

THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JEWISH YEAR BOOK, 1985

The Bnai Brith in Australia has from its inception in 1944 given high priority to its cultural programme, Jewish and general, promoting many a valuable project. Now, to mark the 40th anniversary of its foundation, the Bnai Brith District 21, at the suggestion of its President, Kurt Lippmann, has embarked upon a striking venture: The publication of the first Jewish Year Book in Australasia. Let us hope that this publication will become an annual event, and that it will find many readers. The present issue was made possible by the support of more than 50 patrons and sponsors, mainly from Melbourne.

This Year Book differs in character from the older ones in England and the United States. Whilst the latter well-established Year Books deal mainly with the calendar of the current year and with information on the events of the past year, as well as news on institutions and personalities of the Community, this Year Book puts greater weight on the wider contemporary, historical and literary aspects of Jewish life in Australasia.

The editor is Yehudah Svoray, manager of the Ethnic Radio Station in Victoria 3EA, and the editorial committee, under the chairmanship of Professor Louis Waller, who wrote the Introduction, consists of Kurt Ippmann, Joe Kaufmann, Lisbeth Minz and Hans Ziffer — all residents of Melbourne. Moreover, of the 26 contributions there are 20 from Melbourne and only 4 from Sydney. Is it a coincidence that 5 of the 6 Committee members are "newcomers"?

The articles, divided into 8 categories, deal with education, politics, art and literature, Israel, and the integration of Jews into Australian society. Also included are "Portraits" of — the Feiglins, Rachel Holzer, and Julius Stone — and a collection of 32 typical photos depicting Jewish life in Melbourne, from an open-air Chuppah to Acland Street, and from Mount Scopus to the Mitzva Van of Lubavitch. Some of the articles would be of interest to the general community, such as Prof. Colin Rubinstein's evaluation of the Hawke Government (1983-85) from the Jewish point of view.

The first article by Walter Lippmann deals with the demographic situation of Australian Jewry. He estimates that there are 75-80,000 Jews in Australia, whilst other statisticians speak of 90,000 plus. He reminds us that Australian Jewry is an aged community, having less than 20% of under-twenties and 32% of over fifty-fives. About 75% of all Jews in Melbourne live in the six suburbs of St. Kilda, Caulfield, Brighton, Moorabbin, Malvern and Prahran. Australia has 6148 residents who were born in Israel, viz. 2592 Christians, 2071 Jews and 285 Moslems. Of course, many Israelis were not born in Israel.

Some of the articles are autobiographical and 3 short stories are included. The article on Jewish artists contains several prints in colour, and Rabbi Apple tells us about the Ministry of the Great Synagogue.

It is a worthwhile publication which could become a true and fascinating mirror of Jewish life "down under".

I. Porush