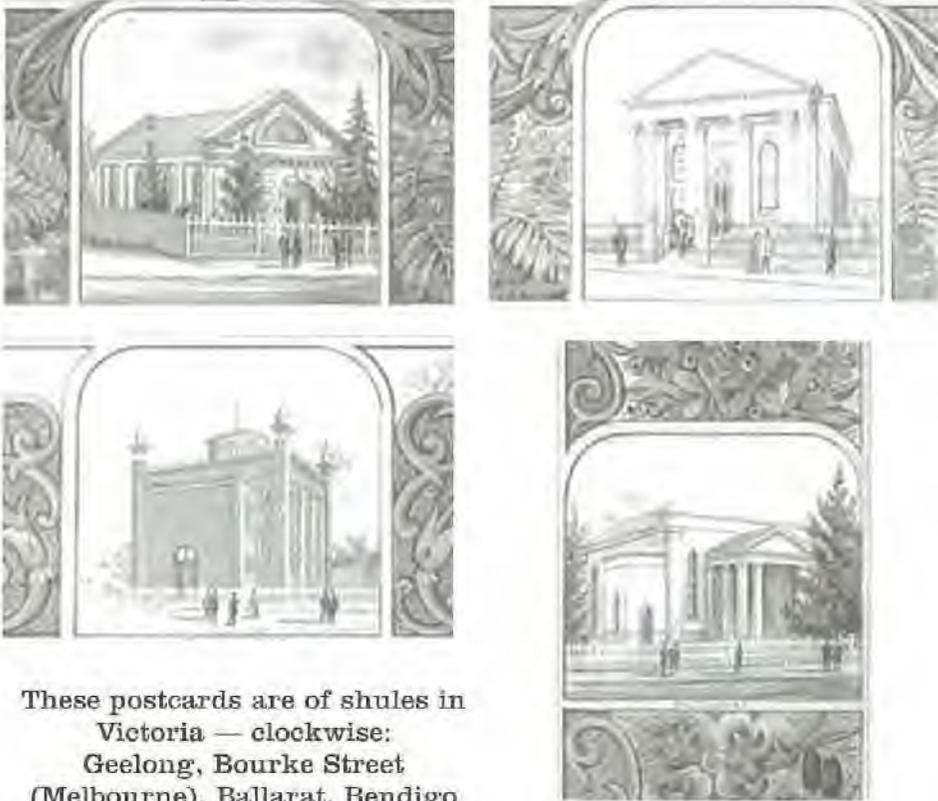


Macquarie Street Synagogue, formerly Friends' Meeting House

In Sydney, smaller congregations arose from time to time but there was no real challenge to the Great until the rise of the Eastern Suburbs community, which established the Central Synagogue in 1912, adopting a name which also arose out of the London scene where in the mid-nineteenth century the Jews of the West End had finally succeeded in establishing the Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street, though the Great – in the City of London itself – retained its hegemony for a long period. In Sydney the success of the Central led to a two-edged saying: 'The Great isn't central but the Central isn't great'.

Like the Great and the Central, other Sydney congregations also called themselves 'The ... Synagogue', though at times the term 'The

...Hebrew Congregation' was adopted. In some cases there were stages; thus the Northern Sydney Hebrew Congregation, founded in 1940, became the North Shore Synagogue.



These postcards are of shules in
Victoria — clockwise:
Geelong, Bourke Street
(Melbourne), Ballarat, Bendigo

Outside New South Wales, synagogues almost always used the name 'Hebrew Congregation'. Thus, the first three Victorian metropolitan synagogues were the Melbourne, East Melbourne and St. Kilda *Hebrew Congregations*. In other cities this latter terminology was also adopted – thus Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth called themselves Hebrew Congregations, not Synagogues. The word 'Hebrew' was preferred to 'Jewish', again with English antecedents (such as the Birmingham *Hebrew Congregation*), because 'Hebrew' sounded softer, more Biblical and even more respectable in days when 'Jewish' was associated by unfriendly elements with unsavoury traits and habits. 'Hebrew' was used for similar reasons in various other contexts, for example 'Hebrew compartments' at general cemeteries and 'Hebrew chaplains' in the defence force. This usage has now disappeared and the cemeteries have *Jewish* sections and the defence force has *Jewish* chaplains.

The predilection for the word 'Hebrew', though it began in Britain, was, however, never universal even there. Sections of the Anglo-Jewish community openly used the names 'Jews' and 'Jewish', for example the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, the West London Synagogue of British Jews, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jews' Orphan Asylum and Jews' College.

The English names of Australian synagogues were generally, apart from the Great and the Central in Sydney, defined by geography, for example: Newcastle Hebrew Congregation, South Brisbane Hebrew Congregation and Hobart Hebrew Congregation. Some names were maintained even when the synagogue moved, such as the Blake Street Hebrew Congregation in South Caulfield, Melbourne.

With the English names came Hebrew nomenclature which rarely bore any relationship to the English name: for example East Melbourne was *Mikveh Yisra'el* (in the early days often spelt *Mickva Yisroile*) – the Hope of Israel; St. Kilda was *Ohavei Shalom* – Lovers of Peace. There is a recent tendency to have Hebrew names without any English version at all. Few of the newer synagogues use the archaic phrase 'Hebrew Congregation'.



Interior of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation

When the Liberal movement began in Australia in the 1930s its places of worship were called Temples, though the Liberal congregation in Melbourne initially called itself the Beth Israel Congregation because it had no permanent house of worship. The decision to re-name the congregation 'Temple Beth Israel' was made in 1937 when land was acquired for a synagogue building. Although continental orthodox synagogues called themselves 'Temple' (for example in Paris and Budapest), the term became especially associated with the new Jewish world of North American Jewry, especially its Reform element. In Australia, the Central European Jews who brought strength to the Liberal movement may have liked the term 'Temple' for nostalgic reasons. There may have been an ideological consideration in that early American and European Reform proclaimed that it did not believe in the restoration of the Jerusalem Temple, and its temples, wherever in the Diaspora they stood, were its sacred edifices. Since those days the World Union for Progressive Judaism has become strongly Zionist (in Australia, the Liberal congregations never had an anti-Zionist period), but in many places the name 'Temple' has been retained out of convention. Nonetheless, 'Temple' is out of fashion in many contemporary Australian Liberal communities. Thus, Temple Emanuel in Sydney is now The Emanuel Synagogue and the Adelaide Liberal Temple is now Beit Knesset Shalom.

Newer orthodox congregations are tending not to have separate English names at all but call themselves merely '*Kehillah*', the Hebrew for 'congregation'. In Sydney the congregation that meets at Masada College is *Kehillat Masada*; the congregation at Moriah College is *Kehillat Moriah*. The Conservative congregation in Melbourne, which has no building of its own, is *Kehillat Nitzan*.

The increasing number of Lubavitch-affiliated centres are known as Chabad Houses (this is an acronym derived from '*Chochmah*', wisdom; '*Binah*', understanding; and '*Da'at*', knowledge). In Sydney, a Bellevue Hill community has called itself '*The Shtiebel*', a Yiddish word that literally means 'room' but is a customary term for a small, warm place of worship.

There were places where a synagogue commenced as an adjunct of a community centre but became the main facility in the centre with an independent identity and name; examples are the Caulfield and North-Eastern Jewish Centres in Melbourne. From the Caulfield Centre emanated the Caulfield Hebrew Congregation; in Doncaster the synagogue part of the North-Eastern Centre became the Yeshurun Synagogue. Both Caulfield and Yeshurun are orthodox.

A number of other synagogues began as and remain adjuncts of

a wider facility. These include prayer rooms at *yeshivot* in Melbourne and Sydney, and at old age homes in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, a welfare agency in Melbourne, and schools in Melbourne and Sydney.

The strangest name for a synagogue is the nickname 'Katanga', by which the Caulfield *Beth Hamedrash* in Melbourne is known. It began as a breakaway from Mizrachi at the time of an African crisis when Katanga separated from the Congo.

A note is necessary about the actual meaning of the word 'synagogue'. While common usage associates the name with a building and defines a synagogue as a place where Jews pray, the original meaning of the word was almost synonymous with 'congregation'. From a Greek root, '*syn*' and '*agein*' – to bring together – it denoted not so much a place as the people who gathered there. 'Congregation' means more or less the same; it is from Latin '*com*' and '*grex*', to collect as a flock. When the New Testament speaks scathingly about 'a synagogue of Satan' (Rev. 2:9), it is not attacking a building but a community. Hence, if the word 'synagogue' is correctly used, 'Central Synagogue' and 'Central Hebrew Congregation' mean the same thing.

In that sense it is possible to have the apparent paradox of a



Historic Hobart Hebrew Congregation

synagogue that has no synagogue. This could be said of Canberra [officially called the ACT Jewish community], where the community centre includes a dedicated orthodox synagogue, with a Liberal group holding services elsewhere in the building. This arrangement, arrived at after considerable controversy, enables both groups to be part of one community, with the Liberals as a synagogue without a synagogue. In time, the Liberal congregation hopes to have its own designated area for worship and will, therefore, become a synagogue with a synagogue. So far, neither congregational group has a separate identity or name.

The historic Hobart Hebrew Congregation has a heritage building in the centre of the city. To overcome internal conflicts, the creation of a community centre with two separate congregational sections has been suggested. In the meantime the synagogue building is shared, with the orthodox group holding certain services at a private house in a nearby suburb and some in Launceston, where the old synagogue needs repair and services take place in the Chabad House. In Launceston all the services are orthodox.

Hebrew Names

It is customary for the letters *Kuf Kuf* (short for *Kehillah Kedoshah*, holy congregation) to preface the Hebrew name of a congregation. The attribution of holy status to a congregation derives from Num. 16:3: 'For all the congregation are holy, all of them'. This does not imply that the congregants are all scrupulously pious but that they come together for sacred purposes.

Some congregations lived for years or decades with only an English name. An example is the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation, which had no Hebrew name until the time of its second incumbent, Rabbi Jacob Dangler, who took up office in 1905, more than thirty years after the congregation was founded. Usually, however, an early concern of a congregation will be to decide on a Hebrew name. The choice is often based on a Biblical phrase. In Australia, two such phrases were especially popular—*Bet Yisra'el*, The House of Israel (adopted by the Great Synagogue, Sydney; Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne; and the Adelaide, Launceston and Newcastle Hebrew Congregations); and *She'erit Yisra'el*, The Remnant of Israel (adopted by the Melbourne, Perth and Ballarat Hebrew Congregations and the small congregation at the Maccabean Hall, Sydney, which operated from the late interwar period, and continues to function today).

Bet Yisra'el, found in Ex.16:31 and other Biblical passages, symbolises the determination of the early Jewish arrivals to

continue the long chain of Jewish history even in far-away Australia. *She'erit Yisra'el*, from Zeph.3:13 and elsewhere, acknowledges that Jews who came to Australia were few in number and felt themselves to be on the distant fringes of the Jewish world, a thought that is made explicit in Nathan Spielvogel's short stories about the beginnings of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation.

Another popular phrase was *Mikveh Yisra'el*, The Hope of Israel (from Jer.14:8), chosen by East Melbourne, Victoria, and Newtown, New South Wales. The symbolism is that God is Israel's hope; by a play on words the Hebrew also means 'The Cleansing Bath of Israel', since God cleanses the people of Israel from their sins (Yoma 8:9).



Interior of the Newtown Synagogue, Sydney

Two strictly orthodox congregations – one in Sydney and one in Melbourne – call themselves *Adat(h) Yisra'el*, The Congregation of Israel (Ex.12:3 etc.), following European precedents. Both congregations arose out of dissatisfaction with what was perceived as the religious laxity of the existing orthodox synagogues.

Other Biblical phrases used by Australian congregations include the following:

1. '*Beth Tephila*' (*Beth Tefillah*), House of Prayer (Isaiah.56:70) — the former George Street and Bridge Street Synagogues in Sydney, forerunners of York Street, Macquarie Street and the Great Synagogue.
2. '*Sukkat David*', The Tabernacle of David (Amos 9:11) — the former Macquarie Street Synagogue, Sydney, with which David Cohen & Co. was associated.
3. '*Orach Chayyim*', The Way of Life (Psalm16:15, etc.) — The Central Synagogue, Sydney.
4. '*Sha'arei Tzedek*', The Gates of Righteousness (Psalm118:19) — Cremorne Synagogue, Sydney.
5. '*Etz Chayyim*', The Tree of Life (Prov.11:3) — Elsternwick Jewish Community, Vic.
6. '*Netzach Yisra'el*', The Eternity of Israel (I Sam.15:29) — Southern Sydney (formerly Allawah) Synagogue.
7. '*Yeshurun*', Upright (Deut.32:15, etc.) — North-Eastern Jewish Centre, Melbourne.
8. '*Nefesh*', Soul (common in the Bible) — a recently formed young adult congregation in Bondi, Sydney.
9. '*Emanuel*', God With Us (Isa. 7:14 etc.) — the Emanuel Synagogue, Sydney.

There are names that, though not Biblical in themselves, are reminiscent of Biblical passages. These are examples:

1. '*Mach'zikei HaTorah*', Upholders of the Torah (reminiscent of Prov. 3:18) — The Roscoe Street Congregation, Bondi, Sydney.
2. '*Tzemach Tzedek*', The Righteous Scion (reminiscent of Isa.33:15) — a Chabad congregation in Bondi.
3. '*Shirah Chadashah*', A New Song (reminiscent of Isa. 42:10, Psalm 33:3 etc.) — a congregation in Melbourne. The name reflects the fact that the congregation follows the same approach to women's participation in the services, as its mother congregation with the same name in Jerusalem.

Several non-Biblical names focus on the word '*shalom*', peace: for example '*Ohavei Shalom*', Lovers of Peace — St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation, Vic.; and '*Ahavat Shalom*', Love of Peace — Caulfield Hebrew Congregation, Vic., and South Head and District Synagogue in Sydney. One hopes that these congregations not only preach peace but pursue it (cf. Psalm 33:15). In the case of Caulfield the name honours their first incumbent, Rabbi Sholem Gutnick.

Other non-Biblical names are the following:

1. 'Sha'arei Emunah', Gates of Faith - Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.
2. 'Or Chadash', New Light - a congregation in Bondi, Sydney.
3. 'Givat Tziyyon', Hill of Zion - South Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.

Some congregations have adopted the Hebrew names of a founder or philanthropist, for example:

1. 'Bet Avraham', House of Abraham - Elwood Talmud Torah Congregation, Melbourne, named for Abraham Hyam Sicree, a former president.
2. 'Bet Aharon', House of Aaron - Arnold Bloch Memorial Synagogue, East St. Kilda, Melbourne, named in memory of a communal leader.
3. 'Bet Nachman', House of Nachman - Kew Hebrew Congregation, Melbourne, named for Norman Smorgon.
4. 'Bet Shlomo', House of Solomon - Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation (originally Surfers Paradise Hebrew Congregation), named for Stanley Korman.
5. 'Ohel Devorah', Tent of Deborah - a Chabad congregation in Glen Eira, Melbourne, named for the mother of the then president.
6. 'Sasson Yehudah', Joy of Judah - a Sephardi congregation in St. Kilda, Melbourne, named for the father of philanthropist Albert Yehuda.

Another group of names has ideological connotations. A number of small Sephardi congregations in New South Wales are named after luminaries such as Rambam (Maimonides) (d. 1204), Joseph Caro (sixteenth century) and the Baha Sali, Israel Abuhatzeira (d. 1984), the 'Praying Father' of the Moroccan community. The original Sephardi Synagogue at Bondi Junction is simply called 'Holy Congregation of Sephardim'. Chabad congregations frequently use the name of a former Lubavitcher Rebbe, Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn. *Tzemach Tzedek*, in Bondi, New South Wales, is named for the *magnum opus* of the second *rebbe* (rabbi) of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (d. 1866). In the Progressive community, the name of Leo Baeck, the twentieth century German Jewish thinker and leader, is perpetuated by the Leo Baeck Centre in Kew, Victoria.

Some names have a geographical provenance, for example the Bondi *Mizrachi* ('Eastern') Synagogue, Sydney. In contrast, *Mizrachi* in Melbourne was founded by the religious Zionist

(*'Mizrachi'*) movement, whose nineteenth century founders looked eastwards to Zion. Another Melbourne congregation is called *'Yotz'ei Russia'* (Jews from Russia). Though Jewish cultural and social centres were set up in Melbourne by Jews from Polish towns such as Lodz, Warsaw and Bialystok, their members were often non-religious and did not establish synagogues. The Hobart Hebrew Congregation, unusually for the colonial period, never had a conventional Hebrew name but was known as *K.K. Hobart* (originally *Hobart Town*). The most prosaic Hebrew name is *HaMerkaz Shelanu* ('Our Centre') founded to meet the needs of Israelis living in Melbourne. The two original synagogues in Brisbane were colloquially known as Margaret Street and Deshon Street. (After a fire, Deshon Street was replaced by a new building in the suburb of Greenslopes).

Liberal congregations generally choose short names. Reference has been made to Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne and Temple Emanuel, Woollahra, (now The Emanuel Synagogue) in Sydney. North Shore Temple Emanuel has retained its original name. Other progressive congregations include Temple David in Perth (named for King David); *Kedem* (Melbourne), an acronym for 'Progressive Congregation of King David School'; *Kadimah* ('Forward') on the New South Wales Central Coast; and a number that use the name *'Shalom'* (for example Gold Coast, Central Coast, Adelaide and Brisbane).

Unlike orthodoxy and Liberalism, Conservative Judaism is new on the Australian scene. It exists only in Sydney, where it forms part of the Emanuel Synagogue, and in Melbourne, where its congregation is called *'Nitzan'*, Bud, because it is the first independent Conservative group in the Antipodes.

Conclusion

What do congregations do with their Hebrew names? Members of the older establishment congregations tend to treat them as merely part of their synagogue letterheads or words emblazoned on the gates or front doors of the building. Newer groups take much more pride in their Hebrew titles, using them when referring to their synagogues and drawing constant lessons from them.

The old custom of having double names, English and Hebrew, has been largely abandoned by many of these groups. In some communities it is the convention for everybody to use the initials of the English name – in Perth, for instance, the letters 'PHC' (Perth Hebrew Congregation) and in Melbourne 'TBI' (Temple Beth Israel) make perfect sense. In some places there are widely accepted nicknames – in Sydney, 'The Great' (once upon a time its nickname

was 'The Big *Shule* (Yiddish for synagogue)'; in Melbourne, 'Toorak' (for the present location of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation; before the move to Toorak Road, the community used to speak of 'Bourke Street'). Elsewhere, hardly anybody knows the congregation's English name or even whether it has one – examples are '*Nefesh*' in Sydney and '*Hama'ayan*' in Melbourne.

NOTE

Though there are histories of a number of congregations they often give no information about the congregation's Hebrew name; presumably this means that the name was a formality and rarely taken seriously.

THE SABBATH SPORTS CONTROVERSY

Raymond Apple

Australians as a sport-loving people seem to need their weekends and public holidays more than any other nation. The climax of the week for so many people is either playing sport or watching it. Even Australians abroad can hardly live without news of Collingwood or the cricket. Aussie Rules and the Ashes are high on the agenda wherever you hear an Australian accent. And the Jewish community is no exception. Someone – it may have been me – once remarked that when Australian Jews read the *Jewish News*, they start at the back with the sports pages because reading Hebrew from right to left is a habit they cannot break. Jokes aside, sport created one of the few occasions in Australian Jewish history when there was a tug-of-war between being Australian and being Jewish. The issue was that of Sabbath sport.

In Britain it is reported that Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler was once asked whether children might swim on *Shabbat*. His succinct answer was, "They may swim, but I would like to think they had *davened* (prayed) first". Even in Britain, it is not certain that he gave a fully correct ruling in terms of *halakhah* (Jewish law), but in Australia where the weather is consistently better and sport is far more evident on the Jewish scene, the problem created a number of major controversies.

This particular paper looks at an episode in Melbourne in the late 1920s and early 1930s when the Judean League was developing into a major force in the community and the rabbis became so embroiled in the issue of Sabbath sport that the problem crossed the seas and even involved Rav Kook, the chief rabbi of the Holy Land, and is said (not entirely correctly) to have unseated one of the rabbinic protagonists.

Though Jews as individuals played sport and some achieved fame, such as the boxer Daniel Mendoza in eighteenth century England, European Jews were generally urban dwellers, with little contact with nature and few opportunities for physical exercise.

Their health and appearance were unimpressive, and they rarely had the physical stamina to defend themselves against antisemitic attacks. Attempts to improve their physical condition were dubbed 'Muscular Judaism', a phrase coined in 1900 by Max Nordau, who urged, 'Let us continue our ancient tradition of being heroes with deep chests, nimble limbs and fearless looks'.

Nordau was probably exaggerating to some extent, but it is true that the ancient Israelites were a hardy, energetic people with their athletes and sportsmen. The Bible mentions physical activities as diverse as running, archery, ball-playing, dancing, swimming, weight-lifting and sling-shooting. Jacob won a wife because he was able to lift a heavy stone; David slew Goliath because of his skill with a sling. After the Biblical period other sports became popular. They ranged from gladiatorial combats – Resh Lakish was a gladiator in his youth – to juggling. Rabban Shim'on ben Gamli'el juggled with eight burning torches during the celebrations on *Sukkot*. The Talmud advises every father to teach his child to swim. The Roman historian Tacitus, who was no admirer of Jews, remarked that 'the bodies of the Jews are sound and healthy, and hardy to bear burdens'.

However, rabbinic attitudes to sport became increasingly disapproving. Despite the many teachings that advocated bodily health, there was strong opposition to the way in which young men gained their exercise. Some sports undermined Judaism, since sporting contests were accompanied by idolatrous worship. Others offended against Jewish morality when they entailed immodesty (*gymnasium* is from *gymnos*, naked) or acts of cruelty. Some threatened Jewish identity: when Jewish athletes played games naked, they sometimes resorted to clumsy attempts to conceal their circumcision. Sports also, like the circus and theatre, often diverted young men from Torah study.

As the centuries went on, there developed a decided preference for intellectual pursuits, for mental rather than physical gymnastics. One of the few 'approved' recreations was chess, which required mental more than physical effort. Nonetheless sports prowess continued to develop. The many rabbinic discussions about whether ball games may be played on *Shabbat* suggest that Jews enjoyed their sports. From at least the fourteenth century, young Jews competed in running, jumping, bowling, throwing and horse riding, and some ghettos had a public square where rudimentary sports carnivals took place.

One sport which was always bitterly opposed was hunting, which was seen as causing cruelty to animals. There are many stories of people who mistreated animals being told, 'You can't really

be Jewish!' There was also opposition to boxing, which often involved injury to other human beings, though this did not prevent a number of Jews becoming famous boxers. In many places, however, Jews lived in such cramped conditions that there was no space for sport. Sunshine, green grass and flowers were rare, and life was too serious for recreation, other than on Purim and sometimes on other festivals.

Max Nordau's vision of the athletic potential of young Jews proved prophetic. In many communities, even to some extent in places where Jewish emancipation was not yet fully or even partly achieved, Jewish sports clubs came into being. They bore names like *Maccabi*, *Bar Kokhba*, *HaKo'ah* and *HaGibbor*. Not only did they allow organised sporting activities, but they altered the profile of the Jewish youth community, involved adults and even senior citizens, and reinforced the healthy, energetic pioneering way of life in pre-State Palestine.

In Australia, Jewish sport actually pre-dates Max Nordau's 'Muscular Judaism'. Apart from individual Jews who achieved note in boxing, cricket, tennis, swimming and other sports, there were organised Jewish sports activities: Hebrew School picnics included a range of games, with the excitement spanning not only the children and their parents but even some of the clergy, and cricket matches between some of the synagogues. From 1924 onwards, the interstate sports carnivals became highlights of Jewish life. But Hermann Adler, who did not mind children swimming on *Shabbat* as long as they had *davened* first, would have felt uneasy to see very little *davening* and hardly any concern for Sabbath observance, not to speak of *kasher* food and other religious practices.

It is against this historical background that the great Judean League controversy needs to be understood. Various initiatives for younger people had come out of Rabbi Jacob Danglow's first years in Australia, including the establishment in 1911 of JYPA, the Jewish Young People's Association or 'Jippa', with sporting, cultural and social activities which waxed and waned. Young Zionist groups – some for boys, some for girls – also came into being, though some said they were more social than Zionist. Some of the clubs used the name 'Judean' in order to denote Zionist identity, but others took to it because, like 'Hebrew Congregation' for a synagogue, it sidestepped the blunt word 'Jew'. The co-ordination of youth and adult organisations was undertaken by the Judean League, which in 1926 bought a building in Carlton which was opened by Sir John Monash and in his honour given the name Monash House. This continued for many years as a north-of-the-Yarra community centre, though it was not greatly patronised by

the growing Jewish population south of the Yarra. In time, the Judean League played a major role in spearheading community democratisation, arguing that the patrician Jewish Advisory Board was too limited and unrepresentative, but this is a story on its own.

In the 1920s the leading clergy – Rabbis Israel Brodie of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, Solomon Mestel of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation and Jacob Danglow of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation – all supported the desire of the Judean League ‘to uphold traditional Judaism’.¹ The League was aware, as the Jewish press pointed out, that the community, including ‘prominent Jewish personages’ were holding or attending social events on Friday nights.² The clergy welcomed the Judean League’s attempts to avoid Sabbath desecration by holding literary evenings at Monash House on Friday nights.³ However, sporting activities on *Shabbat* were a more difficult problem, and in early 1929 the Council of the League decided upon a referendum, asking, ‘Are you in favour of strictly regulated and supervised Jewish Saturday sport?’⁴

The issue was not the principle of playing games on *Shabbat*. The *Shulhan Arukh*, the Code of Jewish Law, expressly states ‘Young men who derive pleasure from jumping and running are permitted to do so on the Sabbath’, *Orah Hayyim* 301:2. The fear was of ancillary infringements of the Sabbath law, such as taking equipment from place to place, using transport, writing down results and handling money, and even making holes in the ground. These problems could be minimised when playing sport privately but were almost inevitable when it came to organised team matches.

Yet, it was not because of the Judean League that the problem surfaced in Melbourne. In February 1930, Rabbi Brodie made a fierce public statement on the subject at the annual prize distribution of the United Jewish Education Board. He referred to ‘a group of Jewish newcomers who called themselves the Hakoah football club (and) wanted permission from the Beth Din to play with non-Jews on the Sabbath afternoon’.⁵ The rabbi said, ‘The Beth Din has not granted and will not grant permission’. He declared:

Our enemies in the past tried to make us give up the Sabbath. They failed; now enemies in our midst try to do the same thing. They, too, would rob us of our Sabbath. But they, too, will fail. Only in a community where people observe the Sabbath would the slightest concession be justifiable. And even then the concession would be very slight and could not extend to organised sport. But in this community, where surely there is sufficient Sabbath desecration without making

it more barefaced and more shameless, no Beth Din, no self-respecting Jew, could possibly grant any such permission. The Melbourne Beth Din has not sanctioned, under any conditions, and will not sanction the playing of organised games on the Sabbath'.⁶

At the annual general meeting of the Judean League the matter was debated to and fro, and Alfred Newton Super⁷ denied that Rabbi Brodie was speaking in a personal capacity.⁸ Nonetheless the League, under the influence of Maurice Ashkanasy, asked Rabbi Mestel for a ruling. Ashkanasy, a dominant force in the League, was involved in East Melbourne and was a severe critic of Rabbi Brodie. Mestel, born in Poland in 1886, was a fine rabbinic scholar with degrees from Jews' College, London. Minister of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation from 1923-30, he took leave in 1926 to go to England to gain a rabbinical diploma. Apart from East Melbourne, he held British rabbinic posts at Richmond, Nottingham and West Ham. For some time he was a welfare minister of the United Synagogue and in retirement lived in Ilford, where he gave a Talmud *shi'ur* and assisted with services. He died in 1966.

In 1930, Rabbi Mesel made the following statement on 'Sabbath Sport' to the Judean League:

I welcome the opportunity to correct the erroneous but widespread idea that such sport is contrary to Jewish Law – an idea which I can only attribute in part to the fact that the conception of the Sabbath as a day of gloom, which has been adopted by some of our Gentile neighbours, has ousted the true Jewish conception of the day as being not only one of rest but of joy and recreation. Possibly the restricted movement and liberty of our people in Russia, Poland, and other countries, created such economic conditions as did not allow them time for sport.⁹

He affirmed that 'Amateur sport on the Sabbath is not only not prohibited but is expressly permitted by Jewish Law'. His permission extended 'to competitive sport, to competitions for trophies of no intrinsic value, and to organised sport, but not to sport pursued as a business or for gain', and warned against 'committing numerous incidental breaches of Jewish law'. He was, however, prepared to envisage conditions under which sports could be played on *Shabbat*, so long as matches were strictly supervised. He added, 'I would regard it as a fine thing that, instead of young men engaging in Sabbath sport in defiance of authority, committing

numerous incidental breaches of Jewish law, and forming undesirable attachments, they should play together under Jewish religious supervision, observing Jewish Law, and strengthening their Jewish Faith, enthusiasm, and consciousness'.¹⁰

Mestel's proposal would have established a concept of *kasher* sport. Other rabbis might have opposed any form of sport, supervised or not, though in practice the more modern rabbis learned to turn a blind eye to such prohibitions. Mestel was, however, not simply thinking of good relationships with young people, but was arguing from within Jewish law and finding *halakhic* justification for his stance. Nonetheless he was in error when he claimed that his position was approved by Chief Rabbi Kook, as we shall see.

The specific matter in contention was football, which is not a simple problem of running and jumping but involves additional *halakhic* concerns. Though Moses Isserles, in his glosses to the *Shulhan Arukh*, takes a lenient view of ball games on *Shabbat* and says, 'yesh mattirin, v'nahagu l'hakel - some authorities permit it, and the custom is to be lenient',¹¹ other authorities disagree. Karo, the author of the *Shulhan Arukh* itself, says, 'Asur lis'hok b'Shabbat v'yomtov bakkadur - it is forbidden to play with a ball on *Shabbat* and festivals'.¹² Yet, they were not debating a new problem. There is evidence that ball playing was already known and not regarded with great rabbinic favour two millennia ago. Rabbinic sources indeed aver that the Palestinian town of Tur Shim'on was destroyed *shem'sah'kim bakkadur*, because its inhabitants played ball on the Sabbath.¹³ Another source suggests that the Jewish community of Alexandria perished for the same reason.

Football, entailing kicking a ball, generally produced strict rabbinic responses. Rabbinic sources in the Middle Ages also knew of other ball games in which a bat was used, possibly similar to cricket and tennis, though of course without these names. These sports must have been popular even before medieval times since they also figured in rabbinic debate about *Shabbat* laws.¹⁴

Rabbi Mestel told the Judean League that he had heard that Chief Rabbi Kook had approved the playing of football in the Land of Israel on *Shabbat*. Rabbi Brodie was certain no such permission had been given. In order to find out for himself, Newman Rosenthal as editor of the *Jewish Herald* cabled Rabbi Kook (and also Chief Rabbi J.H. Hertz in London). Rabbi Kook sent back an indignant reply denying that he had never even contemplated allowing football on *Shabbat*. His cable to Rosenthal dated 13 May 1930 read, 'I have never approved. Cricket and football on Sabbath or Holydays are Forbidden'.¹⁵ The contrary impression had been spread by an official

of the Maccabi football team in Palestine. The *Jewish Chronicle* in London reported what this official had said or deduced, and someone sent Rabbi Kook a cutting.

In 1931, Rabbi Kook wrote to the *Jewish Forum* of New York: 'I have received your esteemed letter with the clipping concerning football playing on Sabbath and festival, and was amazed to see that in my name any sort of permission was given for it. It is absolute falsehood! ... It is an *issur gamur*, entirely forbidden without any permissibility whatever, and such a thing should not be done'.¹⁶

Whether Rabbi Kook really understood what football was all about is a moot point. There is a story that in about 1920 he received a delegation from a football club that hoped he would let them play on *Shabbat*. He asked about football and its rules. They did their best to explain the game but he said, 'There is something I don't understand. You tell me that each team has a goal. Why then do they struggle so hard to push the ball into the other side's goal? Wouldn't it be much simpler to get the ball into their own goal?'¹⁷

Rabbi Kook's rejection of Sabbath football was reinforced by Dr Hertz. In a cable dated 19 May, he upheld Rabbi Brodie's view 'that the playing of organised games by Jewish clubs on the Sabbath is prohibited'. The Judean League wanted to appeal to the London Beth Din but Brodie strongly objected because he said he already knew that London supported his own prohibition. Maurice Ashkanasy and the League said that a request to the local Beth Din to allow the appeal to the London authorities had previously gone unanswered, though Brodie was certain that the Beth Din had sent a reply, and Ashkanasy wrote to the press insinuating that Brodie was not entirely truthful and making personal remarks about the rabbi and 'his coterie'.¹⁸

Whilst the conflict was at its height, Mestel resigned from the Melbourne Beth Din¹⁹ and informed the Judean League that 'having regard to the authority of the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, such sport should not be officially sanctioned'.²⁰ He also denied that a report in the *Argus* had come from him.²¹ Before long he left East Melbourne. His departure was hastened by the controversy but it would have happened in any case because the Depression was affecting the congregation's capacity to pay his salary. However, Mestel never resiled from his *halakhic* ruling, and when he was living in retirement in Ilford, Essex, he continued to relate the Judean League story. I recall him talking to me about it in the early 1960s.

His conflict with Rabbi Brodie had not 'arisen in a night'.²² Mrs Mestel had Brodie in mind when she wrote about people who made life difficult for her husband. The *Jewish Herald*, with a Brodie

connection, backed Brodie, and the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* – whose editor was not one of his adulating followers – urged that the problem be faced with more understanding and ‘in a sympathetic and helpful manner’.²³ The paper opposed relying on ‘an English Beth Din on matters regarding which they have no local knowledge’²⁴ and asked whether the cables to Rabbi Kook and Dr Hertz had ‘fully and frankly revealed’ the whole facts.²⁵ Many in the community probably supported Lionel Jacobson, who, in a letter to the *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, said that Saturday afternoon was the only time when ‘wholesome... recreation’ was practicable, including participation in outside sports competitions. He added: ‘Although it may seem to some people that Jewish traditions will suffer by this apparent disrespect of our Sabbath day, may I point out that we are always eager to glorify our famous men and women who have succeeded in bringing honor (sic) to the Jewish name, no matter whether they are “froom” or otherwise’.²⁶

The more restrictive position was not without its champions, even though the majority of the community were probably lukewarm in their observance of orthodox traditions. Frank Silverton spoke for the less *froom* group when he wrote in the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* on 10 April 1930 attacking those who would drive the community ‘along a narrow groove. The *froom* sector included Abraham Feiglin who wrote warning that Sabbath sport would hasten assimilation ‘and the little Jewishness which still remains in the Australian youth would suffer’.²⁷ J.E. Stone quoted, with Rabbi Mestel in mind, the rabbinic advice, ‘Sages, be careful with your words’.²⁸ L.J. (later Rabbi) Super, the community’s chief *shohet* wrote an article examining Rabbi Mestel’s sources.²⁹ Hirsch de Vahl Stone said that Rabbi Mestel’s view was ‘as inconsistent as it is humorous’ and wondered why Mestel allowed his own daughter to play sport on Saturday. He said he was reminded of a case when a cow fell into the river on *Shabbat* and a rabbi said it would be a desecration of the Sabbath to save it. Then someone said: ‘But rabbi, it is your own cow’. The rabbi now said, ‘Save it: it is cruelly to animals!’.³⁰ L.A. Silk said in a letter to the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* that youngsters from *froom* homes were ‘playing with gentile clubs who are only too pleased to welcome them’.³¹

Within the Judean League itself there were various views. In 1930, Leslie Abrahams, the past president and now vice-president, admitted as much in a letter to the *Australian Jewish Herald*, criticising the way Maurice Ashkanasy had handled the matter. Abrahams added that ‘nevertheless the conflict between the rabbis had made life very difficult for the League’. He quoted Rabbi Mestel

'You may organise and play any game with other Jewish or outside bodies' and Rabbi Brodie 'You will desecrate all that is left of our Sabbath'... and added 'How long will ye halt between two opinions?',³² sighs the weary Community'.³³

Trying to drive a wedge between the rabbis, a Judean League official made a public statement that he had heard that Rabbi Danglow was in favour of Sabbath sport.

Danglow was no fanatic and probably would not have used Brodie's rather extreme words about 'the enemy in our midst' nor given either side a blank cheque, but it was probably he who toned down Beth Din policy to read that 'under certain conditions certain games might be played', with the wider, 'In view of the fact that desecration of the Sabbath must inevitably follow in other ways, we could not give permission for organised games to be played on the Sabbath'.³⁴ Unfortunately, the full records of the Melbourne Beth Din are not available for consultation, as many of their archives, including registers of conversions and divorces, disappeared about thirty years ago. However, the friction between Brodie and Mestel is attested to in the following passage from Ruth Mestel's article:

It is not necessary to point out where the greatest opposition came from. The reader will probably guess. People who should have known how to "play the game" wrote to the non-Jewish press, washing their domestic linen in public not for reasons of Orthodoxy, but because of "politics" which ought not to exist in the ministry.³⁵

The whole story filled the Jewish press in Melbourne and Sydney throughout early 1930. The editor of the *Australian Jewish Herald* called for *sof davar*, 'an end to the thing', and said, 'Those who observe the Sabbath will continue to observe it. Those who don't will, of course, continue to please themselves. It will take a higher authority even than Rabbi Mestel to effect a change'.³⁶ Subsequently, the controversy continued to be a focus within the community. *The Australian Jewish Chronicle* said it was:

...the subject of heated talk in numerous committees and at numerous private gatherings. The matter crops up at social evenings, bridge parties and functions... It even formed, most inappropriately, the subject of discussion at a recent funeral, and otherwise respectable citizens have seized me by the buttons of my coat in the streets of Melbourne, and taking me on one side, have poured their views on the matter into my reluctant ear.³⁷

Its editor, Rev A.T. Chodowski, commented wryly that once the Judean League had sorted the problem out: 'I wonder what the Jewish people of this city will have left to them as a subject of conversation'.³⁷

The fences between Brodie and the Judean League seem to have mended with the passage of time. The League's minute books recorded that at the annual general meeting on 7 December 1931: 'After the elections were held Rabbi I. Brodie addressed the gathering on the question of Sabbath sport, and suggested a conference of all Jewish sporting bodies being held with the aim of co-operating to eliminate sport on the Sabbath'.³⁸ The conference took place at the Toorak Road Synagogue in mid-1932 under the chairmanship of Rabbi Brodie and was reported on at the Judean League Council on 23 June 1932. The following strongly worded motion was carried by the Council: 'The Association will not tolerate nor in any way countenance the playing of competition sport on the Sabbath, and individual members of the clubs in the Association shall not assist nor be members of any Jewish team playing competitive Sabbath sport'.³⁹ An amendment that the words from 'and individual members' onwards be omitted lapsed for want of a seconder. Yet, however good this sounds from the point of view of Rabbi Brodie, sporting competitions on *Shabbat* became entrenched with little regard for Sabbath observance.

Much later, in correspondence with me, a reference was made to the incident in 1999, when Rabbi Kook's successor, Rabbi Dr Isaac HaLevy Herzog, was chief rabbi of Ireland. Rabbi Herzog's attitude was summed by Dr Leonard Warlock of Sydney. I had made a comment to the *Australian Jewish News* about Sabbath sport and Dr Warlock wrote:

Your comments on sport on Saturday prompt me to recall that in Dublin in the 1930s the Jewish Cricket Club "Carlisle" of which I was a member played on Saturday although we were all from Orthodox homes and could 'daven for the Amud', that is conduct services (I still do when I have *Yahrzeit*); and who was our rabbi? None other than Rabbi Isaac Herzog, later chief rabbi of Israel. He had to quietly acquiesce though not approve. Interestingly, his young sons Chaim and Yankel used to come round to our home in the next street on Sunday mornings after Shul to get the results of the games.⁴¹

Orthodox Jews in British countries, and many of their rabbis, condoned without protest the playing of tennis on private courts on *Shabbat*. Examples are Samuel Montagu, the first Lord Swaythling,

whose children played on his private court, and Rabbi Danglow in Melbourne, whose children played on the tennis courts at the homes of their Michaelis and Hallenstein relatives. A member of the London Beth Din, Dayan Bernard Spiers, is said to have observed when a Jewish neighbour played tennis on a Saturday afternoon, 'Healthy recreation is permitted on the Sabbath'.⁴³ It must be said that on private premises without any admission charge the problems of *Shabbat* ball games are greatly diminished though not eliminated.

When, in 1954, Rabbi Mestel reiterated his 1930 arguments, M.I. Fabritz stated: 'Rabbi Mestel is quite erroneous'.⁴³ He said that the statement in the *Shulhan Arukh* that young men may run and jump on *Shabbat* applies to individuals, not to organised sport, and that according to the *Magen Avraham*, the commentary of Abraham Gumbiner, any permission applies to festivals and not *Shabbat*. He also quoted Dr Michael Friedlander, a famous principal of Jews' College, London, who said that the prohibition of 'work' on *Shabbat* includes 'everything which our conscience tells us to be inappropriate on the Sabbath'.⁴⁴

In Australia the issue of Sabbath sport surfaced again time after time with the post-war strengthening of the Jewish sporting movement and the upsurge in the Jewish day schools, when schools and clubs were reluctant to deny themselves the opportunity to take part in sporting competitions. In Britain the Association for Jewish Youth (AJY) organised sports competitions on Sundays in order to reduce Sabbath desecration, though it was no secret that some or many members of AJY clubs who wished to play sport on Saturdays found ways to indulge their interests. If I may be permitted a personal note, I worked for the AJY as religious director for a few years and arranged weekends away, usually at the seaside, without competitive sport. In an unofficial way some participants did play games and they seemed satisfied that I was there to pray for good weather without necessarily playing sport myself.

Few Australian rabbis showed much interest in Jewish sport or indeed in sport of any kind. An important exception was Rabbi David I. Freedman of the Perth Hebrew Congregation who enjoyed watching Jewish sports matches so much, probably not on *Shabbat*, that on at least one occasion he ran onto the field and hugged and kissed some of the players, to everyone's embarrassment except his own. Rabbi Lazarus M. Goldman of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, a keen sportsman himself, often walked on *Shabbat* afternoon to watch cricket and tennis at various sports grounds near his St Kilda Road home. Rabbi Goldman was excited to be the official patron when interstate sports carnivals took place in

Melbourne. When he was away on active service during World War II, he played cricket with his troops and was one of the most energetic members of the Australian military chaplaincy. Rabbi Danglow played golf and bowls well into old age, though he was more active in boxing and other sports in his earlier years.

Over the years, some Maccabi state organisations appointed honorary chaplains and from time to time raised issues of *Shabbat* and *kashrut* with them. For a long period I was chaplain to NSW Maccabi and even had a Maccabi blazer. When people asked me what sport I played I used to say: 'I'm the captain of the *davening* team!' Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler might have approved, though I am not certain whether I succeeded in bringing very many Jewish sports people closer to the prayer book. Like every other rabbi, however, I always felt for Rabbi Moshe ben Avraham of sixteenth century Provence who approved a game like tennis on *Shabbat* subject to the proviso that it not be played 'while the sermon is being preached in the synagogue: this is absolutely not permissible'.⁴⁵ That proviso would certainly have resounded well with Hermann Adler.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ENDNOTES

1. *Australian Jewish Herald (AJH)*, 17 April 1930.
2. *Australian Jewish Chronicle (AJC)*, 10 May and 19 July 1928.
3. *AJH*, 6 February 1930.
4. *Judean League Minute Book*, date uncertain, p. 122.
5. *AJH*, 3 April 1930.
6. *Ibid.*
7. The son of Rabbi Isaac Jacob Super, Melbourne's chief *shochet*. He was a solicitor, active in communal life and the first person to write a university thesis on Australian Jewish history.
8. *Ibid.*, 1 May 1930.
9. This statement was made on 22 April 1930. Mestel re-published the full text in the London *Jewish Chronicle (JC)* years later, when there was a Sabbath sport controversy in South Africa, *Jewish Chronicle*, 19 Dec 1954.
10. *Ibid.*

11. *Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 308:45 and 518:1.
12. *Ibid., Orah Hayyim* 308:45.
13. Jerusalem Talmud, *Ta'anit* 14:5.
14. Babylonian Talmud and *Tosafot, Betzah* 12a.
15. *AJH*, 15 May 1930.
16. *Jewish Forum*, New York, 20 Ellul 6591 (1931).
17. Shmuel Katz, *Jerusalem Post Weekly Edition*, 2-9 Dec 1978.
18. *AJC*, 17 July 1930.
19. *AJH*, 1 and 29 May 1930.
20. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1930.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Jonah 4:10.
23. *AJC*, Editorial, 8 May 1930.
24. *Ibid.*, 3 July 1930.
25. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1930.
26. *Ibid.*, 2 April 1930.
27. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1930.
28. *Mishnah Avot* 1:11.
29. *AJH*, 15 May 1930.
30. *AJC*, 19 April 1930.
31. *Ibid.*, 17 April 1930.
32. I Kings 18:21.
33. *AJH*, 8 May 1930.
34. *AJH*, 3 April 1930.
35. Ruth Mestel, 'Memories of Melbourne', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol. 17, Pt 1, p. 67.
36. *AJH*, 1 May 1930.
37. Mestel, *op cit.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. Judean League, *Minute Book*, typed attachment to 162.
40. Judean League *Minute Book*, p.163.
41. Comments in letter from Dr Leonard Warlock of Sydney in a letter written to me on 25 March 1999.
42. *JC*, 26 March 1954.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Michael Friedlander, *The Jewish Religion*, 1953, p 352.
45. Ely E Pilchik, 'Anyone for Tennis on Shabbat?', *The Jewish Digest*, Feb 1974.

YOUR PAST, MY PRESENT: SUSTAINING LIFE ACROSS GENERATIONS.*

Laura J. Stocker

PREFACE

I have a Polish friend who refers to her native land as *chronically martyred*. But its Jews are surely doubly martyred. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the turbulence in Poland was kaleidoscopic and the politics tragic, even by Polish standards. It was during these times that my forebears lived in Poland and its neighbour Lithuania.

I know something of my forebears' lives in Eastern Europe because they are documented in a manuscript written by my great grandmother, Mary Wasserzug Natelson, titled 'The Rabbi's House: the story of a family'. It was hand-written in Yiddish¹ and comprises two parts. The first, subtitled 'The Rabbi's House', is a written account of oral stories and family traditions representing: life in the late eighteenth century in Poland when my forebears lived in Grajevo;² life during the 1830s uprising in Przerosl;³ the establishment of the Rabbi's house in Wierzbolowoi;⁴ and their move to Wilnov, Lithuania, where they experienced instability in the early 1870s. The second part of the manuscript is subtitled 'Mary' and consists of Mary's own memories. The two parts overlap for the period of Mary's life, and provide a rich three dimensionality to the history. It is a personal account that focuses on family and cultural life rather than political events.

Mary wrote the manuscript so that we, her descendents, could read and understand her life and times. Here, I am writing back to my great grandmother, long after her death, trying to make meaning of my heritage and of her legacy by exploring the time, place⁴ and culture in which my forebears lived and from which they made their meaning. I present and respond to small episodes from the manuscript, selected and edited for this journal article.

* This article was peer refereced.



Mary Wasserzug and her husband Sam Natelson shortly after their marriage in 1882 in Manhattan.



Mary Wasserzug Natelson (seated) with her daughter Ethel Natelson Weiner and grandchildren Irwin (l) and Josh (r) ca. 1920.

Wanting to 'stay true' to the intent and the voice of the author, I decided to let Mary's themes emerge and guide my article. But even before I started, I failed in this respect, because I realize that I chose events, phrases and emphases, consciously or subconsciously that reflected my own life experiences. I was viewing the manuscript through eyes of a forty-something-assimilated-Jewish/Kiwi/Aussi-feminist-ecologist; some themes appealed to me more strongly than others; certain details seemed unnecessary to this article; several episodes highlighted similar themes, so I chose one representative episode; and so on. In addition, even before I began my own reading and writing, Mary's daughter, Rachel had translated the original from Yiddish to English. How much editing did she do in that process? Perhaps one day I will have the manuscript re-translated from Yiddish and find out.

This story is now very much a palimpsest, with many layers of writing and re-writing.

Dear Great Grandmamma

You were born in the middle of a blizzard, a fifth daughter and unwanted. But you were born in a caul⁷, a sign of good luck. Perhaps that made all the difference to your life and mine...

I am writing to you from the west coast of Australia. I want to let you know how your life story has affected my life. I would like to reach some kind of understanding with you, and to see how our lives reflect each other's. (Or not!) Did you hope, when you wrote so long ago telling us about your family and the choices you made, that someone would write back?

You don't know me because you passed away in 1981, 30 years before I was born. Nor did you know my mother, Mary, who was named after you. In Ashkenazi Jewish custom, as you know, a child is never named after someone living.⁸ Here, my day comes into being with the song of magpies, and the distant throb of the fishing fleet leaving port. I live with my husband Gary, our son Declan, and our dog Jacki. Eucalypt trees surround our house and their intense odour pervades our waking life. I bike along the coastal path to work at university. My son Declan bikes with me to his primary school. We smell the fresh briny sea ruffled by the morning breeze and spicy fanflowers in the dunes. I think of the snorkel or kayak or surf we had on the weekend. This is Noongar Country: the coast, islands and sound belong to their Dreaming. We bike past a public sculpture depicting 'Walyalup Ngoonkaa' – the place of sea-eagles and wind – and we are in the port town of Fremantle.

I often bike past the synagogue in Fremantle, unused by Jews for nearly 100 years. If Australia is the edge of the Diaspora,⁹ then Fremantle is truly the edge of that edge, a rumour in the sea breeze: a shred of fringe, yet also an exploration. For me, the edge is liberating: I have a sense of freedom here that our forebears did not enjoy. And yet, when I look closer, the edge disappears, becomes a dynamic scattering and reconnection. Here, on the edge that is not an edge, I make meaning with my family and friends.

Arriving at university, I sit at my desk: beside me is a photo of you taken around 1920. You look dignified and relaxed, a daughter and two grandsons beside you. Your hair is white. You wear a slight smile, full of intent; your eyes bore into mine. I ache with wanting to know you. Another photo shows you and Sam, shortly after you married in 1882. Your eyes solemnly intense. You were both still teenagers, looking uncomfortable and nervous in your formal stiff clothes. The newness of New York to you, the anxiety of being greenhorn Yiddish migrants, and the hardship of your adopted life, all show in your faces. Then, how quickly you became New Yorkers, and how quickly New York became you.

In 1928-1929, you wrote the manuscript 'The Rabbi's House: The Story of a Family'. You wrote in Yiddish, the language of Ashkenazy Jews, and deposited the original in the YIVO Scientific Institute¹⁰ archives in New York. You may not know that your daughter Rachel produced an English translation before she died in 1943. Your other daughter Agnes lodged a copy of the translation with the Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. Around 1960 she also distributed copies to your living offspring; I received a copy.

In between your writing the manuscript, and Agnes' distributing it, lies the Shoah. Neither you nor I experienced the Shoah directly, that time of horror when the Nazis murdered nearly all those Jews left in Eastern Europe. That abyss lies between us. I see it in hindsight. When I read your accounts of life in Poland and Lithuania, I do so with the knowledge of what happened to those left behind. Perhaps your family saw the Shoah with foresight. The Shoah may not have surprised you completely, given the history of Europe's Jews. Indeed, that foresight partially motivated your family to migrate. Had you not migrated, I could not be here writing to you. None of our family would be here at all.

You were a life writer. You were a 'herstorian', writing about issues of interest to women, to you, at the time. Many issues connect us: women's struggles, birth, mixing work and motherhood, death, education, parental roles, and relations with mothers-in-law and husbands. But there are other issues that separate you from me, issues particular to the places and times of your manuscript: Eastern European politics and Yiddish culture in the nineteenth century.

Let me tell you how I first found your manuscript. In the telling, you will begin to see how alike we are and how unlike. We both grew up in the country. You grew up in the Lomza, a province in North-eastern Poland, a land of shy waterfowl and shining marshlands, meandering rivers and fertile wooded plains; and, of terrible violence. Your country, though I have never been there, appears in images as old, peaceful, lyrical, gold-green, shiny. Or, in the winter, the black silhouettes of the deciduous trees stand stark against the grey sky, with white snow around. Quiet, too. There are silent, haunted spaces, testaments to the violent murder of so many generations of Jews.

Like you, I grew up a 'freshwater person' in a land of bottomless lakes, swift rivers and native bush. Our dairy farm smelt of wet, green fertility and sweet cows; it lay on the volcanic plateau in the centre of the North Island of New Zealand. But New Zealand is a new country compared to yours, geologically I mean. Geysers, boiling mud-pools, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes: all part of our

daily life. There was a legacy of violence there too: wars among the indigenous Maori tribes before colonization; then, much more devastating wars when white people arrived.

When it rained on our farm, which was often, we kids played in a small cottage, 'the bach', a hundred metres from our house. My father lived there as a bachelor after World War II, until he met and married your beautiful grand-daughter, Mary Natelson, in 1953; she had come to New Zealand from New York to study for her Masters in Economics. Perhaps you can imagine the culture shock of life as a dairy farmer's wife. You certainly discovered the meaning of culture shock when you migrated to New York! She was as independent and courageous as you in her migration and adaptation, but like you, she had some tough and painful times.

When my parents built a new house, the 'bach' became an annex. One room in the bach was filled with old trunks containing my mother's elegant clothes from the 1940s-1950s: she treasured her memories and threw little out. My friend and I played dress-ups in these clothes. There was a small rusty stove in which we cooked mud and grass-cakes. The smell of mothballs pervaded the room.

A certain book lay around: it was bound in orange-brown cardboard with matching cloth tape down the spine. Inside, the pages were old and coarse, typewritten on one side only, double-spaced with scratchy letters. It looked suspicious and unusual. On the cover I could read 'The Rabbi's House'. I believed, at the age of eight, that this was a mistake and should have read 'The Rabbit's House'. With a title like that, it should have been a children's book, but nothing in it interested me. I searched through the book several times and saw no pictures of rabbits. There were strange words and names on the pages, among words and names that I knew well. Mostly, it seemed irrelevant and boring. Yet, the book lodged in my memory as a point of mystery, a small but significant disruption to the flow of the world around me.

Great Grandmamma, you may find my ignorance disturbing. But, like many Jews, in the latter part of the twentieth century, I did not know for a long time that I was Jewish. My mother was a sensitive and aware adolescent in New York during the Shoah, and later she sought to protect us from the threat of persecution by dissociating us from her background. Also, she wanted to separate from what she saw as a traditional, prescriptive religion not relevant to a modern woman. I am not sure how I found out I was Jewish, but as I grew up, there was a silence around matters Jewish. I respected my mother's right to remain silent; in fact, I had no choice. I felt frustrated, though, and excluded from a part of her that I knew was formative: a corresponding silent space developed in me. Still, when I wake up in

the early morning light, and think about writing to you, my heart pounds with anxiety about breaking the silence; and about what I might learn, and not be able to unlearn, of life and death in your Yiddish heartland. I only now feel comfortable writing to you, since my mother's death several years ago.

Re-opening 'The Rabbi's House' manuscript years later, I realised it was about my own family, your family, our family. The opening story in the manuscript is about *your* great grandmother, called Miriam, and it begins in the late eighteenth century. ¹¹ Forgive me if I *précis* you in places.

The Rabbi's House: 'I always told you learning is no good for a girl!'

Naphtali was a businessman, respected by Jew and Gentile for his learning, his generosity and his honourable dealings. As he had no sons, Naphtali educated his daughter, Miriam, in general knowledge, the Talmud ¹² and the Pentateuch. ¹³ She had clear skin, an engaging smile and lively grey eyes. Devout and kind she was, but strong-willed. She knew her own mind and would brook neither contradiction nor interference. Miriam loved simplicity and discouraged her mother's attempts to trim her dresses or put buttons of gold on her shoes. She would not wear a silk scarf. It sufficed to twist her golden brown braids about her head.

At 13 years old, Miriam was betrothed to a young man whom she did not know. He was the son of a Rabbi and so her parents were well pleased with the match. On the way to her wedding she caught sight of a young man in his parents' inn in Grajewo. It was 15 year old Paltiel - capable, confident and smiling, with an armful of flowers. She met his eyes in a full gaze and smiled back. She abruptly refused to marry the boy to whom she was betrothed, Rabbi's son or not. Naphtali was deeply grieved at the prospect of his only daughter Miriam marrying a bourgeois and not a Rabbi's son - hence an intellectual aristocrat - a scholar destined to become a Rabbi himself. 'I always told you learning is not good for a girl,' Miriam's mother, Chava, wept, 'She thinks she knows better than her father whom she should marry!' Faced with her parents' insistence that she marry the Rabbi's son, Miriam became ill with despair, falling into a semi-comatose state.

Deeply concerned about Miriam's nervous collapse, and feeling that it was a matter of life or death for his daughter, Naphtali finally capitulated. A thousand roubles changed hands, the betrothal was called off, and Miriam's health returned overnight. She and Paltiel married and they lived in love; her word was his law. They had three daughters - Blume, Ittke and Chaia.



Despite the political upheaval of the time, Great Grandmamma, you chose to open your account of that time with the personal story of our foremother, Miriam. You described the effect of her education on her subsequent determination to choose her husband: to be her own woman at all costs. I admire your style! Miriam is the first 'feminist' you recorded in our family history. You would not have used the modern term 'feminist', but I know that you actively identified with women's rights. I also know that you yourself struggled to marry your beau of choice, and this was denied to you. It is not so surprising, then, that you chose to open your manuscript with this issue.

Thanks to your and other women's activism, I get to vote; I also got to marry whom I chose. I was a late starter though, and my brothers used to tease me about being a spinster teacher - like your own daughters who translated and distributed your manuscript and who as young women still had to choose between a teaching career and marriage. I was thirty-five by the time our son Declan was born and I married Gary two years after the birth. (Many women in your generation would have been grandmothers at that age!) Gary and I have shared the rearing of our son, and we both have our own professional lives. In my immediate world, such a life is by no means unusual. More broadly too, in Western society, few regulations curb the rights of the individual. The sense of meaning derived from culture and community, as you knew it, has been replaced to a large extent by the right to exercise freedom. It's hard to get the balance right between meaning and freedom!

Miriam and Polliel, however, were just happy that two of their daughters grew up to marry rabbis. One of those daughters was Ittke, your grandmother; and the rabbi she married was Reb Gushe Wasserzug who led a small *shtetl*¹⁴ called Przerosl in the Northeast of Poland during the 1830s uprising.¹⁵ Summer and early autumn were warm and gentle in Przerosl. But the town lay under muddy snow in the winter, and then in spring it lay under snowy mud.

The Rabbi's House: 'When Poland is free I shall make you and all the Polish Jews happy'

One day in Przerosl during the 1830s uprising, Ittke's husband the Rabbi Gushe Wasserzug was in the House of Study leading evening services. A Polish baron, Count Potoczki, ran into the Rabbi's house where Ittke was alone. He was highly agitated. 'Hide me, for God's sake - Russian soldiers are after me.'

Pausing for a second to think, Ittke took charge. 'Here, put on

my husband's coat and streimel.¹⁶ Sit by the table and pretend to study the Gemara.¹⁷ Shake yourself the way earnest Jews do in prayer. I'll deal with them. Just don't say anything.'

In a less than a minute, twenty Russian soldiers stormed the house. 'Where's the Count? We saw him come in here.'

Ittke raised her dark arched eyebrows and picked up a candle. 'Perhaps he did. I'll help you look.'

The soldiers were suspicious. 'Surely you saw him run in?' They pointed at the Count absorbed in study, shaking himself, and not looking up. 'Who is this?'

Ittke shrugged. 'That's my husband.' By way of distraction she took them down to the cellar and offered them her best vodka and cold meats, saying, 'You must be famished', while thinking, 'Please God, don't let my husband come home right now'.

Then she heard the front door open and knew it was Gushe. However, the Russian soldiers, who had not eaten in two days, were so busy stuffing themselves on Ittke's stores that they did not hear him. Ittke finally managed to push the Russians out the back door. They waved, laughed and blessed her as they left: 'Long live the Jewess!'

Returning to the dining table, Ittke found her husband talking with the Count. They hid the Count in a warm spot behind the façade of the oven, in case the soldiers came back. Having written a testimonial account of the incident and passed it to Ittke, the Count left at midnight in women's clothes, declaiming, 'When Poland is free I shall make you and all the Polish Jews happy'.

The fortunes of the revolution turned. The Russian soldiers left and the Polish soldiers returned. A week later, on Sunday, the sexton¹⁸ ran to Ittke. 'Come with me, Rebbezin. Hurry up — the Poles have taken your husband and all the Councilmen away to be hanged.'

Heavily pregnant, Ittke ran to the square with the sexton, arriving just in time to see the soldiers slip a noose around her dear husband's neck. Shouting out in pure Polish, she waved the Count's testimonial at them. 'Read this! It is from Count Potoczki. It shows that we saved his life from the Russians just a week ago. He promised all would go well with the Jews. You have to let all these men go free. We'll help your cause — food, drink, whatever you need.'

The Polish soldiers read the testimonial and took the noose off Gushe's neck. 'Long live the Jews!' To make good Ittke's offer, the Jews then had to take the Polish soldiers into their homes, giving up their best food and drink to them. Their daughters, however, they hid in the school, in the bathhouse, and in the rooftops. The fortunes of the revolution turned again. The Russians re-appeared

and the Polish soldiers left. The Jews were again compelled to take the Russians into their homes and proffer their depleted provisions; the men hid their wives as well as their daughters.

In this story I recognise an achingly familiar theme of Yiddish experience: the long history of intense cruelty and suffering for Jews, interleaved with life-saving acts between Jews and non-Jews in which shared humanity transcends historical differences, but also punctuated with apparently arbitrary and random impulses or events that determine whether individuals and whole families live or die. I have experienced nothing like our forebears' suffering during the 1830s' uprising. So, the life stories recorded in your manuscript bring me both closer to and further from you: closer, because I learned so much about our shared history; further, because you yourself were familiar with persecution, whereas I am not. As I write this letter, I feel like an insider in your world because I am writing about my own late relatives: about, and to, you, Great Grandmamma. Yet, I also feel like an outsider because you passed away so long ago and I know you only from the manuscript, and your larger world from books. I'll tell you something that has haunted my night: an overwhelming fear of my family being tortured. Even as a small child I felt anguish at the thought of this. I am not sure where the fear came from, but it did not belong to the normal life of a New Zealand school-girl. Perhaps a kind of cultural memory was passed along generations; or maybe I heard or read things that I repressed. My insider and outsider feelings seem to permeate and change each other.

The tenuousness of our family's continuation is painfully clear to me from our forebears' lives. We hang like bobbing spiders from a single delicate strand, Great Grandmamma; the complex webs of our family's past shimmer above us, full of flies and rents, and below us lies oblivion. Who cuts that strand?

The Rabbi's House: 'Give me my child and keep the pillow!'

In the midst of the Revolution, the Rebbezin bore a son. Three days after this event, the child lay wrapped up in a pillow. It was customary, as soon as a child was born, to swathe him in a long band. Even his hands and feet were bound to keep the tender limbs from breaking. So it was with the Rebbezin's child, wrapped in a long cloth, hands, feet and all, only the top of the head barely showed. Thus, the child was placed on a big pillow and once more rolled in another swaddling band to keep him warm. As the

Rebbezin lay with the child beside her wrapped in his pillow near a French window that was slightly open, a Russian soldier went by, quickly thrust the window open, grabbed up the pillow and ran. At once the Rebbezin sprang through the window, chased after the soldier, crying: 'Give me my child and keep the pillow!' The soldier ran on and the Rebbezin fell in a faint. At this moment the child began to cry, the soldier was frightened as it seemed to him the pillow was crying. So he threw down the pillow, a crowd gathered and sent the Rebbezin home in a droshky with the pillow, not to mention the child.

Ittke became very ill from the shock and from running violently so soon after childbirth. She bore no more children.

Her parents in Grajevo also suffered greatly through the revolution and Poltiel (the Rebbezin's father) died. Miriam, the Rebbezin's mother, was unable to conduct alone the large establishment with the inn and gave it over to the charge of her eldest daughter, Blume, who was married to a Jarmulowsky, a man of business who dealt with the barons. The money, the silver, and all precious objects she brought to her dear daughter, the Rebbezin and took up her dwelling with her.

Miriam took much comfort in her daughter's child. Moses Selig looked just like her husband, peace to his spirit, broad shoulders and large black eyes. Miriam could not tear herself away from the child. Whatever he wished was granted, since he was very dear to the Rabbi and the Rebbezin, and his grandmother's chief joy.

The revolution died down a bit. One lived constantly in a state of fear.

What can be more devastating to a mother than the loss or hurt of her baby? You have had this experience yourself, I know. When our own son Declan became ill with flu as a baby, I learnt how to pray. He normally slept between Gary and me in the bed at that time in his life, but when he was sick he liked to lie on my chest, sneezing and coughing into my face. At those times, I abandoned my rational, scientific, free-willing self in favour of fervent prayers to anyone or anything that would listen. My memories of that feeling of helpless and hopeless desperation give me sympathy for the intensity of Ittke's distress as she dashed, probably hemorrhaging, down the street after her abducted baby. In Australia, Great Grandmamma, whole generations of children with mixed Aboriginal and white heritage were removed from their families and adopted out to white families. Although our current Prime Minister

has formally apologised for this practice to Indigenous people, facilitating healing, many years of pain and sorrow lie behind and ahead of Aboriginal families here. Racial prejudice blocks the ability of people to feel empathy for the pain of others. But personal stories can help us feel with others if we listen with open hearts, can't they?

The Rabbi's House: Moshe Selig, the Spoilt Child

Gushe and Ittke's son Moshe Selig grew up an indulged and self-willed child, albeit good-looking and smart. His doting grandmother Miriam died shortly before his *bar mitzvah*.¹⁰ Moshe Selig's first marriage [in 1844] was to Deborah, the daughter of a wealthy Rabbi from Sini; it was a disaster. Ittke would not hear of her son and daughter-in-law leaving the Rabbi's house to establish an independent household after the usual three years of maintenance. Of the view that Deborah would not be able to attend to Moshe Selig's needs and cook his favourite dishes, Ittke also could not bear to lose the apple of her eye, her precious son, snatched from her once by the Russian soldier. This view incensed Deborah's mother and the two mothers-in-law did not speak.

Ittke continued to coddle Moshe Selig with dainties and affection, and ignored Deborah who suffered melancholy as a result. Deborah could expiate her wrongs in Ittke's eyes by producing a son. But after each of three daughters, Ittke became more vexed and unfriendly towards Deborah who believed she was being punished by God and went mad with grief and sorrow. She was sent to Warsaw where she eventually recovered but, on her return, the warring mothers-in-law decided that Deborah and Moshe Selig would be divorced. About this the mothers-in-law were not to be gainsaid, although Deborah and Moshe Selig loved each other dearly. But it had been decided... it was the will of God!

A year later, Moshe Selig was ordained as a Rabbi, and the matchmakers began to seek him out again. He married Rachel Rokeach, a woman of independent means and thorough education from Wilno.

In your account, it was not Moshe Selig or Deborah who were unhappy, just their mothers. These two powerful mothers determined the fate of their 'children' who were themselves already parents. It seems tragic to my twenty-first century understanding: harsh and ironic that these women sought to exert their own personal power so unrelentingly as mothers, disabling other women and perpetuating a set of values that gives primacy to men and

masculinity. Despite the show of women's power in this story, it does not illustrate what I think of today as 'feminism'. On the other hand, despite the choices and freedom we appear to enjoy, the tensions and ambiguities of living as a feminist are not resolved today. The theory is well developed, though!

The revolution must have left deep emotional scars on Ittke. The abduction of her son, the near-hanging of her husband, and the violent murder of her father would surely account for some of Ittke's desperate actions in relation to Moshe Selig's life – at least this explanation makes Ittke's behaviour seem less monstrous to me.

When I first read this story, I thought your comment 'it was the will of God' was ironic. Later, I realised that your statement more likely reflects a deep belief that humans are just instruments of God's will, with no free will of our own, as your grandfather Reb Gushe reminds us later in your manuscript. A belief in God's mysterious will can be consoling in hard times, but also sorely confronting. As you might imagine, this belief came under intense scrutiny by Jews during and after the Shoah. Which is more unbelievable, Jews asked themselves: a God who would inflict such suffering on his chosen people; or, self-determining humans who behave evilly and escape justice in a godless world?

In my own life I have been fiercely independent, Great Grandmamma, forging my own path, travelling, working and marrying as I choose. It has rarely occurred to me that I might be following a Providential plan. Perhaps the arrogance of youth made me an existentialist. My parents were also strong existentialists when they were younger, but my mother became more fatalistic as she got older. Of course, Great Grandmamma, I can never know whether I am carrying out my own free will; whether the 'choices' I make are real or imagined. I act as if I have free will and the ability to influence the world around me, though, and I take my choices seriously. I believe now that my own tenuous existence is not just a result of my own web-weaving, though, but also of the larger forces of our family and political history, and some apparently arbitrary or stochastic events like Ittke's baby being returned to her. Possibly even the effects of praying when I feel desperate!

Despite my sympathy for the loving couple who had to divorce, I know that you and I would not be here if their mothers had not been so domineering and intransigent, because, after all, Moshe Selig's next wife, Rachel Rokeach, would be your mother, and my great great grandmother....

The Rabbi's House: No Boy Child

Unfortunately for Rachel (Moshe Selig's second wife), Ittke was no more pleased with her second daughter-in-law than with her first. Rachel was intelligent, educated, cultured and pleasant - but she could not peel a potato let alone cook to satisfy the tastes of her spoiled husband and his watchful mother. Ittke herself was very capable in the kitchen and insisted that to have good servants, one must first be a mistress of housewifery oneself.

Falling pregnant after a year of marriage [about 1860], Rachel began to hope that she would bear a son and her mother-in-law would forgive her for the sin of not being able to cook. Rachel did not bear a son and Ittke did not forgive her. To make matters worse, Rachel could not nurse her daughter. So the Rebbezin Ittke fed her granddaughter, Shprinze. The little girl was strong with a remarkable appetite and Ittke grew to love her dearly.

Feeling a failure as a mother and housewife, Rachel decided to go back into business and get out of the house. She opened a hardware store and prospered. Moshe Selig began to assist her. They worked as a team - Moshe Selig was the buyer and Rachel the saleswoman. Rachel and Moshe Selig continued to eat at his parents' house, and Ittke looked after the baby Shprinze of whom she was very fond. The arrangement worked well and the family of the Rabbi's house was content for a while.

After three years Rachel bore another girl baby during a terrible blizzard [in 1863]. Not only was the baby another girl - Moshe Selig's fifth daughter - but Moshe Selig had lost a fortune of hardware stock transporting it during the same snowstorm. Ittke asked that the baby be named Miriam after her own mother, and Rachel eagerly agreed, hoping the naming would make Ittke feel close to the baby. However, the Rebbezin would have nothing to do with a baby born in such a malevolent hour. The neighbours came in to help Rachel, fortunately, as she was weak from the birth and could not nurse Miriam. Rachel returned to work when she was strong enough, keeping the nurse on to look after her. This expenditure Ittke thought extravagant. She regarded the baby as excess baggage, despite the fact that the baby was born in caul, a sign of great good luck. Miriam was always known as Mary.

That was you. (You wrote about yourself, Mary, in the third person.) Your mother wanted you, though. And she was convinced that you wanted to comfort her with your friendly looks. Through your sympathetic account of your mother's misery, I see that Ittke

remained a very controlling mother-in-law, and that Rachel, like Deborah before her, really suffered. Neither your grandfather, the Rabbi, nor your father, Moshe Salig, seem capable of making more than mild interventions into Ittke's actions. Jewish mothers and mothers-in-law get a lot of bad press, in fact are stereo-typed, for their bossy interference. When I began exploring our family history I thought I could disassemble this type of stereotype. But no, these women are everywhere in our history! In fact, my own mother was a very forceful character and I am no shrinking violet either.

I find it hard to reconcile the dominance of our foremothers' characters in their daily lives with the formal position of women and girl-children as secondary to men at the time. You see, in my world, Great Grandmamma, it is no longer so important for families to have a son; daughters are cherished just as dearly. My mother wanted a girl so much, after having had two sons, that she convinced herself that her third child, me, was going to be another boy. When I was born she looked at me stoically and saw a boy baby. She told the nurse to tell my father (in the waiting room of the hospital) that she'd had another boy but was not disappointed. The nurse replied, 'But Mrs Stocker, it's a girl!' Apart from purely personal preferences, there are few issues of social status or financial advantage attached to the sex of a child in my world. (Even the costs of weddings are often shared between the two sets of families!) I have to admit reluctantly that, despite big strides forward for women, we still live in a patriarchy.

The Rabbi's House: 'She ought to be pitied – not mocked'

When Mary was a year and a half old, Rachel gave birth to another beautiful child, fortunately, a son. He was named David after his mother's father. The Rebbezin was delighted and brought him up herself. She would not let anyone so much as peep at him. She loved him dearly and watched carefully over him. Even when his own mother was holding him, she disapproved her method and snatched the child away from her.

Moses Selig went away to Königsberg in Prussia and became a commission merchant...

Rachel announced that she wished to join her husband in Koenigsberg. This her mother-in-law regarded as a piece of impudence, but when the Rabbi told his daughter-in-law to go in good health, the Rebbezin agreed and Rachel went to her husband.

Before her fourth child was born, her husband bade her go back to Wierzbolowo for her confinement. Rachel sorrowed at the thought of being with her mother-in-law. 'What?' thought she, 'Aren't any children being born in Königsberg? Why need I go to my

mother-in-law?" Rachel began to doubt her husband's love and returned sorrowfully to Wierzbolowo.

Moses Selig sent for his eldest daughter to keep house for him, which aggravated Rachel's vexation. Another son, Leib, was born, but was received with indifference. Moses Selig did not even come home for the *Brith Milah* (circumcision).

Rachel fell into a fever and in her delirium revealed her troubled thoughts. One day in broad daylight she went into the courtyard, took off her shoes and jumped in the well. Fortunately a passer-by heard the sound and shouted for help. As it happened, the well had been drained only an hour before so no serious harm befell Rachel. What did hurt however was that the Rebbetzin gossiped in the family about the ravings of Rachel when she had been ill with fever. Rachel overheard the Rabbi say to his wife: 'My own, Rachel deserves our compassion as an orphan and our admiration as a student. She loves her husband – she ought to be pitied – not mocked.'

Poor Rachel – even the birth of her two sons had not won the love and respect she wanted from Ittke. It must have been clear to Rachel by now that she could never win Ittke over. You wrote that at such times, your mother Rachel would pour out her whole heart to you. You were always by her side and you would amuse your mother with your laughing and singing. I was also my mother's little ray of sunshine. It is a great blessing for a downhearted mother to have such a child, but it can also be a burden for a child to play that role all the time.

You were a little tomboy growing up. You write how much you loved your home, the *shtetl* of Wierzbolow, with the rivers 'Shirwente' where the men and boys went swimming, and 'Pawirzhepe', the shallower stream on the other side of the town, reserved for women and girls. You loved to climb trees, swim, pick nuts and flowers and play with your little brother David. And you were accident-prone. Once you nearly killed your little brother as you climbed a bookshelf and toppled it on him. After this, the Rabbi nicknamed you Sennacherib the Second, a reference to the Assyrian king who harrassed ancient Israel. The nickname stuck until the day you threw a stone at one of the Rabbi's disciples for using this term of grave opprobrium. That episode made me laugh!

I relate strongly to this part of your life. I was also a tomboy like you and your namesake Miriam, our first family feminist. I scorned girly things, apart from games of dress-up and dolls when it was raining, preferring horse-riding, climbing trees, rowing our little boat, swimming in icy lakes, surfing in wild seas, and building huts

in the haybarn with friends and brothers. After my mother came to New Zealand and put aside her Judaism, she took on a study of the natural world as intellectual and spiritual sustenance; this study, and her love of nature poetry were her inspiration. They were also my sustenance and inspiration: the landscape of my youth became imprinted on my soul. There were features of that place that spoke to me directly about its aliveness: the sighing and heaving as the earth shuddered; the steamy juices that leaked out everywhere; the mysterious grottos lined with ashes and ferns; the healing qualities of the hot springs; and the uncertainty of when the nearby volcanoes would erupt again. We made exhilarating trips to the sea and immersed ourselves in its power and beauty.

Actually my mother had been a tomboy too, as a child, running around the woods in rural Bushkill, Pennsylvania, with her sister. Your own New Yorker son Nathan had married a woman whose family ran a country resort there. They lived at Bushkill till my mother was five, and her love of the countryside formed an important part of her identity, despite subsequent years of life in treeless Brooklyn.

But your rural lifestyle in Wierzbolowo was not to last any longer than mine or my mother's did. When you were ten, your family moved abruptly to Wilno.²⁰

The Rabbi's House: 'My dear Rachel, I have good news for you.'

Moshe Selig returned from a spell in Königsberg and asked for his wife. He hugged her. 'My dear Rachel, I have good news for you.' Rachel was overwhelmed by this unusual show of affection. She stood listening, too surprised to speak.

His news was that he had taken up the management of a hardware factory specialising in nail production, in Wilno. The factory belonged to Count Tiskewitch. Moshe Selig had taken a big house in Wilno for the family, in Shuwitze Gasse overlooking big beautiful gardens.

Tears of relief flowed down Rachel's face; she was finally going to be back among her own relatives and old friends in Wilno, living in her own house with her own community. She hoped that finally she wouldn't have to struggle any more. And for a time she didn't.

Within a week, the family moved to their new home in Wilno. It was like a St Petersburg palace: it had fifteen rooms, and from eight large windows the Wasserzugs enjoyed a view of trees, flowers and patrolling peacocks in the *parodner hof* [private park] of Moshe Gordon. Even better, Rachel did not have to cook. Moshe Selig's secretary Chaim Yok had a wife who ran a restaurant and brought in all the family's meals. With a maid-servant and a house-man,

Rachel lived like a baroness. She relaxed and enjoyed her life with her husband. A hub of social activity, the Shuwitze Gasse house was alive with Moshe Selig's merchant friends, and Rachel's old friends and relatives. Tables were charged with food and drink. On the Sabbath and holy days, *Zmiros* [*Jewish spiritual songs for the Sabbath!*] were sung and the whole street heard.

The nail factory was the only one of its kind in the area and it employed 300 German workers. Moshe Selig was a good manager and became popular with the merchants within his ambit. Rachel and Moshe Selig were happy for the next two years.

...But Mary was discontented, she missed her brother David, who had stayed behind to be taught by the Rabbi. She missed too the rural freedom of Wierzbolowo...friends, woods, wild flowers to pluck, trees for her and her playmates to climb for nuts.

Your mother Rachel was so happy to return to Wilno; but you write how terribly you missed the countryside of your childhood in Wierzbolowo. This feeling I understand. I also moved from the country to the city, Auckland, at the age of ten. I remember driving over the Auckland Harbour Bridge on our way to our new home on the North Shore, wondering aloud where all the farmland was. Like you, I missed my friends, the landscape, the village; my childhood. I cried at lunchtime at my new school, huddled alone behind a bush. It is not unusual for a child to move from place to place while growing up. Gary and I have brought up our own son Declan in the small city of Fremantle, and barely a week goes by without our both wondering if we should be living in the country like my brothers' families, with the freedom, safety and ease of a rural lifestyle (real or romanticized!).

But perhaps mobility makes it hard for the person to put down deep roots anywhere else. For me, when I move to a new place, I need to learn it, to study its landscape ecology. The names of plants, animals, rocks and even stars are different in each place. The spirit of each place is different. And the Indigenous people are different. It takes a lot of time to develop a rapprochement with a new place, while attending to all these parts. I think the more times one relocates, the harder it is to develop a sense of the new place. For this reason, in addition to the educational and cultural benefits that Fremantle offers, I want Declan to complete his growing up process in Fremantle. I want him to be able to feel solidly grounded in the social, cultural, economic and ecological warp and woof of this place, even in the environmental and social injustices against which

we struggle and yet at the same time reproduce. However, we take him back to New Zealand every year so he has a sense of it as his second home. I want him to know that he could live there if he wanted to, which he says he does one day.

At least you could take your religion with you, as Jews have done for millennia, wandering from one country to another. Judaism provided a solid core of values and beliefs within you, and it bound your community together. Yiddishland was in your texts and people, as much as it was in the landscape itself. But in Lithuania, times were beginning to look bleak again for Jews in the 1860s.³¹ Despite the culture, comfort and wealth your family knew in Wilno, there were strong political currents that did not bode well for their medium-term future – especially since they went to assist other Jews in Wilno who were caught in the crossfire of conflicting view-points, or in antisemitic outbursts.

The Rabbi's House: 'Who would believe it of me?'

Once Rachel learned that an estimable householder from Wierzbolowo, Judel Levinkind, had been arrested on the charge of delivering gunpowder to the *metezhnickes* [Polish revolutionaries]. When the governor questioned him, Judel merely smiled, as if to say, 'Who would believe it of me?' But the governor condemned him to death.

Among Rachel's large acquaintance, there was a certain Zlotke whose husband had connections with the Tsar. Through her husband, Zlotke appealed on behalf of Judel, who was innocent. Tsar Alexander immediately signed a reprieve and Judel was released.

On another occasion, Rachel learned that Isaac Natelson, a nephew of Judel Levinkind, and a family friend, was stationed as a soldier in Wilno. She went from post to post until she found him and gave the officer a rouble and a package of tobacco to permit Isaac to spend the Sabbath at the home of Moshe Selig Wasserzug. He used to come every Friday evening and stay until sundown. Later she prevailed upon her friend Zlotke to get him a furlough of two weeks in which to visit his parents. Isaac returned since Zlotke had so assured the authorities.

Two months later they again permitted him, this time on his own responsibility, to go on a visit to his parents, but this time he did not return. Disguised as a woman, he crossed the German border and thence to America.

For many years there had been ongoing waves of emigration. I believe that your father, Moshe Selig, could see what lay beyond the

immediate horizon; after all, conditions in the Pale were worsening for Jews; revolution was thick in the air: crowding and persecution were on the rise. In any case, your father resolved to go to America. Ironically, his immediate reasons for leaving were personal feelings of shame and desperation – his company secretary had duped him and now he was bankrupt. The backdrop to his migration, however, was clearly political. ‘America the Healer’ promised him personal and political redemption.¹⁰² From Hamburg, the port of embarkation, Moshe Selig wrote letters of farewell to his parents, to Rachel and to you children.

The Rabbi’s House: ‘We fancy that we can carry our own will - that is an error.’

When Moshe Selig’s family read the letter they plunged into grief and despair: Rachel wept tears of disbelief and her mother-in-law fell into a dead faint knowing in her heart that she would never see the apple of her eye again. Only Gushe tried to remain calm, calling on his religious faith for strength, saying,

‘Ittke, my dear wife, remember that there is a God in Heaven. His will must content us. When Joseph the *Tsaddik* [righteous man] disappeared, Jacob wept for him for 22 years. It was God’s will that Joseph should bring sustenance to a starving people so He put it into the brothers’ minds to sell Joseph into slavery. Jacob would never have permitted Joseph to leave him of his own accord, for he loved him dearly, as we do our own son.

‘What can we humans know? Perhaps America is destined to help the Jews regain Eretz Israel. They say that America is a land of freedom and equality. That is well for us Jews. Were I ten years younger I would go to America myself. Remember, Ittke, in the Polish Revolution how close we were to losing our son, and how I was rescued from death with the noose already around my neck? What do we know, Ittke, of what the future may hold in store for us? Surely God knows what he does. Thank God we have lived to have grandchildren and with God’s help we may have great-grandchildren, and if it is so fated we may, with God’s help, see our son again. But we must resign ourselves to God’s guidance. We fancy that we can carry our own will - that is an error.’

Later, Rachel felt a little calmed by her father-in-law’s words. She repeated what he had said to Mary, now ten years old. Mary listened attentively and replied, ‘Mama, I want to go to America’.

...Rachel felt a growing desire to leave secretly for America. She wanted to be with her husband, not her mother-in-law. She confided to Mary that she was thinking of leaving in secret for America. She would take Mary with her, but would leave David¹ at the Rabbi’s

house for now, to study with his grandfather, and also leave Leib'l and Shprinze behind..

The Rabbi heard about their secret departure from David. The Rabbi immediately took a droshky [horse and light cart] to Mydtkunen²³, hoping to be in time to dissuade his daughter-in-law. But he arrived at the station only to see the train about to start, yielding him only a glimpse of Rachel and Mary through the carriage window. He realized the significance of the moment...his hopes to see his only son again were now in vain. So long as his daughter-in-law had still been in his house, and Moshe Selig wrote of his intention to return...but now all that was done. Rachel and Mary saw him weep. The Rabbi also foresaw that the rest of his grandchildren would also leave him and follow their parents to America...

On the train to Hamburg, Germans stared at Mary, and Rachel hid her daughter's face in her lap, afraid the little girl would be stolen from her. In Hamburg, they found Rachel's brother. To Rachel's alarm he held a letter from her husband, informing her that he had lost all his money again and was unable to support a family. He instructed her to return to Wierzbolowo.

The thought of returning to Wierzbolowo filled Rachel with outrage. She would rather eat bread and water than live with her mother-in-law again. Rallying quickly, Rachel decided to leave for New York anyway. In support, Mary expressed to her mother a bold new idea: 'I shall earn money and give it to you. Don't worry. God will help us'.

Rachel kissed her daughter, rejoining: *Allevei, amen* [may that be so, amen].

Your mother's reasons for leaving were, like your father's, as much personal as political: she was fleeing the domination of her own mother-in-law, as well as institutionalised persecution, to join her husband in America. It was the power of your mother's personality, and ironically her clash with her mother-in-law's equally powerful personality, that enabled your family's escape. Leaving behind most of her children, in the hope that they would be able to follow later, Rachel acted in desperation. I feel for her anguish, and yours. It seems to me that you and your mother took your choices seriously, despite family, religious and wider politics of the day that trended towards a fatalistic view. I hope that I would have the courage to take that kind of action in similar circumstances.

In 1873, a train carried Rachel and you towards the safety of a

new place – in Hamburg you embarked on a ship to New York. Behind you, a long slow night was gathering. There would be no dawn here for Jews: in 70 years time, trains would carry them to hell.

During the time your family lived in Wierzbolowo, its 1200 or so Jews made up nearly half the population in that town. After the Shoah only three Jews, women hidden by Lithuanian families, remained alive: that was the end of a 300-year-old community. Today there are no Jews living in your beloved Wierzbolowo and the surrounding district: no one to call it Wierzbolowo. Among the 25 streets, there is no *der Rov's Gass*. The town is called Virbalis in Lithuanian, and in a field about 1.5 kilometers from the town, there is a mass grave with an inscription that reads:

Here was spilled the blood of about 10,000 Jews (men, women and children), Lithuanians and War Prisoners of different nationalities, who were cruelly murdered by the Nazi murderers and their helpers in July and August 1941.⁶⁴

So, Great Grandmamma, the Yiddishland of your birth was finally silenced; a few scattered plaques have replaced your exuberant flourishing.

Whether you were doing God's will in migrating to New York, who knew? The thought clearly consoled your grandfather, the Rabbi, though. You did earn money and give money to your parents: as a 10-12 year old you worked 14-hour days in sweatshops like many others.²⁵ Your parents did not adjust well to life in New York and died early. As the Rabbi guessed, all your brothers and sisters moved to America; as he hoped, he did have great grandchildren. They also have grandchildren: we exist despite the tenuousness of every link.

Your closing words in the manuscript were:

Mary is not so strong, but very much alive. Some day she even hopes, with God's help, to have a business of her own again. Immersed as she still is in family cares, she is ever alert to the interests which dominate the lives of each member, but has her own outlook on life and affairs. Long before her college daughters marched in suffrage parades, she was keen for equal suffrage, arguing in and out of the family circle. Today she thrills to the League of Nations and to the cause of World Peace, like any young idealist.

When this book has been translated into English, she means to gather the various branches of her family together and present the story of their grandfather and grandmother who left far-off Lithuania to come to America for their children's children's sakes.



In these closing lines, I feel you across the generations. I sense your pride and courage, your independence of spirit and the power of your character, without which you may never have survived, let alone written your manuscript. And I feel a deep familiarity with your ideals and your personhood.

I feel gratitude for Rachel's and your courage in choosing to migrate to New York and for my mother's courage in choosing to migrate from New York to New Zealand, in all cases explicitly and consciously for the sake of your descendents, including me. I also chose to migrate – from New Zealand to Australia – to pursue my doctorate in marine biology and a life of my own.

As I hike homewards into a strong sea breeze, my son Declan returning from school next to me, I watch the turquoise waves rimmed with white. I contemplate the legacy you and Miriam created: I am a citizen; I work at a job I find rewarding - teaching sustainability at a university; I am happily married with a loving family. Be assured, Great Grandmamma, I do not take it for granted.

An important part of your legacy has been a deep love of learning. You write about rabbis as intellectual aristocrats, and you are proud to belong to that tradition. In my own world, class consciousness is frowned on; it seems ironic that Jews, as an ethnic group that were themselves oppressed as second class, maintained strong class distinctions, albeit based on meritorious study as much as lineage. My mother, despite her deliberate remove from Jewish culture and religion, placed great value on education and intellectual pursuits: when I was only ten she announced I would have a PhD one day. (No pressure!) However, the value she placed on education was not about status for its own sake, but about political liberation, social justice and the inherent worth of learning. She often exclaimed that 'they' could confiscate your possessions, land and money, but the last thing they could confiscate was the contents of your head. This view surely came from a family history of persecution and repeated exile, as well as a traditional rabbinical commitment to the text.

Another part of your legacy is that our immediate life is one of peace, privilege, meaning and beauty. These days, I live near the Indian Ocean in Western Australia, and am happiest in it: surfing, snorkeling, swimming or boating with family and friends. I have not experienced persecution, violence or lack. So Great Grandmamma, do you find it a painful irony that so few in our family are now observant Jews, that the price of our survival has been cultural loss and cultural

transformation? So, when it comes to talking about Jews I feel uncomfortable saying either 'they' or 'we'.

I don't think of myself as a 'migrant': I have consciously put down roots into the natural world of my adopted country, Australia, and searched for a sense of place. But they are shallow roots: I always feel ready to move, to invoke the spirit of my forebears, if necessary. Simon Schama quotes a Jewish colleague as saying 'Trees have roots...Jews have legs',²⁶ but I have a bet both ways, on scattering and on reconnection.

Perhaps it is hard to rest deeply in this place because despite our own privilege — or perhaps because of it — so many people in the world lead lives of intense suffering and hardship, and the very land I live on was stolen from its indigenous owners. Great Grandmamma, there is still nowhere for us to live on this planet that is uncontested, where we could put down deep roots and be confident we were not displacing others, nor were ourselves under threat. So, I am humbled by the generosity of the Noongars who have welcomed us here; Noel Nannup has said to me, 'After you have been here for six years, the spirits know you'.²⁷

We get off our bikes at South Beach where we meet Gary and the dog for a swim on the way home. You see, I may not throw crumbs into the sea at *Rosh Hashanah* to renew my spirituality, but I throw my whole body in, for exactly this purpose.

Your loving great granddaughter,

Laura

Post script

Access to my great grandmother's manuscript has been a joy and an opportunity, both personally and professionally; it has provided close insights into the life of my forebears and their place in history. It has been a challenge in the sense that I want to deeply understand them, and especially the author Mary: it is not enough to make an easy claim to virtue by discovering some forebears who were once oppressed, I am mindful of Kriwaczek's scathing comment: 'Today it sometimes seems as if everybody wants to be part of an ethnic minority that was once (but is no longer) subject to discrimination...Jews, it turns out, are as susceptible to the lure of this sentimental and self-deluding vogue as anyone else'.²⁸

There are indeed very serious political and ethical issues involved, including, for writers, about not misappropriating, romanticising or challenging certain Jewish experiences for the sake of narrative effect.²⁹ Jewish writers can be critical of the 'rootsy' tendency of contemporary Jews, including their own tendencies, yet ironically still find it irresistible.²⁸

Overall, the rights and responsibilities of a person to know and to write about their family's experiences have to be considered in relation to the rights of, say, extant family to maintain privacy for their own reasons.³¹ Not everyone feels, like Heddy Varga, that they have nothing to lose in telling their own story.³² Indeed, many family members would prefer their stories not to be written up and shared (see examples in Armstrong, 1998).³³ In discussing the manuscript and family history with immediate family members we have learnt about each other as well as about the past. My father commented on reading a draft of this paper that he had no idea I thought so much about these things.

As I said above, I have been both insider and outsider in writing about my own late relatives. Some authors have argued that it is more honest to write as an outsider, as you are less constrained from being critical.³⁴ In this sense, writing as a complete outsider can liberate an author from worrying about the impact of what s/he writes on others' feelings, say the extant family; but the price of this approach can be the objectification of family and community.

To be sure, writing as an insider carries heavier responsibilities: one has to weigh up the ethics and consequences of revealing or not revealing, judging or not judging. In my attempt to write in a letter format, even though it is to someone dead, I have been in relationship with my forebears and with their/my family and community; a person's death may change somewhat the ethics of writing about him or her, but there may still be impacts on those relatives that live, on the memory of the deceased, and on the memorialisation of an historical world. In writing 'relationally', my focus has been on the meaning and significance of connections, and on feelings, identity and sense of self, rather than solely on an abstract understanding of a set of elements that makes up history.

ENDNOTES

1. Yiddish is, loosely, the language of Ashkenazy Jews of Germany and Eastern Europe, being a mixture of Hebrew, German, and other European languages including Polish and Lithuanian. It is written in the Hebrew script. Despite a dramatic decline in its heartland of Eastern Europe after the Holocaust, it lives on through diverse expressions in places like New York, as explored by Jeffrey Shandler in his book *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
2. Latitude: 53.6500. Longitude: 22.4500
3. Latitude: 54.2500. Longitude: 22.6500

4. Latitude: 54.6250. Longitude 22.8222
5. Latitude: 54.6885. Longitude: 25.2802. Capital of Lithuania.
6. There is a particular challenge in doing research into nineteenth century Jewish families in Eastern Europe: it is very difficult to locate many of the smaller *shtetls* because they have been wiped out and/or because of linguistic complexities. For example, the *shtetl* of Wierzbolowo was written 'Werbelow' in the translated manuscript. This was a transliteration from the Yiddish as Mary Wasserzug Natelson had originally written it, of course. Like many places, it has multiple spellings and pronunciations that reflect the layers of occupation and language over the centuries. The borders of these countries have changed often. Towns in the vicinity of Wierzbolowo have experienced Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and German rule. Coupled with the fact that letters are pronounced differently in the various languages, this history means that the Wierzbolowo is also written: Verbal, Verzhbolov, Virbalin, Virbalis, Verbal, Wirballen, Verzhbelova and Wirballen. I used JewishGen's online program *shtetlseeker* (<http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities/>) which uses sound recognition of words (Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex) and, in combination with MapQuest, Expedia, MultiMap, and Google Maps. These websites helped me find many of the *shtetls* mentioned in the manuscript.
7. The baby was born inside its intact fluid-filled amniotic sac.
8. In Sephardi Jewish traditions, children can be named after living family members.
9. Rutland (2001) uses this phrase as the evocative title of her book about the experience of Jews and the trends in Jewish culture in small Australian settlements physically removed from European, North American or Israeli mainstreams. See *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, second edition, Sydney: Brandl & Schlesinger, 1997.
10. Now the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research <http://www.yivoinstitute.org/>
11. Poland had been partitioned and occupied by its three neighbouring super-powers, Austria, Prussia and Russia (Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A history of Poland*, New York: Columbia University, 1982, pp. 81-162); Russia thereby acquired a large, unwanted, Jewish population (Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix/Orion, 1995, p. 358). Tsarina Catherine the Great created the Pale of Settlement, consisting of much of present-day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland,

Ukraine, and parts of western Russia. To this region Catherine exiled all Jews in the Russian empire: they had to carry passports to move around; their economic involvement was regulated; and many lived in poverty (Chaim Potok, *Wanderings: Chaim Potok's History of the Jews*, London: Hutchinson, 1978, p. 374).

12. The central text of Judaism comprising Rabbinical discussions, interpretations and commentaries. It comprises two parts: the *Mishnah* and the *Gemara*.
13. Or Torah, comprising Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
14. A *shtetl* was a small Eastern European town in the nineteenth century with a significant Jewish population where Talmudic culture, piety, learning and conservatism were core. *Tzedaka* or charity towards Jews by wealthier Jews, together with a communal lifestyle, was by necessity a strong feature of the *shtetl* because so many Jews were forced into poverty by economic, political, geographic and social restrictions placed on them. Finally, during the Holocaust most were obliterated. The *shtetl* was studied in detail by Eva Hoffman in *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.
15. In 1825, Nicolas I (Bloody Nicolas) succeeded his brother Alexander I as Tsar of the Russian Empire, and under his rule the Polish and Jewish outlook became dramatically bleaker as the new Tsar sought to make Poland more directly subject to Russian control. He also introduced the 'Cantonist Decrees' — forced conscription of Jewish youths aged 12-25, who were denied access to kosher food and culture (Johnson, op. cit., p. 358). In November 1830 a small group of Polish conspirators began an uprising against the Russians, which turned into all-out war. The uprising of the 1830s was a nightmare for Polish Jews. Although they did not take sides in the revolution, they suffered greatly: they were often scapegoated by both Poles and Russians. My forebears lived in Przerosl for ten years spanning the uprising.
16. Cylindrical hat worn by Polish Jews
17. Often informally used to mean the whole Talmud.
18. No reference in endnotes *via text*
19. Ceremony celebrating a boy's thirteenth birthday and his commitment to religious responsibilities within the Jewish community.
20. Lying along the Neris River, Wilno (also spelt Vilna) was then a world centre for Yiddish culture, and called the

Yerushalayim de-Lita (Jerusalem of Lithuania) by the Jews of Eastern Europe. Lithuanian Jews were known as Litvak, and Wilno was a stronghold of the Litvak Talmudists, led in the eighteenth century by the famous Wilno Gaon. Unlike the Hasids of the time, Litvaks Talmudists emphasised understanding God through scholarly study of the Talmud, and rabbinical training in the yeshivot. Wilno was thus the cultural centre for Talmudic families like the Wasserzugs, even though many lived in or close to Poland (Paul Kriwaczek, *Yiddish Civilisation: The Rise and Fall of a Forgotten Nation*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005). In 1870, when my forebears lived in Wilno, nearly half the population was Jewish; shops and businesses closed on the Sabbath.

21. Jewish wellbeing in the Russian Empire had improved somewhat after the time of Bloody Nicholas (1825-1855) when Alexander II became Tsar of Russia. He reversed the law limiting Jews to certain streets in Wilno in 1861. Some Jewish Cantonists were released. However, Poles were sorely provoked by the Tsar's decision to conscript Poles to his army, and by the introduction of martial law in Poland. In January 1863 a group of Polish insurgents with 'Red' support began the so-called January Uprising. The 'Red' message of universalism and equality was attractive to many Jews. The uprising grew in strength, and Lithuania joined in February. In 1864, the Tsar emancipated the serfs, making them landowners, out-maneuvering the Reds, and effectively garnering peasant support against the nobility and the uprising. The Uprising was crushed and brutal reprisals followed for years.
22. Although Jews had been emancipated throughout much of Europe (1791 for France; 1791 for Netherlands; 1867 for Hungary; 1869 for Italy; 1870 for Sweden; 1871 for Britain and Germany), Jews in the Russian Empire would have to wait until the rise of Communism in 1917. In the end, of course, 'emancipation' did not help Jews.
23. Latitude: 54.6389. Longitude: 22.7331
24. www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/virhalis/vir3.html
25. The stories of many Jewish migrants' experiences in New York have been movingly documented in their own words in Jocelyn Cohen and Daniel Soyer, eds, *My Future in America: Autobiographies of Eastern European Jewish Immigrants*, New York: New York University Press in conjunction with YIVO, 2006.
26. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, first edition, New York:

- A.A. Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1995, p. 29.
27. Dr Noel Nannup has spoken regularly to my university classes discussing Noongar cultural traditions and contemporary issues.
 28. Kriwaczek, *op. cit.*, p.16.
 29. Daniel R. Schwarz, *Imagining the Holocaust*, London: Palgrave, 2000.
 30. Howard Jacobson, *Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews*, New York: Overlook Press, 1994, pp.6-7.
 31. Richard Freadman, *This Crazy Thing a Life: Australian Jewish Autobiography*, Crawley, W.A.: UWA Press, 2007, p.152.
 32. Susan Varga, *Heddy and Me*, Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books, 1994, p.5.
 33. See examples in Diane Armstrong, *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations*, Milsons Point, N.S.W.: Random House Australia, 1998.
 34. John Docker, *1492 : The Poetics of Diaspora*, London, New York: Continuum, 2001.

SANCTUARY FOR WHOM? JEWISH VICTIMS AND NAZI PERPETRATORS IN POST-WAR AUSTRALIAN MIGRANT CAMPS*

Suzanne D. Rutland

In an address entitled 'Where can the Refugees Go?' given to the national conference for Palestine in November 1944, James G. McDonald analysed the inadequate response of the allies to the Jewish refugee crisis during the war years and then predicted that the situation would not change. Surveying the main countries able to receive refugees at the end of the war, he stated: 'Australia? The latest land settlement scheme for Jews in that comparatively empty continent can be expected to result in the admission of hundreds, perhaps a few thousand, not more, Jewish refugees.'¹

This prediction proved to be somewhat pessimistic, as Australia took in 10,000 Jewish survivors from Europe and Shanghai in the period from 1946 to 1951. However, in the same period, almost 170,000 non-Jewish 'Displaced Persons' (DPs) were accepted into Australia, so that the percentage of Jews was comparatively small. In 1988 a book entitled *Sanctuary? Remembering postwar immigration* rendered an account of the post-war emigration program.² It contained only one reference to Jewish immigration.³ One year later, Mark Aarons published his account of the post-war migration program, with the word 'sanctuary' also in its title.⁴ It dealt with the perpetrators of the destruction of European Jewry during World War II and revealed that a considerable number of them managed to find refuge in Australia through the government mass sponsorship schemes, which started with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). This article will examine the IRO

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program in Australia, the situation in the major migrant reception centre, Bonegilla, in Victoria and the reasons why so many war criminals and Nazi collaborators were admitted through this program. It will also investigate the antisemitic sentiments displayed by the immigrants in these camps against the Jewish DPs, who were so few in number that their experiences have so far been largely omitted from the main narrative of Australia's postwar history.

Australia and the IRO Program

After World War II, the Australian government introduced a new migration policy. Whilst British migrants were still the preferred source, efforts were made to increase substantially Australia's population by tapping previously restricted migration sources, especially non-British Europeans displaced by the war.⁵ This change developed towards the end of the war as a result of the impact of the threat of a Japanese invasion. This survival anxiety led Calwell to develop the concept of 'populate or perish' in a little book he entitled *How many Australians Tomorrow?* published in 1945.⁶ In this way, the Australian Labor Party and the newly created Department of Immigration under Arthur A. Calwell, introduced a radically new approach to post-war migration policies.

In May 1945, there were about seven and half million DPs in Europe, of whom one and a quarter million were Jews. Most were housed in DP camps set up in the British, American and French zones in Germany and Austria, as well as in Italy. By early 1946, the majority of the DPs had been repatriated, but there were still over a million residing in camps. In April 1946, a special international committee was established to consider the problem of the DPs. It recommended the formation of the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). In December 1946 the United Nations General Assembly decided to replace the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) with the IRO. For its constitution to be endorsed, it required 15 countries to contribute 75 per cent of its total budget. By June 1947 16 countries joined the scheme, with eight countries agreeing to make advanced contributions.⁷ The Eastern bloc countries refused to co-operate with the IRO as many of the refugees had fled from the Communist controlled areas.

In April 1947 proposals were made for Australia to join the IRO. Noel Lamidey, chief migration officer at Australia House, London, strongly recommended co-operation with the IRO. He argued that the IRO was 'the logical body to do the spade work for us'.⁸ In July 1947 Calwell visited London and the continent where he negotiated

an agreement with the IRO under which the Australian government agreed to accept 4,000 European DPs in 1947 and 12,000 in 1948. The Commonwealth was granted full selection rights. These migrants travelled on assisted passages paid by the IRO, but the Australian government made an *ex-gratia* payment of £10 per adult because of the long distance to Australia. The government was also responsible for the reception and employment of the DPs who were selected and assigned jobs according to Australia's economic needs. They were obliged to remain in their assigned jobs, initially for at least one year and later for two years.⁹ This program, known as 'Operation Kangaroo',¹⁰ proved so successful that the numbers were rapidly increased. Between 1947 and 1951 168,200 migrants arrived under the IRO scheme with an additional 29,800 assisted as individuals. In addition some 95,800 non-British migrants who were not assisted by the IRO arrived in this period.¹¹ On the basis of these figures, Australia's contribution to the IRO program in relation to her own population was a significant one and Australia ranked third, after the United States and Canada, in helping to solve the problem of displaced persons after the war.

When Australia joined the IRO scheme, Major-General Frederick G. Galleghan was appointed to head the Australian Military Mission in Berlin, a position he filled until 1949. A career soldier, Galleghan was a hero of the Changi prisoner-of-war camp (between 1942 and 1945). Known as 'Black Jack' because of his dark hair and complexion, he was a hard, rough man,¹² and has been described thus:

He was a stern figure with a natural air of authority that brooked no dissent. Some officers claimed to have feared Galleghan more than they did the Japanese. Nevertheless he is said to have been a respected leader who understood that his men's survival depended on their morale, which he maintained through the imposition of military discipline.¹³

After liberation Galleghan was appointed Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Investigation Service in Sydney from 1945 to 1947, before accepting the position to head the Australian selection team in Berlin.¹⁴ The military mission in Berlin was in charge of all Australian selection policies for the IRO scheme. These policies were implemented through selection teams, which usually consisted of two selection officers, one medical officer and a driver. They were sent to various parts of the occupied territories in Germany, Austria and Italy.

The early selections were made from Baltic, Ukrainian,

Yugoslavian and Czechoslovakian DPs.¹⁵ Initially, only Baltic migrants were selected because their racial appearance — tall, blond, blue eyed — fitted into the image required by the White Australia Policy. As such they were considered to be 'Aryan' in appearance. The Australian government also believed that 'they are people who are easily assimilated'.¹⁶ In April 1948 Galleghan suggested that Poles be included as other groups were diminishing.¹⁷ The Secretary of the Department of Immigration, Tasman Heyes, approved this suggestion with the proviso 'for your confidential guidance (that) Polish Jews should not be recruited unless they are exceptionally good cases and then in limited numbers'.¹⁸ In July 1948, when Hungarians were admitted into the scheme, the same stipulation was made. In December 1949, selection processes commenced among German nationals who had been dispossessed by religious or political persecution during the Hitler regime or who had emigrated from Germany and subsequently been displaced.¹⁹

The Australian selection teams at first did not accept family units but by late 1948 this provision was modified. They were instructed that family units could be accepted with the exception of Poles, Hungarians, Jews and White Russians.²⁰ In March 1949 Polish family groups were accepted 'on the same terms as displaced persons of other nationalities subject to their being non-Jews'.²¹ In the cable with this instruction Heyes stressed 'desire no publicity be given to the exclusion of Jewish persons'.²² Even in May 1949, when all nationalities 'who are of pure European race' became eligible, 'Jewish family units of European nationality' were still excluded.²³ This policy of exclusion remained in force until the last years of the IRO program in 1951 and 1952.

Migrant Camps in Australia and the entry of Nazi War Criminals

When the DPs arrived in Australia under 'Operation Kangaroo' they were sent to migrant reception and training centres, which were usually military camps that had serviced army needs during the war and were scattered across the country.²⁴ Calwell's idea was that these camps would assist in the acclimatisation of the newcomers to Australia, although it was thought that most migrants would only remain in the camps for a month or so, in order to undertake an intensive program of preparation and orientation for life in Australia.²⁵ After that, they would be allocated work and would move to where their employment was located.

Until 1948 there were three reception and training centres — Bonegilla in Victoria, Bathurst in New South Wales and Northam in Western Australia. In 1949, a further 20 army camps were

converted into holding centres across Australia and by late 1949 there were reception and training centres which catered for 15,500 people at a time, holding centres for 22,500 and workers hostels for 31,014, providing a total accommodation for close to 70,000 DPs at any one time. Once the new arrivals had found approved employment, they were permitted to leave the reception and training camps, whilst the holding centres provided accommodation for the wives and children of men sent to different locations to work.²⁶

The largest camp that emerged was Bonegilla, which was located on the border between New South Wales and Victoria and close to the border towns of Albury/Wodonga. It had served as an army camp during the war. Between 1947 and 1971 320,000 migrants passed through its gates, with the first contingent of Baltic DPs arriving in December 1947. It became known as 'Little Europe', providing the initial accommodation for migrants from over a dozen European countries. Conditions were very basic. Migrants were housed in fibro huts with corrugated iron roofs that were unbearably hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. Altogether there were 20 blocks, each of which housed between 300 and 600 people, so that the camp could accommodate up to 7000 migrants at any one time.²⁷ The food was basic but plentiful. Many newcomers found it difficult to eat the typical Australian diet because it was different from what they were accustomed to in Europe. Conditions were so difficult that migrants complained and there were a number of riots.²⁸ The second largest migrant camp was Greta, located near Newcastle in New South Wales, which also served as an army camp during the war. Conditions at Greta replicated those at Bonegilla and for a period it served as both a reception camp and a holding camp.²⁹

Interestingly, German was the *lingua franca* at both Bonegilla and Greta, because it was the German speaking DPs who had gained the positions of power in running the camps. They determined where each group of newcomers would be accommodated and the quality of the food that they would be given.³⁰ By the 1950s, 80% of the jobs at Bonegilla were filled by migrants, as working there had a number of advantages. As historian, Glenda Sluga argued, it was 'preferable to taking one's chances labouring in another remote spot in the Australian "bush"; it could offer some stability and security, as well as the certainty of a reasonable standard of accommodation at a relatively inexpensive rate'.³¹

The majority of DPs were genuine refugees fleeing from the dislocation of war and the conquering Soviet army in 1944 to 1945. However, amongst the DP camps in Europe there were also Nazi war

criminals and collaborators, so that the camps that were intended as centres for the persecuted also became centres for the prosecutors. Indeed, the nature of the DP camps, which were hastily organised in over 900 centres throughout Germany, Austria and Italy, led to an absurd mixing of the oppressed with their oppressors, resulting in the characterization of the DP camps by a *New York Times* reporter as 'camps for collaborators'.³² These experiences were repeated in the Australian migrant reception centres where Jews represented a tiny minority. This was particularly the case at Bonegilla, which very quickly earned the reputation as a centre of antisemitism. The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism, which was formed in Melbourne during the war years, was alerted to the problem and collected a series of statements from Jews in the different migrant camps. The contemporary notes about the situation at Bonegilla stated:

The superintendent in charge of the camp is Major Kershaw, but in actual fact the camp is run by his aide who is a Balt by the name of Lipsius. Mr Lipsius is well known in the camp as a former Stormtrooper. He is very much disliked, not only by the Australian staff, but by all non-Baltic migrants, who say he appoints only Balts to the best jobs in the camp. As far as can be verified, there appears to be some truth in this statement.³³

The statement also noted that a number of the English teachers at Bonegilla, themselves recent immigrants from the Baltic countries, were openly antisemitic, whilst the Australian English teachers complained that in the summer, 'when the men wear sleeveless singlets, [it was common] to see the marks showing that they had been storm troopers, under their arms'.³⁴ Recent research validates these accusations. In her study of Bonegilla, Sluga referred to information provided by Mrs Steiner, the wife of the chief education officer at the camp, of the 'Latvian takeover'.³⁵ but did not make any further comments about this statement, other than noting that later they were replaced by a Polish monopoly. Mark Aarons' study of war criminals in Australia provided more information. One member of the Waffen-SS in Latvia, Konrads Kalejs, worked as a documentation and processing clerk in Bonegilla after his arrival in 1950. Aarons claims that in this position 'he was well placed to help other Nazis, handing many sensitive documents, especially the issuing of identity cards to other migrants with no papers'.³⁶ Kalejs received his Australian citizenship in 1957, and later settled in the United States in 1959. In 1979, the Office of Special Investigation (OSI) was created by President Jimmy Carter to investigate the

presence of war criminals in the United States. It uncovered evidence that Kalejs had served in the Arajs Kommando, the Latvian Security Auxiliary Police, during the Nazi occupation of Latvia. He had played a key role in the execution squads, which travelled throughout the country, carrying out mass murders of Jews and other civilians.³⁷ Kalejs claimed on his immigration application forms for Australia and later the United States that he had been a farmer during the war, and that his papers had been lost in a fire in 1947. However, he had admitted to the IRO that he was a lieutenant in the Latvian army in 1941.³⁸ He was eventually deported from the United States for lying about his activities during the war, and was later forced to leave Canada as well. He died peacefully in Melbourne while an appeal against his extradition to Latvia was being heard.

Another war criminal, Branislav Ivanovic, arrived with the IRO in June 1949 and was sent to Bonegilla. He had collaborated with the Nazis from the start of the war until the end of 1944, serving as the Understate Secretary for Transport and Communications in the Nazi-controlled Serbian administration of Milan Nedic.³⁹ As such, he was classified as a war criminal and in March 1950 the Yugoslav government requested his extradition. This request was refused by the Australian government, which used the fact that he had arrived under the name of Branimir Ivanovic to claim that this was a case of incorrect identity. According to the government's note of August 1950, Branislav Ivanovic had not migrated to Australia.

The government's refusal to take action against Ivanovic was part of an ongoing cover-up on the part of the Department of Immigration to the real situation in the Australian migrant camps. In December 1949, a migrant English teacher, J. Gray, wrote a letter complaining about 'an apparent tendency to Fascism among certain groups of his students'.⁴⁰ This information was passed onto Immigration by the Director of the Office of Education, R.C. Mills. Gray referred to a man by the name of Popoff or Popovic, a Yugoslav. Mills claimed that 'this man allegedly was using his position of influence to disseminate fascist propaganda among other recently arrived migrants [in Bonegilla]'.⁴¹ Heyes initiated inquiries and was able to clarify that Popoff or Popovic was actually Ivanovic; that he had served in the Serbian Nazi puppet government; and that he was a staunch anti-Communist. A copy of this report was sent to Major Kershaw, but Immigration simply informed Mills that following their inquiries, the information gathered did not warrant any action. This was despite the fact that, as a senior Nazi official, Ivanovic should never have been accepted into the Australian sponsored IRO program.⁴² Again, in May 1950,

Heyes wrote to the Department of External Affairs that Ivanovic appeared "to be identical" with a DP employed as a block supervisor in the Bonegilla migrant camp'.⁴³ Clearly, Immigration had a very clear picture of Ivanovic's identity, but no action was taken on the Yugoslav request.

In May 1951, the Yugoslav consul general again asked for the extradition of two other alleged Nazi war criminals, Mihailo Rajkovic and Milorad Lukic.⁴⁴ A memo from the Legal and Consular section of Department of External Affairs referred to weakness of evidence against the two: 'Even if investigation discloses that there is some truth in the Consul-General's allegations, it does not appear desirable to accede to its request for the men's extradition. Similar requests have been made to the United Kingdom Government but almost all have been refused on the grounds that it is time to bring to an end the punishment of minor war criminals.'⁴⁵ The memo concluded that the evidence against one was weak, but that a rather better prima facie case had been made against the other. In a letter from Sir Charles Spry of 11 July 1951 to the secretary of External Affairs, Colonel Spry wrote: 'While this matter appears to be an extension of Yugoslav internal politics, it must be stated these two men represent a body of Yugoslavs who cause infinitively less trouble to this organization than the great body of their fellow immigrants. They are unceasing in their campaign against Communism and can and do assist ASIO to the limit of their ability'.⁴⁶ As a result, extradition was refused. Again, both men had arrived under the auspices of the IRO program and Lukic, who arrived in November 1948, was also initially housed in Bonegilla.

In 1986, the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles put together a list of 40 alleged war criminals from Latvia and Lithuania who had come to Australia with the IRO program. The list contained the name of Karlis Ozols, who was born 9 August 1912 in Riga and was a member of the Arajs Commando murder unit, which was accused of committing mass murder perpetrated in Latvia and Byelorussia. It was noted that he was a 'platoon commander, Latvian Security Police, Riga - left for Australia, 23 February 1949 aboard the *Mozaffari*'.⁴⁷ Ozols had been a leading chess player in Latvia before the war and was a member of its Olympic Team in 1936. He did not try to change his name or his identity after the war. He continued to play chess and played a pivotal role in building up chess in Victoria in the 1950s. Not surprisingly, an IRO official who arrived on the *Mozaffari* in Australia in March 1949 asserted that 'among the Baltic migrants on the *Mozaffari* were some who had fought with the German army during the war'.⁴⁸

These stories are just some examples of the type of war criminal who was able to enter Australia under the IRO, a subject investigated in detail by Aarons. Indeed, he illustrates that members of the Ustashe continued to migrate to Australia, even after the end of the IRO program, with Geza Pasti, a member of the Ustashe, arriving in Bonegilla in February 1954, but 'promptly absconding' from the camp and making his way to Melbourne.⁴⁹

Reasons for the Entry of Nazi Criminals into Australia

A number of factors explain why Nazi war criminals and collaborators entered Australia, and other countries. In 1948, the United Kingdom contacted seven Commonwealth governments, recommending the termination of prosecution of Nazi war criminals. Its letter stated that 'punishment of war criminals is more a matter of discouraging future generations than of meting out retribution to every guilty individual. Moreover, in view of future political developments in Germany envisaged by recent tripartite talks, we are convinced that it is now necessary to dispose of the past as soon as possible'.⁵⁰ The Commonwealth countries were requested to reply to this recommendation by 26 July 1948. In a letter from the Commonwealth Relations Office to Lord Shinwell, it was noted that all the Dominion governments, with the exception of Australia, answered the above telegram 'agreeing or at any rate not disagreeing with our proposals'.⁵¹ Since Australia did not reply by the requested date, it was assumed that the Australian government had no objections to the recommendation.

The procedures followed by the Australian selection team show a pattern of ignorance and inexperience, which led to laxity in the selection process. 'Enemy aliens', that is Germans and Italians, were excluded from migration to Australia in the early post-war years and they were not part of the IRO scheme. There was, however, no formal Australian policy for the exclusion of Nazi collaborators from East Europe. It was presumed that all DPs were genuine refugees. Selection criteria tended to mediate in favour of those who hid their Nazi past because, unlike their victims, their physical health had not been undermined by years of mistreatment in concentration and forced labour camps.

East Europeans who had actively assisted in the Nazi terror sought to cover up their wartime activities. There were many forgeries, false names and denial of an unpleasant past history and such activities were difficult to police. Those who had been members of the SS often had the tattoos of their blood group in their left armpit removed. Such tattoos were removed usually by a skin graft operation and it was alleged that an American army doctor was

among those who performed such operations.⁵² The IRO did search for the tattoo but it was possible for people to go in place of their friends for the medical examination, as occurred with X-rays.⁵³ With the Australian medical team, each DP was examined naked, but the medical officers did not examine diligently for tattoos or evidence of a scar. If a scar was found and the DP questioned, there was always a benign reason — such as a boil, pimple or wound from knife or bullet. The Australian medical officers were not even given any specific instruction on such matters.⁵⁴

Before the war, Australia had no consular offices in Europe. British consular officers dealt with all Australian migration matters. Even Australia House in London had no authority to accept applications for landing permits from non-British Europeans. With the newly established Department of Immigration in Australia in 1945, a large number of immigration officials were employed. Most had no experience or knowledge of European history, current conditions or languages, yet the selection teams were chosen from these officials. The IRO undertook the initial selection for Australia. The Australian selection teams interviewed those DPs, who fitted into their selection criteria, but they assumed that those DPs who were presented by the IRO were acceptable on security grounds. They were much more particular in regard to medical examinations.⁵⁵ In addition, the calibre of the men in the Australian selection teams was very variable. Some were public servants who were co-opted from other departments while others were opportunists, anxious for the experience of working overseas. Many were inexperienced and most were not fluent in a foreign language so that they were totally dependent on interpreters. Their lack of knowledge of Nazi and Fascist organizations and their crimes perpetrated in Eastern Europe meant that they were ill equipped to cope with the migration demands of post-war Europe. Many did not understand the nature of organizations such as the Ustashi and the Arrow Cross. The documentation they were given listed the nationalities acceptable under the Australian immigration program and the restrictions on Jewish migrants, but there was no documentation about the various East European institutions of collaboration.⁵⁶

The combination of insufficient, and at times, inefficient, resources on the one hand, and misrepresentation by prospective immigrants of their status and past on the other, allowed Nazi and war criminals to enter Australia. Australian Jewish historian, Dr G.E.J. Bergman, worked as an interpreter on the intelligence staff of the British troops in Austria from 1945-1947. In 1950 and again

in 1951, he stressed that 'effective screening' is practically impossible' because of the problem of faked identity cards and the fact that at least two hours per person was needed to investigate their past. Bergman believed that 'a team of 30 efficient and thoroughly experienced Australian security officers speaking German fluently and also acquainted with the ruses and tricks of post-war Germans' was required to ensure the exclusion of Nazi war criminals and collaborators.⁵⁷ An editorial in the *Sydney Jewish News* in 1950 entitled 'How Nazis Come Here' referred to a former Nazi in Vienna who was caught engaged in producing false passports for Australia.⁵⁸ On the other hand, in correspondence published in the *Mercury*, Hobart, regarding the question of the lack of screening of German migrants, Gerhard Koerber wrote a letter to the press stating that he had not been 'screened' in Germany before his departure. In a statement from an official of the department, it was claimed that migrants may be screened and not know it, as screening did not always need a personal interview.⁵⁹

Given the fact that Australia admitted almost 170,000 DPs under the IRO scheme between 1947 and 1952, officials were faced with the pressure of time. An English journalist, Robert Symes, claimed a friend of his, a commandant of a DP camp in Germany, received a cable from London that he must have 20,000 DPs ready for Australia within three weeks. The commandant called back to London saying that it was impossible to screen such large numbers in so short a time. The cable was repeated and the numbers requested were sent. Symes claimed in 1952 that 'Australia has been over anxious to place numbers before selection.'⁶⁰ A member of the Australian selection team stated that 'I can recall socially talking to my friends and the air of disgust or concern that we had to process these people so quickly... We used to call them 'bodies'.⁶¹ DPs would be brought from their resettlement camp to a staging centre for selection and the numbers presented were often excessive for the time available, yet they had to get the work done. One reason was the problem of logistics — it was often difficult to move large numbers to a staging centre and since they had to return that night to their resettlement camp, the work could not be left until the next day. Another reason for the pressure of time was the problem with shipping. When IRO boats became available, 'bodies' had to be found.⁶²

The pressure of selection, particularly in the early years, meant that Australia was reliant on the IRO for security screening. Alan Ryan Jr, former head of the United States OSI, claimed that the IRO's own investigations were 'superficial and in the eyes of some, corrupt' with many of its clients former collaborators.⁶³ Mileko

Trebich claimed that Charles Wagner, employed by the Austrian IRO, had participated in the round up and murder of 3000 Yugoslavs. It was claimed that Wagner had some influence on the selection of DPs for Australia.⁸⁵ A medical officer with the IRO recalled that IRO screening was 'fairly superficial' although it was better in the British zone than in the American zone.⁸⁷

Foreign sources were also unreliable. The US Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) relied on the Gehlen organisation, an American funded, secret, German agency for security screening. Its staff included high-ranking Nazis and war criminals, among them top Nazi military counter-intelligence officer, Dr Franz Six, Professor of Political Science at Königsberg University and former SS-Oberführer, a commander of a mobile SS killing squad.⁸⁶ In 1951, Australia was still reliant on foreign officials for screening, especially American and British officials.⁸⁷ There were also problems with the US controlled Berlin Document Centre as it only contained personal files and records of German SS and Nazi party members, but not dossiers of indigenous collaborators serving in the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian Auxiliary Police, the Croatian Ustashi or the Hungarian Arrow Cross. Despite contemporary acknowledgement of screening deficiencies, Australia continued to rely on these sources. In 1952, after a trip to Eastern Europe, Harold Holt praised the Berlin Document Centre and stressed that British and American intelligence officers were co-operating with Australian migration officers in weeding out undesirable immigrants.⁸⁸

The preoccupation with communists has been described as 'Cold War myopia'. Already in the 1930s Australian government policy was more concerned with preventing the arrival of anti-Fascist campaigners than with Nazis operating in Australia. This has been amply illustrated with the decision of preventing Egon Kisch from giving a lecture tour in Australia, while in the same period, Nazi propagandist, General von Luckner, was permitted to tour Australia.⁸⁹ After the war, fear of a Communist takeover dominated policy of the Western powers. Later, the Klaus Barbie affair revealed that America utilised and then assisted in the escape of war criminals, indicating the lengths to which Western powers were prepared to go with their Cold War strategies. Exact Australian involvement in such activities is not clear, but there can be no doubt that Australia placed much emphasis on detecting Communist sympathizers over others. At the height of the Cold War tensions in 1948-1950 the Australian selection team adopted this 'mental pre-occupation' with Communism and its alleged supporters.⁹⁰ In 1950, Sam Goldbloom stated that the 'basis of accepting' migrants seems

to be anti-Communist. Those who fought the Nazi undergrounds seem to be barred. Apart from being anti-Communist, physical prowess is also important.⁷¹ A letter from J.B. Polya in the *Mercury*, Hobart, claimed that 'fascist journals are freely circulated in Australia. Reputable New Australians are being threatened and systematically denounced by organised neo-fascist groups. Australian citizens who protest against the mass migration of war criminals are accused of communist sympathies'.⁷²

It would be wrong to suggest that Australian immigration officers deliberately admitted Nazis to Australia. What is closer to the truth is that they only wanted DPs who would not undermine the government's migration policy. For this reason Jews were excluded and the emphasis of the selection policy was on strong, healthy looking migrants who would be able to bolster the manual labour supply in Australia. As evidence emerged of Nazi war criminals and collaborators having entered Australia, especially during the years 1948 to 1952, the Labor and later the Liberal governments were, as in Canada, primarily concerned with blunting the issue and turning it aside. This was the case during the period when Holt was the Minister for Immigration since he was sponsoring the mass German migration program and did not wish to admit to any weaknesses in the Australian screening process.

Exclusion of Jews from the IRO and the ending of IRO Funding

As in Canada, Jews were largely excluded from the IRO program to Australia. In 1949, it was estimated that of the 50,000 DPs who had arrived in Australia, less than 150 were Jewish, despite Calwell's assurances that 15% of people arriving under IRO sponsorship would be Jewish.⁷³ Of the 170,000 refugees who entered Australia between 1947 and 1951 on the work contract scheme, a maximum of 500 were Jewish. Even though many Jews did not qualify, since they tended to have professional and commercial skills whilst the IRO scheme targeted skilled and unskilled workers,⁷⁴ there would have still been a considerable number of Jews who could have been admitted under the Australian scheme. These small numbers also reflected the fact that Jewish DPs did not volunteer for the program because of the vehement antisemitism displayed by the non-Jewish refugees.

The fact remained that the Australian government did not want to increase its Jewish intake, keeping it as in the past and in the future in line with the 0.5% of the Jewish population in Australia. One Australian immigration official stated in respect of German and Austrian refugees in Shanghai: 'We have never wanted these people and we still don't want them. We will issue a few visas to

those who have relations there as a gesture'.⁷⁵ The virtual exclusion of Jews from the IRO scheme in 1947 and 1948, and the subsequent limitation of selection of Jews to single males and females who were prepared to sign a special undertaking that they would work in remote areas of Australia only, is evidence of this attitude.⁷⁸

In addition, the Australian government policy under Calwell was that no government funds were to be expended on Jewish DPs. Jewish refugees who arrived from 1946 to 1953 were either sponsored by family members already in Australia or by economic sponsorship. Both forms contained a question of the ethnic Jewish identity relating to the person to be sponsored. The costs for migration had to be covered either by families or by the Jewish community. However, the local Jewish community was very small in number, consisting of only 23,000 souls in 1933. They absorbed around 9,000 pre-war refugees, and 17,000 post-war survivors in the period from 1947 to 1954. Thus, community leaders appealed for financial assistance from the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS). These American Jewish welfare organisations assisted in organising transportation to Australia and in funding the Jewish hostel system that was created, based on the government's insistence for accommodation guarantees for all Jewish migrants.

Initially the IRO provided the JDC and HIAS with a subsidy for the fares paid for individual Jewish refugees. Each passage cost about US\$500 with an IRO payment of US\$300, a significant contribution. However, in September 1948, Calwell insisted that the IRO cease reimbursing the JDC and HIAS, resulting in great hardship for the Jewish refugee organisations. The JDC argued that all the individual Jewish DP cases fell under IRO jurisdiction and were eligible for funding assistance. They described the Australian government policy as 'arbitrary and discriminatory' and were determined to fight it.⁷⁷ Despite this, the JDC decided to continue to advance the funding for fares to ensure that the Jewish DPs did not lose their chance to migrate to Australia where they could start to rebuild their lives after the war. By the end of 1949, the JDC calculated that they had spent over a million dollars for fares to Australia that should have been reimbursed by the IRO. Despite continual representations to Calwell and later to Harold Holt, who became Minister of Immigration in December 1949, this matter was not resolved until 1951 when Holt agreed that the subsidy could be reintroduced, but without retrospectivity.⁷⁶

Some Jews did manage to come with IRO. Nick Gardos was a Hungarian Holocaust survivor who on 1 July 1944 had been

deported with his mother, father and sister and many other relatives to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Of all his family, only he, his mother Maria and sister Clara survived. He was reunited with his mother and sister in Budapest in June 1946. Following the Communist takeover of the family business and properties on 15 May 1949 he decided to escape from Hungary. Gardos wished to migrate to Australia because it 'was the furthest point away from Europe apart from New Zealand'. He was aware of the quota for Jews but as he put it 'living in Europe all my life it never occurred to me that it would be any different. It was the same at universities with the *numerus clausus* so it was no surprise. After the war, there was antisemitism and Australia was no different'. Gardos explained how he managed to be selected even though he was Jewish:

He [the selection officer] asked me what I am doing for a living. I said I am a farmer. You know at that time I looked like a *sheigist* [Yiddish for non-Jew] but at the same time I did not look like a farmer either and my hands were really... from milking cows, 15 cows, and you know when you milk a cow you get big bunions here from the fork and your hands get very, very rough and you could practically grate cheese on it, so the fellow who interviewed me said: "Are you a farmer?" I said "Yes." He said: "Show me your hands." I showed him my hands and he said "OK. You are a farmer." It took about five minutes, the whole thing. Five minutes at the most. I went on the next transport.

Interviewer: You mentioned you looked like a *sheigist*. Can you explain what a *sheigist* is?

A *sheigist* is a non-Jewish boy.

Interviewer: Right and did the selection officer ask you if you were Jewish?

No, he had my... he knew I was Jewish. Oh Yeh! He had all the papers there and in Europe there was no such thing as filling out a questionnaire and no religion. I never knew it existing [sic] and I don't think it was any different after the war either. It was only here in Australia that I had the surprise that people ask you all sorts of questions except "What's your religion".⁷⁹

Gardos travelled to Australia on the *General Taylor* with 1260 refugees, of whom only 12 were Jews. He was one of the few Jews to pass through Bonegilla.

Antisemitism on the Migrant ships and in the Australian Camps

Most of the Jewish DPs sponsored by the IRO experienced antisemitism during their voyage to Australia and in the migrant reception centres. Reports of the trip to Australia illustrated the attacks Jews encountered:

On the 16/3/49 on the *S.S. Dundalk Bay*, at Trieste, 1060 passengers boarded the ship and amongst them were 17 Jews. The first antisemitic incident occurred on the first day, where Jews were continuously insulted, and the antisemites tried to provoke incidents. 12 nationalities were on the ship. The Ukrainians, of which there were approximately 400, tried every day to provoke incidents, and were the biggest offenders. e.g., the D.P.s had to eat on different shifts. If two or three Jews come in the mess room, the Ukrainians immediately shouted, "The Jews are coming..." Often, the members of the crew, who were English and Danish, has [sic] to interfere so that Jews could sit in peace at the table and were not manhandled.⁸⁰

The experiences on the *Dundalk Bay* were mirrored on the other IRO transports coming to Australia where Jews were a tiny percentage of the overall number of passengers.

When the Jews arrived in Australia, their situation was often not much better. Complaints were made by a number at the Wallgrove migrant camp at Rooty Hill, near Sydney, the migrant centre near Canberra, Woodside Camp near Adelaide, South Australia and, of course, Bonegilla. One example of such complaints was this letter:

I come from Europe. I went through the terrible war, and I find myself again in a camp with fascists. They still seek our extermination. Their animal instincts follow me like black clouds. I live in barracks, one Jew between twenty Jew haters with a black past. Last week I overheard a conversation from my neighbour's bed. One informed his two mates — There were happy times when he and his friends, who were capable of deathblows, used to loot and beat up Jews... How am I better [off] than my father and brother and the whole family who were murdered by Hitler, and who knows through which of my present camp inmates they were killed? (Signed. Michael Einlager, Hostel Wallgrove, Rooty Hill).⁸¹

An account of the situation in Canberra by a member of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism reported that the seventeen Jewish DPs living there wished to fulfil their two-year work contract, but had no desire 'to be forced to work together with the same antisemites who had murdered their parents and relations, and committed unspeakable crimes against the Jewish people'.⁸² As Aarons commented, the 'Jews were clearly intimidated and genuinely feared for their safety'.⁸³

It is interesting to note that evidence of such ethnic tensions has not been reported in the broader historical literature relating to the Australian migrant camps, perhaps because Jews were such a tiny proportion of the overall number of DPs who arrived in the migrant camps with the IRO program. Thus, in relation to Bonegilla, Sluga claimed that 'the migrants themselves rarely mention ethnic, or national, rivalries' and she argued that 'class affiliations often broke down barriers and took priority'.⁸⁴ Similarly, Keating commented in regard to Greta Migrant Camp that 'nearly all reminiscences of life in the camp relate that there was very little inter-national tension at Greta'.⁸⁵ However, the Jewish DP experiences in the Australian migrant camps revealed a different picture.

Failure of Contemporary Efforts to prevent the arrival of Nazi Criminals

The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism spearheaded many of the protests against alleged fascist activities amongst the new arrivals. However, the known left wing or communist sympathies of a number of leading members of the Council invalidated the evidence it produced to prove Nazis were entering Australia, resulting in the persecution of Jewish refugees. An Australian lawyer, E.W. Renouf, submitted to the government material provided by Dr and Mrs Stephen Vahl, members of the Sydney Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism. Heyes wrote a department note for the Minister, Harold Holt, stating: 'While not unmindful of the charges, if correct, I feel I must warn you that enquiries so far appear to indicate that these documents and charges are emanating from the Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism. The Council is said to be Communist dominated and is managed by Judah Waten, a known Communist'.⁸⁶

Such attitudes, combined with the feeling in the department that Jews in Australia were 'very anti-displaced persons',⁸⁷ prevented any serious investigation into the Council's allegations or the evidence they presented.⁸⁸

In 1953, Ernest Platz, secretary of the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, submitted to

parliament and to the Head of Immigration, Tasman Heyes, a collection of Nazi memorabilia as evidence of the existence of Nazis in Australia. The collection included a small statuette of Hitler found in Bonegilla, a bronze plaque with effigies of King Frederick, Bismarck and Hitler, found at a migrant camp at Wilhouse Street, Northcote, Victoria, and dozens of press cuttings from Nazi newspapers published in Australia. A high government official stated that this evidence was inconclusive. 'There may be a few Nazis in Australia... they could do no harm... their activities were a nuisance but negligible'.⁸⁹ Sam Goldbloom, a young ex-serviceman, and other members of the Council managed to enter Bonegilla masquerading as plumbers and gain access to the showers where they saw evidence of the removal of the SS tattoo marks under the arms of a number of the men there. Goldbloom managed to take some photos, which were also presented to the government as evidence.⁹⁰ As Aarons clearly shows, Holt consistently denied any truth to the allegations raised by Jewish Council members such as Platz and no action was taken, even though Holt claimed that all such allegations were investigated.⁹¹

Conclusion

What is disturbing is that Nazis and perpetrators entered Australia with relative ease when compared with the admission of Holocaust survivors. The fact that the Australian authorities turned a blind eye to the arrival of Nazis, even after clear evidence was produced, also made it more difficult for Jewish refugees to arrive. It can be stressed that this is not simply a coincidental or historical footnote. Rather, the processes were inextricably bound, one with the other. For those charged with keeping the Jews out were the same people making the decisions about who were allowed in. In addition, whilst the non-Jewish DPs arrived in Australia, with their fares and initial housing covered by the IRO and the Australian government, this was not the case with Jewish DPs. On the contrary, Calwell prohibited the IRO from providing any funding to the Jewish organisations in Europe responsible for coordinating Jewish refugee migration to Australia, whilst their reception by their sponsoring family members or in Jewish community hostels had to be paid for by the Jewish community.

It is estimated that around 4-5,000 war criminals probably migrated to Australia in the immediate post-war era, but no action was taken at the time. It was only in 1986, as a result of Mark Aarons' research and representations from the Jewish community, that the debate was re-ignited and the government agreed to investigate the accusations of false sanctuary being provided for

perpetrators in Australia. However, this delay explains Australia's failure to bring those accused of war crimes to justice in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Forty years on it was too late to provide sufficient evidence according to criminal law as required by the Australian justice system, so that criminals such as Konrads Kalejs were able to escape sentence and die peacefully in their new country of sanctuary.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE: LESSONS FROM ANTI-ISRAEL DEBATES ON CAMPUS

Goffrey H. Tofler

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, I tuned into a community radio interview about recent Middle East history. Although the expert spoke with a reasoning voice, he slipped past 2000 totally ignoring the Camp David (Arafat, Barak, Clinton) peace talks and the final rejection by Arafat of the peace opportunity in the Oval Office in January 2001.¹ How could the academic ignore this pivotal attempt to solve the ongoing problems? Since the academic lived locally in Sydney, I telephoned him at his university office, and we had a relaxed conversation. Quite nonchalantly, he reasserted that the 2000 Camp David talks were of little consequence. What was his prediction for the future? Again, quite matter of fact, he predicted decades of bloodshed followed by the dissolution of Israel as a Jewish homeland. Would he be interested in my coming to speak to his students to provide a different perspective? 'Oh no, we get plenty of speakers from all sides' was the reply.

This dismaying encounter, added to recent efforts by academics to boycott Israel, suggests that little progress appears to have been made on campus in furthering acceptance of Israel's history and position since the early 1970s, when I played an active role in Jewish student politics in Perth (education officer of Western Australian (WA) Jewish students in 1972, and president in 1973/4). On the contrary, with the ongoing conflict, I sense an erosion of sympathy towards Israel's overall political standing.

Despite the limitations of looking back 30 years to the 1970s student days, in particular the Australian campuses of 1974 and 1975, what lessons can be learned for today from the experiences of that time? A brief chronology of the turbulent period is useful. For more in-depth accounts, including more on the individual participants see Mendes² and Gersh.³ Many of the Jewish community leaders from the 1970s onwards developed their

leadership skills during this period, including federal parliamentarian, Michael Danby, Jewish educator Peta Jones-Pellach, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies member, Irving Wallach, former NSW Jewish Board of Deputies president Michael Marx, as well as former ECAJ president Jeremy Jones who was involved with the campaign later in the 1970s.

1971 and 1972: Anti-Vietnam student protests on Australian campuses joined the moratorium campaign against army conscription. In 1972, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam ended conscription. This was a popular move seen as a great success for student activism. In that year, the Israel student union joined the Asian student association to which Australia also belonged.

1973: In October, the Yom Kippur war shocked Israel and the Jewish world. Following the conclusion of the war, the Arab countries initiated an oil embargo against countries that supported Israel.

1974: In January, an anti-Israel platform of resolutions was adopted by the National Council of the Australian Union of Students (AUS). The council determined that all tertiary student campuses be given the opportunity to debate and ratify these resolutions. The result of these debates, in which I participated at University of Western Australia (UWA), was an overwhelming Australia-wide defeat of the anti-Israel resolutions. Because of this result, Australia was obliged to support Israel at the Asian student association's meeting by voting against Israel's expulsion.

1975: Rather than being deterred by the clear rejection of the anti-Israel stance, the hard left AUS national council representatives voted to resubmit anti-Israel resolutions for debate on student campuses. To strengthen the anti-Israel position, the AUS council decided to 'educate' the students by supporting a national tour of representatives of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS). On the day the two GUPS students arrived, a brawl occurred outside the AUS Offices in Melbourne. This was followed by a violent demonstration at Macquarie University in Sydney, where student leader Stephen Enoch was injured. Other student leaders sustained injuries and received credible threats of violence during this period.

Shortly after the Macquarie University demonstration, a dramatic debate on the ABC show 'Monday Conference' pitted Eddie Zaninari, the GUPS representative, against Peter Wise, the Jewish student representative, together with a vocal student audience. I clearly recall watching the nationally televised debate, dismayed at the ability of Zaninari to powerfully present the anti-Israel position

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Brawl over Arab visit

MELBOURNE: The arrival of two Palestinian students in Melbourne yesterday sparked a brawl which left several people injured.

Israeli and Palestinian supporters clashed verbally at Tullamarine Airport when the Palestinian students arrived to start a tour of Australian universities and colleges.

The second and more serious clash occurred during a noisy demonstration outside the Australian Union of Students headquarters in Carlton.

The Palestinian students were holding a press conference in the building.

Two of those injured were taken to hospital. One was an elderly passer-by whose head was split open by a banner. Blood streamed from his head as he was carried away.

Another man was severely bitten on a leg.

About 40 Israeli supporters, mostly students, had gathered outside the building waving banners and shouting "AUS sticks."

Fighting broke out when about 50 Palestinian supporters tried to force the others off the street.

The police arrived and restored order but the demonstrators continued to shout insults at each other from across the street.

Three people were questioned by the police, but no charges were laid.

Mr Danny Elish, a spokesman for the Israeli supporters, said that his group had been attacked by the Arab supporters.

"They started throwing stones and bashing us with banners," he said. "Quite a few were hurt."

The brawl outside the AUS Office in Carlton, North Melbourne, was featured on the front page of newspapers across Australia.

(as will be discussed later). Campus debates were more acrimonious in 1975, however victory for the pro-Israel position was achieved nationally, although with a reduced margin. Despite that, Israel was 'expelled' from the Asian Student Association. As a backdrop to the campus debates, in 1975, the United Nations General Assembly supported the invidious motion that 'Zionism is racism' (UN General Assembly Resolution 3379).

1976: The AUS Council was unable to resubmit the Middle East motions, due to opposition led by Jewish students and other supporters who had gained influential positions on the AUS council and at major Melbourne and Sydney student campuses. AUS was subsequently investigated for financial irregularities and disbanded, to eventually return in a more benign structure and policy.

Motives for the Anti-Israel Campaign

The anti-Israel resolutions were consistent with other more radical left student positions propounded in Europe and the United States. Focus on the Vietnam War had delayed their airing in Australia, however, the winding down of Vietnam and the powerful passions it had generated, resulted in some student activists looking for a new cause to support. To an extent, it did not matter what the issue was, as long as they were united and against the 'black forces' of imperialism, capitalism, Zionism, Americanism. Rhetoric was borrowed from the Vietnam rallies, such as 'Vietnam-Palestine one struggle, one victory.' Arab activists were only catalysts to the local students.

Arnold Roth, the Australian Union of Jewish Student (AUJS) President at the time, considered that the anti-Israel resolutions from 1974 were seen by the hard left (Marx, Trotsky supporting) student leaders as part of a broad plank of motherhood and apple pie student issues that would naturally be supported. Indeed, the AUS student leaders were surprised by the resistance from Jewish students. When the resolutions were defeated in 1974, the AUS leaders obstinately resolved to push it through in 1975.

Local student activists often knew little about the historical and factual basis of the Middle East conflict, but a great deal about what it took to get people motivated and moving. Despite their naivety and ignorance, the passions generated by the anti-Israel side who thought that Zionists were the source of all evil, was much greater than the passion of the people on the pro-Israel side. Melbourne and Sydney student campuses were more active than Perth, and I recall attending an impassioned, packed rally in Melbourne where Michael Danby spoke.

Why was Palestine chosen as the Issue, not Aborigines or Tibet?

Several features made the Palestine issue very attractive to student activists. Firstly, it had all the hallmarks of a standoff on a global level that was ripe to exploit. Secondly, it seemed to present as the forces of good versus evil, west versus east, strong versus the weak. This rang true especially for students who were unfamiliar with the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thirdly, the conflict could be presented as a set piece of an American imperialist colonialist power against an indigenous, noble, struggling people. The Palestine issue provided the chance for some students to get passionate about an issue contrary to dominant society values. For some students, developing a contrary position is self-defining; such a stand could 'get you excited, and move you forward in life'. For some, being oppositional can appear to prove maturity by looking past conventional issues and trying to understand root causes. A desire to know what is 'really' going on can potentially lead to conspiracy theory or at least oversimplification. With time, most students settle into middle class lives and careers and forget about these issues. Indeed, Irving Wallach, a Jewish student leader, confirmed that people who he had debated against in the 1970s had much more moderate views when he met them years later.

It was not that the student activists became so fired up about the rights of the Palestinian Arabs that they got on a plane and went to work in a refugee camp—this was far from reality. The plight of the Aborigines never engaged the anti-Israel students, perhaps because it was too close to home and might require questioning what they were actually doing to help. The active resistance from Jewish students also provided a local opposition. Anti-Semitism was not a major factor, although the equating of Zionist with Jew was occasionally heard. Israeli and Jewish supporters of the anti-Israel position were also encountered. Funds from Iraq and Libya were considered to have supported the anti-Israel position.

The Jewish Student Society in the 1970s and its Response

When I started Medicine at UWA in 1971 and joined the Jewish Student Society (Hillel Society at the time), it provided social and educational activities whereby students such as Jack Stern, who had recently returned from a Jewish Student Leadership course in Israel, discussed concepts of existentialism and people like Martin Buber and Mordechai Kaplan. In 1972, as part of a religion week on campus, I arranged for Rabbi Coleman to speak on Judaism. While the Rabbi's talk was greeted with the courtesy and respect one would expect, I was shocked when, on another day, the gentle Baha'i speaker was shouted down by students. Through that, I

became aware of the antagonism to Baha'i from some Islamic groups. This period also saw the publicizing of the plight of Soviet Jewry, and Jewish students participated with the community in anti-Soviet rallies to support *refuseniks*. The Yom Kippur war of 1973 was a shock to us all, and we held a pro-Israel rally in front of the UWA Student Guild.

The anti-Israel resolutions of 1974 provided a rude awakening for those of us on campus. Local and national student newspapers frequently featured anti-Israel and anti-Zionist articles. For those who supported the principle of national liberation movements for groups, such as Inuit and Native Americans, Zionism fitted well as the Jewish liberation movement. It was unjust that the Jewish liberation movement alone was being discounted. This disillusionment was stronger among students who actively participated in left wing politics on campus, since among the left, how you stood on the Palestinian issue often became a litmus test for whether you had the correct credentials.

Even though many on the anti-Israel side had limited understanding of the Middle East situation, they argued with passion. Often, a simplistic notion of underdogs and overdogs was used, where 'right thinking' people always had to be on the side of the underdogs - in this case, the Palestinians. Zionism was labeled along with the other 'scourges' of Colonialism, Imperialism and Americanism.

A positive development of the time was the strengthening of links between the Jewish student groups across Australia. Perth student leaders, including myself, went to AUJS education and discussion weekends and conferences in Melbourne and Sydney, where the political situation was discussed, and education material to combat the resolutions was disseminated. Alan Bowen-James, a mercurial speaker from Sydney, visited Perth to support our activities. We also received support from the local Jewish community.

While we easily defeated the anti-Israel stance in 1974, the anti-Israel arguments were more sophisticated in 1975, as typified by the comments of the GUPS representative, Eddie Zaninari. The televised ABC Monday Conference of May 1975 provided some dramatic moments, and for many Jewish students, such as myself, it indicated how an anti-Israel position could be presented in an effective manner.⁴ It is useful to present some of the transcript to reflect the power of the debate between Eddie Zaniniri (EZ) of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) and Peter Wise (PW), political officer for Australian Union of Jewish Students. The program chair was Robert Moore (RM):

RM. 'Mr Zananari, it's no news to you to hear that your visit has been opposed in some quarters; do you feel that you've had a fair hearing since you've been in Australia?

EZ. 'Well, I've been given a fair chance, however there has been a lot of noise in many of the meetings. This is minimal compared to places like the US where violence was used to stop us from speaking. However I think that Australian democracy and freedom of speech has finally won'.

RM. 'Mr Wise, do you think that Mr Zananari and his colleagues should have had a fair hearing? Should they be here?

PW. 'Well I really don't think they should be here but now that they are here I think that we should listen to the lies that they have to perpetrate. On the occasions they were drowned out by demonstrators, they seem to have only won support because people were saying let us hear what they have to say. However, the other day at NSW Uni, people were able to hear what Mr Zananari had to say and they were absolutely revolted. (mixture of exclamations of disagreement, laughter and applause).

RM. 'What I'd like to do before we bring our audience in is to put to both of you what I see as fundamental, however naïve, questions, and I'd like both of you, first to outline what you see as the precise claim to the territory in dispute of the Jews and the Palestinians and I'd like both of you to outline what you see as their relative claims.

EZ. 'Palestine in 1917 had a population of 52,000 Jews, 76,000 Christians and well over 700,000 Moslems. As a result of persecution of Jews in Western Europe, Palestine received hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants into Palestine. However, the Zionist movement through collaboration with the British mandate in Palestine had succeeded through three terrorist organisations - the Irgun, the Stern Gang and the Hagana to forcibly drive out the Palestinian population and establish an exclusively Jewish state. Right now there are 3 1/2 million Palestinians outside their homeland with a recognised right to self-determination.

RM. 'Come back to my point. What is the precise claim? Do you admit that the Jewish have any claim at all?

EZ. 'The Jews do not have a self-determination claim in Palestine—they are colonizers and self determination is giving to the colonized, which happens to be the Palestinian people, not the colonizer which happens to be the Zionist movement. We should be going back to our homeland and have our right

to self-determination as recognised internationally by the UN charter and other general assembly resolutions and establish a secular democratic state that takes into consideration our national rights as well as the fact that there are 3 1/2 million Jews in Palestine, in occupied Palestine, who have basically come into occupied Palestine after 1950.

R.M. 'You, the Palestinians were there first and they're in the largest numbers.

EZ. 'We have been there for 4,000 years. This is our fundamental claim.

R.M. 'Mr Wise, now what is the precise claim of the Jews to Israel?

P.W. 'At the moment Israel is a sovereign nation and I believe that Israel should exist and continue to exist. I don't see that there should be any question about that. The UN has recognised the state of Israel; Israel is a state which is existing now and it's going to exist in the future, and I'm going to fight against any efforts from the PLO or Mr Zaninari, as its representative, to try to destroy that state.

Mr Zaninari also cleverly used quotations by Israelis to further his argument. For instance, he went on to say:

EZ. 'Mr Wise is saying that Israel is there and should be recognised irrespective of what happened to the Palestinian people. The South African regime is there and it is recognised irrespective of what happens to the indigenous nation. I would like to quote Abba Eban, Foreign Minister of Israel, who says: 'Withdrawal will not bring peace, but we want a state that will remain overwhelmingly Jewish in character, composition, society, culture and spirit'.⁵ This is actually the real nature of Zionism. A colonialist state, expansionist, racist, that discriminates against the various populations that exist in the area.'⁶

The audience had probing questions but they were able to be deflected by Mr Zaninari. For instance, in response to 'what is your attitude towards terrorism' Mr Zaninari responded that:

The PLO follows UN support regarding people's wars, Israel practises terror to this very day. The difference between terrorism and heroism is on which side you stand. If you stand on the side of liberation, freedom from oppression, then this is heroism. If you stand to oppress, to colonize, then this is terrorism and this is the basic struggle (applause).⁷

Despite the strong performance by Eddie Zaninari, the debate subsequently became more even with the Israel position better presented. When years later, I spoke with Peter Wise, he remembered that he had misunderstood the first question, and failed to provide a strong historical argument for Israel in his reply. This briefly set him back until he recovered his composure. Although Peter was a strong debater, he remarked how different was the experience of being on TV, responding under pressure to questions compared to campus debates, especially with an eloquent and experienced opponent. Peter had minimal training in preparing for such a TV debate, and strongly recommended that people practice well for any such pressured encounter. Irving Wallach noted that the Wise-Zaninari debate:

...was a major lesson for all of us, because we all thought ourselves such polished and experienced campus campaigners at the student level, which we were, but we were still hitting in the kids league and Eddie Zaninari was a very polished media performer.⁸

Gary Holzman also recalled participating in a televised debate in Perth with the head of the WA university student council, and being taken aback by the pressure and stress of the format.

Lessons Learned

The success of AUJS in combating the anti-Israel resolutions represented an important victory, and was due to several factors. Firstly, AUJS representatives nationally put in hard work and effort in mobilising votes. This was essential because all campuses were voters. Peta Jones-Pellach recalled how the campaign was very time consuming, with visits and debates at numerous country campuses. It was exhausting but there was a very positive spirit and coordination among the student leaders. It was also a major challenge to 'get out the vote' where many students were politically apathetic and focused on their lectures. On the other hand, some students who previously had little contact with the Jewish community became politically very active and supportive. Campuses varied greatly in their Jewish student presence and involvement. For instance, in Perth, Jewish student representation was good at UWA but limited at the West Australian Institute of Technology. Secondly, several Jewish student leaders, particularly in the Eastern States, had participated in the anti-Vietnam movement and other student issues so they had student credibility. Thirdly, by promoting and supporting a two-state (Israel and Palestinian)

solution, the Jewish students were able to present a positive proposal that seemed reasonable and balanced to the voting students. In the 1970s, the two-state solution was not widely promoted either in the Jewish or general community. However, by supporting this position, it placed AUJS in a very moderate middle of the road position that was not seen as Israel versus the Palestinians. Fourthly, rather than going alone, AUJS attracted support from other university groups including Christian groups. This point was emphasized by Michael Marx during my interview with him. Non-Jewish supporters and speakers such as Peter Costello were effective at the time, and this contributed to their ongoing understanding of Israel's position. It continues to remain important for Jewish groups to enlist non-Jewish support for Israel. Fifthly, debating tactics were refined and experience from elsewhere such as US campuses was used. Finally, although AUJS was caught unprepared in 1974 by a hard left AUS executive, it quickly recognized the importance of Jewish and Pro-Israel supporters in University Guild Leadership positions, and this was continued in later years. Being a committee insider remains the best way to influence decisions.

The Monday conference was a reminder that sophisticated arguments can be used against Israel, and situations are never black and white. Being placed in a position of having to defend Israel in an argument can happen at any time. Being knowledgeable is important, as is appreciating your own ignorance, knowing your facts, history, and arguments, and also those of the opposition. It is important to practise debating skills to be used in different formats.

It is important to follow the strengths and weaknesses of arguments about the Middle East, presented by anti-Israel writers, many of whom are Jewish. While we often assume that presenting facts will win out, beliefs often prove resistant to factual arguments, and emotion and ideology often trumps reason. In daily life, we all see instances of conflict of interest, denial of facts, double standards and biases. Confirmation bias, whereby one only listens to supportive arguments, and ignores arguments to the contrary, probably contributed to the academic, whom I mentioned in my introduction, ignoring historical events that challenge his anti-Israel stance. Medicine provides the advantage of randomized, double-blinded studies, where the potentially biased patient or doctor does not know which medication is being administered. In several instances, the results of a double-blind trial have been totally opposite to the prior beliefs and expectations of the doctors, and have resulted in major changes in treatment. Unfortunately, discussion about the Middle East cannot be determined by

randomized trials, but we are still obliged to be as rigorous with the facts as possible.

How an argument is framed plays an important role in what the outcome will be. For instance, an argument framed as tiny Israel (David) versus the numerous Arab countries (Goliath), will run differently to one framed as the 'occupier' Israel (Goliath) against the oppressed Palestinians (David). How to best present your values and frame debates is excellently discussed by George Lakoff in his book *Don't Think of an Elephant*.⁶

To help frame the Middle East debate and indeed understand how a peaceful solution could be achieved, it is important to adequately define what the debate is about, and who are the participants. Israel versus the Palestinians is far too narrow a focus, which inevitably presents the Palestinians as the underdog. More inclusive descriptors have been used such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East conflict. IPICAC is an acronym I find useful in understanding the conflict. IPICAC (also spelled Ipecac) is a syrup that doctors occasionally use to induce often violent vomiting after a dangerous drug overdose. Each letter can be used to point to an important participant in the conflict. Thus 'I' represents Israel; 'P' represents Palestinians; The second 'I' represents Islam, Iran and Intellectuals; 'C' = Christianity and other Countries; and 'AC' represents the Arab Countries. So if one wants to fully understand what is happening in the conflict with a guide to a solution, these are the principal players to consider, and their motives for and against a solution. Clearly, the conflict is multidimensional.

CONCLUSION

For many Jewish students who participated in the 1974-75 anti-Israel campus debates, the experience was strong, meaningful and long-lasting. A number of our key community leaders developed their debating and leadership skills in this period, and many of the former student leaders subsequently played and continued to play important roles in the Jewish and general community. For example, Arnold Roth, former president of AUJS, made *Aliyah* to Israel, where he experienced the tragedy of his daughter, Malki, being killed in a suicide bombing. He subsequently has powerfully advocated against terrorism in international forums including the United Nations, and formed the organization Keren Malki, which provides home support for children with special needs. Michael Danby is a federal parliamentarian who is a strong advocate for Israel and human rights. Peta Jones-Pellach provides a broad range

of programs as Director of Education at the Shalom Institute, Sydney, and Jeremy Jones received the 2007 Human Rights Medal for his work in promoting freedom from discrimination, and his work within Indigenous, Jewish and Muslim communities.

Apart from the personal sense of achievement that participants gained in helping support Israel, the success in overturning the anti-Israel resolutions may well have contributed to Australia being more supportive of Israel than many other countries, and limiting the inroads of PLO sympathizers into Australia.

Many of the students who came to debates were open minded. University is a moment in life when people are open to ideas being delivered to them to digest and perhaps take on board. Since this is a time when people can be influenced, political activism on behalf of Israel at university campuses is valuable. Most uninvolved students do not have the time or interest to analyze a complicated case, but if you present the case in a rational way that resonates with them, you may be able to win them to your cause. This applies to Jews as well as non-Jews. Promoting Israel's position is more worthwhile at this stage in life than at any other. It is more valuable than interfaith dialogue or lobbying at the United Nations. If you want to move people's mind-sets, getting them at university and at that age ought to be at the top of everybody's list. While this paper has focused on 1974-75, Jewish students have continued to play an important role in advocating for Israel and in combating anti-Israel campus activities. This need is no less acute today than during the 1970s. The community should make Jewish student support on campus a high priority.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To research this topic, I examined student archives at UWA, back issues of the UWA student paper, the *Pelican*, and AUJS archives in Sydney. I also interviewed participants in the student politics of 1974-5, including former AUJS Presidents, Arnold Roth and Joe Gersh; Perth student leaders Gary Holzman and Ilana Atlas, and David Parker, the head of the WA Student Guild at the time. I also spoke to Sydney Jewish student leaders Peter Wise, Irving Wallach, Peta Jones-Pellach, Geoff Gordon, Steven Enoch and Michael Marx; Sydney student activist Craig Johnston; former debating champions David Celermajer and George Farkas; and former member of parliament, Joe Berinson.

In addition, I reviewed written accounts of the period from Joe Gersh and Philip Mendes, who I also interviewed, as well as a copy of a transcript of the Monday Conference debate kindly provided by Philip Mendes.

This article is based on a contribution to a compilation in honour of Rabbi Shalom Coleman's 90th birthday (2008), and was presented in part at Limmud Oz, Sydney 2007.

ENDNOTES

1. Documented in Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: the inside story of the fight for Middle East peace*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
2. Philip Mendes, 'Australian Union of Students Middle East Debates', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol 12, part 1, pp. 188-210, 1993.
3. Joe Gersh. *The A.U.S. Campaign. A report on the rise of anti-Israel sentiment on Australian campuses, and the campaign to defeat a series of resolutions passed at successive January Councils of the Australian Union of Students (A.U.S.) Australasian Union of Jewish Students*. 1975.
4. Transcript of the ABC Monday Conference TV debate, May 1975, a copy of which was kindly provided by Philip Mendes.
5. From a statement to the *Jerusalem Post*, 28 January 1968.
6. Transcript of the ABC Monday Conference TV debate, May 1975.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Interview with Irving Wallach February 2006.
9. George Lakoff, *Don't think of an elephant!: know your values and frame the debate*; introduction by Julia Baird, Carlton North, Vic.: Scribe, 2005.

BOOK REVIEWS

MARINE OFFICER, CONVICT WIFE, THE JOHNSTONS OF ANNANDALE

by Alan Roberts. *Balmain, Annandale Urban Research Association, 2008. 248pp*

Those familiar with the story of Esther Abrahams/Julian/Johnston from the point of view of the research and writing of the late Dr George Bergman¹ and others who would see her as a beautiful young milliner caught stealing lace and cruelly sent to New South Wales in 1788 with her tiny baby Rosanna, coming to the attention of the dashing Lieutenant George Johnston on board the *Lady Penrhyn*, becoming First Lady of the Colony and then being cruelly dealt with by her children, will be shocked at her portrait in this new book by Dr Alan Roberts. Those who, with the late Morris Forbes,² doubted the hyperbole and see her as a woman with human failings will perhaps not be quite so stunned. In this new biography of Esther, Dr Roberts questions everything from her age and occupation to her role in the household. Possibly Dr Roberts is more objective, being neither a descendant nor Jewish, but he does make a number of assumptions, which may not necessarily fit with all the facts. He has nevertheless produced a fascinating book, extremely well researched, which brings the Johnston family and their milieu to life in an enormously detailed way and which challenges many aspects of the family's story that has been told before by Bergman and Lemcke.³

With a glowing foreword by Emeritus Professor Brian Fletcher, a recognised expert in Australian history, impeccable proof reading by former University of Sydney Librarian, Neil Radford and copious appendices, this book is an important and valuable addition to the history of not only Annandale, but also of the early colonial past of New South Wales. No detail is too minor for Roberts' eagle eye as his appendices attest: lists of assigned servants, utilization of land grants, lists of stock, sales to the commissariat, improvements to the property, land acquired and distributed by other family members, lists of furnishings and servants. The endnotes are

numerous and detailed, the bibliography full and wide-ranging from rare early historical records and archives to modern online search engines. The book is well illustrated with maps, drawings and photographs with detailed captions. It draws on and very much adds to Roberts' research for his BA Hons and PhD theses as well as his experience as a professional historian, Royal Australian Historical Society research officer and writer.

Roberts draws a portrait of Esther in London as a girl, perhaps not as young as we have been led to believe, perhaps not even a milliner, perhaps even (heaven forbid) a 'prostitute' but not 'on the game', who, having arrived in Sydney on the First Fleet, began living with Johnston as a concubine (which was quite a common occurrence for the military). She was perhaps his housekeeper, having been a hut keeper and washerwoman. It was certainly not unknown for men to have children by their housekeepers and eventually marry them. Roberts seems to opt for the worst scenario where Esther's origins are concerned; however his portrait of Johnston shows him as a kind husband who referred to Esther by the pet names of Het and Hetty and regularly used the term 'the mother of my children'. She entertained important visitors at Annandale and Johnston provided generously for her in his will. The fact that Esther had her portrait painted in 1824 showed her status as the widow of an important leading member of colonial society. Macquarie entertained the family at Government House in 1820 and Esther apparently attended some official functions such as a ball at Government House in 1819 and earlier balls at home in 1808 and 1809. One visitor to Annandale referred to her as a genteel and pleasant lady and her grandson described her as industrious. In her latter years she apparently took to drinking, quarrelling with her family and driving dangerously around the streets as evidenced by her doctor.

Esther never relinquished her Jewish identity and in fact was often identified as a Jewess living with Johnston. None of her children followed her religion although her grandson, George Robert Nichols, was instrumental through his profession in obtaining equality with the Christians for Jewish ministers to receive government stipends in 1854. The name Mrs. Julian, which she used after 1799, is a mystery, although it does correspond with Esther settling at Annandale. Her first child Rosanna was married as Abrahams in 1805, her mother's supposed maiden name. Esther had used the name Julian while Johnston was in England in 1811, receiving land grants in this name. Her son George was referred to as George Julian in a legal document in 1811. In a court case against Rosetta March in 1810 she was noted as Etty Juelin. Roberts

surmises the name might have been used initially as a criminal alias, but this does not seem to be the case in New South Wales where Johnston's will even used the alternative name for his wife and family. Nothing is apparently known of Esther's parents, yet a nephew, Michael Abrahams, son of Mrs. Phoebe Abrahams, arrived in 1835 to visit his Johnston cousins. At Esther's marriage to Johnston in 1814 she was referred to as Mrs. Esther Julian, a spinster and, unable to sign her name, marked the document instead. The suggestion is made that Macquarie put pressure on Johnston to marry.

While Roberts really brings the Johnston family to life and we feel a father's loves and losses quite strongly in the narrative, we are also acutely aware of his loss of status after his return from England having been condemned for mutiny in the rebellion against Governor Bligh. He clashed with some important people and was sent for court martial in England in 1800. However, he was not charged for this at that time, but was later court-martialled in 1811 after the Bligh mutiny. He is described as 'one of the most impressive of the foundation pioneers of New South Wales...intelligent, energetic, effective, efficient, a good military leader, a good farmer, father of an impressive family...observant and keen to learn, alive to the opportunities presented by the natural resources in and around the colony and fascinated by its fauna'. He made many good friends and was loyal to his patron, Northumberland. Along with many of his fellow officers, he indulged in commercial activities which were not strictly legal but which supplemented his salary and helped to provide for his growing family. Johnston was inordinately fond of his children and provided well for them, sending them to England for their further education and training. His part in the rebellion against Bligh, while first giving him a leading role in the Colony finally blighted his career.

Roberts' command of his detailed research is excellent but occasionally he makes assumptions or comments, which may not necessarily be supported by his evidence. One such is the 'prostitute' description of a young criminal Esther in London. (Perhaps the most amazing assumption is in the first chapter where Roberts chastises the Admiralty for failing to supply sanitary pads and nappies for the women on board the *Lady Penrhyn* when there were no such items. Sanitary napkins were invented in the nineteenth century and nappies had just been invented in the seventeenth. Old linnen rags were the normal things used by women at menstruation if they could get hold of them and, until the invention of the safety pin in the mid 1900s, cloths simply tied around babies' bottoms served as nappies.)

The present-day suburb of Stanmore covers the site of Annandale House and farm, which George established in 1799 and which dominated the area for many years and was finally demolished in 1905. All that remain today are the gates and the names of the family commemorated in the suburb of Annandale. The Marine Officer and his Jewish convict wife were commemorated in 1988 when 250 descendants met for a reunion to celebrate the continued existence of their family line. There is also a commemorative pavilion to Esther in the Bicentennial Park, Glebe.

Helen Bersten

ENDNOTES

1. GFJ Bergman, 'Esther Johnston, the Lieutenant Governor's wife', *AJHS Journal*, vol 6, part 2, 1964, pp.90-122
2. Morris Forbes, 'Esther Johnston revisited; revisionism in her story', *AJHS Journal*, vol 18, part 2, 2004, pp.137-163
3. Geoffrey Lemcke, *Reluctant Rebel, Lt. Col. George Johnston, 1764-1823*, Sydney: privately printed, 1998.

FROM IBERIA TO VAN DIEMAN'S LAND; A COHEN FAMILY ODYSSEY

by Pam Zopf and Geoff Court

Self published, December 2008, 287 pages, 65 illustrations

Benjamin Cohen, age 36, a confectioner, was convicted of receiving stolen goods at the Old Bailey on 31 October 1835. He was held on a hulk on the Thames River, then transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *Lord Lyndoch*, arriving at Hobart in August 1836 after a four month voyage, where he was assigned to assist with hut-keeping and cooking for a convict sheep station at the extreme far north west of Tasmania. His wife Sarah (nee Torres) with three sons, the youngest aged six, arrived four years later and asked permission for the family to be reunited. The overseer and the convict superintendent had no objection but their bureaucratic delay resulted in a tragedy. Records a few months later show Benjamin becoming mentally deranged, imagining he was about to be subjected to tortures reminiscent of the Inquisition, slitting his own throat, and when saved and moved to Launceston drowning

himself in the prison well. A Hebrew prayer book, which he was often seen reading, was found in the pocket of his jacket. Sarah remained in Tasmania, opened a confectionary, and was financially assisted by being employed to attend to the ladies gallery of the Hobart Synagogue. On Sarah's death in 1857 she was buried in the Harrington Street cemetery. During the 1850s her sons moved back and forth between the Victorian goldfields and Hobart, married non-Jews, and gave Australia over a thousand descendants.

A second arm of the family arrived independently in Melbourne. Raphael Cohen, brother of Benjamin, had married Abigail Torres, sister of Sarah. The Torres family was part of the interrelated Sephardi community of London with very few out-marriages to Ashkenazim until the mid-1800s. When a request was sent from Melbourne in the 1850s for assistance in establishing a colonial Sephardi congregation, Enoch, a son of Raphael Cohen migrated, followed by others of his siblings during the next two decades. This arm of the Cohen tree remained planted more firmly within the Jewish community, possibly in part due to the presence of their extended family groups, and partly to the expansion of the Melbourne community with East European migration of the late 1800s.

This is a well-researched and clearly organised genealogical study of family lineages, reaching back in time to their Sephardi origins and updated with the most recent births. The genealogist and author have read extensively and selected numerous illustrations and extracts from published histories, official documents, Synagogue histories and family tales which should be of interest to anyone whose ancestors have a similar source. The extracts are interspersed among the many pages, listing names and dates to give historical context to the bare details of personal vital events. This structure is a very workable format for presenting the people and their background to the members of a wide family. It is possibly the closest method an author can utilise in the sequential pages of a book to mimic the links between disparate information on a website. The publication is well designed for a fairly inexpensive privately published book.

The London Sephardi names traced in this study include Ribeiro, Mizrahi, Pardo, Abendana, Dias, Soares, da Costa, and Torres. A few of the included names, which unexpectedly appear in local Jewish records, are Buckingham, Stewart and Bullen. One criticism is the absence of an index. It would be far too unwieldy to index every instance of every name, but an index, which leads to the first mention of a surname among the genealogical pages, could give a reader a starting point for specific family branches.

Gary Luke

FROM ONE END OF THE EARTH TO THE OTHER:
THE LONDON BET DIN, 1805-1855, AND THE
JEWISH CONVICTS TRANSPORTED TO AUSTRALIA

by Jeremy I. Pfeffer

Sussex Academic Press: Brighton, 2008, ISBN 9781845192938,
355 pages.

In 1805 R. Solomon Hirschell established the first ongoing *Bet Din* (Rabbinic Court) in the English speaking world. Two of their *Pinkasim* (minute books), spanning from 1805 to 1855, which record the decisions of over seven hundred cases related to marriage, divorce and conversion are the subject of Jeremy Pfeffer's groundbreaking research. A few of the cases involving convict transportees were included in an article by Pfeffer in the *AJHS Journal* (XVIII, Part 3, 2007). Other Australian related cases are included in this publication.

The first half contains a detailed study and explanation of the *Halakhic* rationale behind the decisions of the *Dayanim* (judges) of the *Bet Din*. English Jewry at that time included a conglomerate of the earlier generations of waves of Sephardic refugees, *conversos* or New Christians who had returned to openly practising Judaism in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with part remembered religious practices; Ashkenazi Jewish refugees from the continent; street-level, middle class and entrepreneur traders with ambivalent attitudes towards their Jewishness; some with non-Jewish wives, and children born outside of strict *Halakhic* marriage. As Pfeffer notes, 'Hirschell's approach to the realities of his times had been to open the doors of Judaism as wide as *Halakhah* permitted in the hope of keeping as many Jews as possible within the fold.' The religious, legal and social freedoms of England permitted mixing of non-Jews and Jews in ways not encountered in most parts of Europe, where religion determined the borders between communal relationships, and conversion to Judaism was very rare and usually illegal. Conversion to Judaism in England was also illegal, but a short voyage to Amsterdam followed by a confirmation by the *Dayanim* in England of the Netherlands conversion provided a solution for that constraint.

A number of interesting tales of family relationships are traced by matching *Pinkas* entries with marriages in the major London Synagogues, some of which demonstrate the impact on migrants of the differing practices among the various centres of European Jewry and London. Statistical charts of annual divorces and marriages show that, although the seven hundred or so *Pinkas*

entries sometimes required fresh *Halakhic* interpretations, these rulings had no direct impact on the majority of those who remained within the disparate Anglo-Jewish community. Other problems of adaptation to hold the community together are in a number of published histories. With a Jewish population in London growing in the early 1800s to around 15,000 the synagogues were often short of a *minyan* (prayer quorum of ten men) on *Shabbat*. Unlike its European counterparts, the London *Bet Din* had no need to handle personal or financial disputes as British courts had no inherent discrimination against Jews. There were, however, a small number of agreements and pledges, using the *Pinkas* as an official register.

As there was no *Yeshivah* (Talmudic academy) in West Europe, Hirschell's successor in the mid-1800s, Rabbi Nathan Adler, had to appoint replacement *Dayanim* from East Europe who were not familiar with this new world, and who sheltered 'behind the walls of tradition', making it more difficult to become a Jew. Pfeffer suggests one result of Hirschell's liberal understanding was the absence of a demand for Reform Judaism in England until the time of Adler's appointment. Reform Judaism emerged in England half a century after Germany although the emancipation of English Jewry had preceded that of Germany by a century.

The Australian content fills the final half of the book. One chapter briefly reviews a dozen cases involving convicts, followed by an in-depth discussion of the Sheerness Jewish community. The book focuses on the crime of Joseph and Judah Solomon their time in Tasmania, and their *mishpocha*. The author has uncovered surprising aspects of their tales. Reb Aaron Levy, the *Dayan* of the *Bet Din* who visited Australia in 1830 was the reason the author began his exploration of the *Pinkassim*. Reb Levy was an ancestor of the author's wife. It is fitting that a biographical sketch of the first religious authority to land in Australia is included here, with a bibliography of his known scribal works. The voyage was to conduct a divorce to release an *Agunah* (chained woman), the wife of a transported convict. The final chapter ('Do-it-yourself *Giurim* in Australia') looks into the decisions about conversion as they were conducted in various ways by the synagogues in Sydney, Hobart and Melbourne, before the establishment of the accredited *Bet Din* in Victoria in 1864. Pfeffer remarks on the discrepancies between the Hebrew and civic dates on the earliest *Ketubah* (Jewish marriage certificate), for John Moses and the convert Mary Connelly, with evidence that the *Ketubah* had been prepared by Reb Levy but the dates and names entered later by others. The first set of Rules published by the Sydney Synagogue in 1833 also has a number of date errors leaving a similar ambiguity about the establishment date of the first synagogue committee in Sydney.

This is a pioneer study of these *Pinkassim* and their context. It opens the door to avenues of further research, and to an understanding of how the self-identification as Jews of Anglo-Jewry and their colonial Australian *mishpocha* differs from the paradigms of our community today. Where Todd Endelman's *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714-1830* (pub. 1979) threw new light on the social behaviour of acculturated English Jews, this publication by Jeremy Pfeffer is like an X-ray view of the nerve centre of *Halakhic* Judaism as it mapped a path through a difficult new world. It is an impressive work for its original research, the included background material, and the insight which runs through it of English Jewry of the period.

Gary Luke

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF CANBERRA. RECOLLECTIONS IN ORAL HISTORY.

Edited By Adele Rosalky

Canberra, ACT Jewish Community Inc, 2008. 220pages

This book is the result of numerous interviews conducted mainly by Adele Rosalky and Sylvia Deutsch, whereby they recorded the oral history of older members of the Jewish community still living in Canberra, focusing on the roles these people played in the foundation of the ACT community. A CD is also available. The interviewees are Dr. Ronald Mendelsohn, OBE, Earle Hoffman, OAM, Dr. Harry Rosenberg, Nina Horton, Sir David Smith, KCVO, AO, Beverley Chalker, Dr. Mervyn Doobov, OAM, Sue Doobov, OAM and Bernard Freedman, OAM.

The interviews have been painstakingly transcribed in all their details with a brief biography preceding each transcript. Some people have been interviewed several times, but the chronology of the interviews is not the important factor (1990s to 2007). It is interesting to compare different interviews of the same person and to see the development of a small, hard-working community over the years. In 1995 Ron Mendelsohn referred to strong antipathy from Melbourne Jewry to the development of a National Centre. The book was made possible by a grant from the ACT Chief Minister's Department's Office for Ageing, which was used for interviews and transcription. Rosalky rightly says that 'each individual's voice can be heard in these transcripts' and ACT Jewry's pride in the community is obvious in all interviews.

We are informed that in 1933 the Census recorded four Jews living in Canberra and 26 in 1949. (Adele and Mischa Bernstein were living in Canberra for a few years in the 1920s but had left by 1933). Rosalky does not give the number of Jewish residents from the most recent census which would have been 2006.

There are interesting photographs included, but the work desperately needs an index as there are so many gems of information which are almost impossible to find again without re-reading the whole transcript. For example, the following email was received from Sylvia Deutsch in response to the article on Dr Billigheimer in our last Journal (v.19, part 1, 2008):

Further to the article 'Dr Billigheimer in Australia' by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple, AO, in the most recent AJHS Journal (Vol.XIX Part 1, June 2008, pp.61-74), I wish to draw attention to the fact that Dr. Samuel Billigheimer's son Professor Claude E. Billigheimer and his family were resident in Canberra for some years early in the history of the Canberra community (resident from 1955-1958). There are several references to the role of the Billigheimers (including Dr Samuel Billigheimer) and a photo of Professor Claude and Rachel Billigheimer in the oral history collection *The Jewish Community of Canberra: Recollections in Oral History*, edited by Adele Rosalky, published by the ACT Jewish Community and launched on 12 June 2008 at the National Jewish Memorial Centre in Canberra.

ACT Jewish community founders the late Dr Ron Mendelsohn, OBE, and Mr Earle Hoffman, OAM, mention the Billigheimers and their role in the community several times (pp.17, 31-32, 43-44, 90, 93, 97, 145 and photo on p.153). Dr. Samuel Billigheimer visited Canberra to conduct services on High Holydays for many years in the early days of the community. His son Claude Billigheimer and his wife Rachel were strongly involved in the community and were instrumental in instituting stricter observance, including separate seating for men and women.

The photo on p.153 shows Graeme Lipman at his barmitzvah party in September 1956 with Claude and Rachel Billigheimer. The Lipmans are believed to be the first Jews to settle permanently in Canberra. Graeme was almost certainly the first boy to have had a barmitzvah in Canberra and was taught by Claude Billigheimer.

The book and CD are available from the ACT Jewish Community Centre Inc., PO Box 3105, Manuka, ACT, 2603.

Helen Bersten

ALVA'S BOY, AN UNSENTIMENTAL MEMOIR

by Alan Collins,

Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne, 2008, pp180

This is a posthumous publication, finished three months before the author's death from cancer in late March 2008 and edited by his wife Rosaline and by Alex Skovron, a family friend and poet. It is the story of Alan Collins's childhood in Sydney, a childhood quite unlike the usual Jewish childhood where love and care are lavished on each child.

Alan's parents Sampson Collins, known as Sam, and Alva Phoebe Davis married in 1927, a first marriage for Alva, a young, naive and impressionable Sephardi shopgirl, and a third marriage for the vain poseur and stupid commercial traveller, Sampson Collins. Alva's family disapproved of Sam Collins, so when the need arose to get their help, he pig-headedly refused it, to his young son's disadvantage.

Alan Collins was born in September 1928, when his father enjoyed a brief period of prosperity and insisted the birth take place in a recently rented Bellevue Hill mansion, with a midwife in charge. Alva haemorrhaged critically while no doctor could be roused in the area because it was *Yom Kippur*, and she died during the childbirth. Instead of accepting the help of Alva's sisters who offered to bring up the child, Sam took him to the Scarba Home for Babies in Bondi, where Alan spent his first year, and then to the Ashfield Infants Home, both run by the non-denominational Benevolent Society.

Sam Collins remarried, but his wife Bella did not want to look after a toddler. So Alan spent two and a half years at the Ashfield Home, only visited by his father, or his mother's relatives, once a year. Then Sam divorced Bella and in his usual way arranged for Alan to become a boarder with his distant relatives Harry and Cissie Cohen for a pound a week, where Alan slept on a creaky couch in a lounge-room while card-games and musical records were played around him. At least there he received a smattering of Judaism, and started school at Waverley.

When Alan, better known as 'poor Alva's boy' (a phrase which he hated), was seven and a half and getting some intellectual stimulation from Harry Cohen's verbal lessons in Judaism, Sam decided to remarry. This time the bride was the Catholic Shirley Compton, secretary to the Commercial Travellers Club, who at twenty-four was half the rakish Sampson Collins's age. He had hopes of making a home for Alan, his young wife, and her nasty

elderly widowed mother. Both women resented the boy's presence, called him 'the brat' and treated him meanly and cruelly. He recalled them both as harridans. As he described them: 'Each of the women, in her own way, soon devised for me an endless circle of scorn, misery and degradation that encompassed every waking and even sleeping moment. My father too was at their mercy.' But his father, too infatuated sexually by Shirley, did nothing to protect his son for the six years they were together. Retrospectively Alan calls his father 'a priapic albatross'. One of the few consolations for Alan was an occasional friendship, which he developed with a neighbouring little Jewish girl, Gertie Rosen, a girl with golden curls.

At their rented cottage in Francis Street, Bondi, Shirley's mother paid the rent and Alan was not allowed to sleep indoors, even in winter. He was forced to sleep in a small passageway, between the laundry and outdoor toilet. He was not even permitted to eat indoors. If his tone is bitter and sometimes sarcastic, he was certainly treated cruelly, both physically but even more emotionally, while his stupid, gutless father simply acquiesced to keep the peace. He found consolation in reading, being treated kindly by the owners of the local lending library who never charged him for borrowing books and steered him skilfully into Australian literature, with writers 'who transported me beyond the dunny door to the limitless horizons of the Australian outback'.

A summer on a Hawkesbury farm, arranged by a kindly Australian neighbour, planting seed potatoes and living with a Seventh Day Adventist farming family was a confidence building experience, particularly as it enabled him to be away from his stepmother. She in the meantime had two children of her own, two little boys, one of whom at least from her lover, Sam's more prosperous friend, the furniture dealer. These boys were brought up as Catholics and taught by Shirley to despise their half-brother.

Sam's fourth marriage foundered and he grew a little closer to Alan, who grew to pity him. Alan recounts his adventures as a 'street-smart tearaway' in Bondi, stealing fruit from the greengrocer, selling newspapers before school from tramway running boards, manning the fairy-floss stall at the Bondi Beach Carnival, and truanting from the local primary and high schools. In one respect Alan resembles his father, the ease of evoking sexual desire from an early age and his sexual awareness. He describes well the inbuilt verbal antisemitism he experienced at school and in the street, and also the Australian Jews' antagonism to the European Jewish refugees, which emerges as a form of Jewish antisemitism.

Alan's later teenage years at the Isabella Lazarus Children's

Home in Hunters Hill are not evoked here as they are described in his earlier book, *The Boys from Bondi*. It is amazing that with such a childhood and adolescence Alan Collins became a successful adult, journalist and editor of the *Sydney Jewish News* then advertising executive, author of several best selling books for teenagers, and with a happy adult family life in Melbourne.

Sophie Caplan.

IN HINESIGHT

by Hilde Hines

2006, self-published through *Inkling Advertising Pty Ltd*, Adelaide, pp.290, including family photographs and three family trees.

Hilde Hines was born in 1917 in Nuremberg into a family which had dwelt in Germany for many generations on both sides. Her father fought in the German cavalry during World War I and her future husband's father also served in the German army. She states that she lost as many cousins fighting for the Kaiser in World War I as she lost during the *Shoah* in World War II. She and her young husband, Gus, emigrated from Germany in early 1938, eventually arriving in Australia, where they became pillars of the Jewish and the general Australian community.

Hilde was born Guckenheimer, a name apparently linked to Guggenheim. Her family was not at all religious, but kept Jewish social and familial links and went to *shule* on Yom Kippur. Several of the men in her family were active in Jewish welfare organisations. Hilde and her elder sister Sophie (always known as Gogo) were members of German Jewish youth movements *Kamaraden* and later *Habonim*. The family's fancy letter-writing paper factory was lost in the economic downturn of the 1920s, and her father went into insurance. They continued to enjoy holidays as well as a rich social and cultural life.

Once Hitler came to power in 1933, Nazism became supreme at Hilde's high school and she left school at the age of 16 instead of matriculating and studying medicine as she had intended. Both she and Gogo each spent over a year looking after the children of a Catholic French family in Algeria, until their father became very ill with atherosclerosis [sic] and Hilde had to return to Germany. Max Guckenheimer and her maternal grandfather both died in the same week, and her mother Liesel was widowed and orphaned at the age

of 38. Hilde decided to become a kindergarten teacher and to enrol in a Jewish kindergarten seminar in Berlin. Entry at the seminar was only at 18 and she filled in the time volunteering at a Jewish old age home in Nuremberg and doing a cookery course.

On her return from Algeria she had met Gus Heinsfurter, who was five years older and a youth leader. He had lost his father before the age of thirteen, and had been offered an apprenticeship in metals, identifying metals for the scrap metal trade. They started going out and became engaged once his older sister married. The political situation in Germany made them desirous of emigrating as soon as possible, so they married in January 1938. Gus came from a more traditional family, which kept a strictly kosher household. The only immediate emigration possibility was to live in Holland near the Dutch-Belgian frontier and to work in Belgium, as Holland would not let refugees work there.

Fortunately Gus's new brother-in-law had non-Jewish family connections in Adelaide and they sponsored his brother-in-law for an Australian landing permit to Adelaide, and also agreed to sponsor Gus and Hilde and his mother Minna. Due to Minna's reluctance to leave Germany, they only left Holland on the last Dutch passenger ship to sail after the war started and arrived in Adelaide in mid-January 1940. They were hoping to sponsor Liesel and Gogo who were in London, but this was not possible until after the war ended. Both Hilde and Liesel kept the letters they exchanged during their separation, and this helped Hilde to recall many of the events and feelings during that time, as well as conditions in 1940s Australia, such as cheap prices of meat, fruit and vegetables, expensive prices of clothing, and six o'clock closing of liquor outlets. Gus and Hilde were young and enthusiastic and loved Australia from the first moment they arrived.

Gus went looking for work and by chance found that a company he had looked up in the telephone directory had just opened a Metal Trading Company. They hired him and, finding him both honest and knowledgeable, paid him far more than the basic wage. Within a few months he was put in charge of the Metal Trading Company, and he stayed with the firm for eighteen years. Metal was necessary for the war effort and Gus's knowledge and hard work were appreciated. Eventually he was sent interstate by railway, and later by air, which was much slower than now.

Hilde was also able to find a job through the Kindergarten Union, and then they were able to rent their own flat. Gus's mother, Minna, chose to live with them for the remaining nineteen years of her life, rather than with her own daughter, on condition that their home was totally kosher. She did the cooking.

On arrival in Australia they changed their surname to Hines. Gus and Hilde joined the Air Raid Precautions organisation in which Gus was chosen to lecture to groups from other districts, although they were still classed as 'enemy aliens', and only later as 'friendly aliens'. Hilde describes the life of new German Jewish immigrants, which had its difficulties although she also emphasises how well Australian non-Jews treated them. Among their friends in Adelaide was the recently appointed Rabbi Dr Alfred Fabian and 'his shy young wife Ilse'. Gus became vice-president of a Jewish Welfare Society Migrant Consultative Committee. He said that at their first meeting every family was represented, even those they never saw again in calmer times.

The local Jewish community was not welcoming, perhaps because it was previously made up of people who came from England, but whose families were previously from Russia or Poland. They did not have much in common with the German and Austrian Jewish refugees. Nevertheless, by the 1970s, Gus and Hilde had become the leaders of the Adelaide Jewish community. Gus served as president of the Jewish National Fund in South Australia from 1943 to 1956, Life Trustee of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation from 1948 and president from 1955 to 1964. Later he became president of the South Australian Jewish Board of Deputies from 1968 to 1982 and also a Foundation Member of the committee for the Adelaide Festival of the Arts, and on an Australian Broadcasting Commission music body because he supported the ABC orchestra. Hilde was vice-president and then president of a revived South Australian WIZO, and later head of the United Israel Appeal as well as the first president of the Adelaide branch of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society. She wrote stories on her family history research for the *Kosher Koala*.

As they moved up the socio-economic ladder, they were able to improve their lifestyle. They had a daughter, then a son, each of whom married well for love, and have four bright grandchildren. They kept in touch with dispersed friends and family. The son of a good friend from their time as refugees in Holland who went to USA and married there to another refugee, is Malcolm Hoenlein, currently one of the three great leaders of American Jewry.

The autobiography was published for the benefit of WIZO. Hilde Hines passed away peacefully on Saturday 3 February 2007, when she was nearly ninety years old, two days after the official launch of the story of her life. Gus Hines had died on 3 January 1987. Each of them was an outstanding human being.

Sophie Caplan

THE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST IN AUSTRALIA.

*Edited by Tom Lawson and James Jordan.
Valentine Mitchell & Co.Ltd., Edgware, Middlesex, 2008*

The 'tyranny of distance' did not distance Australia, or indeed any country, from the tyranny of Nazi Europe, and Tom Lawson and James Jordan, editors of *The Memory of the Holocaust in Australia*, remind us of 'the global significance of the Holocaust memory'. As Konrad Kwiet says, 'the history of the Holocaust is intrinsic to the Australian past too'. 'More than 30,000 Jewish refugees from Europe found a new home in Australia', he notes, and Sharon Kangisser Cohen adds that 'on a *pro rata* basis, Australia accepted more survivors than any other country outside Israel'.

The baggage of refugees who escaped from a menacing and war-torn continent contained very few of the material possessions with which travellers weigh themselves down, but memories burdened these people. Memories of Berlin, Budapest and Warsaw, where a life they had cherished had been destroyed, and memories of Treblinka, Auschwitz and Majdanek, the camps which they survived and where loved ones perished. Sometimes memories were too painful, the scars too deep, to be discussed, and silence replaced the telling of memories on Australia's shores. Only later, sometimes much later, could stories be recounted and the legacy passed from those who had grown up in the ancient cities of Europe to those spending childhoods on the beaches of Australia.

This book charts the voyages of refugees and those linked by family and cultural ties to the *Shoah*, and it follows the journeys of their memories. It explains how memories travelled from Europe to Australia in the minds and on the bodies of Jews of the old world who became 'new Australians'. It describes how memories moved from private intimacies into history-books, school courses and museum displays. It shows that memories journeyed across the generations from those born at the end of the nineteenth century to those coming of age only in the twenty-first century.

These essays inventory the ways in which Holocaust memories can be discovered and recorded, the different historical approaches to the Holocaust, the sources available for scholars. The memories of one Holocaust survivor – Bully Schott, an ordinary Jew, an ordinary German – are transformed by Konrad Kwiet into a moving portrait of one man's experiences. Amelia Klein's tells how testimonies of over 1300 survivors have been recorded on video

since 1992, preserving faces and voices for friends, relatives and future generations. Suzanne Rutland explores the classrooms and syllabi of Moriah College, and the manner in which students have learned the history of the Holocaust since the school was established. David Ritter uses newspapers and other media reports to assess the impact of the Eichmann trial in the rediscovery of the Holocaust. Sharon Kangisser Cohen has carried out interviews to consider how the 'third generation' views the Holocaust, and how survivors feel about the transmission, preservation and possible loss of memories. John Docker offers a critical reading of Patrick White's depiction of a Holocaust survivor in his 1961 novel *Riders in the Chariot*. Avril Alba looks at the Sydney Jewish Museum, the creation of its sanctum of remembrance in 1994, and how secular and theological traditions blend in Holocaust commemoration.

These chapters cover a spectrum of the ways in which Holocaust memory is safeguarded, and they offer a history of these memories in Australia. For fifteen years after the war, a 'code of silence' prevailed, as one author puts it; refugees tried to get on with their lives in the new country, as people tried to move forwards rather than look backwards. Then the Eichmann trial, in 1960, brought the Holocaust back into the papers and onto television, with increasingly public discussion of the war and its effects on Jews and other victims of the Nazis. Before that time, as David Ritter put it, "the Holocaust" [as an identifiable phenomenon] did not yet exist in Australia, but the trial provided impetus for the 'memory work' that followed. The 1970s saw emphasis on multiculturalism, and a new fear and anger at Holocaust revisionism to which Jews, historians and politicians reacted. In 1976, in an essay competition for Jewish day schools (introduced at Moriah College by Sophie Caplan), students researched the histories of their families, many touched by the Holocaust, and in 1979 a Holocaust Remembrance Committee was established. The first major Holocaust exhibition in Australia was held two years later; in 1982, an Association of Holocaust Survivors was set up, in 1986 an Institute of Holocaust Studies opened, and the Sydney Jewish Museum was inaugurated in 1992.

It took more than thirty years after the end of the war – a generation – for memories of the Holocaust to be revived and discussed with vigour, and now we are another generation further down the time-line of history. This collection reflects on the history of Holocaust memories and their institutionalisation in schools and museums, in books and videos. It asks questions about the present and the future. Sixty years after the end of the war, how will these memories be passed on to future generations, and how should they be passed on? This issue is a cultural and historiographical one, but also a moral one.

Moreover (and Avril Alba's chapter provides insight), how do the memory and history of the Holocaust extend beyond the Jewish community, and what is their place in the wider heritage?

These questions, of course, have particular pertinence to groups most connected to the Holocaust, but they concern all Australians. We are witnessing memories of a past that very much infects the present, art and artefacts and vestiges collected in museums, testimonies gathered in books or recordings, and the interpretation of the past by historians and curators. We are looking at memories that have sometimes remained unspoken, forgotten or even repressed, and history that can also be contested and even denied.

Australia is a country filled with memories and dreams, from the dreamtime of the indigenous inhabitants to the nightmares of those who brought their sufferings to this country from the concentration camps of central Europe or the killing fields of Southeast Asia. It also holds the dreams of those who sought here a place of refuge, opportunity, peace and prosperity. Works such as Tom Lawson and James Jordan's collection invite reflection on these memories, consideration of our personal and collective 'memory work', concern with the creation and preservation of sites of memory. The volume offers new case studies on the global memory of the Holocaust, and also explores an important aspect of Australia's own history.

Robert Aldrich

TESTIFYING TO THE HOLOCAUST

*Edited by Pam Maclean, Michele Langfield
and Dvir Abromovich*

*The Australian Association of Jewish Studies,
Sydney, 2008, pp 226.*

Testifying to the Holocaust seeks to systematically examine the body of oral testimony held at the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre in Melbourne (JHMRC) from a variety of methodological and disciplinary perspectives. Faced with the enormity of current holdings of survivor video testimony in collections such as the JHMRC, the Visual History Archive at the University of Southern California and the Fortunoff Archive at Yale University, the central question posed by the volume is a timely one: how do we study these vast holdings in order to extract their stored historical knowledge and assess their impact and meaning in the present?

Given the immensity of the task at hand, *Testifying to the Holocaust* makes a vital contribution to this area of research but falls short of a comprehensive review. For while the majority of the articles do engage directly with the vexed issue of methodological approach, this difficult question remains largely under-theorized given the peculiarities of the medium of video testimony and the sheer volume of the JHMRC holdings. Where methodology is found wanting, conclusions can only be described as 'tentative' and as such the usefulness of video testimony for historical and other forms of research remains open to question.

However, while it may not answer every difficulty involved in utilising this medium, this volume certainly asks pertinent and often illuminating questions. In their introduction editors Pam Maclean, Michele Langfield and Dvir Abramovich invite the reader to consider video testimony as one might a literary text. Building on the already voluminous literature in this area of study, they approach the video archive as a repository of 'pure potential'¹ and embrace its ability to shed light on aspects of Holocaust experience that may have been overlooked in more document-centred approaches. Referencing Christopher Browning's recent attempt to reconstruct three Nazi camps about which very little physical or documentary evidence remains, the editors do not belie the potential for testimony to supplement the historical record, but posit that for repositories such as the JHMRC to be fully realized it is the potential they hold for research beyond the purely historical that must now be considered.

As such Pam Maclean, Katerina Von Kellenbach and Donna-Lee Frieze's respective contributions consider testimony as sources for political, theological and philosophical reflection. Kellenbach's deconstruction of feminist theologian Melissa Raphael's 'ethic of care' through applying the lens of the perpetrator provides a compelling example of the fruits that such an approach might yield. In issuing the challenge that 'the theological, philosophical and ethical crisis of the Holocaust can only be fully appreciated if the oral testimony of suffering and survival is read alongside the evasive, deceptive and distorted voice of perpetration,' Kellenbach reminds us that not only victims bear witness to atrocity. With regard to understanding the Holocaust, we are lacking in the most vital testimony of all—that of those who carried out the killings. In this particular case the absence of testimony from the women who provided Raphael's 'ethic of care' to perpetrator fathers, husbands and sons forms a lacuna in our ability to regard women's traditional role as 'care givers' as redemptive in any form. Without such testimony, Kellenbach contends that Raphael's 'ethic' remains

purely victim-centred and, therefore, ultimately inadequate as theodicy. Thus, while Kellenbach convincingly illustrates the weaknesses inherent in Raphael's approach, her focus also serves to reinforce the valuable contribution that testimony makes to both theological reflection on the Holocaust and to our understanding of gendered behaviour *in extremis*.

In their ability to narrow down the selection of testimonies under review, focused inquiries such as Kellenbach's and Peter Monteath's examination of *Mischlinge* fare better with regard to methodological approach than perhaps the more ambitious case studies by Michele Langfield, Pam Maclean (with Michele Langfield) and Amelia Klein. All three researchers survey broad cross sections of the JHMRC archive in order to identify 'patterns of response'. Langfield does so with the goal of assessing the long-term psychological effects of Holocaust trauma on survivors; Maclean and Langfield seek to understand the contribution testimony may make to patterns in Australian migration history and Klein explores the efficacy of video testimony as a communicative 'tool' across generations.

As Langfield points out a 'certain inconclusiveness pervades these subjects, so much so that it is almost impossible to make any meaningful generalisations' with regard to survivor coping mechanisms and the 'meaning' bestowed by survivors on their own survival—beyond the already well established and documented phenomenon of 'survivor guilt'. Despite this considerable challenge Langfield and Maclean do manage to come to some conclusions regarding the interplay between trauma and migration through a close examination of the migration experiences of pre and post-war survivor refugees. While the authors characterize their conclusions as 'tentative', their work illustrates the promise of such approaches to supplement rather than assert patterns of response when writing migration history. Langfield and Maclean's careful 'reading' of the video sources reveal the layers of meaning that are evoked in personal testimony through a consideration not simply of testimony content but also of the interviewees' affect. Indeed, it is this 'feeling' that testimony conveys which may well be its redeeming value for research and documentation.

The ability, inherent in the genre of video testimony, to transmit both knowledge and emotion animates Klein's article. Klein is interested in what such testimony can offer future generations, not with regard to oft-repeated platitudes of 'warning', but rather in its ability to facilitate 'intergenerational dialogue' and allow the grandchildren of survivors to 'make sense' of their grandparent's experiences, 'enabling descendants to deal with feelings of loss and

mourning', Klein's work certainly bespeaks the potential for video testimony in this regard but she also reminds us that this is largely only possible when deliberate educational programs are constructed in order to facilitate communication across generations.

Klein's observation that it is against its 'usefulness' that the ultimate value of video testimony will be measured is further explored in Bjorn Krondorfer's thoughtful concluding article. Krondorfer's ruminations on the potential pitfalls that a surfeit of memory holds, urgesurge the reader to re-examine the usefulness of 'forgetting' as the essential corollary to effective 'memory work'. He reminds us that 'preserving and remembering are not the same things' and that the creation of an archive does not equate to an appreciation of its content. 'Forgetting' in Krondorfer's definition is the beginning of any 'purposeful' memory work, for any remembrance of the past must be selective in order to convey meaning rather than simply transmit information. In this spirit, *Testifying to the Holocaust* must itself be considered a valuable contribution to such memory work, a valiant attempt to bring meaning to complex and divergent memories, and in so doing bring to light not only the 'facts' of survivor's experiences, but the long-term impact of these experiences on the victims and their descendants.

Avril Alba

ENDNOTES

1. Aleida Assmann, 'History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony', *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006), p. 271.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2008

2008 was the 70th Anniversary year of our Society, which we celebrated on Sunday 7 September with an enjoyable birthday luncheon in the Israel Green Auditorium of the Great Synagogue. Our guest speaker was Dr Anthony Joseph of Birmingham, UK, who for over forty years has been our corresponding member in England. He is a former president of the Jewish Historical Society of Great Britain, and presently for several years the elected president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain. Dr Joseph gave a memorable and entertaining speech, which is printed in this Journal. He was accompanied by his wife, Helene Howard, for whom we had arranged to find her only first cousin, Ruth Rothstein Cavalaro and her husband, with the help of Lionel Sharpe of Melbourne. They had been out of touch for over forty years.

A feature of the luncheon, at which ninety members and guests were present, was a delightful musical interlude sung by committee member Helen Rasko in her stage name of Helen Lorraine, accompanied by her younger son, David Rasko. Another feature was the celebration at the luncheon of the ninetieth birthday of Valerie Bennett, half-sister of our senior vice-president, Judy Shapira. Judy Shapira, Helen Bersten, Helen Rasko, Russell Stern and I contributed in various ways to the success of the luncheon. Professor Clive Kessler and the enthusiastic guests added to the function's success. Earle Hoffman, former chairman of the ACT Jewish Historical Society, came specially to take part. Unfortunately other interstate leaders who were invited could not attend. Louise Rosenberg and Nonie Guthrie, retired committee members and Suzanne Rutland and Dennis Bluth, former presidents, as well as Marianne Dacy of the Archive of Australian Judaica, were particularly welcomed.

Our 2007 Annual General Meeting on 4 November 2007 featured as speaker Paul Morris who gave an enlightening talk on 'The Jews of New Zealand'. Paul Morris is Professor of Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, and was a visiting scholar at Sydney University Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies.

Our program for the year 2008 started on Monday 25 February at the COA building in Bondi Junction with a talk by our patron, Rabbi Raymond Apple, on his late teacher, Dr Samuel Billinghamer;

an immigrant of 1938, who taught advanced Jewish Studies in Melbourne and who inspired him to make the rabbinate his profession. Although few members had heard of Dr Billingeimer previously, it proved a fascinating lecture, which everybody enjoyed.

On Sunday 18 May a most successful meeting took place with over forty members present to hear Ari Lander. Ari spoke on the topic of his PhD thesis on 'The Importance and Significance of the Zionist Youth Movements in Australia since 1940'. He did not mention any of them specifically, but spoke of their general characteristics and their effect on the Jewish community. Ari had interviewed a number of members of our Society who had belonged to Habonim, B'nei Akiva and the Zionist Youth League. There was a vigorous question time and comments by an enthusiastic audience.

On Monday 4 August the annual reading of part of the seventeen best essays of the previous year in the Dr Hans Kimmel Competition in Contemporary Jewish History was held at Moriah College. As usual there was a large audience of parents, grandparents and staff, as well as some AJHS members. We were welcomed by Acting Principal, Mrs Donna Delbaere, in the absence of a Moriah College Principal. Among the leading essays were those of Galit Jones on her great-grandfather, the architect Alexander Weinstock; Michael Immerman on 'The Life and Work of My Father Dr Hilton Immerman'; Ariella Smith on 'The Life and Times of Shaul Ben Dov'; and Aviva Monk on 'A great Dane: The Life and Times of Oldefar'.

Last year our immediate past president, Associate Professor Suzanne D. Rutland, produced the book *Triumph of the Jewish Spirit: 40 Years of the Jewish Communal Appeal* which records the history of the JCA as well as a brief history of each of its constituent organisations and its vision for the future. I wrote the piece on the Australian Jewish Historical Society, which was illustrated with a photo of Percy Marks, our founding president, and a photo of Rabbi Raymond Apple, past president, our vice-president Judy Shapira and Morris Forbes, another past president. The book was distributed to all donors to JCA. Those of us who had worked for JCA were listed and many photographs of past and present workers were included. We are proud to be included in this epoch-making book. We support and are supported by the Jewish Communal Appeal, and I represent the Society on the JCA Board of Governors as a Trustee Governor. We are still the organisation drawing the least funds from the JCA, but its funds have enabled us to purchase a new photocopying machine and to replace our old archival boxes with new acid-free archival boxes.

As for our committee, firstly the 2007 Annual General Meeting

agreed to the choice of Harris Lewis as our second patron following the death of Morris Forbes and the absence in Israel for most of the year of our first patron, Rabbi Raymond Apple. Then our former internet expert, Joe Ben Mayor, resigned last year shortly before the AGM due to ill health. The rest of the previous committee was re-elected in the same positions, with the addition of Gary Luke who is specialising in the convict era history, as well as Jewish cemetery research, particularly Goulburn Jewish cemetery and the older graves at Bookwood Jewish cemetery, which require repair. He is also concerned with the preservation of archives throughout the Jewish community.

During the year we co-opted Noela Symonds, who had been a volunteer in our organisation for some years and was given the portfolio of Office Manager, formerly a duty of Helen Bersten in addition to serving as our Honorary Archivist. Noela works closely with Helen Bersten, and is a most worthwhile member of the committee. Our immediate past president, Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland, continues to edit the Sydney edition of our Journal with the help of Helen Bersten and Judy Shapira as sub-editors. Barbara Temple and Phillip Moses continue to computerise all our archival items and Stella Marshall assists with archival preservation. Russell Stern ably and conscientiously deals with the entirety of our finances and the address list of our members and subscribers. Judy Shapira, our senior vice-president continues to edit and largely write four annual editions of our excellent Newsletter. She also endeavours to find families who will provide family history stories for the Newsletter. Over the last few years a number of members have funded an issue of the Newsletter in honour of a family *simcha* or memorial. Jeannette Tsoulos continues her assiduous work as honorary genealogist.

Helen Bersten, Gary Luke, Jeannette Tsoulos and myself attended the first all Australian conference of our sister organisation, the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, and each presented a segment or all of a program. Other members, including Sarah Vorchheimer and Sunny Gold, also attended. The conference was most worthwhile and a great success.

Jeannette Tsoulos and her sisters recently lost their mother, Julia Phyllis Morris, and we wish their families 'Long Life'. Suzanne Rutland's daughter Ronit recently married Adrian McDonald at Chabad Double Bay. We wish the young couple and Dr Rutland *Mazeltov*.

At our 70th Anniversary luncheon Helen Bersten was awarded Life Membership of our Society. Suzanne Rutland was awarded a Certificate of Achievement from the Royal Australian Historical

Society 'for outstanding service as a researcher, writer and editor of the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, as well as her service as an office bearer of the Society'.

Sophie Caplan, OAM
President

OBITUARY

Dr Lionel Edward Fredman

19 July 1931—20 April 2008

After years of progressive Parkinson's disease, borne with courage and dignity, Lionel died peacefully at his Newcastle nursing home. He had devoted his working life to the teaching of history at the University of Newcastle, and helped to hold the small Jewish community together as the Newcastle Synagogue secretary for many years.

Lionel was the eldest son of Stanley Lewin Fredman (1901-1975) and Rose Olga, née Sharp (1907-1974) and was born in 1931 in Reservoir, then a small satellite village of Melbourne situated at the terminus of the electric train line. Stanley had set up a general medical practice there in 1926. Stan and Rose met when she came over from Perth for a family wedding, and after a courtship done mainly by correspondence, they married in Perth in November 1928.

Faced with the difficulties of the depression years, Rose, Stanley and Lionel, aged two at the time, moved in 1933 to a practice in a large Edwardian house in the more populated area of Westgarth, an industrial area closer to the city. This house had been vacated by Dr Emanuel Rosanove, who went on to specialise in dermatology, and his barrister wife Joan. The house was modernised in 1940-41, and an air-raid shelter was built in the front garden. Lionel continued to live with his family until he left for America in 1957.

Lionel attended Westgarth Central School from 1936 to 1943, Wesley College from 1944 to 1948 where he gained two exhibitions on matriculating, then The University of Melbourne where he graduated BA(Hons) in 1953, LLB in 1955 and MA in 1956 for his thesis entitled 'Sir John Quick, the Role of a Founding Father'.

During his teens, Lionel was a contestant in Junior Information on 3KZ radio, compered by Norman Banks. A fellow contestant at that time was Barry Jones.

Lionel was a keen thespian, and played a number of roles with the *Habimah* Players during his university years; his acute mind was also well honed for debating; his team went out to Pentridge one night to debate the prisoners and he was also in the Victorian debating team for the Jewish sporting carnivals in Sydney in

1955/56 and Perth in 1956/57. Lionel used to attend the informal book and bottle nights of the 'Bread and Cheese Club', held in the Richmond home of the legendary J. K. Moir, OBE (1893-1958). Devoted to mateship, art and letters, this Club was active in promoting Australian writers, and published books for them especially on poetry and local history, often in limited editions.

In 1954, Lionel became the first honorary secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS). He wrote many papers for its journal, including one on the long-gone Jewish community of Bendigo, and organised the editing and publishing of the Selected Short Stories of Nathan Spielvogel in 1956. Each copy was numbered and signed by the author shortly before his death. Lionel remained fully involved with the Society until his departure to the USA in 1957. Lionel was to continue his involvement with the AJHS on his return to Australia, and wrote eleven papers in all for the *AJHS Journal* from 1955 to 2000.

Lionel decided that he was not suited for the Law and decided to go to the United States to undertake further study in the discipline of History. He went first to Stanford, where he was awarded an MA, and then to Tulane where he gained his PhD. After his return late in 1959, Lionel gained a position in the History department in Newcastle. His career there spanned 33 years, and he progressed to Associate Professor. During this time, he became a proud and passionate Novocastrian. He was a prolific writer of books, papers and reviews covering Australian and American history and was appointed the first life member of the Australian & New Zealand American Studies Association (ANZASA) in 1994, the year after his retirement. Associate Professor Chris Dixon remembers his influence at the University, and in his tribute to the members of ANZASA, noted that:

Lionel played an important role during the association's early years and hosted the 1974 and 1988 conferences. Lionel taught American History at the University of Newcastle from the early 1960s until his retirement. During that early period he flew Old Glory in a History Department that rarely looked outside British and Australian history. Along with his interest in The Great White Fleet, Lionel's abiding passion was the study of politics and political systems.

Lionel was a quietly spoken and earnest man who displayed a great love of learning, a genuine passion for the Great Republic and a subtle sense of humour. Lionel also devoted time and energy to the local community and was a regular speaker at local schools and community events. He

was a gentle man in every sense, a scholar whose love of his discipline was apparent to all who encountered him.

Lionel's first marriage was to Carolyn Rosemary Rees in 1965 at the Parramatta Registry Office, long before the days of civil celebrants. They produced three children – Jacqueline, Nicholas and Antonia. The family home was initially in Adamstown, a Newcastle suburb. Lionel then bought an 1835 house 'Government Cottage' in East Maitland in 1977. He was so excited about acquiring an historic house he forgot to tell Carolyn until after he had put down the deposit!

Lionel was anything but a dry academic. He had a droll sense of humour, and delightfully eccentric interests, perhaps best exemplified by his passion for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes, for which he attended international conferences. He enjoyed Dracula movies, musical theatre such as Gilbert & Sullivan, and old songs by Noel Coward or Al Bowlly. His elder daughter Jacqueline agonised every Father's Day to find a card without the hackneyed male scenes of golf, fishing or beer cans.

Dr Rachael Kohn, the ABC Radio National broadcaster has fond memories of Lionel, and admired his contributions to the Jewish Studies Conferences in the early 1990s. She still recalls the tour of Newcastle he gave her, just a few months after the earthquake in 1989. Lionel delivered a paper at the Ninth Annual Conference for Jewish Studies in July 1995 entitled 'Wesley College: The Jewish Experience' which was reported in great detail in the *Australian Jewish News* of 28 July.

Lionel's second last trip to Melbourne was in 1997, where he read, with some difficulty, a paper about the Hon. Nathaniel Levi, ancestor of Rabbi Dr John Levi, at a Colloquium in honour of John on his official retirement. Lionel had written up Nathaniel Levi and no less than 13 other entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Lionel and John had been good friends and colleagues for a long time; back in 1982, Lionel arranged for his second marriage to Jacqueline Simon to be conducted by John in Melbourne. The marriage lasted ten years, sadly halted by Jacqueline's death from cancer. Another life-long friend from Wesley College days was historian and author Professor Geoffrey Blainey.

Lionel was the brains and the energy behind the launching of the magazine PAN (Performing Arts Newcastle) as a Bicentennial venture in 1997. The first issue was dedicated to Nellie Stewart who, he felt, epitomised the performing arts in Australia.

From the early 1980s, Lionel began his long association with

the small Newcastle Hebrew Congregation being its secretary for nearly two decades, and one year as president. He reissued a revised and expanded version of the original small 1977 Jubilee Booklet on the Newcastle Hebrew Congregation as a contribution to the Newcastle City's Bicentenary in 1997. His dedication and service to the survival of the Congregation led to the naming of the Synagogue Hall after him at his 70th birthday luncheon, which was held there in July 2001. Invitees to the luncheon included his extended family, the local Jewish community, University colleagues, and many public office holders of the City of Newcastle.

Lionel was a true bibliophile with a magnificent library on a broad range of subjects. His declining health meant that this had to be dispersed among his family and his precious books are now a permanent reminder of him. He was an excellent correspondent, and we have kept many of his letters which continued right through until his Parkinson's disease made his writing totally illegible. He encouraged his children's academic pursuits and the value of travel.

Soon after his first grandchild was born, Lionel said to him: 'I hope you will be curious', truly a noble aspiration.

Through troubled times, Lionel's first wife Carolyn had been a tower of strength for her children, and in more recent years, had given much time and care to Lionel as his illness progressed. He is survived by his first wife Carolyn, their three children and their families.

This tribute was written by Lionel's younger brothers, Malcolm and Clive with assistance from his daughter Jacqueline.

ERRATA

- Morris Forbes lived in Plowman Street, not Ploughman Street.
- In Ann Gluckman's article on Alec Klippel: University of Otago not Otego, also Alec Klippel married Haidee Moses (not Asher) on 19 March 1918.
- In Noela Symonds' Book Review, the South American country is Colombia (not Columbia). Also the Austro-Hungarian Empire did not join the allies with Italy in World War I; it was just Italy.

Extra information about the Strathfield and District Hebrew Congregation and Synagogue:

Like other congregations that had their genesis in the 1930s and 1940s. The Strathfield and District Hebrew Congregation and Synagogue began with a request to the Board of Jewish Education for a teacher to provide classes in Jewish education for children in the district. This request came from my parents, Samuel and Naomi Kolts in Strathfield and they offered their home as the venue. The first teacher was Miss Laura Boas. My father contacted all the Jewish families he knew in the district to ensure sufficient pupils. I believe this was in 1939.

When my parents moved house the venue changed to the home of David and Vera Pearlman who operated a milkbar close to Strathfield station and offered a room in their flat above the business. Classes continued in this venue for some years, and a photograph of the teacher and her students in 1947 was published in the *History of the Board of Jewish Education 1909 - 1979* by Maurice H. Kellerman. This publication gives an account of the subsequent transformation from this beginning to a congregation which conducted not only education classes but also staged cultural and community events as well as establishing a synagogue. These subsequent developments are also outlined in Kellerman's book.

Lesley Goldberg

I am the eldest daughter of Vera and David Pearlman who, for

many years, held the classes each Sunday in our home. The New South Wales Board of Jewish Education provided collapsible trestle tables and long stools to accommodate 40 children, who at one time attended the classes. They also provided textbooks and *siddurim*. Each Sunday, my parents would clear a sunroom of all furniture and carry from a storeroom in the garden all tables and stools up a steep flight of stairs to the sunroom. Textbooks and *siddurim* were brought out from cupboards for the pupils.

We lived beside Strathfield station, which was strategically placed for the children who caught buses or trains from Ashfield, Croydon and Burwood and were boarders in private schools in the surrounding area. Lyon and Allan Robinson came from Parramatta. Buses also stopped outside our shop from Bankstown and Hurstville. After World War Two there were few private cars on the road, so the only form of transport was buses and trains. Each year my parents built a very large *Succah* in the backyard, large enough for everyone to enjoy on *Succot*.

My sister, Barbara Stein, and myself have vivid memories of Rabbi Porush and Harry Kellerman coming out to supervise. However, we cannot remember how many times per year this occurred. Mr Rothfield also came during the year. Would it be to see boys who were nearing *Barnitzvah* age to arrange to teach them their *Parsha* (portion of the week)? Reverend Kezelman, we can recall attended Florence Street premises after they were purchased. Miss Laura Boas was a very competent teacher who was popular with her students. She was helped by Gerda Bruck. In the photograph, is a teacher's aide, Malcolm Isaacs, son of Sam and Ria Isaacs.

The Strathfield P&C Association was an active group. Meetings were always held in our home until the Florence Street, Strathfield property was purchased. A very successful youth group founded by my mother, Vera Pearlman, commenced in Florence Street as the property had more facilities to bring the activities of young people together.

Kath Price in her article, 'A Remarkable Man: Maurice Herman Kellerman - A Colleague and Friend since 1938' wrote: 'In a close partnership with Rabbi Porush, Harry [Kellerman] worked untiringly to provide a high standard of education for all Jewish children by developing Sunday School classes in an ever expanding network in both city and suburbs, and later by the establishment of Day Schools.'

Fam Brown

Editorial Comment:

Below is the response of Sarah Vorchheimer to the Errata comments to Part One of her article, 'Outline of Frum Jews in NSW'. We have reduced her comments because of their length and complexity. The numbering matches the numbering in the previous 'Errata', but in some cases we have only included comments to some of the parts from (a), (b) and (c) etc for each page. Mrs Vochheimer has also included Errata from Part Two of her article.

This correspondence is now concluded.

ERRATA re Part One - 1788-1940

Outline of Frum Jews in NSW: A Response by Sarah Vorchheimer

Firstly - I emailed Dr Suzanne Rutland on 5 February 2008 with the following corrections:

There are a few Corrections to my article in the last Sydney edition:-

Page 348 fourth last line - should read 'in the Blue Mountains at Leura (NOT 'KATOOMBA')

Page 357 eighth last line - should read 'Channa Rachel Hammer (née Rosenbaum)'

Page 363 10th line of text below the heading - the correct spelling is 'Woolf Ruta Cohen' (NOT 'WOLF').

I later observed that the editor's misspelling of 'Woolf Ruta Cohen' (omitting the 'o') was repeated on page 348.

One further correction from myself for p. 357 - Sandhurst was actually the old name for Bendigo. It was not a Melbourne suburb. Therefore, Harris Weingott married Sarah Knopp in Bendigo.

Now to the substantive matter - the article entitled 'Errata. Readers' Comments on 'An Outline of the History of 'Frum' Jews in New South Wales 1788-1940' on pages 152-155.

Technical matters:

1. Hebrew transliteration follows the source documents.
Note that my list of sources is five pages long. Most is original research. I did request that my list of sources be published to

demonstrate the depth of research, because, I always look for verification of each piece of evidence.

(Ed. comment: we don't publish sources, only endnotes.)

2. The spelling 'Rabbi Yitzchak Elchornon Spector' is that given by Barg (*AJHSJ* Vol VII p. 438) to whom I was referring at that time. I note that Klugman in his biography of Rabbi Ramson Raphael Hirsch uses the spelling 'Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor'. I have seen a variety of spellings for this great man's name. Readers should be aware that he spelled his name in Yiddish. However, I disagree with my critic's spelling 'Hakhamim'. The accepted spelling in English is 'Hachamim'.

With regards to K'hal Adath Jeshurun or Kehillath Adath Jeschurun (and my critic did not note the differing spelling of the last word), in Germany the congregation was known as *Kehillath Adath Jeschurun* (originally *Kchillath Jeschurun*). When the shule transplanted to Washington Heights, New York, in the U.S., it was initially known as *Kehillath Adath Jeshurun* (the 'c' was dropped fairly early on in the US). In conversation, people from that tradition often still call it that, as well as 'KAJ' and 'Breuer's'. More recently it changed to *K'hal Adath Jeshurun*. Although my late husband was on the board and was also President of Congregation *Ohav Sholaum* also in Washington Heights, his preference was Breuer's, so through him, I have had an association with this *kehillah* - KAJ — since 1969.

Substantive matters:

p.341

Litvak means Lithuanian. *Litvishe* (though loosely translated as 'Lithuanian') is the term applied to the non-chassidic strictly orthodox eastern European tradition of learning and practice inherited from the *Yeshivot* of what was once greater Lithuania and now exemplified by those in Israel and the United States in particular. The meaning has become much wider than its original force, so that, for instance, one sees it used in *Hamodia* nowadays as a contrast term to *Chassidische* (that is Chassidic) to encompass even *Yekkish* (German Orthodox) and central European *Oberlander*. *Litvishe yeshivot*, as pointed out, follows the *Vilna Gaon*, as opposed to Chassidic tradition.

Oberlanders in particular was the group I was discussing. *Undertlanders*, I understand may be more of what the critic is

referring to. Rabbi O. Reich is an expert on all these fine differences and influences. I also refer the critic to the biography of Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer - *The Rebbe, The Story of Rabbi Esriel Glei Hildesheimer* by J.H. Sinason, Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1996. Also read *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch — Architect for the Modern World* by Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, Artscroll History Series, Brooklyn, NY, USA: Mesorah Publications Ltd, 1996.

p.342

- a. See David Havin, *Orthodox Jewry in Carlton and Surrounding Suburbs*, 2nd Ed. Melbourne, 2007, p.43. Also look at historic photos from the early days of photography in the nineteenth century.
- b. At the end of the article it is explained that it is actually Part One and that the article continues in the following Sydney Edition where it goes to 2006. The paper was originally presented at a meeting of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in July 2005 and was then prepared for publication and brought up to 2006. It was considered too lengthy for one issue of the Journal, so it was divided into two at 1940.

If a majority of a *shule's* members were *frum*, they were included. If they were not, they were not included. The emphasis is on the totally *frum shules*, plus some outstanding *frum* individuals, or, in the earliest days, those who stood out as possibly *frum* in their convict society, though they might fail to measure up today. (As it is an outline, many worthy people have not been mentioned.) Sometimes it was a very hard call.

- c. This is not my experience of *Mizrachi*, especially with its *B'nei Akiva* connection
- d. See p.367, plus Vol XIX Part 1 pp 120-123.
- e. *Hamodia* (English Edition) describes itself as 'The Weekly Newspaper for Torah Jewry'. I was defining the scope of my paper and how I decided what groups to include (in 2001-5 when I was researching and writing). *Hamodia* originally began in Poland almost a hundred years ago. It was re-established in Israel in 1950 by Rabbi L. Levin and has had an English Edition for roughly 15 years. It used to arrive in Sydney a week late. A version for Australia first began using computer technology from 18 May 2006 and recently — from 19 June 2008 — an Australian Edition with Australian content and

Australian advertisements, printed on fine quality newsprint and published here has been available, due to the rising popularity of this excellent four-part approximately 100 page weekly paper and magazine. In 2008 *Hamodia* now has much more emphasis on outreach and acceptance of those seeking to return to *Yiddishkeit*, but still with some way to go. On these criteria all Sydney Orthodox *shules* would now rate a mention.

P.343

- a. What the critic says with regards to *Torah im Derekh Eretz* is applicable in the case of *Unterlanders* but less so in the case of *Oberlanders*.

Readers should also remember that at the time there was no separate country called Hungary. There was, instead, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Austro-Hungarian Empire included not only modern Austria and Hungary, but also Romania, Dalmatia, Illyria, Galicia, and other parts of what is now Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia and part of northern Italy. Interestingly Hungarian is, or was in 1972, still spoken in pockets in some of these territories which are not part of modern Hungary.

The *Chasam Sofer*, R. Moshe Sofer Schreiber, (born in Frankfurt-am-Main) was very opposed to secular learning and to new things. His influence is very evident on *the Adass Yisroel* Congregation of Melbourne and some of his descendants. Sydney has a different history, a different story and different influences.

It is widely acknowledged that the most exclusive congregation founded in nineteenth century Europe was the *Frankfurtische Israelische Religionsgesellschaft*. If one studies the subject, one can see that all the great leading strictly orthodox rabbonim of the mid-nineteenth century Europe had an influence upon one another and upon all the strictly orthodox congregations — particularly those in the German confederated states and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Also of interest is the fact that the German State of Prussia ruled over much of what is now Poland.

The congregations who required (or still require) all members to be strictly *shomer mitzvot* exclude those who, in their estimation, fall short of their high ideals. Frankfurt-am-Main was noted for this, because of how far the general community had fallen there. Other examples exist. For others, 'separatist orthodox' could be just as appropriate. They simply separated from the non-observant community. Both terms are used.

- d. I was relying upon a number of accounts. Benjamin Disraeli spells his name thus.
- e. I was talking about the mid-nineteenth century, not the re-interpretation in the twenty-first century. (See Yossi Aron 'Orthodox debate: insularity or engagement?' in 'Outlook' *AJN* 18 July 2008 p. 22 on the alleged situation in KAJ today.) When trying to translate in three words, one does not give a long discourse. I suggest the critic and any others interested in the subject read Volumes VI and VII of the *Collected Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*, New York: Feldheim, 1997, particularly in Vol VII p.81ff. 'The Relevance of Secular Studies in Jewish Education', 'Our Mission' pp.151-182 — particularly p.169 and 'A Classic Principle of Jewish Education' pp.277-295 particularly pp.292-295.
- f. See Klugman on S.R. Hirsch *op. cit.*

p.344

- a. 1788 precedes 1810—the year given for the world-wide start of 'Reform' or 'Liberal' Judaism and before 1930—the date of the first 'Reform' congregation in Australia.

p.345

- a 1828 is the correct date. I began my article by pointing out that none of those who arrived as convicts in 1788 could be regarded as *frum*. One would hardly expect convicts, for that is what our first Jewish arrivals were, to be pious, punctilious upholders of every Jewish law and principle. Nevertheless, Marcus, who arrived in 1792 and who was continually harassed by the Christian clergy, apparently as he was perceived as a leader of the Jewish convicts, was outstanding, both for having learnt in Polish *Yeshivot* (he was actually born in Mannheim according to Dr Levi) and for being notable for not only himself trying to adhere to his religion in almost impossible conditions, but also for helping his fellow Jews do the same and providing them with some leadership. Without a *luach* (calendar) to assist the calculation of Jewish holy days in our complex 28-year lunar/solar calendar cycle, it was not surprising that the mostly ignorant convicts and early settlers became confused. A lack of learning does not equal a lack of piety, as many Chassidic tales emphasise. Family historians have relayed to me some of their findings relating to Marcus, though I, myself, have not viewed the actual material. Convicts were, in reality, slaves.

The affection the fledgling Jewish community had for Joseph Marcus can be seen in the fact that they erected a tombstone for him with words of the last verse of *Adon Olam* engraved on it in Hebrew.

On the point of contact with the chief rabbinate of London — see 'The First Bet Din Convened in Australia' by Jeremy I Pfeffer pp 272-301 in the same issue of the *AJHSJ* as my article and preceding my article. Pfeffer points out that 'of the various cases dealt with by the [London] Bet Din between 1805 and 1855, some twenty directly concerned Australia convict transportees'. The case Pfeffer deals with on p. 280 started on 2 December 1807. Another case he mentions on p. 284 is of the effecting of a *get* at Newgate prison on 27 November 1806 before Solomon Joseph (Chaim Zelig ben Yosef) was transported to New South Wales.

Though there is nothing specific, I note also that Pfeffer states on p.291 that the 17-year-old convict William Abrahams was 'authorised by R. Hirschell in 1828 to slaughter poultry in Van Dieman's Land'. That and the authorisation of P.J. Cohen in 1828 and the many cases the London Beth Din dealt with concerning convicts would suggest that there must have been some sort of contact prior to the journey of R. Aaron Levy. The Beth Din clearly saw the need to provide some sort of pastoral care by the authorisations given to both Abrahams and to P.J. Cohen, and I doubt that the Beth Din just dreamed it up without any sort of input from New South Wales.

- b. Rabbi Aaron Levy clearly found two other acceptable persons to form a Beth Din to effect the *get* in 1830. One was obviously P.J. Cohen who, despite the critic, is recognised in Sydney as having been *frum*. Clearly there must have been at least one other when Rabbi Levy arrived in Sydney at the end of 1830. I am not claiming all the early leaders were *frum*, but clearly some were. Moreover, as there are records of *Shabbos* breakers being boycotted in convict Australia, there were some who were quite serious about keeping the *mitzvot* of the Jewish faith.

- c. Michael Hyam was a mohel.

p.347

In response to the question: 'How does the author know that the Rothschilds and Montefiores were regarded as *frum*? Sir Moses Montefiore's level of orthodoxy, for example, fluctuated', the Rothschilds were amongst the first to join the Frankfurt-am-Main *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft*. One Rothschild was not *frum*

according to Klugman *op.cit.* The Montefiore family has a reputation of being *frum*, but it is possible for people to have lapses at times, and then do *teshuvah*.

p.349

There were people who had belonged to Broken Hill who ended up belonging to Melbourne *Adass*.

p.355

a. An observation on Saphir's justifiable criticism of the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire in the mid-nineteenth century and observing that the attitude continued for a long time afterwards, does not, to me, seem out of place. Things have improved, but it can still be hard to tempt the best people to take up a post out here. It does help now that Australia is the ninth largest Jewish community in the world and the only growing Jewish community outside Israel.

b. This is mentioned on p.361.

p.356

The name YOSHUAH is from his family tree. I received a number of different editions for different family members. I interviewed many descendants. All agreed his nickname was 'Shaya' and that he was known officially as 'YOSHUAH' (with a handwritten note 'Isaiah, Rabbi/skilled Hebraist' next to it on my version of 9 Jun 2005). Undoubtedly his full Hebrew name was Yeshayah. I was giving the English spelling that is on his official family record.

p.360

East Melbourne congregation; See David Havin, *Orthodox Jewry in Carlton and Surrounding Suburbs*, 2nd Ed. Melbourne, 2007. p.15f. Moses Rintel founded it.

Heder, not yeshivah ketanah: His daughter said it was a *yeshivah ketanah* (Minor Talmudic Academy) — much like the Rabinovitch Yeshivah College. He would have started *heder* at three. My eldest son started at Rabinovitch Yeshivah College at four and had attended *heder* before that. Rev Goran clearly learned whilst staying with his uncle as well, but the details were a little sketchy.

p.362

This is based on original documents in the 'Foreign Jews' file 243 at AJHS.

p.363

Apart from the misspelling of Woolf, it is correct and based on:-

1. File 243 'Foreign Jews' — original documents held by AJHS
2. Jones & Lutman, *Orach Chaim: A Way of Life - the Central Synagogue*. Sydney: State Library of New South Wales Press, 2000, p.4.

Where the latter clashed with the former, I followed the former original records, which I doubt had ever been carefully examined before. These original records threw interesting light upon Newtown *shule*, Central and on Rabbi Bramson (who had an exquisite hand!).

p.364

- a. Information from Jones & Lutman *op.cit.* Porush gives it as *Machzikay Hadas*. Every other reference I have seen complies with Jones & Lutman

Errata in Vol XIX Part 1

('Frum' (Strictly Orthodox) Jews in New South Wales Part 2)

p.98

Second Paragraph, 3rd line, move the closing bracket from next to 'family' and insert it after 'culture'.

p.101

Second last line, second last word, the 'n' has fallen off 'Shulchan Aruch'.

p.106

Second last line of the indented quote from Israel Herszberg should have read 'drove' as agreed, because it was an actual quote. Somehow it reverted to a previous editorial amendment.

p.108

Caption to the photo - second line - should read '*Shochet* Sztillerman'; third line should read 'Herszberg'.

p.117

7th line from the bottom insert an apostrophe 'Y'sodef.

p.120

In the section 'The Bellevue Hill *Shtiblach*'—6th line in that section 'religions' should read 'religious'.

In the Section 'Yeshiva - the 2003 split' — first paragraph was

edited down from 'Yeshivah Boys' High School - sharing the premises at 36 Flood Street designed by Harry Seidler with the primary school. I believe this was 1971.' The editing has left the reader wondering to just what period of the school this is alluding.

The editing in the second paragraph of this section, where events are telescoped, also has resulted in a confusing read in relation to the Yeshivah Kindergarten at Maroubra and the founding of the Mount Sinai College.

p.121

- a. First paragraph. The telescoping in the editing here results in the last line of the paragraph not making historic sense. Originally the last two sentences read: 'As a purpose-built school building, it served the school well, originally for the primary school, and later for the reborn Yeshiva Boys' High School, after the Primary School had moved to Dover Heights, having leased the former Dover Heights Boys' High site (subsequently Dover Heights TAFE) from the N.S.W. Department of Education.'
- b. The second last paragraph and the last paragraph (which goes over the page) are badly edited and do not make historic sense.

The original text read:

'The Yeshiva Gedola (Rabbinical College of Australia and New Zealand, Sydney) was founded in 1986, headed by Rabbi Lesches, a Kol Torah Yeshivah Graduate who had arrived in Sydney some years before, when Rabbi Feldman was bringing out an increasing number of rabbonim. It was equipped to train young rabbis and grant rabbinical degrees — a first for New South Wales — although Rabbi Herc had earlier trained rabbonim and given rabbinical degrees, as we have seen above.

'Those trained were not just Australians, but young people from all over the world - the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and South Africa were generally represented in every intake, alongside local lads.'

'Among the many hundreds (possibly over a thousand by 2007) of rabbonim trained at the Sydney Yeshiva Gedola, was Rabbi Shmuelly Boteach — renowned for his book *Kosher Sex*, along with other writings on relationships. He married the daughter of one of the founding Friedmans of South Head Synagogue. This is one of many instances of marriages between local girls and the young rabbinical students who have come here to learn. Some couples stay here to enrich the country with

their knowledge and enthusiasm, others leave to foreign shores. This has led to a very strong American influence in the strictly orthodox community, with many families having dual American/Australian citizenship.'

P.122

- a. Third last paragraph. The telescoping of this paragraph by the editor has left it wanting in sense.
- b. Second last paragraph. It is disappointing that the Jewish date - *Tu b'Av*—of the Sheriff's seizure was omitted by the editor. That was significant as it was the relationship of the Jewish dates that bore significance rather than the English dates. Also there was myth building up about the date of seizure and the Rabinovitch *Yahrzeit*.

Index to Vol XVIII 2006-2007

p.4

'Authors' should include 'Vorchheimer, Sarah, 340, xviii'. (This is not omitted from p. 5, 'Articles' as well.)

GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES

This list represents enquiries made to the AJHS until April 2009, where we were not able to supply information. 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.

BARNETT, John Judah and wife Mary Ann had pawnbroker's shop in Sydney, 1872. Daughter, Hannah. Seeking info on the family.

EMANUEL Moses, dentist, son of Samuel and Dian(n)a born 1836, Sydney. Married Annie Gould 1862. Death date required and info re Samuel and Diana.

MYERS, Abraham, father of George Edward Myers (b. South Africa c. 1840). Latter also aka Edward George or Edwin George. GE married in South Australia (non-Jewish ceremony).

PRAGER, Henry, waterproof garment manufacturer, lived in Newtown area 1905-7, probably died 1907. Family moved to USA 1919. Seeking trace of Henry's death.

REINITZ, Grete (Margarethe), arrived 1939, aged 40. Death date and place required.

SHAPIRO, Isaac, died, Sydney, June 1981. Seeking info about his life.

SOLOMONS, Simon Stanley, died in action 1944. Parents Esther and Reuben. Info sought on his life and family.

ZIVCON, Feiwe-Salle from Latvia visited his brother Shaje/Leopoldin Australia. Seeking info on family.

NEW MEMBERS, 2009

The following became members during the year:

Robert Kaplan

Evelynne Cherny

Ari Lander

Peter Kahn & Janette Rosenthal

Robin Margo SC

Maria Guthrie

Issy & Sandra Pilowsky

CONTRIBUTORS

Avril Alba, BA (Hons), BMsc (Adelaide University), MA (Harvard), is the Director of Education at the Sydney Jewish Museum. She teaches for the Melton and MOSAIC programs, and the Departments of History and Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney, where she is currently pursuing a doctorate in History and Jewish Studies. In 2008 she was the Project Director and co-curator of the newest addition to the Sydney Jewish Museum's permanent exhibition, *Culture and Continuity: Journey Through Judaism*.

Robert Aldrich, MA, PhD (Brandeis), FAHA, FASSA, is Professor of European History and Chair of the Department of History at the University of Sydney. His research concerns historical memory and monuments, and among his publications is *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories* (2005), and an edited collection, *The Age of Empires* (2007).

Raymond Apple, AO RFD, BA, LLB (Melb), MLitt (UNE), Hon LLD (UNSW), FJC (London School of Jewish Studies), is patron and past president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. He was senior rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for 32 years and was also judge/registrar of the Sydney Beth Din, senior rabbi to the Australian Defence Force and a lecturer at Sydney and NSW Universities. He has written widely on Australian Jewish history.

Helen Bersten, OAM, BA, Dip Lib, a member of the AJHS Committee and its honorary archivist since 1979.

Sophie Caplan, OAM, BA, Dip Ed, MEd (Hons), a child survivor, has worked in both Australian Jewish history and Holocaust history. She is an oral historian who interviews survivors and prewar refugees and lectured on the Shoah at the University of NSW. In 1991 she founded the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society and in 2004 she was elected as president of the AJHS. Her work has been published in anthologies and journals in English, French and German.

Anthony Joseph, MB, BChir (Cantab), FSG, is a medical practitioner who was educated Cambridge University and worked in London.

Sydney (Australia) and West Midlands UK. Served as president Jewish Historical Society of England 1994-1996; chairman, Birmingham Branch since 1969; president, Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain since 1997; corresponding member for Great Britain of Australian Jewish Historical Society since 1965; director, International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies 2000-2004; and contributor on Jewish Genealogy to *Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture*. Among his many monographs is *My Ancestors Were Jewish* (Society of Genealogists).

Gary Luke, DipFHS, is a committee member of the AJHS, assists AJGS members with their research, and is a trustee of the Jewish section of Rookwood. He is currently conducting post-graduate research of the pre-synagogue convict Jewish community.

Suzanne D. Rutland, OAM, MA (Hons) PhD, Dip Ed, is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney. Her latest book is *The Jews in Australia*, Cambridge University Press. She has held numerous leadership positions, including being immediate past president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Inc, and Sydney AJHS journal editor since 1991.

Laura Stocker, MSc, PhD, A New Zealander by birth, a marine ecologist by training whose mother's family were Jews from a rabbinical tradition, she currently teaches sustainability at Curtin University of Technology, and researches sense of place, community cultural values in relation to the coast, climate change adaptation and sustainability education. One of her main research efforts at the moment is a book entitled: *Where the Sea Carried Us: Moments in Diaspora about sense of place, marine ecology and Diaspora*.

Geoffrey H. Tofler, MBBS, MD, FRACP, FACC attended University of Western Australia (UWA) from 1971-6 where he was Education officer (1972) and President (1973,74) of the WA Jewish student society. After graduating and specialising in Cardiology, he spent 13 years in Boston, where he was Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School. He then returned to Sydney in 1998, where he is Professor of Preventative Cardiology at Sydney University and the author of over one hundred original scientific manuscripts. During this period, he has retained an active interest in the study of the Middle East conflict.

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