

# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



VOL. XVI 2001



PART 1

# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

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

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

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A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed on the back cover. Information about membership in the Society and its other activities and resources may be obtained from the Honorary Secretaries in Melbourne or Sydney.

The Editors welcome suggestions for articles and manuscripts dealing with any aspect of the Australian Jewish experience. The Journal is national in coverage and deals with the whole sweep of Australian Jewish history from 1788 to the contemporary period.

Material submitted for consideration for publication in the Journal should be presented on a 3.5inch Macintosh or Windows computer disk, saved in Microsoft Word (or TEXT/ASCII/RTF format). Please indicate the software and version used. The disk should be sent with an identical double-spaced printout, and may be accompanied by illustrations. References should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes. No payment can be offered for any contribution. No handwritten submissions will be accepted.

Communications regarding publication should be sent to the Editors: Dr Rodney Goutman, PO Box 608, Carnegie, Victoria 3163; or to Dr Suzanne D Rutland, Mandelbaum House, 385 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, NSW 2008.

## **Front cover: Invitation to Lewis Sanders**

(Lewis Sanders: 1834-1911. Lewis was the founder of L Sanders & Co (together with Lewis Levy) that later became the Leviathan Ltd. Three corner shops at the corner of Bourke and Swanston Streets, which soon expanded and became one of Melbourne's famous business houses.

(Courtesy: Collection, Jewish Museum of Australia)

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**Volume XVI**

**Part 1**

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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This edition departs from its usual presentation in two distinct ways. It has been divided into two separate sections, and begins rather than ends with a collection of primary sources. The division of the text is not arbitrary, but rather intended to highlight two related matters. The first is the celebration of Australia's first centenary of Federation. Compiled by *Lorraine Freeman*, these documents illustrate reactions to this momentous event, the intensity of communal Anglophilia, and the time, attitudes to communal issues such as Zionism Jewish education, and the ever-present need for charity to help those in difficult circumstances. The second section is a celebration of the centenary in unique way - it contains some of the winning entries in a competition designed to encourage secondary-school-age students to read and think about the Australian Jewish historical record, and ultimately to write about any aspect within its broad canon which has excited their imagination. By any measure, this endowed competition by the Godfrey and Myra Cohen Charitable Trust was an overwhelming success. One aspect of the competition was a commitment, that where possible, winning entries would be published in this journal. Unfortunately, the format of chosen by the entries of two of the winners did not suit the journal's current style and thus could not be included.

*Rodney Benjamin* provides two articles on completely different topics. The first deals with the meeting which unified the various state Jewish welfare societies into a national body, which finally overcame the legal, procedural, and personal barriers which had doomed previous attempts. The other revisits the writings of this country's pre-eminent demographer, the late Professor Charles A Price, whose work provided a crucial references for other practitioners of the art dealing with the size and nature of the Australian Jewish population,

The piece by *Rodney Goutman* is a reminder that when Konrads Kalejs entered Australia in 1950, a Nazi or fascist past was nor did bar to Australian citizenship. This fact was a feature of the intense controversy at the time between the Australian Jewish community and the Robert Menzies Government over the vexed question of German immigration. A heightening Cold War atmosphere and a national pre-occupation with economic development simply nullified concerns over the morality of mass German immigration. This was the first time that the Australian Jewish community had been threatened with sanctions for opposing government policy.

Helped by *Serge Liberman's* translations, we have access to the impressions of Australian Jewry of three prominent Yiddish visitors - *Jacob Pat*, *Chaim Shoshkes*, and *Berl Frimer* - of Australian Jewry. Each of these was a guest lecturer at the Kadimah in an era when Yiddish culture was much stronger in Melbourne than it is today. The importance of these observations does not lie in their accuracy. Undoubtedly, the brevity of their visit meant that their access to the broad variety of the community was greatly restricted. Interest here is in the outsider's interpretation of what they did observe, no doubt influenced by local commentary.

Few in Australia have worked harder and over so many years in Australia on behalf of Israel than South Australia's Adelheid Traub, who passed away this year in her nineties. In recognition of her work, the South Australian Branch of the Friends of the Hebrew University celebrated her activism and generosity with a lecture entitled the 'Adelaide-Israel Heritage' delivered by another respected communal worker, *Helen Tversky-Steiner*. She used this occasion to disclose her own family's links to the Holy Land, and the Adelaide community's connections, first with Palestine, and then Israel.

This year, the Historical Society has been privileged to hear the reminiscences of a number of speakers who have been closely identified with Jewish activity, or with endeavours in which Jews were most prominent. Three of these talks are reproduced in this edition. The first is by nonagenarian *Bernard Boas*, a grandson of Adelaide Hebrew Congregation's first Minister, the Reverend Abraham Boas. He provides a unique perspective on Jewish existence over his long lifetime from the perspective of an Anglo-Australian. Another contribution is by *Leon Haskin*. This reveals his love for the life and ambiance of the schmatte business in Melbourne's Flinders Lane, and for the many Jewish characters who operated in its environs. Finally, there are *Stan Marks*'s humorous musings about the 'Third St Kilda' or 'Danglow's Own' scout troop. Many future community leaders numbered in its ranks. Marks is left contemplating whether Jewish scouting has a role in the twenty-first century.

Two contributions are of a particularly intimate nature. *Yetta Rothberg-Allen*'s 'About Annie' tells about her 'little Yiddishe Momma' living and surviving in the multi-ethnic environment of Carlton, and later, in old age, moving to the more rustic environs of North Balwyn. She ends with a poignant poem with an all-to-familiar theme - a lament, even the mourning for lost opportunities of finding out about one's own parents' background while they were still alive. Then there is *Phillip Mendes*' autobiography, which traces his own political radicalism whose origins lie in his family circumstances, feelings of alienation at school, a growing awareness of injustice in the world, and social work practice in working-class areas of Melbourne.

Recent years have seen a steady growth in the number of new synagogues in Melbourne. However, the current new establishments are but the latest phase in a long and varied history that stems from the early years of the Colony of Victoria. This is illustrated by *John Cohen*'s timeline which shows the geographic spread of the creation of Jewish places of worship over a hundred year period, from the first religious services held in the Port Phillip District in 1839, through to the eve of the Second World War.

This edition of the journal ends with three book reviews, *George Keen*'s consideration of 'Orache Chaim-The History of the Central Synagogue' in Sydney, *Phillip Mendes*' assessment of Mark Aaron's 'War Criminals Welcome: Australia, A Sanctuary For Fugitive War Criminals Since 1945', and finally *Rodney Goultman*'s thoughts about Henry Lew's 'The Five Walking Sticks'.

Rodney Goultman  
Editor

## 100 YEARS AGO

*Compiled by Lorraine Freeman*

On the first of January 1901, the six Australian colonies became federated into one Commonwealth. The Australian population numbered 4 million, of which 75% were native born "Australians". More than 50% of the total Australian population lived outside the capital cities.

The Jewish population of Australia in 1901 was just over 15,000, which equated to 0.04% of the total population. The contemporary census, however, had revealed that 20% of the Jewish men in Sydney and Melbourne were married to "persons of another faith".

The Jewish Herald editorial of December 21<sup>st</sup> 1900 viewed the newly emerging Commonwealth as an extension of the British Empire.

### **The Jewish Herald.**

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER, 5661—1900.

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#### **The Dawning Era.**

WHILE the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth is hailed with the utmost satisfaction by all true-hearted Australians, we Jews form no exception. Many of us were born in this country, others have made it the land of their adoption, but each and all are sincerely attached to it. Its interests are our interests, its welfare is identical with our own. True to the best traditions of the mother country, Australia has one law for all alike, and he who respects that law will be protected by it in return. Everyone may follow his peaceful avocations without let or hindrance, and cultivate his inborn talents and tastes. If rivalry is inseparable from modern life, it is of a kind that will tend to the greatest good for the greatest number. The majority rules, but the minority has also its rights, which must not be and are not entirely trampled under foot. True toleration makes us concede to others what we claim for ourselves. The dissension which unfortunately divides classes and creeds in the old country is happily unknown here; no one desires to transplant it on Australian soil. In matters of religion everybody is at liberty to follow the dictates of his own conscience. There is and can be no interference, because the State does not tolerate it. Under these happy auspices Australian unity is becoming an established fact. People on both sides of the Murray will now come to look upon each other as fellow-citizens, sharers of a glorious past and co-workers in what all hope to be a no less glorious future. All will wish the new Commonwealth God-speed, and pray that within her boundaries there may be found at all times that righteousness which exalteth a nation. The ties which have hitherto bound us to the mother country are not to be weakened, but rather strengthened, by the new Constitution, and hence we may all indulge the hope that the mother will always be proud of her daughter beyond the seas.



The Jewish Herald assured readers that the ties to the British Empire would be strengthened by the creation of the Australian Nation. Loyalty to Britain would thus be assured. Many non-British adult Jewish males who had arrived from Europe hastened to register as British subjects by 1901.

With Federation, it was hoped that a closer union could arise between the Jewish congregations in the various states. The January 1<sup>st</sup> celebrations, held in Sydney for the inauguration of the Nation were seen as the opportunity for holding a Conference, with the aim of attaining new cooperation between the several dispersed Jewish communities. These hopes were dashed when Rabbi Dr Joseph Abrahams, of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, discovered that he had not been included in the official program for the Service of Divine Thanksgiving that was to be held at The Great Synagogue, on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January 1901. He reacted with an indignant boycott of the Conference, although he did attend the service. The Sydney Hebrew Standard of February 16<sup>th</sup> 1901 was miffed.

## The Hebrew Standard OF AUSTRALASIA.

ALFRED HARRIS, ... .. EDITOR.

HARRIS & SON,  
PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS,  
249 GEORGE-STREET, SYDNEY.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1901.

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It has since transpired that Rev. Dr. Abrahams feels that he has been grievously slighted and has publicly expressed his opinion in this regard. He further explains his absence from the conference on these grounds. Mr. A. M. Hertzberg is, we are given to understand, also under a similar impression of discourtesy in his case. Having proof that Dr. Abrahams had cast an aspersion on the courtesy of the Sydney Jewish Community, we have made inquiry and explain that Mr. G. J. Cohen, on his part did his utmost under the special circumstances to extend every communal courtesy to the visitors, and if the methods necessary for communication have upset his plans, it is a serious breach to rank the community as discourteous without bringing the subject of complaint before those responsible for its existence. We sincerely believe that in some manner the smouldering embers of parochial jealousy have been fanned into flame for sinister motives, and that the good-feeling, the accomplishment of the inauguration of the Commonwealth has engendered in all other spheres will soon permeate and bring the discordant tones in our communities to a higher and nobler keynote than petty fogging affairs that really seem the offspring of jealousy. We do not forget that—

" 'Tis doing wrong creates such doubts as these ;  
Reads us jealous, and destroys our peace."

For the sake of the good that an interchange of opinions on Jewish questions will do, let us hope that better and more thoroughly religious sentiments may out-weigh apparent grievances, or we shall find that—

" Small jealousies, 'tis true inflame desire ;  
'Tis too great, not fan, but quite blow out the fire."



However, the Melbourne Jewish Herald of January 1901 had already published the Rabbi's own candid words on the matter.

**MR. GOTTHELF** regretted exceedingly the absence of the Rev. Dr. Abrahams.

[In order to place before the public both sides of the question, we submitted this part of the report to the Rev. Dr. Abrahams, who gave the following explanation—

"The real reason why I declined to attend was well known to some of the members of the conference. I had been treated with unparalleled discourtesy by the lay authorities of the Sydney congregation. I deeply appreciate the welcome accorded to the visiting clergy on Sabbath, the 5th January, from the pulpit; and this courtesy, on the part of the Rev. Mr. Landau, makes the action of the lay authorities all the more marked. Of all the visiting ministers, I was the only one not asked to take part in the special service on Sunday morning, the 6th January. It is true that on Saturday afternoon, of course after the programme had been printed, I was asked in a half-hearted sort of way to read one of the Psalms, which I indignantly declined.

Both religious and lay leaders from the various states then arranged to meet at an interstate Conference, to be held in Melbourne in May of that year. However this conference did not take place, as the Victorian Beth Din announced that the most senior Rabbis from Victoria would not attend. All the planning and hopes came to naught (see: "A New Movement").

Many Victorian Jews enlisted to fight in the Boer War, including Alfred Saunders, Myer Blashki and Harry Shappere. Harry Shappere's sister Rose had been the first Jewish nursing sister to qualify in Victoria, and she enlisted with a British hospital in Johannesburg (see: "Return of Sister Rose Shappere"). Rose was one of a group of forward-thinking women who worked, and achieved financial independence. At that time, women were rarely found at the war front, nor did they vote. In the years leading up to Federation, there had been a general expectation and a hope that suffrage would soon be achieved.

Concern was expressed among the male members of the boards of congregations that not only might women now insist on voting at congregational meetings, but that they could conceivably be elected to the board and even become an office bearer. This was an issue for the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation by 1896, when two leading women members of the congregation were given the right to vote at a general meeting. Within a month an extraordinary meeting was convened, and the two ladies had that right rescinded (minutes of Ballarat Hebrew Congregation).

The Federal Convention held in Adelaide in 1897 was petitioned to have the women's vote written into the Federal agenda. In fact female suffrage was only

later achieved, on a state-by-state basis, and women in Victoria waited until 1908 for voting rights at state level.

1900 saw the beginnings in Australia of organised Zionism. The West Australian Zionist Association was founded in 1900, under the leadership of Rev Freedman (see "Zionism in Australia"). In Victoria, the Jewish press opposed Herzl's scheme for the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, stating that it would be a disastrous failure (see: "A Mere Trifle").

## The Jewish Herald.

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 18th JANUARY, 5661—1901.

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### A New Movement.

PROVIDED the congregations are willing, there is to be a conference of Jewish ministers and representative laymen in May next. Seeing that the object of the conference is to further the interests of Judaism in Australasia it would ill become us to throw cold water upon the proposal. Nevertheless, we cannot but confess that we have serious misgivings as to the practical results of the movement. The conference, as proposed, will contain the lay element in largely preponderating proportions, and, this being so, we may be sure that there will be a great deal of wild talk on questions of ritual and of religious practice; in short, of remodelling Judaism from top to bottom. Unlike in days gone by, when Hebrew learning was far more common than it is now, every Jew at the present day considers himself quite competent to form and express opinions on ecclesiastic matters, with which those who have studied them during the greater part of their lives are slow in dealing. It would be well to bear this in mind at the very outset, and if there is to be a conference it should be at once understood that the orthodox character of our institutions is not to be interfered with; that it is not the intention of the promoters to make radical changes, which have done no good wherever they have been introduced. It will, therefore, be necessary that a business paper should be prepared before the conference meets; that those who wish to bring certain matters forward should give notice of it, and should embody their ideas in carefully thought-out papers, after the reading of which a debate might take place and, if deemed desirable, certain resolutions be passed. The organisation of a conference is so important that a great deal of the practical results depends on it. The time from now till May next is short, but with a good working committee, and especially an able secretary, much might be done even in that short time.

# The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 1st FEBRUARY, 5661—1901.

## The Death of our

## Good Queen.

LITTLE did we think when our last issue went to Press that, before we should take up the pen again, the British Empire would be plunged into the deepest mourning—a mourning which for extent and intensity has not its equal in English history. Such is the uncertainty of all things under the sun. In the fulness of years, surrounded by an affectionate family, and deeply regretted by a loyal and devoted nation, good Queen Victoria has been gathered to her people. England is the poorer by her loss, but the richer by her example. The most glorious heritage which she left to England is not a largely increased territory, but the record of a noble life—admirable from beginning to end. Thousands of thousands declare her praises; none can say one word against her. There is absolutely no room for that exercise of charity with which the memory of the departed is generally treated—the voice of criticism is silenced. What excellent lessons may coming generations learn from good Queen Victoria—lessons of duty faithfully discharged, of pious resignation to the will of the Almighty, of kindness to the highest as well as to the humblest in the land, and of a thousand other virtues which endeared her to her people. Amongst queens a Queen, amongst women a woman, she stands out in bold relief from the best and noblest of all generations. She was well-stricken in age; past the limit assigned by the Psalmist to human life; we knew she could not much longer grace the throne; but, when the hour of separation drew gradually nearer, everybody prayed that she might be spared for a little while longer, and everybody felt deeply moved when at length the inexorable hand of death made an end to her long and eminently useful life. In the heart of the British nation Queen Victoria will live for ever; and if there is any truth in the teachings of our religion—as we firmly believe there is—she will, in another world, receive the reward of her righteous life on earth.

ת נ צ ב ה



Australian Jewish leaders were concerned to stress the importance of religious education (see "An Ambitious Scheme"). A United Jewish Education Board had been created in Melbourne in 1895. It consisted of prominent public figures of the day, including The Hon Nathaniel Levi, the Attorney General Isaac Isaacs, and Phillip Blashki who was appointed as the President. However the debate centred on whether that religious education was to be given in a separate Jewish day-school, or in a secular school that had pupils of all religious denominations.

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## **Our New King.**

**HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS** the Prince of Wales has ascended the throne of the British Empire as King Edward VII. The nation with one voice accords him a hearty welcome. If the Crown were not hereditary, but left to the vote of the people, there could be no doubt as to whom it would have been conferred upon. A better choice could not have been made. As Prince of Wales, King Edward VII. has long endeared himself to the people over whom he now reigns. His generous disposition, his liberal views and his kindness of heart have won for him the love and admiration of all classes. He has at all times identified himself with the weal and woe of the people, and the British are not slow in recognising sterling worth. Their prayers and best wishes follow him upon the throne, and they will be as loyal and devoted to him as they were to his Royal mother. Though the sorrow which the demise of the Queen has occasioned is yet too fresh and too deep to permit of an outburst of the most genuine enthusiasm, there is, nevertheless, but one wish and prayer in the minds and hearts of all alike, and that is :

**GOD SAVE THE KING !**



## RETURN OF SISTER ROSE SHAPPERE.

By the arrival, about ten days ago, of the s.s. *Damascus* to this port, Sister Rose Shappere returned to her parents, residing in Villier-street, Elsternwick. She has been in the thick of the South African war, and has had experience such as falls to the lot of very few ladies, even in her own profession. As is already known, she was in Ladysmith during the siege, and the hardships she there had to undergo beggar all description. Even from her own vivid account we can form but a faint idea of what she had to endure. She had under her charge as many as eighty-four patients at one time, all more or less suffering from enteric fever, or, what is perhaps as bad, dysentery. At first there was a plentiful supply of drugs and medical comforts, but these gradually vanished as the siege dragged on to an unexpected length. Nurses are proverbially resourceful, but, under these trying circumstances, Sister Shappere's ingenuity was taxed to the very utmost. Many a time had she to remonstrate with the officers in charge of the camp to obtain what was required for the suffering soldiers, and her appeal, inspired by a sense of duty, as well as by womanly sympathy, had generally the desired effect. But, for all that, it was a hard time that was spent in Ladysmith, much harder than pen can describe or tongue can tell, and physical suffering was often aggravated a thousand times by the shelling of the Boers, who respected no one and nothing, not even the flag with the red cross. At length, when the siege was raised, incessant work of the most fatiguing nature began to tell upon Miss Shappere's own health. She was invalided home, but it was not by any means a pleasure trip, as she was placed in charge of a large number of invalided soldiers, whose comfort had to be looked after as well as her own. Arrived in England, she remained only about ten days, and then, as she had sufficiently recruited her health and strength, the order came: "Once more to the breach!" But Sister Shappere's enthusiasm in, and devotion to, her work know no bounds, and so before long she was again on the veldt.

When the various contingents left Australia it was thought that many of them, after they had gone successfully through the war, would not return, but would settle in the Transvaal, where there would be splendid openings for young energetic men. Sister Shappere, having seen the country and its people, does not share that belief. The country can hold out no comparison with Australia, she says. The climate is much too severe.

# The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 15th MARCH, 5661—1901.

## A Munificent Gift.

The munificent donation of One Thousand Pounds given by the family of Mr. and the late Mrs. Michaelis to the children's ward of the Alfred Hospital will be hailed with the utmost satisfaction not only by the managers of that institution, but by the whole Jewish community. It is a striking illustration of practical benevolence. The funeral of the late Mrs. Michaelis was conducted with all possible simplicity. To spend much money for such a purpose was considered, and very properly so, mere waste. On the other hand, the family have given a handsome donation for the benefit of the living. In their grief over the loss of their dear mother, they have thought, and found comfort in the thought, of the little children who are afflicted with disease and whose parents have not the means to restore them to health. It would have been impossible to choose an object more likely to benefit a larger number of persons, and that the most deserving of all classes. And when it is remembered that only a few months ago the same family, or their firm, contributed the sum of £500 to the extinction of the debt on the Melbourne Hospital, their present gift is all the more creditable to them, and deserves the heartiest recognition of all well-wishers of the community.

# The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 10th MAY, 5661—1901.

**The  
Royal  
Visit.** It goes almost without saying that the Jews of Australasia join their fellow-citizens of all creeds in an enthusiastic welcome to the Heir Apparent and his Royal Consort. They were sincerely attached to the illustrious Lady who last graced the British Throne, and they are equally devoted to her rightful successor, King Edward VII., by

both of whom they have always been treated with all the justice and consideration they could fairly expect. The Jews of Australasia, like their co-religionists at Home, have never shirked any duty devolving upon loyal citizens, and, we feel sure, they would not shrink from any sacrifice that the British Empire or any integral part of it might need. We do not say this in any boastful spirit, nor do we in the least mean to hint that we are better in this respect than other people; we merely wish to emphasise the fact that the ruler makes the citizen, and that in other countries there is no reason for that deep-seated prejudice against the Jew which so sadly mars the civilisation of our age. It was said the other day by the representatives of all races and creeds who presented addresses to His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York, as he passed through Singapore, that under the British flag all subjects alike shared the same liberty and the same privileges, and we Jews can fully endorse that statement. We therefore heartily welcome the representative of our Sovereign who is now honouring us with a visit, and, in common with all our fellow-subjects, we look upon that visit as a compliment paid to the people of Australasia in recognition of their loyalty to the Throne, and their readiness to rally round the grand old flag in times of need. We regret that the recent death of our beloved Queen does not permit of the Royal visit to be made as joyful as it would otherwise have been, but nevertheless the people's hearts are thrilled with joy and gratification at the presence in their midst of the Heir Apparent, and all hope that by means of this visit the ties that bind Australasia to the mother country and to the Throne, already strong, may be further strengthened.

*'Wir wollen sein ein einzig Volk von Brüdern,  
In keiner Noth uns trennen und Gefahr!'*

(One united nation of brothers we shall be,  
In peril and in stress stand close together.)



# The Jewish Herald.

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 7th JUNE, 1861—1901.

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## A Difficult Question.

THE meeting held last Sunday in the vestry-room of the Bourke-street Synagogue had to deal with a difficult question, and, all things considered, we cannot see how it could have dealt differently with that question from what it did. Some children have, inadvertently, been admitted into the school of the Jewish Education Board, who, from a Jewish point of view, are not Jewish children, and the question arose, whether those children should be allowed to remain there. The school was established for the purpose of teaching Jewish children the elements of their religion. It is not an ordinary school for the imparting of secular knowledge. If it were the latter, no one would question the admission of children of all denominations. But being only for supplying religious education to Jewish children, the least that could be done was to ask those who largely support the school whether they are willing to admit other children as well. The answer which the majority of the subscribers gave was substantially this, that they did not wish to place non-Jewish children in a false position. Those children do not attend there merely to learn Hebrew and to see what the Jewish religion is like; they attend because their parents wish them to be brought up as Jews. With that desire every Jew naturally sympathises; but it has to be borne in mind, and the parents ought to be made aware of that fact, that merely learning Hebrew and the tenets of the Jewish faith and the history of our people does not make those children Jews; other steps ought to be taken and other ceremonies to be gone through to attain that end. It is simply nonsense to say that a Jewish school—that is, a school imparting Hebrew and religion to Jewish children—ought to be open to all-comers. There is no Jewish school in the world which aims at such a thing. The Jews of Melbourne are willing to pay for the religious education of their own children, but not for that of others. That other denominations would probably be glad to receive all sorts of children into their religious schools has nothing to do with us. They make no secret of their desire to make proselytes wherever they can; it is part and parcel of their religion. We do not act on that principle; it is foreign to our religion. Under these circumstances the meeting held last Sunday could not come to any other conclusion than this—that all children taught in the Board's school must be Jews, and if some are not, but wish to be, then the parents must take the necessary steps to have them made Jews. Whether facilities should be given to such children to be admitted into our fold is another question, which probably most liberal-minded Jews will answer in the affirmative. But before all things it is necessary that our rules should be upheld, and that there should be no trifling with practices in vogue amongst Jews all over the world.



DECEMBER 7, 1900

## Zionism in Australia.

It is difficult to see what good our people in Perth can do by starting a Zionist branch. Do they want to go to Jerusalem at an early date? Are they in need of a "legally assured home?"

They have one, and they ought to be deeply thankful for it. But they will tell us that they desire to secure the same boon for those of their co-religionists who are in need of such a home. Of course that is another matter, and a very laudable desire. But are they in the least sure that the methods adopted by Herzl and Nordau are the right ones, and in the least likely to lead to success? It is tolerably certain that they are not, and men of light and leading in Europe, especially in England, are firmly of that opinion. But what can Jews in Western Australia do for so gigantic, and let us add, so Utopian a scheme? Well, they can send money; that is, money towards a doubtful purpose. Might not that money be rather given to a purpose which has in it every element of success? There is the Anglo-Jewish Association which helps oppressed and neglected Jews in the best and noblest way; that is, by subsidising schools, by seeing that the young people of both sexes shall have the opportunity of acquiring a modern education, followed by such industrial training as they are naturally fitted for. Why not support that noble institution instead of sending away money to further an object which has not advanced, and is not likely to advance, beyond fine speeches? But, quite apart from all this, the movement planted on Australian soil may do an immense amount of harm. Let us make no mistake about the meaning of Zionism. All over the world it is taken to mean an agitation for the return of the Jews, at an early date, to Palestine, there to form themselves into an independent nation under their own government. You cannot give Zionism a meaning of your own; you must take it as it is, or not at all. Do we Australian Jews want that? Do we wish it to be said that we do not look upon this country as our home, and that we aspire to become a separate nation? Not one out of a thousand Australian Jews will identify himself with such an idea. Let us beware that we may not create a false impression that can only do us harm. Our people have quite enough to do to remove old, deep-seated prejudices; to give these, by unwise actions on our part, the semblance of reality would be a deplorable policy which we may have reason to rue at no distant date.

# The Jewish Herald.

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 16th AUGUST, 5661—1901.

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## A Mere Trifle.

DR. HERZL asks for a mere trifle—one million and a-half pounds sterling. Half-a-million he has already in the Jewish Colonial Trust Company's coffers, and all that is now required is another million and a-half. He does not say what is to be done with the money; he does not give the contributors, or would-be contributors, an opportunity of judging for themselves whether the scheme which he has in his mind, and to which he means to devote the money, is a feasible one, and bids fair to become a success; no, all he says is that he has had several interviews with the Sultan of Turkey, and that there is a favourable opportunity of settling a large number of Jews in Palestine. But Dr. Herzl ought to know that Jews are practical people, and that, before they part with their money, they very likely want to know some more particulars about the object to which the money is to be applied. A General Booth, to whom large funds are entrusted, to be used by him according to his discretion, is all but impossible amongst the Jews. At any rate, such a man has never been known amongst our people. Moreover, there are Jews in Europe and America who know something about transactions with the Sultan of Turkey, and who in all probability want to see undoubted security before any money is to be paid over to that Sovereign. No one, we are sure, doubts Dr. Herzl's sincerity, nor his integrity; but he is an enthusiast, and, as he himself told his hearers, not a business man; whereas, a transaction such as he contemplates requires all the tact and experience of able business men. We are very much afraid that until Dr. Herzl submits his plans and his favourable opportunities to the careful scrutiny of a Board of such men, the trifling amount which he asks for will not be easily forthcoming. People have plenty of use, and good use, too, for their money; they do not fritter it away on objects about the feasibility of which they know little or nothing.

**An Ambitious Scheme.** **THE** Hon. Nathaniel Levi, M.L.C., who followed Mr. Jacobs, also emphasised the urgent necessity for improved facilities for religious education. The hon. gentleman has

always viewed the disestablishment of the Melbourne Hebrew School some years ago with regret, and he holds that nothing will satisfy the requirements of the Melbourne Jewish community in this respect except a school for religious and secular education, somewhat on the basis of the Jews' Free School in London. That is an ambitious scheme, no doubt, but is it within our reach? Have we the means to carry it into effect? It is well known that but for the support of the Rothschild family, the noble minded benefactors of English Jewry, the Free School would perhaps no longer exist, or, at any rate, would not have expanded to its present proportions, when over 3000 children are taught under its aegis. The Jews of London, as a body, do not give it that support which it needs. Is it likely that in Melbourne such a school would meet with adequate support? To start it at all would require an endowment fund; where is that to come from? The United Jewish Education Board requires something like £300 per annum to keep it going; but do we not know the difficulties that are experienced and the devices that have to be resorted to in order to obtain this extremely moderate amount of money? How could it be expected that a Jewish school for religious and secular education combined would meet with the much larger support that it would require? But, supposing the financial difficulties were overcome, we are by no means sure that the large majority of Jewish parents would send their children to such a school. It is a debatable question, the solution of which would require a great deal of deep and earnest thought, whether it would not be wiser and better to allow Jewish children to be taught all secular subjects side by side with the children of other denominations, and thus give the future citizens of the state an opportunity of learning to know each other better, and to start a friendship which in all probability would last far beyond school life. On the other hand, it may perhaps be shown that our own religious requirements are of such a nature that nothing but a separate school would satisfy them. For our own part, we do not, for the present, favour either the one view or the other; we only say that these are ponderous questions which demand a great deal of consideration. If the community is in a proper frame of mind to discuss them, well and good. But it must also be prepared to give effect to its decision, whatever it may be, and to provide the necessary means for either one scheme or the other. All parties are probably agreed that the importance of religious education could not possibly be over rated, and, further still, that the present results of our educational efforts leave much room for improvement. How is that improvement to be effected? That is the question of the hour, and the sooner it is taken in hand the better.



**The Jewish  
Girls' Guild.**

THE seventh annual report of the Jewish Girls Guild, Sydney, is very pleasant reading. Mrs. J. H. Landau, the president of the Guild, and the members of the Board working with her may well be congratulated upon the good work they are doing. And a great and very commendable feature of that work is this, that it involves personal service. It is easy enough for people who have plenty of money to spend some of it in relieving the poor; but to render personal service, to leave one's ease, and to give up one's leisure hours in order to bring a little cheer to those who are afflicted, is a very different and a much more difficult matter, to which not all people are equal. It is an excellent preparatory school for the more complex work which the older and larger charitable societies have to perform. Nor is it the habit of making personal sacrifices alone but experience as well that is acquired by the members of the Guild, and experience is a most valuable aid in charity work. It needs a practised eye and keen powers of observation to distinguish the impostor from the really deserving man, the 'Oily Gammon' from the silent sufferer. To spurn the one and to practically help the other is a duty, but a duty which needs experience.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN JEWISH WELFARE SOCIETIES

*Rodney Benjamin OAM*

The conference to establish the Federation of Jewish Welfare Societies was held in Melbourne on Sunday the 7th & Monday 8th September 1947. Strangely the minutes of the meeting do not disclose where the meeting was held, although the hotels where the interstate and overseas visitors stayed were recorded together with the fact that everyone went to Leo and Mina Fink's for high tea on the Sunday evening before the meeting started.

Those present were:

From Sydney, Saul Symonds, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) who had called the meeting in that capacity although he was also president of the Sydney Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS). The other representatives of Sydney AJWS were, Israel Green the Vice-president, Harry Lesnie the Treasurer, and the long serving committee member Hans Vidor.

From Melbourne, Alec Masel, the immediate past president of both the ECAJ and the Melbourne AJWS; Leo Fink, president of both AJWS and the United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund<sup>1</sup> (UJORF) in Melbourne, Sammy Wynn executive member of AJWS, Melbourne, and a high profile Zionist of the time, and Dr Benfey also on the executive of AJWS representing the German Jewish refugee organisation. Mina Fink, Leo's wife, was present as an observer for UJORF, and Mrs Rosefield was an observer for Ladies Auxiliary of AJWS.

From Brisbane came Messrs Newhouse, Solomon and Moses; from Adelaide Messrs Hains and Adelson; from Perth the brothers Myer and Alec Breckler; and from Hobart the Reverend Mr Warse.

Most importantly Mr C.H. Jordan was present. Charlie Jordan, an American, was at that time in Shanghai representing the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC). He had come to Australia to help the Australian Jewish community's efforts obtain landing permits for some of the remaining 12,000 Jewish Displaced Persons still stranded in Shanghai who had no relatives in Australia who could nominate them.

This was not the first attempt to form a Federal body. The original moves were initiated in 1936 and 1937. The Welfare Societies did not exist at that time. There were fund raising bodies, called German Jewish Relief Funds, which were formed in Australian capital cities which were intended to send the funds raised overseas to help German Jewish youth escape from Nazi Germany.

In September 1936 the London Committee which was organizing this movement decided to take an initiative that would facilitate the entry of German Jews into Australia. The London Committee negotiated directly with Australia

House in London. The novel suggestion was raised that, if the Australian committees of GJRF were to use their funds to give a guarantee to the Australian Government that refugees admitted would not become a charge on public funds, then the existing requirement of the Australian Government for landing money equivalent in present values to some \$25,000 per person for those guaranteed, would be waived. The London Committee was sending Ernest Halstead, its president, to Sydney to assist the Australian committees to implement these plans.<sup>2</sup>

The suggestion of the GJRF providing a guarantee posed legal problems for its Committees. They were all unincorporated bodies and were legally unable to provide such an assurance to the Government. To overcome this problem the Committee of the NSW GJRF decided that "if it were immediately necessary then the President (Samuel, shortly after that Sir Samuel, Cohen) should personally [provide the] guarantee and be indemnified from the funds of the Appeal".<sup>3</sup>

Halstead arrived in Sydney to attend a meeting of the NSW GJRF in November 1936. Isaac Boas, a scientist who was a senior member of CSIRO and had frequent contact with State and Federal Cabinet members in that capacity, also attended as president of the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board. The following year he was to become the first president of the Victorian MWS. Halstead suggested that the London Committee would 'vet' all applicants there before sending applications for landing permits to Australia and that the Australian GJRFs should form a central body that could make sure that the immigrants were "desirable and of a category readily absorbed" in Australia and be one body to represent the Jewish community to the Australian Government on migration matters.

Boas contributed to the deliberations by adding that he had discussed the question of German Jewish immigration "with nearly every member of the Cabinet" who, although they are willing to help, are annoyed at being approached by individuals. The Sydney executive of the GJRF had already considered the question of the formation of one body and a copy of a plan for the centralization of the GJRF was given to all present for later discussion.<sup>4</sup>

At the next meeting of the NSW GJRF on 3 December 1936, Paul Cohen (Cullen), its indefatigable honorary secretary, spoke of the proposed central organisation. It was to be a company incorporated in Canberra, which would also serve as a vehicle to provide guarantees. The meeting was advised that:

the Melbourne Committee would fall into line when details became known to them. although they approved of the principle of the scheme they did not consider incorporation of the Company was desirable at present.<sup>5</sup>

At the next meeting of the NSW GJRF on 17 December 1936 the minutes carry a sub-heading, "Re Australian Jewish Welfare Society". Under this heading, the first formal mention of AJWS, the honorary solicitor of GJRF, A. Kahn, presented draft Memorandum and Articles of Association of the proposed new body. The proposal to register the Society in Canberra was moved by Paul Cohen and carried unanimously.<sup>6</sup> This was a bold move at that time. Company law in Australia was controlled by State legislation. There was no vehicle for establishing an Australia wide company other than through separate registration in each State. Sir Isaac Isaacs was invited to Patron and Sir Samuel Cohen was to be the first

Federal President. It was not until early 1938 that it was established that registration of the proposed AJWS could not be effected in Canberra. The meeting of NSW GJRF in April 1938, which recorded this rejection of federal registration, bore the notation.

It was proposed that with Melbourne's agreement it should be registered in Sydney.

At the next meeting of the NSW GJRF the words "or without" were added to the original minutes and were initialed by the chairman of that meeting. The minute then read that "with or without Melbourne's agreement the company should be registered in Sydney" This seems to have ensured that no federal body was established at that time. The Sydney AJWS was incorporated under New South Wales law in November 1938 and the Melbourne AJWS was incorporated under Victorian law in July 1939.

Matters progressed a little more equably in 1947, but there were still overtones of tension. These stresses were apparent between Saul Symonds and Leo Fink during the meetings. They were evident in correspondence exchanged between them even before the conference. In a letter to Fink dated 26 August 1947 Symonds wrote asking for details of funds held and their levels of expenditure in settling migrants. The letter went on:

I would point out that it is common knowledge that in addition to Welfare Society funds there are other funds in your state which have been collected for the purpose of assisting new arrivals which may not be included in your regular funds. We would ask that particulars of such monies be submitted...<sup>8</sup>

Fink's response dated 28 August read:

immediately on receipt of your letter I instructed, our auditors to prepare a statement of accounts of funds held by AJWS...<sup>9</sup>

Fink did not mention the funds held by the UJORE, which totaled over £25,000 (\$1,000,000) of its own funds and advances from HIAS totaling £72,000 (\$2,900,000).<sup>10</sup> This of course was the information that Symonds was seeking. And Fink knew it.

In an early exchange between the two on the second day of the conference Fink disclosed that he had received a phone call from HIAS in Paris two days before concerning approaches being made to Arthur Calwell, the Minister for Immigration in the Australian Government, while Calwell was in Paris. This brought a response from Symonds that:

I have always complained that you do not act in a straightforward [manner]. I told you what I had done in the matter by phone on Friday. When I saw you yesterday you told me nothing. You deliberately concealed the information. If that is the attitude you are going to adopt... there can be no co-operation.<sup>11</sup>

Discussion concerning the creation of a Federation prompted this from Fink:

It is demanded that we dissolve ourselves and become puppets of the great Australian body of the federation of Jewish Welfare Societies ... the federal body should only co-ordinate the machinery without having any sovereign powers whatsoever.<sup>12</sup>



Later on Masel explained the views being put by Fink:

'There are a great many people in the Victorian Jewish Community who think that we might have saved some hundreds of people in the Far East if action had not been taken by the NSW body. Whether we like it or not there is a large group of people in this community who are worried that the Sydney Society would dominate the federal body. I don't share the feeling of Mr Fink... but if it is not acceptable to Mr Fink and his Society then he is right in raising it.'<sup>13</sup>

Despite these problems between Sydney and Melbourne, Saul Symonds was elected Chairman of the conference, which commenced on the Sunday evening. Symonds advised the meeting that its prime purpose was to prepare for the position when AJWS would again be able to sponsor migrants.

In order to put this story in perspective, it must be realised that the first post war survivors who reached Australia came under Calwell's "close relative scheme". It was a programme negotiated by Alec Masel as president of the ECAJ with Calwell. Under the scheme the permits were issued on the basis that relatives already in Australia guaranteed each arrival. By the date of this meeting more than a thousand survivors had already reached Australia. The names of just a few of the ships which had already arrived carrying survivors under the close relative programme, the *Ville D'Amiens* in November 1946 and the *Johann de Witt* in March 1947, and the ships from Shanghai, the *Yoochow*, *Taiiping* in 1946 and the *Hwa Lien* in early 1947, is an indication of the extent of the "close relative scheme". This Federation meeting was preparing the way for the time when it was expected that AJWS would again have to sponsor migrants rather than relatives.

Alec Masel had just returned from a trip to Shanghai, which had been made with Calwell's formal approval, to select appropriate people from the Jewish DPs there for entry to Australia. Masel read from his report which, he said had already been approved by the Government. He had selected 1,445 DPs from the group supported by AJDC there and a further 100 Jews who had arrived there from Russia many years previously.

Jordan introduced himself as the representative of AJDC New York and as an observer and delegate of the International Refugee Organisation, the IRO. He spoke in these terms:

We are deeply touched by the courage of Mr. Calwell ... he has exposed himself without hesitation in giving the Jewish DPs a break... it is foolish to say that more should have been done ... you have a government that is committed to promoting immigration ... the people who are available for immigration are not always the people the country wants ... every government has to cope with public opinion ... pressure groups have more power in under-populated countries like Australia.<sup>14</sup>

Jordan went on to make a plea that the gathering should "set aside any differences that may prevail in the communities as a whole".<sup>15</sup>

After some fairly heated debate, which centered round states rights, it was agreed unanimously to set up a Federation which would enter into guarantees for migrants, co-ordinate states activities, act as liaison with the ECAJ, disseminate information to the states, and ensure that migrants were distributed fairly between

states. NSW delegates were asked to draw up a draft constitution. On that note the meeting adjourned at 11pm.

It resumed on the following morning at 10 o'clock. The whole session, which lasted until 1pm, was a discussion of how much money would be required to fund the next phase of immigration and whether this altogether uncertain sum could be found within the various State communities. There was no agreement on either question until it was moved by Green and Lesnie of Sydney that Jordan should be asked to recommend to AJDC in New York that \$100,000 (some \$2.5 million on present dollar values) should be made available for 1948 expenditure. Fink trumped this card by moving an amendment that AJDC should be asked for \$300,000 or \$7.5 million in current values.

The latter figure drew a response from Jordan that it "is of no use for me to pass on a recommendation that I know will be turned down... I will recommend the sum of \$100,000 ... you are going to have to tell me how you are going to work as a co-ordinated body, how you will apply the funds, whether as a loan or as capital investment... I am sure if you and I agree now the money will be forthcoming"

After lunch Fink withdrew his amendment. But the bickering went on. Now it was about who would bear the cost of running the Federation. Eventually it was agreed that these would be carried 50/50 by Sydney and Melbourne and that AJWS Sydney would provide all the guarantees for the whole of Australia. The States would provide counter indemnities to Sydney. And that migrants who were not joining relatives or friends would be sent 40% each to Sydney and Melbourne, 8% each to Perth and Brisbane, 3% to Adelaide and 1% to Tasmania. The total numbers expected were not even guessed at.

The final motion of the afternoon was that the Federal body should be called the Australian Federation of Jewish Welfare Societies and that the individual state bodies shall retain their old names.

The convention resumed at 8pm that night. Possibly because of the long day the meeting agreed Alec Masel's motion that the Federation office should be in Sydney until otherwise determined by Conference was agreed without discussion. Saul Symonds was appointed President, Israel Green Vice-President, Harry Lesnie Treasurer and Walter Brand Executive Secretary at a salary of £324 a year on top of the £936 a year he was receiving from AJWS Sydney.

The constitution of the Federation took some six months to resolve. Its objectives were to:

act as representatives with the Commonwealth Government in conjunction with the Executive Council of Australian Jewry for the Jewish Communities in Australia in regard to Jewish immigration into Australia .....

to ensure that [this] immigration ... be orderly and systematic ...

to enter into guarantees for the admission of Jewish displaced persons into Australia

to co-ordinate activities ... and to disseminate information<sup>46</sup>

What took the time to finalize this document were the matters concerning representation, where to Federal body should be and for how long it should stay there.

What is important to note was that it was the ECAJ, which at that time took the lead in matters of negotiating with Government. The ECAJ elected a "liaison officer" to do this negotiating, a role that was filled with distinction by Leo Fink and then by Sydney Einfeld for many years, although in the latter's case he was acting at various times not only in this role but as president of the ECAJ, the Federation and MWS Sydney.

There are some postscripts.

Firstly, much of the time of the conference in September 1947 was spent discussing what they saw as the two major problems of the immediate future. First was the projected arrival of some 1,700 more Jews from Shanghai. Despite Alec Masel's optimistic report to the conference, this influx never occurred because of Australian Government's attitude to the character of the migrants.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, the conference expected a further influx of Jewish DPs through the International Relief Organisation (the IRO) scheme. At the time the Australian agreement was to accept 1,000 persons a month under the scheme. Twenty five per cent of that figure would be Jewish. What actually happened was that very few Jews did arrive under the IRO scheme and no funds from the scheme were contributed by the Australian Government for passage monies for Jews who came outside the scheme. We struggle on with the information available to us.

As far as I am aware none of the participants in the conference who created the Federation are still alive although Paul Cullen who was part of the first attempt to create one is here with us today. It must be mentioned that the catalyst for the meeting fifty years ago, Charlie Jordan of AJDC was to die in most extraordinary circumstances. Jordan made a return trip to Australia. Born in Philadelphia Jordan was a trained social worker who had worked for AJDC since 1941 interrupted only by war service. Jordan came to Australia again in 1964. At that time he was executive director of AJDC for Europe stationed in Geneva. While still serving in that position Jordan was to die in suspicious circumstances. While he and his wife were visiting Prague in 1967 he went missing one evening. His body was discovered in the Vltava River several days later. A cause of death was never determined. But because of the broad role played by AJDC in rescue work behind the Iron Curtain, foul play was suspected.

## NOTES

- 1 The UJDRF was formed in Melbourne in June 1943 to raise funds, and collect clothing and food to assist Holocaust survivors. In 1947 a process was initiated to combine UJDRF with AJWS.
- 2 *NSW GJRF Minutes* 3 and 30 September 1936.
- 3 *Ibid.* 22 October 1936.
- 4 *Ibid.* 26 November 1936.
- 5 *Ibid.* 3 December 1936.
- 6 *Ibid.* 17 December 1936.
- 7 *Ibid.* 7 April 1938.



- 8 Letter from Symonds as President of Sydney AJWS dated 26.8.1947 to Fink as President of AJWRS, Melbourne. JCS archives.
- 9 Letter from Fink to Symonds 28.8.1947, JCS archives.
- 10 Balance Sheet of the United Jewish overseas Relief Fund at 30 June 1947, in its Annual Report.
- 11 Minutes of Conference of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies, Melbourne, 7th and 8th September 1947, p.15. JCS archives.
- 12 Ibid. p. 12.
- 13 Ibid. p.29.
- 14 Ibid. p. 3.
- 15 Ibid. p. 7.
- 16 Copy of Memorandum of Association of the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies in JCS archives.
- 17 See SD Rutland, "'Waiting Room Shanghai'", Australian Reactions to the Plight of Jews in Shanghai after the Second World War' *Leo Baeck Institute, Year Book XXXI, 1987*.
- 18 See SD Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*. Collins, 1988. pp.238-9 and Appendix II. And WD Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, vol-II, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1991, pp.66-7.

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## I AM JUST A NO-WHERE MAN

*Rodney Gouttman*

The enigmatic circumstances which led to Konrads Kalejs' initial presence in Australia remains the stuff of mystery novels. And because of this it is timely to remind ourselves that when he came, it was in the midst of a bitter struggle between the Australian Jewish community and the Menzies Liberal-Country Party coalition Government over mass German immigration. It was a conflict which showed how welcoming Australia was of migrants with a direct Nazi past, or had collaborated with that heinous regime.

There has been a question mark hovering over Kalejs' entry, as to whether the Australian security apparatus of the time, had a hand in easing his arrival down-under on the *General Muir* in October 1950, then allowing him to remain in perfect freedom under his own name until he left the country for the first time in 1959. No-one on board the *General Muir* remembers him. From 1952 to 1955, Kalejs served in the extremely security sensitive post of document officer at the Bonegilla Migrant Centre, issuing likely former Nazi collaborators with Australian identity papers. Despite the longevity of the job, no-one recalls him. Anti-Semitic behaviour was reported at Bonegilla but nothing was done about it. Apparently no records of the camps incumbents were kept. It beggars the mind how the camp was administered, organized, let alone how the needs of its inmates were met. Not even a "Sir Humfrey Appleby" excuse, that the documents were burned in some past fire, has been offered. Then in his immediate post-Bonegilla life, Kalejs worked for short stints at the Victorian Rivers Water Commission, and the Dunlop Rubber Company in South Melbourne. No-one recollects him, and no confirming data is available. To crown all this, in 1957, Kalejs was granted Australian citizenship for which a security clearance was usually required. Two years later, he quietly slips out of Australia for the United States to become a successful businessman. Despite revelations about alleged Nazi war criminals, stirred by the likes of Mark Aarons<sup>1</sup> especially, no official pressure has been brought to bear on the security agencies to spell out their role, either of commission or omission, in this whole affair.

Kalejs appeared on Australian soil in the midst of the bitter dispute over German immigration that was fast reaching breaking point between the Australian Jewish community and the Menzies Government. At least four points need to be made immediately about this clash. Foremost, it was the first instance in Australian in which the Jewish community had so publicly challenged a government. Secondly, it was the first time in which a government in Australia had resorted to threatening the Jewish community in its history. For many Australian Jews, the Holocaust was fresh and still relived in the nightmares of many of its victims. Holocaust survivors by 1950 had become a major demographic of Australian Jewry. It was the decision of the government through its Minister for Immigration,

Harold Holt to attempt to attract the Volksdeutsche, or ethnic German nations driven from places like Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Sudetenland. They were known for their fulsome pro-Nazi sympathies, and the fear was they might establish anti-Semitic and anti-democratic cells in Australia.<sup>2</sup>

The third aspect was that these immigrants were to be given, like Kalejs, an unsullied passage into Australia quite unlike the treatment experienced by many Jewish refugees both before<sup>3</sup>, and certainly after the Holocaust.<sup>4</sup> Much folklore in the Jewish community still attends the role played Arthur Calwell, Australia's first Minister for Immigration's in the immediate post war Jewish DP immigration. While thanks must be accorded for every Jew given refuge, and while those whom were granted this sanctuary were understandably eternally grateful, the evidence also shows Calwell bucked to anti-Semitic forces to severely curb their numbers.<sup>5</sup> Early in 1947, faced with an anti-Semitic backlash, Calwell ended the offering to Jewish DPs on humanitarian grounds, forcing future Jewish applicants to be assessed like all other immigrants.<sup>6</sup> Many Jews seeking admittance with the help of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) found the door closed.

Rodney Benjamin has said that Maurice Ashkenasy recently installed as the President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) persuaded a very reluctant Calwell to abandon the 25% limit on Jews being transported to Australia by ship or plane. He suggests that although the quota created delays, it did not restrict entry into the country.<sup>7</sup> It is true that Australia's record in taking Holocaust survivor is a good one when compared to the poor or non-existent history of rescue of most other Western democracies. Nonetheless, personal testimonies of gratitude cannot erase the fact that many were denied. And driving the governmental policy was the head of the Department of Immigration, Tasman Heyes, without any apparent objection of his ministerial masters, first Arthur Calwell, and then, Harold Holt.

Finally, there is the fact that restrictions applied to Jews was not the unique domain of Holocaust survivors. Late in 1949, there was an attempt to bar *Jews of Middle East Origin*.<sup>8</sup> It did so under the rubric of the White Australia Policy declaring them "black". It had the effect potentially of keeping out such notable Sephardi Jewish families such as the Kedouries and Sassoons, greatly feted in Great Britain. The Department of Immigration sought to use the same "Jewish clauses" in the entry documentation which had been used to exclude Jews, especially from Eastern Europe, in the 1930s. These 'clauses' were only finally removed in 1953,<sup>9</sup> that is three years after Kalejs arrived in Australia.

By 1950, the Cold War frost affected not just the international scene, but also Australia's domestic politics. On December 10, 1949, the avowed anti-communist government of Robert Gordon Menzies took office. In 1949 the Chifley Labor Government established the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) to observe the communists on the home front. It relied much on its mentors in the British and American security establishments. It was their agencies, especially the British, which were responsible for vetting in situ, applicants from war-torn Europe wishing to find solace in the Antipodes. Given the Soviet Union now was the *bête noire*, a Nazi or fascist past was not considered a disability.

Security concerns with communists and their fellow travelers was extant in



Australia during the Second World War, even after Stalin joined the Allies. The sad irony is that at the very time Jews were being slaughtered in Europe by the Nazi war machine, Jews in Australia were under surveillance for any communist or British Zionist tendencies.<sup>10</sup> Surveillance of the *Jewish Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism*, commenced in 1942 only to be taken over by ASIO in 1949<sup>11</sup> when it was still a bona fide member of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ).

The Menzies Government took the Treasury Benches without relish for Jewish DP immigration, and Dr Herbert Vere Evatt's advocacy in the General Assembly of the United Nations for a Jewish state in Palestine and Israel's inclusion in the international body once she had guaranteed her existence on the battlefield.<sup>12</sup> For pragmatic international reasons, the Menzies Government soon came to support the fledgling Jewish State.<sup>13</sup> Joseph Linton, Israel's first ambassador to Australia, observed not long after his arrival in 1950 that there was little Jewish social contact with the new Menzies' Government compared to the previous Chifley administration.<sup>14</sup> Both strategically and tactically, this omission did not help the Jewish cause when it came to the issue of German immigration.

Of course, German immigration to the Antipodes was not new and reached deep into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century history of the Australian colonies through to the first World War. Both as Jews and non-Jews, they made up many of the contingent of those seeking to escape Nazism in 1938-9 who were reluctantly allowed in by Joseph Lyon's United Australia Party Government.<sup>15</sup> During the war, there were German Templars who were repatriated to Australia from Palestine and interned. G.Kinne notes that emissaries were sent from Germany to Australia in the 1930s to organize Nazi activities, even spying and possibly sabotage. The first attempt at Nazi organization happened in South Australia.<sup>16</sup> At the time, however, an Australian intelligence report suggested:

Even a German who has thrown in his lot with Australia, will hate the thought of the Australia being destroyed and his people suffering. The utmost that Australia can justly expect of him is that he will do nothing to stab his adopted country in the back.<sup>17</sup>

By all accounts Nazi activity failed to take root, though there was much anti-Semitic and pro-German sentiment expressed in the Lutheran press in South Australia.<sup>18</sup>

Suzanne Rutland's "Edge of the Diaspora" provides a snap history of the Australian Jewish Community's opposition to in her German immigration from early in 1946, beginning with the Jewish Refugees Association being aggrieved over the settlement of the Templars already here. Visiting Australia in 1949, the famed Pastor Niemöller, lobbied on behalf of German immigration.<sup>19</sup> The same year the ECAJ forcefully took up the cudgels to try and stop this influx happening.

Public protests rallies against German immigration in Sydney and Melbourne drew large crowds. Non-Jewish luminaries were on the platform including Labor's parliamentary leader Dr HV Evatt, and Kim Beazley. While the presence of the Labor gentry were welcomed, their presence was a little disingenuous. After all, it was during the Chifley regime that Jewish DP immigration was curtailed, an extremely porous security screening of European applicants relied upon, and

even a bunch of German scientists and technicians, no matter their background, were encouraged migrants. It is hard to refute Harold Holt's claim in response to critics of his German program that he was merely continuing policies established by his ministry under Arthur Calwell. Indeed, one can only speculate as to what might have happened in Australia with regards post-war Jewish rescue had Holt been in Calwell's shoes. Given the attitudes of the Menzies team at that time, one may well deduce that the numbers leaving Europe for Australia would have been far fewer. Nonetheless, Calwell bucked under intense anti-Semitic pressure and not just from opposing parties. On his trip DP camps in Europe seeking potential migrants, he was extremely relieved to find that many of the inmates were "blonde", "blue-eyed", "Baltic", and "plainly not Jewish".<sup>20</sup>

There was also the unfortunate selection of OWC Fuhrman as Australia's first official emissary to Israel who reached the Jewish State in the first days of 1950. The immediate evidence for this was, that when he was Australian Consul General in Shanghai he point blank refused the Jewish DP entry permits for Australia.<sup>21</sup> His attitudes were brought to the notice of both Evatt and Calwell by leaders of the Australian Jewish community, but both ministers refused to intercede arguing there was no one else available to take the job. Fuhrman was to keep his subsequent anti-Semitic views confined to diplomatic notes he sent from Tel Aviv to Canberra.<sup>22</sup>

The Menzies Government's wish for migrants was to maintain the post-War reconstruction policy first devised and adumbrated by Labor administrations during wartime. It was a fusion of interdependent economic, social, cultural, and strategic, national goals. But for it to happen, Australia required a far greater population of around seven million when the Second World War came to end. With war coming on the heels of the Great Depression in which Australia suffered greatly, the national fertility rate was too low to produce the needed increase in population, at least in the short term. Moreover, its usual source of migrants, Great Britain, was reluctant to release its people because she needed people to restore her bombed out society. The human reservoir of the DP camps in Europe provided an attractive alternative of cheap labor. Whether such persons had an inhuman rights' record was of little concern unless it was deemed communist inspired.

Indeed, the Australian Jewish community was in complete sympathy with policies to attract immigrants to their nation's shores. It was specifically the intake of German immigrants which was queried on two grounds. Their presence would be a constant reminder of Holocaust survivors of their suffering, thereby inhibiting the healing process. Also, it would introduce an anti-democratic rump to Australia.

The issue radicalize the Jewish community, one traditionally used to keeping its head down lest anti-Semitism be aroused. Usually, lobbying on matters of communal self interest was left to quiet diplomacy. In this case, that was tried and found wanting. The issue was considered of such importance that the Jewish community's dissent went public. This uncharacteristic behaviour initially caught Harold Holt off balance, though he soon went onto the attack.

Maurice Ashkanasy, in his capacity of President of the ECAJ, followed his predecessors, Horace Newman and Sidney Einfeld, and wrote to Holt on 30 August 1950, imploring him not to proceed with German immigration. Rumour had the



minister having had signed an agreement with the West German Government for 10,000 migrants, with that number increasing per year over a four year period. Ashkanasy ran the mantra that such an intake would further the suffering of Jewish survivors of the Third Reich, and introduce anti-democratic elements to Australia. He argued further that the German mindset was what Australians had so recently fought against, and it was unlikely to have changed in the extremely short time since. No amount of screening current in Europe would sift German wheat from the Nazi chaff. Expansion of the population base was essential for post-War reconstruction, but it was unconscionable to take the German road.<sup>23</sup>

Holt's response was began with the ritual of expressing compassion for those who had suffered so cruelly at the hands of the Nazis and their minions, and with the statement that Australia would have no truck with Nazi or fascist ideology. Then he got to the nub of the issue:

I hold the view that the consideration of the question whether German immigrants are to be allowed entry into Australia cannot be judged on an emotional basis, but must be approached realistically from the point of view of this country's needs.<sup>24</sup>

With Holt's plan for 200,000 souls per year into the foreseeable future,<sup>25</sup> displaced persons in Western Europe beckoned as they had Calwell. And as John Storey, Chairman of the Immigration Planning Council, and hence one of the minister's chief advisers on immigration in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of November 1, 1950 declared, a Nazi background was no barrier. Holt rationalized his decision arguing that taking displaced persons would help create a state of stability in Europe. He said he was encouraged by a combined communique from the foreign ministers from Great Britain, France, and the United States, which in May 1949, observed that overpopulation due to displaced persons in several West European states was a recipe ripe for social unrest. And that "greater population mobility could contribute significantly to the solution of the problem".<sup>26</sup>

To the charge that Nazi collaborators had already slipped quietly into Australia, Holt didn't deny it, but simply stated the slogan that he had full confidence in the vetting process in Europe. The criteria for entry was simply, that the person be of good health, good character, not a security risk – meaning non-communist – and be easily absorbed into Australian society. Immigrants, said the Minister, had come from Germany in the past and had been in vanguard of the nation's development. So it would be in the future. And he stressed that German names could be found in their abundance listed on the war memorials across the nation. Holt welcomed the support on German immigration from the Returned Services League. Put simply, he saw no substance in the ECAJ claims.<sup>27</sup> Rumour was that if the Jewish community's dissent continue in public, the Government might stop funds raised in Australia from being repatriated to Israel.

Ashkansy's disapproval of any role in the ECAJ played by the *Australian Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism*<sup>28</sup> dissipated energies when a united front was essential. And while no argument mounted by the ECAJ, had no chance of changing Holt's mind, disunity opened up the Jewish community to what was tantamount to a veiled threat by Holt. As he put it to Ashkanasy:

Your Council has an undisputed right to do this, but whether this campaign, in which racial prejudice would figure prominently, would be to the ultimate benefit of the



Jewish population in Australia is a matter for which your Council might give very sober consideration. The Government for its part, and I, as Minister for Immigration, must decide the question not from any sectional aspect, but from the point of view of what will promote the welfare generally of Australia, and will protect the interests of the Australian people as a whole.<sup>29</sup>

Joseph Linton tells the story of a "prominent", though unnamed Jewish community leader telling Holt that if Canberra agreed, the IRO might be prepared to refund expenses incurred by Australia on behalf of Jewish refugees. Holt said he would pass this information onto Tasman Heyes for consideration, though he was not personally opposed. However, when the Jewish community started agitating against the admission of Germans, the Minister telephoned the Jewish leader to say that, though a friend of the Jewish community, he would brook no interference from it in this matter, and that now the IRO proposal no longer could be entertained. As Linton remarked, the Jewish community was apprehensive.<sup>30</sup> Their public meetings were leading them into uncharted waters.

Reacting to a series of letters in *The Argus* attacking German immigration, Holt went public with his own epistle to the same newspaper on October 14, 1950. He recycled arguments made in private correspondence with the Jewish community. While acknowledging there was disagreement from "from certain sources", and pledging Australia would not tolerate a Nazi fifth column within its midst, he nevertheless still affirmed his belief in the process by which immigrants from Europe were selected:

Our selection officers have won a reputation for their care in the selection of DP migrants and have already expressed their confidence that they can choose with equal care among the Volksdeutsche. Undoubtedly German migrants can make a great contribution to Australia. Germans and Austrians offer a wide numerical field for selection, many have skills Australia needs.<sup>31</sup>

He said that the immigration would go some way to alleviate demands from large employers, such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electricity Commission, the Commonwealth Railways, and the Victorian Electricity Commission, for specialists and technicians from Germany. The use of DPs from Europe, including those from Germany, on contract, could be mobilized to serve national development where it was best needed. Australia, he said, had given the policy high priority because Percy Spender, the Minister for External Affairs Minister, had told him of the great competition for such workers from such countries as the United States of America and Canada.<sup>32</sup>

When Ashkenasy quit the ECAJ as a result of his ongoing dispute with the Council, Ben Green took over as President. With Sam Cohen, a fellow member of the Council, he traveled to Canberra to meet Holt to try once more to change Holt's mind on German immigration, but to no avail. Green on his return, penned a note to the Minister in which he rejected a suggestion made to him at the meeting, that the Jewish community have a presence at the screening process in Europe. The reasons were that the Jewish community completely mistrusted a process that had already funneled Nazis and their friends into Australia. Though he again re-iterated his community's support for Australia's push for desirable immigrants.<sup>33</sup>

In Israel, Fuhman was writing to Canberra how incensed he had become with the attitude of the Australian Jewish community over their rejection of German immigration. He told his superiors that:

I have always exercised a tolerance towards Jews as an oppressed people and have consistently endeavoured to maintain an unbiassed and impartial attitude and outlook towards them as a race and to treat them with scepticism and frequently heard charge that, wherever Jews are or wherever they go, they are troublemakers. I am rapidly inclined to the view that there is much truth in the assertion. I am being influenced in this change of mind by press attacks being levelled at Australia by Jewish writers, who take as their theme the Australian Government's settled policy of admitting into Australia categories of carefully selected migrants.<sup>34</sup>

What angered Fuhman were, what he judged to be 'mischievous' and provocative articles that appeared in Israel written by Australian Jews, such as Ben Green in the journal 'Hador' on March 25, 1951, as to why Australian Jews have been so negative towards German immigration. Fuhman's saw these articles bordering on sedition since they were:

an attack calculated to provoke anti-Semitism in a country where freedom and equality of rights of individuals are written into our Constitution, and in a country where, perhaps, to a certain extent than in other state, the few Jews we number as Citizens of Australia, some 32,000, enjoy the privileges of Australian Citizenship and freedom from persecution and molestation unknown in any other country.<sup>35</sup>

He doubted a written reply from him would ever be published in the Hebrew Press, but in the event it was, it would stir an antagonistic "tirade of editorial and letter-to-the-editor comment". He wanted to remind Israel's Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett, of Australia's role helping to bring Israel into being, and of taking in many thousand of persecuted Jews from war-ravaged Europe. A word in Sharett's ear might encourage him to see Israel's "controlled" and "censored" press refrain from printing "these inflammatory articles".<sup>36</sup> Wiser counsel came from Canberra advising its ambassador in Tel Aviv that while it was permissible for him to raise the matter with the Israeli Foreign Minister, it should only be done informally. However, references to anti-Semitism and to the Israeli press being controlled were to be avoided.<sup>37</sup>

While on leave in Israel, Linton was button-holed by Fuhman who told him that such articles engendered 'disaffection and discontent,' and gave a quite erroneous impression of Australia in Israel. Reporting this meeting back to Canberra, Fuhman said that Linton thought anti-Semitism in Australia was minimal, though he said the Australian Jewish community had a real, deep-seated, and widespread fear, about the admission of German immigrants. Fuhman in his inimical way, said that Linton:

...launched out conversationally into the usual Jewish anti-German propaganda of which Jews have made so much in the post-war period and ended up on a note that what he had said was unofficial but reflected the fears of his racial compatriots in Australia. I did not join in the issue with Linton. He was my guest and the situation was not one that I could do so...<sup>38</sup>

In February 1951, the Minister recommended to Cabinet that 25,000 Germans

should be admitted, and between 1952 and 1957 around 37,000 arrived.<sup>39</sup> How many of them were *Volksdeutsche* may never be known.

Michael Blakeney cites a document from the Regional Director of ASIO, in NSW on February 14, 1952 in which he responds to claims that war criminals were working on the Snowy River Scheme. In that he says that belonging to the Nazi Party or its similar organization:

As far as I am aware it has never been laid down as policy that a history of this kind is a bar to entering Australia as a migrant, nor has it been laid down that officially that high office in the Nazi Party, or proof of 'war crimes' would act as a bar...<sup>40</sup>

When Konrads Kalejs, now a self-confessed officer of Araj's Kommando infamy first called Australia home in October 1950 he may well have been considered by those involved in screening potential European immigrants that there was nothing in his background which should have excluded him. Certainly, genocide against the Jewish people was of little import. What was, was finding 'suitable' migrants. And by 'suitable' meant ones who could help progress Australia's economic development. It was a policy that had across-the-board parliamentary support. An incredulous Australia wanted to forget the Jewish Genocide. The war was over, and the nation was seeking a new dawn.

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## REVISTING THE WRITINGS OF CHARLES PRICE

Rodney Benjamin OAM

Charles Price is not only the doyen of immigration and settlement studies but also has been a towering figure...in establishing Australian demography and population studies in the post-war era.

This is the editor's introduction to the recently published *Immigration, Settlement and Ethnicity in Post-war Australia – A selection of the writings of Charles A Price*.<sup>1</sup> Price retired from his position as a Professorial Fellow of the Australian National University in demography at the end of 1985. He had been at the ANU since its formation more than thirty years earlier.

Few histories of the Jewish community in Australia published during the last thirty years, or studies of Jewish migration to Australia before and after the second World War, or studies of the social structure of the Australian Jewish communities during the same period, fail to cite Charles Price's *Jewish Settlers in Australia*<sup>2</sup> in their bibliographies. Most use figures selected from several of the twenty-two tables of data contained in the Appendices of the monograph.

These Appendices range from the Jewish population of Australia from 1841 to 1961, the country of origin of non-British Jews by year of arrival between 1831 and 1961, intermarriage figures from 1891 to 1954, settlement patterns in Sydney and Melbourne, through to fertility statistics of Jewish women from 1891 to 1954.

But Charles Price has written extensively on Jewish migration to Australia, and the extent of the Jewish presence in this country, in a number of his other publications. This piece examines Price's oeuvre and brings to light many of these otherwise little known references to Jews as migrants and settlers in Australia. They throw a different light both on the number of Jews who arrived in this country both before and after the second World War and the size of the Jewish population of Australia.

It was to celebrate Charles Price's eightieth year that the Australian Population Association, published *Immigration, Settlement and Ethnicity in Post-war Australia – A selection of the writings of Charles A Price*. Edited by Professor Graeme Hugo of the University of Adelaide, it was published in November 2000. The introductions to the collection, written by Hugo and Dr Don Rowland of the Australian National University, remark on Price's role as 'a crucially important adviser to government on immigration and settlement' and 'with contributing significantly to the success of Australia's post-war immigration programme'. It is also a celebration of his part 'in establishing Australian demography and population studies in the post-war era.' It is perhaps in this last category that Charles Price is best known to demographers and writers, both past and present, in the Jewish community.

Charles Price's literary output has been prodigious. Hugo cites 138 works in a 'complete list' of Price's publications. More than forty of these articles, book

chapters, monographs and conference papers have appeared since he retired from the ANU in 1985. The Australian National Library lists 32 publications by Price in its index. His painstaking studies of the history and demography of European ethnic minorities in Australia are exemplary. His position as an adviser on migration to many Australian governments has enabled him to offer informed comment on the subject.

Charles Price graduated BA from the University of Adelaide and then graduated from Oxford with another BA, an MA and a Ph D. He joined the Australian National University in 1952, the year of its foundation, in the Department of Demography.

As indicated in the title of Professor Hugo's book, it is a celebration of Price's writing rather than the wealth of statistical data that has been included in Price's publications. Hugo expresses the intention of the book in his Introduction. 'All of his writings are worth reading. They are above all extremely well written', and 'His *Southern Europeans in Australia* is a classic in the immigration literature.'

From his earliest published work in 1945, *German Settlers in South Australia*, Price's working life has been devoted to the study of the ethnic composition of the Australian population. Typically, *German Settlers* was not only a demographic study of Germans in the wine growing areas north of Adelaide and their descendants, although demography was included. Price studied and wrote about the history of their emigration from Germany and the culture that they brought with them and the manner in which it was maintained in their new land. It was the story of an ethnic group held together by language, culture and the Lutheran religion that survived for a century from its beginnings in 1838. Price included an examination of the influence of the Nazi party on the group during the 1930s. His conclusion, rather disturbingly, was that of some 10,000 Australian born citizens who followed German culture and way of life during that period. 'probably between 4 percent and 10 percent were strongly pro Nazi'. As a result of the war the use of the German language and culture evaporated.

Central to all of Price's work has been a desire to understand and explain what he has called the 'ethnic mix' of the Australian population. In order to satisfy his own demands that the social historian must eschew generalizations based on statistics,<sup>3</sup> Price studied historical sources of the groups that he was examining in the Australian context to better understand and explain Australian society as it was developing.

In the early 1950s the Department of Demography at the ANU was allowed access to naturalization papers by the Department of Immigration. These records, incidentally, have since been destroyed on the instructions of a Minister of Immigration during the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately Price and his assistants examined the records of every second individual naturalized in Australia during the nine decades from 1857 to 1947 and recorded the data on cards. Using some of the data extracted from these records Price tackled the generally accepted notion that 98-99 per cent of the Australian population was British. That is British by birth or Australian born of British descent. Price's figures, using this fresh source, indicated that even in 1861 some 7 per cent of the Australian white population were of non-British origin. This percentage increased substantially even before the massive



post second World War intakes. In 1901 the figures reached some 9 per cent, and in 1947 some 11 per cent. By 1954 it was as high as 15 per cent<sup>5</sup>.

Based largely on these studies of naturalization papers, Price produced the magnum opus of his early years *Southern Europeans in Australia* in 1963. His broad approach to his subjects is demonstrated by the opening of the work, a quotation from Byron's *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*. The book was a study of history and statistics to establish patterns of settlement by southern Europeans in Australia. He found that over 90 per cent of Australia's pre war settlers did not come in simple, distinct national groups that are usually associated in the minds of most Australians as Italians, Greeks, Maltese and Slavs. Rather the migrants came in cohesive groups from small selected areas of each country. These groups tended to settle together in particular areas of Australia. He categorised Italians, for instance, into four major groups from different parts of the country, and Southern Slavs into five groups.

Hugo's selections from Price's fertile pen cover a wide range of subjects. 'Immigration Policies and Refugees in Australia', published in 1981 is an excellent overview of the topic. It is placed second in the collection. 'Before World War II Australia had no refugee policy' wrote Price. 'Refugees were simply admitted if they met the ordinary migration requirements and rejected if they did not. Voluntary societies...might help with passage and settlement costs.' After the War both Labor and Liberal governments continued the old system of allowing voluntary societies to bring in refugees. Price estimated that 'between 1946 and 1976 Australia received well over 350,000 refugees.' This figure included 170,000 allowed in as 'factory fodder' under the controversial International Refugee Organization (IRO) scheme from 1948 to 1951. Controversial because of the outrage felt by the Jewish community at the number of Germans included in the group so soon after the War and because of difficulty encountered by some Jews who attempted entry under this scheme<sup>6</sup>. There were also allegations, recently revived, that a number of war criminals were admitted in the same group.<sup>7</sup> It was not until the election of the Fraser Liberal government in 1975 that a genuine refugee policy was established under the Immigration minister Michael Mackellar.<sup>8</sup>

This point is well worth remembering when considering Australian governments' attitudes to the refugee problems confronting the world from 1933 to 1954.

But we are getting out of a time sequence.

When examining the naturalization archives that were a part of the basis of the *Southern Europeans* study, Price found that this research yielded a wealth of material concerning European Jewish migration to Australia. Some of this data was included in *Southern Europeans*. It was this data which led Price to a more extensive study of Jewish settlement in Australia.<sup>9</sup> Price included some figures of European Jews settled in Australia, that is excluding Australian-born generations, in Table 1 of *Southern Europeans*. The Table is of all European-born in Australia in 1891, 1921 and 1947. Jews are not included in figures of the groups in the Table.

An extract of the Table reads as follows.

**Table 1**  
European-born in Australia in 1891, 1921 and 1947

Grouping	1891	1921	1947
Spanish, Portuguese, Italian	3,900	7,250	33,700
Slav, Greek, Maltese	1,100	8,620	26,750
Other European	67,700	43,900	31,500
European Jews	3,400	5,500	16,500

Source: Price, *Southern Europeans in Australia*, Table 1.

Price does not include totals of all European born in his Table, but adding all European born living in Australia in those years, and comparing these to European born Jews as a percentage of that total gives the following table:

**Table 2**  
European Born Jews as a Percentage of all European  
Born in Australia

	1891	1921	1947
Total European born	76,100	65,270	108,450
European born Jews	3,400	5,500	16,500
Jews as a percentage	4.5%	8.4%	15.2%

Source: Price as for Table 1.

This study of Price's thus shows that there was an increase of 11,000 European born Jews living in Australia between 1921 and 1947, and that in 1947 15.2 per cent of all European migrants living in Australia were Jewish. The 1947 census showed the total number of persons answering 'Jewish' as their religion was 32,019.<sup>10</sup> On this basis roughly half of the Jewish population of Australia were European born in 1947.

The last conclusion must be approached with some caution. Assuming that the figures derived from naturalization data are reliable, it is the data based on 'religion' answers in the census that must be questioned. Price scrutinized the religion answer in some detail in later years. This scrutiny will be examined later in this paper.

But how does Price's data on European born compare with available that which is available from Jewish sources?

The New South Wales Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS) recorded the arrival of an 'estimated' 5,340 persons from Europe between the years 1933 to 1940. Of this total 75 per cent were German and Austrian. The next largest group, 13 per cent, was from Poland.<sup>11</sup> The Victorian AJWS registered the arrival

of 3,100 persons from Europe between the years 1936 to 1942. Of this total 67 per cent were German and Austrian and 20 per cent Polish.<sup>12</sup> In addition the Victorian Jewish Welcome Society in Melbourne had helped settle an estimated 2,500 Jewish migrants mainly from Poland in the period 1926 to 1929.<sup>13</sup> Not all arrivals registered with AJWS. Then there are the unrecorded number of the 2,200 German and Austrian Jews who arrived on the *Duneera* in 1940 and stayed in Australia, and of the 267 deportees from Singapore who arrived on the *Queen Mary* in the same year who stayed. Assuming that only half of the latter groups stayed in Australia these total over 12,000 immigrants between 1926 and 1946.

In 1946 and 1947 survivors of the Holocaust were arriving in numbers. Most famously was the *Johann de Witt* with 702 Jewish passengers, the *Ville d'Amiens* with 187, and a number of other ships, *Monkay*, *Hwa Lien*, *Sagittaire*, and the *Tidewater* to name some of the larger carriers. In total the numbers exceeded 2,000.<sup>14</sup> The total derived from AJWS sources, allowing that fewer than half of the *Duneera* and *Queen Mary* passengers stayed in Australia, is some 14,500.

Even allowing for some double counting in the records of the two Welfare Societies, these totals would indicate that Price's figure of an 11,000 increase in the number of European born Jews shown in Tables 1 and 2 could be substantially underestimated. It is probable that by the end of 1947 European born Jews in Australia could have been as high as 18 per cent of all European born living in Australia at that date. By any measure it represents a substantial intake of Jews both in the prewar and postwar period. The greatest number of Jewish migrants to Australia, the survivors, some 20,000, arrived between 1948 and 1957.<sup>15</sup>

In 1962 Price prepared a paper which was devoted entirely to a study of Jews in Australia. He read it in two parts to the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) in Sydney. Its title was *Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788 to 1961*. The first part was read in December 1962 and the second in July 1963. He read his paper as one address to the AJHS in Melbourne later in 1963. The 'essay', as Price called it, was first published in the AJHS Journal, Vol.V, Part VIII. The Australian National University published it as Social Science Monograph No.23 in 1964.

Jewish writers seem to have given little attention to the text of Price's work. It is, to use the author's words, a 'short essay on Jewish settlement in Australia'. The 'short essay' is some 20,000 words in length and occupies 53 pages of text with 60 footnotes. This is in addition to the 40 pages of statistical data.

The essay is well worth revisiting. The theme adopted by Price is to compare the settlement patterns of Jewish migrants to Australia with the patterns set in the United States and Britain during the periods of Jewish settlement in those countries during the nineteenth century. He identified five stages of settlement adopted by writers of the history of settlement of Jews in Britain and the USA. First, arrival; second, dispersion into country and small towns; third, departure from smaller country communities to larger provincial cities and to less affluent suburbs of larger cities; fourth, movement from less affluent to better areas of larger cities; and finally to second settlement in suburbia proper. His conclusions were that whilst Jewish settlement in Australia had followed this general pattern there were substantial differences. He found that the pattern of Jewish settlement in Australia



was not to move in numbers to the old working-class suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne in the manner of the close settlements in London's East End, or New York's Brooklyn. Darlinghurst and Carlton were not repeats of those clusters. Rather, that the Jewish clusters in Melbourne and Sydney were too dispersed and mixed with other ethnic groups to have evolved into what has been called in other countries of Diaspora settlement, 'The New World Ghettoes'. His studies of those living in Drummond Street Carlton, and Crown Street Darlinghurst show Jews sharing these streets with migrants from various parts of Italy, from the Greek mainland and from the Greek Islands.

Although Price's studies found that many arrivals in the 1920s and 1930s did move into those older areas of Jewish settlement, by 1947 more than half Sydney's population of Jews had moved to the Eastern suburbs. In the same year 60 per cent of Melbourne Jews were living in St Kilda, Caulfield and their surrounding suburbs.

His closing comments are worth repeating here:

The basic problem of Jewry in such societies is how to retain the freedom to live anywhere, enter any occupation, mix equally with other citizens, and yet not let that freedom result in loss of identity as a holy chosen people of the Lord.<sup>16</sup> ... Whether more vigorous activity in such spheres as education will be enough to prevent further assimilation... remains to be seen. The predicament is one that Jews are not alone in facing. Devout Christians... have succeeded even less well than the Jewish people....

Earlier he had noted that, based on the 1947 census, 35.4 per cent of Jews were engaged in the professions, administration and clerical work by comparison with the Australian average of 8.2 per cent.

For this work Price relied heavily on data derived from census and immigration records, and from the analysis of naturalization records mentioned earlier. Price acknowledged the problems associated with using Australian census figures in the context of determining the Jewish component. Reliance has to be placed on the question in the census form asking for religious affiliation. It has been suggested by a number of writers<sup>17</sup> that, particularly in the postwar years, many survivors of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust would not answer 'Jewish' to that question on an official form. There would also be a number of respondents to the census form who identified with the Jewish community, but who would not answer that they acknowledged their Judaism as being a religion. Price suggested that one could use the figure of some 10 per cent of the total population who do not answer the religion question at all, or who answer that they are agnostic, atheist or simply have no religion, and apply this percentage to those declaring themselves as Jews. The actual percentages of those not replying to the religion question added to those responding 'no religion' and to those with an indefinite response were 11.6 per cent in 1947 and 11.1 per cent in 1961.

Of particular interest to Jewish readers will be the 1963 piece included in the Hugo collection entitled 'Integration of Religious Groups in Australia.' It is a study of the religious affiliations of the 2.923 million increase in Australia's population which took place between 1947 and 1961. Just over half of this increase, 1.480 million was of post-war immigrants and their children who were born here.

The analysis, taken from census data for 1947 and 1961, and thus including only those responding positively to the religion question in the census, showed that the percentage increase of the Jewish population was the third highest of all increases in religious groups in Australia. The Jewish population increased by 85.3 per cent. This compared with the increase in the total population of 38.6 per cent. The only religions that recorded a higher percentage increase than Jewish were Orthodox Christians who started from a very low base and were added to mainly by Greek, Serbian, and Russian migrants after the war. The only other larger group than Jewish was Lutheran. Roman Catholics, the largest group, increased by 66.8 per cent whilst Anglican and other Protestant denominations were below the average at about 25 per cent.

A number of Jewish writers have applied themselves to the question of interpreting the 'real' number of Jews in Australia at any given census date. Rubinstein, Goldlust, Encel, Taft, Morris and Lippmann are some of the Jewish authors who have addressed the issue. What was to confuse the point even further was the variation between later census reports of the Jewish population of Australia. In 1971 62,208 persons declared their religion Jewish. In the 1976 census only 53,441 gave that answer. In 1981 the figure rose to 62,125 and in 1986 to 69,088. The 1976 figure was puzzling and the increase to 1981 was not readily explicable by migration or any other known factors.<sup>18</sup> In 1971 a total of 13.25 per cent of Australians did not respond to the religion question, or replied that they had no religion. In 1976 this percentage had risen to 19. Should those percentages be used to increase Jewish census numbers?

Price has revisited the question of Jewish population of Australia on a number of occasions. His extensive examination of the fall in numbers in 1976 led him to the conclusion that only 60% of persons 'of Jewish ethnic origins' declared Jewish as their religion in 1971. This fell to 57.5% in 1976.

In a paper published in 1979, which is not included in Hugo's collection, Price used data from the 1976 census to cross tabulate religion with birthplace. He found that out of a total of 53,400 persons who answered 'Jewish' to the religion question, some 25,000 were born in Europe. This was approximately 47 per cent of the total.<sup>19 20</sup> In another section of this paper Price calculated that figures for the Jewish population as disclosed by the 1976 census should be increased by 30 per cent to allow for those who did not complete the question on religion or stated that they had no religion.<sup>21</sup>

The 1986 census asked respondents to give both their religion and their 'ancestry'. This was the first and only time that this question was put. Price's analysis of the resulting census data was published in 1991 in an article in the *AJHS Journal* 'The Jewish Population of Australia'.<sup>22</sup> This reported that whereas 69,088 persons in the census gave their religion as Jewish only 38,766 (including those who answered the question 'Israeli') answered 'Jewish' to the ancestry question. An analysis of those professing the Jewish religion only 42.3% gave their ancestry as Jewish, with British 11.9%, Polish 8.7%, Russian 6.1%, Australian 6.3%, German and Austrian 4.0%, Hungarian 3.0% and other nationalities of lesser percentages.

Price cross-tabulated the religions of those answering only Jewish to the ancestral question with their religious affiliation. The results were that of those answering the ancestral question as 'Jewish', 90.2% said their religion was Jewish, 5.2 % had no religion, and Christian 3.8%. By comparison more than 9,000 persons in the census gave their ancestry as mixed Jewish and other ancestry. Only 41.5% of those gave their religion as Jewish, 38% as Christian and 19.1% as no religion.

Of course Price was looking at these figures as a study of Judaism as an ethnic group and not as a study of the retention of a religion. He included persons of half-Jewish descent on the predication that 'children of a gentile mother more probably gave their ancestry as non-Jewish'. He excluded 'the much greater number of persons' of less Jewish ancestry than half. On the other hand he estimated that probably 12,500 Jews of third or later generations of Australian born gave their ancestry as Australian.

Price's calculations from this data led him to the conclusion that the total Jewish population of Australia in 1986 was 90,000. This raised the census figure by a huge 20,912, or an increase of 30.27 per cent, a considerable uplift from previous estimations which usually relied on applying to the Jewish figure a percentage based on the whole Australian population who professed no religion.

Using an 'ethnic measure', as for instance, a person who describes themselves as one-half English, one-quarter Scots and one quarter Jewish counts as one-quarter in the Jewish total of ethnic measure, Price calculated the total Jewish 'ethnic' population of Australia at 120,000. Price had arrived at the same figure from the 1976 census in his 1979 publication, *Australian Immigration*, without the availability of the ancestry question.

With Price's agreement Professor Rubinstein added some comments to Price's article in the *AJHS Journal*. Rubinstein's comments were that Price's figure of 90,000 was roughly in accord with his own estimations from his analysis of 1981 census data,<sup>23</sup> and with an extrapolation of the communal register maintained by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, Victoria. He made no comment on the 'ethnic' calculation of 120,000. If the figure of 90,000 is accepted this means that the increase over the census figure of 69,000 is 30 per cent.

Price approached the question again in 1996 in his book *Immigration and Ethnicity*. At page 87 Price accords another mention to Jews in Australia. He reported re-examining the results of the 1986 census. The result of the re-examination was that he was 'quite happy' with his estimate of the total Jewish 'ethnic strength', which counts fractions, of 120,000 or 0.74 per cent of the total Australian population at 30 June 1987. (Table 3.4 page 2)

In February 2000 the Jewish Community Council of Victoria published a study of the Victorian Jewish community based on the 1996 census.<sup>24</sup> The study included an estimate of the Jewish population in Victoria by a detailed comparison of the census statistics with the register maintained by Jewish Community Services (JCS) by postcode. The result of this procedure and their calculations from the results of the comparison raised the census data of the number of Jews in Victoria by 25.5 per cent. It must be said that this figure may well be underestimated. There may well be a number of Jews who are not on the register maintained by JCS and did not answer the census question on religious denomination.





**Table 4**  
Total Jewish Population in Australia  
Australian Census Data Increased by 30%

Year	in Australia Census Data	estimate of 30%	Increase assuming Census data increased by 30%
1933	23,553	30,619	
1947	32,019	41,625	11,006
1954	48,436	62,967	21,342

Increase between 1933 and 1954                      31,649  
Percentage increase                                      105.64%

Source: Price, *Jewish Settlers*, Appendix I.

The percentage increases from Table 3 are, of course, identical. But the question can be asked whether this calculated increase reflects on the estimates of Jewish migration to Australia before and after the second World War? A comparison with the total population increase of Australia for the same period produces the following table:

**Table 5**  
Total Population Increase of Australia 1933 - 1954

Year	Total Population of Australia	Increase	Percentage Increase
1933	6,629,839		
1947	7,579,358	949,519	14.32
1954	8,986,530	1,407,172	18.35

Increase between 1933 and 1954                      2,356,691                      35.5

Source: 'Population', J.C. Caldwell, Table 17-35, in *Australian Historical Statistics*, W.Vamplew (ed.) Fairfax, Syme and Weldon, Sydney, 1987.

Using the figures from Table 4 it could be expected that the Jewish population of Australia would increase from 30,619 by 35.5 per cent to 41,480. From Table 4 calculations it reached 62,967 a growth of more than 20,000 persons that would be expected if there was no substantial immigration of Jews during the period.

Whether or not one uses the figures in the previous paragraph, the conclusion is inescapable that the growth of the Jewish population in Australia between the critical years of 1933 to 1954 was nearly three times greater than the rest of the Australian population.

Of course this merely confirms Price's figures in Appendix I in *Jewish Settlers*. This Appendix shows that the percentage of the Jewish population to the total Australian population grew from 0.39 per cent in 1933 to 0.54 per cent in 1954. To the untutored eye this small percentage increase might mean only a marginal increase. Indeed I have heard it put forward that this 'marginal' increase is proof that Australia discriminated against Jews in its migration programmes before and immediately after World War II because the percentage was barely changed! In fact if the total Jewish population grew from 0.39 per cent of the population of 6.630 million in 1933 to 0.54 per cent of 8.986 million in 1954, this represented an expansion of nearly 3 times the growth rate of the general population of Australia.

Price's earliest figures on the Jewish proportion of European born in Australia given in Table 2 above show that it was more than 15 per cent in 1947. In the years from 1921 to 1947 the net increase in the number of European born Jews in Australia rose steadily. The total number of European born Jews living in Australia trebled during the period. The total number of European born living in Australia, excluding Jews, increased 1.66 times.

There does not seem to be any sustainable argument to contradict the conclusions assembled by Price from different applications of data, that the number of Jews in Australia reached an unprecedented proportion of the total population as a direct result of immigration into Australia both before and after the second World War.

Along with other Jewish historians I too have trawled the Australian archives on immigration and found evidence of appalling anti-Semitism committed to paper by members of Australian government departments, and of schemes developed within these departments to restrict the number of Jews to whom entry permits would be given. One of the documents that I found was dated in 1928. In a letter the Melbourne office of Investigations Branch of the Attorney-General's Department, which at that time was providing assistance to the Jewish Welcome Society, the Director of the Investigations Branch in Canberra included a memo which read:

My experience has been that Jewish organisations (Welfare Societies, Zionists, etc.) endeavour to constitute themselves into quasi-official bodies and one of their favourite attempts is to appear eager to co-operate with Governments over immigration. In this way applications for migrants get referred to these bodies and before long these institutions start issuing instructions demands, etc.

It must not be forgotten that Jewish welfare and religious institutions are part and parcel of a worldwide organisation.<sup>76</sup>

The warning did not deter the officer to whom it was addressed from assisting Jewish immigrants during the next eleven years.

The great problem is to marry this evidence to the disproportionate numbers, (disproportionate to the numbers of Jews in the Australian population before 1933, and disproportionate to the numbers of other European migrants), who reached these shores between 1933 and 1954. It is difficult also to contradict the oral evidence of those concerned with settling the migrants who reached Australia



during the period. A still living staff member of the Melbourne AJWS recalled that in the immediate post war years the president of AJWS, Alec Masel, had a supply of entry permits in the bottom drawer of his desk. The staff could access these forms, fill them in and have them approved by the Immigration Department at will.<sup>27</sup> Or the comments of Leo Fink in 1949 that 'the problem will be the absorption of the immigrants, not the obtaining of permits.'<sup>28</sup> By 1953 the displaced persons camps in Europe had been completely emptied of Jews.<sup>29</sup>

In her recently published book on the attitudes of British politicians and civil servants that sought to limit the number of Jews allowed refuge in Britain from the Nazis both before and after the Holocaust, Louise London faced a similar problem. In her conclusion she asks the question:

Can a particular individual's acceptance of stereotypes and anti-Semitic views tell us how he himself would handle the Jewish refugee issue?

and answers:

These examples (she cites Sir Horace Rumbold and Neville Chamberlain in this paragraph) suggest that what determined the responses of British ministers and officials to the Jewish refugee issue was not attitudes to Jews as such, but the degree to which they felt able to adopt a humanitarian stance.<sup>30</sup>

An allowance must be made for a gap between private and public utterances, and the actions of individuals.

The precise number of Jews fleeing the Nazis and given refuge in Britain does not seem to exist. London suggests that by 1939 it was only between 60,000 and 70,000. Ascherson cites a figure of 90,000 permits issued by the British government during the first six months of 1939 alone.<sup>31</sup> Rubinstein provides the number of Germans and Austrians given permission to disembark in Britain from the beginning of 1937 to June 1939 at 284,889<sup>32</sup>, although the number who were able to stay and those who were in transit to other destinations is not indicated.

In 1996 Price published a study on Russians in Australia. As a side issue to this study Price identified the number of Jews in Australia who were born in Russia.<sup>33</sup> He had used the card files he had created from the naturalization case records as a basis for his calculations. This was because of the many problems of using data from Australian censuses. Until the first World War the census figures were derived from the countries in the Tsarist Empire. After 1920 official statistics showed the new countries of Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania separately whilst after 1951 the birthplace in the census data of 'USSR' included such places as Asia, the Urals and Moldavia. Price constructed a table (Table 1) that included the countries of the old Tsarist Empire, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belorussia. In that Table he identifies the number of Jews resident in Australia born in those countries at the census dates of 1901, 1921 and 1947. The numbers of Jews were 2 249, 3 010 and 8 476 respectively. If one applies those numbers to the total Jewish population derived for census data in those years the results are that in 1901 and 1921 nearly 15 per cent were born in those countries and in 1947 the percentage had risen to 26 per cent. Price had presented figures for the birthplaces of Australian Jews, separately for males and

females, in the census years 1911 and 1954 in Appendices III (a) and (b) of *Jewish Settlers*.

In many of his writings Price presents figures to destroy the myth 'that all but one or two percent of the Australian people are British by ethnic and cultural origin.'<sup>34</sup> Price did the same exercise in *Jewish Settlers*, an exercise that has passed quite unnoticed. In the Appendices quoted in the previous paragraph the 1911 census recorded that 23.8 per cent of Jewish males were born in neither Australia or Britain whilst the number of females was 16 per cent. These figures tend to destroy the Jewish myth of the cultural origin of the essentially 'British' Jewish population of Australia until after the second World War.

The imbalance between the genders of the Jewish population of Australia shown in those figures of Jews not born in Australia or Britain, heavily in favour of males, was very pronounced throughout the nineteenth century. The genders of the Jewish population in this country did not come into balance until 1961. It is one for the explanations for intermarriage rates, high but declining for males and steady for females, shown in Price's study of that issue in *Jewish Settlers*.<sup>35</sup>

In 1996 Price returned again to the question of how one measures the Jewish population of Australia.<sup>36</sup> He re-examined the question of whether the measure is to be based on religion or as a 'distinct ethnic group'. In his discourse on the subject he asserts that in the 'early 1980s, with some Jewish leaders pressing hard for a census identification or ancestry question which would show the Jewish people as a distinct ethnic group, I had decided to treat them as such.'<sup>37</sup> As mentioned earlier, Price's methodology for determining ethnic groupings is to trace lineage so that a person with one Jewish grand parent would count for the addition of one-quarter to what he called 'ethnic strength'. In his count even one Jewish great-grandparent adds one-eighth of a person to the total. It is open to question whether the Jewish leaders, who were pressing for an ancestry question to be included in the census form, would count as one for their own a person with one Jewish great-grandparent who came from a family that had practiced Christianity for two generations. Price's conclusion at the time was that he was still happy with the 1987 estimate of 120,000 Jews in Australia based on his concept of 'ethnic strength'. It becomes a question, as Price put it in a later piece on the subject of 'ethnic strength', of making 'the important distinction between ethnic identity and ethnic origin.'<sup>38</sup>

Where does all this lead us? We are really no further advanced on the vexed question of how many Jews there are in the Australian population. Perhaps the only true measure is, as put forward by Goldlust that 'the most compelling ultimate criterion for inclusion [in the count] must remain voluntary self-identification'.<sup>39</sup> But no census asks such a question.

One point is quite clear. During the critical period of post second World War immigration, the Jewish population of Australia increased by 85.3 per cent compared with the increase in the total population of 38.6 per cent. The increase in the Jewish population was so large that it undercuts the argument that departmental officers and politicians effectively hindered Jews in their attempts to reach Australia. The facts of the other counts by Price mentioned in this article support that proposition. To ignore them is to distort history.

## NOTES

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- 5 'European Minorities in Australia' in *Historical Studies of Australia and New Zealand*, 1954, 6(23). Fn.1.
- 6 S.D.Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, William Collins, Sydney, 1988, pp.238-9 and 329-332. Rutland calculates that fewer than 500 Jews arrived under the scheme, but other writers have put the figure higher. See W.D.Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, William Heinemann, Port Melbourne, 1991, Vol.2, fn.53, p.146.
- 7 For this topic, and the Jewish community reaction to German immigration, see Rubinstein, *ibid.*, pp. 412-414 and p.428, and Michael Blakeney, 'The Australian Jewish Community and post-war immigration from Europe' in W.D.Rubenstein (ed.) *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1987, pp.327-333.
- 8 Price, 'Immigration Policies and Refugees in Australia', *International Migration Review*, 1981, 15(1-2), p.99.
- 9 Author's conversation with Charles Price 12 February 2001.
- 10 Price, *Jewish Settlers in Australia*, Appendix I.
- 11 Anne Andgel, *Fifty Years of Caring*, Sydney, 1988. Appendix VIII.
- 12 Rodney Benjamin, *A Serious Influx of Jews*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988, Appendix 4.
- 13 *ibid.*, p.31.
- 14 *ibid.*, p.208
- 15 Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, Table 2.1
- 16 Price acknowledges the source of this phrase to Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*, 1957.
- 17 See Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, pp.91-2 for an examination of these views.
- 18 Price examined this fall in numbers in some detail in *Australian Immigration, A Bibliography and Digest, Number 4*, 1979. ANU, 1979, pp. A 102-105. His calculations produced the conclusion that the fall was closer to some 2,500.
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- 21 *op.cit.*, pp. A 102-105
- 22 Volume XI (3): 527-533.
- 23 Rubinstein, Note to Table 2.1, p.137.
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- 30 Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933 – 1948*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p.279.
- 31 Neil Ascherson, 'Remains of der 'Iag' a book review of London's book in *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XLVIII, No.5, March 29, 2001, p.45.
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- 33 'Russians in Australia: A Demographic Survey' in J. McNair and T. Poole (eds.), *Russia and the Fifth Continent*, University of Queensland Press, 1992, pp 54-80.
- 34 'European Minorities in Australia, 1840-1940', *Historical Studies of Australia and New Zealand*, 1954, 6(23), p 290.
- 35 Appendix XI
- 36 *Immigration and Ethnicity: The Work of Charles Price*, Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Canberra, 1996.
- 37 Ibid., p.87.
- 38 See Price, 'The Ethnic Character of the Australian Population' in J. Jupp (ed), *The Australian People: an Encyclopaedia of the Nation, its People and their Origins*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1987, p. 120.
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## IMPRESSIONS OF A VISIT

JACOB PAT, 1956

*translated from Yiddish by Serge Liberman*

Late one evening, after a lecture, we sat, a group of Jews in the big lobby of the Savoy Plaza over a cup of coffee. In a corner, by the piano, sat a pianist playing music by Bach. People come at that hour to the beer-tables. At one table, we Jews sit and talk about Jewish life in Australia. I learn the lesson diligently.

Jews arrived here through miracles - Vilna Jews, Volkevisher, Lodzer, Lubliner, Warsaw Jews, themselves wonder how they have survived, how they have succeeded, acquired their own houses and cars. They tell of miracles befalling Jews in Australia.

'Not long ago', says one. 'I read about an Australian Jew of whom Lloyd George said that were the First World War to last any longer he would have become Chief Commander of the Allied armies. As it was, he was Chief Commander of the Australian forces'. Another tells proudly: 'In 1918, Monash conducted a counter-offensive lasting sixty days against Wilhelm's army and brought about its collapse. After the allied victory he led a parade through London of high-ranking soldiers, with five thousand decorated Australians'.

'His uncle, the Jewish historian Gractz, probably accompanied him', someone at the table joked. And the Zionist at one table says: 'In 1928, Monash became President of the Zionist Organisation in Australia'. And the Bundist at the same table says: 'You are talking about exceptional Jews among gentiles. I am more interested in the twenty thousand Jews who settled in Australia after the second World War, who have established themselves here and make a life for themselves. That is more remarkable and requires more effort than to become a general'.

And I learn, both at that table, at other tables, in Jewish homes and at Jewish gatherings, how Jews indeed live in Australia.

Sydney is the main port in Australia. It reminds me of San Francisco in its hilliness. My friend Mendel Kasher from Sherinewitz and Sydney has for two decades already been in love with Sydney. He did not let me go, he had to show me all its attractions, its twenty-one broad and white beaches. My Bialystoker friend Chaskiel Davis showed me its beauty for miles around; mountains, rivers, forests and waterfalls.

I stayed in a hotel at Bondi beach. In my presence, Jewish weddings and Bar Mitzvahs were celebrated there. At one such Bar Mitzvah, I spoke with the Ambassador from Israel and with the president of the Jewish community, Einfeld. In the same suburb there live a sizeable number of Jews. I was in Sydney for one week, held several lectures, was entertained at receptions in private homes, visited the Sydney Synagogue and the Jewish Communal Centre. I spent time, too, with the leaders of the Jewish community, in the magnificent home of a Bialystoker Jew and met the Bundists of the city, and everywhere I heard the same: 'Sydney is

more beautiful; but Melbourne is better. Beauty is no one's. It comes from God alone. But that which is better is the work of men'.

Melbourne, too, lies at the foot of the Pacific Ocean. A city of parks, avenues, palm trees and sports grounds, Melbourne's partisans took me to Cook's Cottage. My two Lodzer friends, M. Silman and T. Ginter, took me repeatedly on tours, showed me the attractions of their city Melbourne. The chairman of the 'Kadimah', Ben Zion Patkin, the Zionist, taught me the *Torah* as relating to Melbourne's streets, Melbourne's Jews and Melbourne's history; and Itzhak Kahn, the Bundist from a small Polish town, one of the most noted lecturers and writers in Melbourne, instructed me in the Jewish problems of the community. Some 5800 Jews attended my lectures and meetings and from them I had the opportunity to learn of Jewish life in the biggest Jewish centre in Australia. I was guest at 31 tables in 31 homes. Courageous, precious Jews. Young, middle-aged, elderly, men and women, their sons and daughters, I saw and sensed their love for their new and free home. I studied the mood and way of life of the Jews in Australia. 'Our democracy', says the young Lodzer Bono Wiener who is active in the Labor Party, 'is of an Anglo-Saxon kind'. I remember most vividly what one of my friends there, Herschel Bachrach, told me: 'As soon as I set foot here after my Shanghai exile, I said to myself, "Here I have been reborn!"' He spoke not only for himself but also for the majority of the new arrivals.

I must control my pen in order not to draw the reader too far towards the beauty of Australia - to her nature, her mountains and waters, her cities and towns - lest we divert attention from the main issue: How do Jews live in Australia?

'True, we have our Jewish problems', said to me an Orthodox leader of the community at a meeting of the Board of Deputies. 'Schools, education, assimilation. But remember and record in your book that at the beginning of this century, there were among Jews 50% mixed marriages, just as it is today in the small community in Perth. But in Sydney today there have been only 12% mixed marriages and in Melbourne a mere 3%. Why? Ask your Polish Jews. They have saved us. There was a real danger that we might have been lost'.

The old saying 'business is as difficult as splitting the Red Sea' is no longer appropriate. Everyone makes a living without splitting the sea. 40% of all Jews are employed in the garment industry, both as employers and as businessmen. Jews also work in knitwear, in the shoe industry, in furniture, in fruit shops, in building. The country is young. 'Whatever one begins, as long as one proceeds with common sense and care, one will succeed'. So I was told by one of the most intelligent men in Melbourne, Chaim Gust, and that during a discussion about spiritual matters - *Hasidism* and *Kabbalah*.

Quite different is the tempo of work in Australia from that in America. In Australia, no one grabs; there is time; there is no hurry. On average, a craftsman earns between fifteen and twenty pounds a week, sufficient for a decent but modest living. If his wife does not want to stay at home and wishes to help out - and that is not difficult - she opens a small store and they prosper more easily. One of the best signs of the economic stability of the Jews in Australia is the high number of self-owned houses among the new arrivals. I did not collect statistics, but I have recorded close to thirty private houses among them, whether they be knitters,



weavers, tailors or locksmiths. The same applies to cars.

I have already said that I was a guest in 31 houses in Melbourne and Sydney. Around each table were always some twenty or thirty guests. After the meal, more guests arrived for a cup of tea. To some homes there came over a hundred guests. There the tables were heaped with all manner of good things. What do Jews do around the tables? - First, they chat and tell stories. Then they become happier, greet and sing Jewish songs, those folk and workers' songs that they have brought with them from their old home. At this moment there stands clearly before me the joy in the house of my friend from Poland, S. Burstin in Melbourne. His children, students, are following in his footsteps. He is among the founders of the Waks House. His home is full of people, full of pleasure. So many familiar faces from so many towns and villages in Poland. There is here a marriage between Poland, Australia and America. The celebration is enhanced through the harmonica and lively singing of a young Vilna woman Freda Wilenski, niece of Pati Kremer, wife of the founder of the Bund, Alexander Kremer who died in the Vilna ghetto singing 'Di Sh'veue'. Freda sings, plays, takes the public by storm. And she too passed through the Nazi camps, enduring all manner of suffering. Today she is the wife of the quiet, modest, friendly Mordecai Wilenski. In a short time she has become the forelady of a large garment factory. Her husband is a printer with a local Jewish newspaper. I relate these particulars because I believe that they are the particulars that give a clearer picture of the Jewish situation.

I know well the refugees from Poland: from Lodz, Bialystok, Mlava, Warsaw. I had a strange feeling as I sat at their tables or rode in their cars along the streets of Australia. Theirs was a mixture of history in the ghettos, in the camps and in their exiles with a new history of their renewed lives in Australia. War had left them broken. Someone's children had been burned in the crematoria, another's husband had died, another's wife also carried away by fire. The sadness was oppressive. One remained alone in the world yet one had to continue to live. Every blade of grass has its angel that forever bids it 'grow'! So one established new ties, new marriages. New children came into the world. Through miracles, one made one's way to Australia, went into the factories, into business, bought one's own house and car, created clubs, organisations, built institutions. And so we sit at the tables and sing the songs of the old home: 'In the forge, by the fire'.

Yes it was a big forge with a burning fire. Not all wounds heal. Now I sit with Itzik Gilbert from Belchatov, Poland, today living in Sydney. There is gloom in his eyes. He speaks softly. He asks a favour of me; his child who, at the beginning of the war, was six months old was handed over for care to a priest in the village of Janina in the district of Lublin. He cannot rest. He, the Belchatov Jew, was driven to Russia, his wife died as a partisan fighter in the forests. He feels certain that his son is still alive somewhere, that he will grow up to be a gentile, a Pole. 'Help me', he says, 'help me to find my son'. Itzik Gilbert from Belchatov is merely an example.

I sit with my landmen, Bialystoker. There are in Melbourne about 500 Bialystoker families, accounting for three thousand persons. In one-time Bialystok, they would have occupied perhaps ten streets. The majority of them are well-established. I sit among Bialystoker Jews who tell stories of Australia: they have

wandered from Bialystok through Roumania, across the Balkans, through the East, through China, to Australia. Arrived here, built houses, factories, businesses; helped to establish a textile industry, created a Bialystoker Centre - a large house with a large garden, a children's home, apartments for newcomers - and gave aid to Bialystokers in Israel.

I sit with the Lodzer. Five hundred Lodzer are with me at a communal gathering. The Lodzer have built up a knitting industry - pullovers, socks - and so they live. Their commemoration gathering is saturated with grief and nostalgia. There are so many of one's own people, companions, friends. One remembers the past: meeting at the Lodzer Philharmonia on Pietrhover Street, or on Norntervich Street, or in the synagogues. Do you remember? Do you remember? Do you recognise me?

That is how Jews live in Australia.

### **Rabbis, Education, Synagogues in Australia**

An orthodox Jewish Williamsburg as in New York does not exist either in Melbourne or in Sydney. But the orthodox Jews try to strengthen orthodoxy in the best way they know how. They have already done a great deal, although admittedly they do not find the going easy. I spoke with people who are intimately familiar with the matter.

'We have 25,000 Jews and only six rabbis', complained one orthodox leader, 'at a time when in Johannesburg, South Africa, there are 34 rabbis for 28,000 Jews; in Manchester, England, there are 30 rabbis for 32,000 Jews, and in Winnipeg, Canada, there are 22 rabbis for 17,000 Jews. How can people be observant without spiritual guides?'

In Melbourne there are nine synagogues and eight smaller places of prayer that are called *shitblech*. Under the auspices of the Education Board, the Melbourne rabbis conducted a study and established that on the preceding Kol Nidre service, 11000 Jews attended the synagogues; of these, 2000 attended the Liberal services. On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, there were 9000 Jews; on the second day, a mere 5,600. Even less than in Sydney.

'And on Shabbat?', I asked. 'On Shabbat, only 4% of the entire Jewish population attends the synagogue'. The plaint runs as follows: 'What kind of Jew is it who, on Shabbat, never goes to *shuel*?' 2800 Jewish families in Melbourne buy kosher meat. But of these, 1800 families do not adhere to full *kashrut*. Only 1000 families keep 100% *kashrut* and on Passover allow no *chametz* into the house. There is also a tally kept regarding the *mikvah*. My orthodox informant says with regret: 'Only 8-200 women come to the *mickvas*. The remainder get by without them'. His remedy is to have rabbis come from other parts of the world - particularly America and Israel - to stimulate the Jews. But no-one comes.

Even if the orthodox Jews have not succeeded to draw the people back to observance and *Kashrut*, many have nonetheless done a considerable amount in regard to education, *chedarim* and Talmud-Torahs. In these Talmud-Torahs, 700 pupils study nine hours a week. Hebrew is translated into Yiddish. The Australian yeshivah is two years old. It is a day-school with forty-nine students. Two more smaller Talmud-Torahs have been started where study is conducted as in the one-

Australia. I did not hear their language there, did not hear the Yiddish language.

### **Jews and their Cultural Activity in Australia**

The Kadimah-hall in Lygon Street is overfilled already for the eighth time. People stand on the steps and in the hallway. No vacant seats are left. So one [was] permitted uneasily to sit upon the stage. Why have the people come? What do they want to hear?

They listen as if spellbound. They hear about five million Jews in the great distant America, about the general and the Jewish worker-movement, about Jewish problems and achievements, about Jewish literature, *Eretz Israel*, the Diaspora. The hall is no longer a mere meeting-place. It creates the impression of a packed hall of *Hasidim*. It seethes; in the silence a pot boils. It is a quiet murmur of hearts, here in the furthestmost corner of the world.

Who are the young and the middle-aged public in the hall, the men and the women? All came here, saved from the devastation of Poland; they are the remnants of the Polish tables - from Ger and Kovno, from Sarno and Plotzk, from Lublin and Bialystok, from Warsaw and Lodz - in each one's head and heart a confusion of memories, of nostalgia. Here sit Jews who have come from the German camps, from the Siberian steppes, from prisons, from limekilns - come after all their migrations and wanderings, to a country that is democratic, that is blessed with a strong trade union, where antisemitism is virtually unknown. Here one draws the threads of one's being together again. No more will they wander about - so they believe. New families have been established; here are raised the local-born - the redemption of those who perished in the fires. So they sit in the hall, huddled together, and whisper: 'Just like in our home town in Lublin'.

Who and what is the Kadimah? That is the central house of the Yiddish-secular Jews. Its official name is 'Jewish National Library "Kadimah"'. It is already 45 years old. Its founders were immigrants from Russia and Poland. There was a time just before the second World War when apathy befell the members of the Kadimah. It would perhaps have disappeared had it not been for post-war immigration. Today the Kadimah has 1300 members. To its diverse ventures - its symposia, meetings and theatre performances - there come the Yiddish-speaking sections of the community.

The Kadimah, whose *raison d'être* lies in the domains of Yiddish culture, is also active in Jewish national and social affairs. Thus, for example, it organised the protest meeting against the Arab atrocities against Jews, took part in the Israel campaign, protested against the destruction of Yiddish culture and of the Jewish writers in Soviet Russia, has conducted a fight to democratise the Jewish Board of Deputies to which it sends its delegates.

In the Kadimah-hall are also held meetings and activities of the landsmanschaften, school concerts, gatherings of different organisations and parties - the Bund, Pioneer Women, Keren Keyemath. Also ghetto commemoration evenings. The Kadimah also has an amateur theatre troupe that stages plays under the direction of Jacob Waislitz and Rachel Holzer, familiar Jewish stage artists from Poland. Hack-works are strictly excluded. Some 8,950 people came to these plays in the past year.



The Kadimah has representatives on the Education Board where it carries on a struggle against the largest school Mount Scopus College. Its aim is 'a proper national education; what it sees instead, and fights against, is the dilution not only of Yiddish but also of Hebrew' and 'the piecemeal transformation of the College into a general school where the Yiddish language plays a secondary role'.

35,780 Jews have attended the various functions of the Kadimah in the past year. So says L. Frydman, the secretary of the Kadimah, with pride. The president of the Kadimah is the Zionist Benzion Patkin, active in Jewish culture and a supporter of Yiddish. The committee is comprised of adherents of different Jewish political, national ideologies. I shall mention separately the activity of the Melbourne Bundists at the Kadimah. The Bund has a large organisation in Melbourne consisting of several hundred members and a youth organisation. Their active participation in the Kadimah is particularly important. The harmonious relationship between the different groups, their mutual co-operation is the reason for the Kadimah's success. Long may it continue in this way.

To the camp of 'Yiddish Jews' one must add the two weekly newspapers: the *Yiddishe Naves* under the editorship of I Rubinstein and the *Yiddishe Post* under Gedaliah Shaiak. These papers play an important role in Jewish life in Australia. Matters pertaining to Jewish schools, religious life, and to Jewish literature receive appropriate discussion in them. These Yiddish papers together with their English counterparts come into all Jewish homes. They are self-supporting.

Out of the camp of secular-Jewish Jews grow the most important institutions. I mean their schools and kindergartens: the Peretz school, Peretz kindergarten, Sholom Aleichem school, Sholom Aleichem kindergarten. The I.L. Peretz school already exists twenty years. When the present administrator of the school, Joseph Giligich, took over the administration in 1938, there were at the Peretz school only 38 children. Today there are 250 in the school and 31 in the kindergarten. The children come there from 25 suburbs in buses and cars, the majority the children of Yiddish-speaking parents. At the Sholom Aleichem school there are 160 children and 35 in the kindergarten; today they number close to 200.

In both schools lessons are held twice a week - Sunday and Wednesday. There are no classes on Shabbat. On each study day, the children study for two and a half to three hours. Both schools are housed in their own separate buildings. It was my good fortune to arrive in Melbourne just as people prepared themselves for a great event - the dedication of the new splendid building of the Peretz school; the lovely house of glass and stone had just been completed and carried the name of the martyr Arthur Zygelboim.

The Peretz school has grown in stages, particularly in the last years. A large house was needed. The people, parents of children, leaders, a camp of Bundists with the good brother and comrade, the one-time Lodzer weaver Silman at the head, took it upon themselves to erect the building. They built it with the greatest devotion. The house cost 25,000 pounds. Together with the weaver Silman, the motivating force was the veteran teacher from the secular Yiddish school movement in Vilna, Joseph Giligich. He has been in Australia nearly twenty years.

When I came the building was already completed. I was conducted through it by my long-familiar friend from Warsaw, the builder of ORT and other schools -

Chaim Rozenbes, I pass through the splendid, bright and sunny classes, through the hallways in the building on both storeys. I marvel at the garden, the playground. I recite a *Shehechinah*. A building is a building. But more important are the classes filled with Jewish children, the kindergarten with three to four-year-old elvers singing and dancing. Yiddish rings out of every classroom. I attended lessons in history, literature and Yiddish. Joseph Giligich, my old comrade from the Yiddish school in Vilna, conducted me through the classes. Together we chatted with the children, asked them questions, listened to their answers, heard their stories and poems, their discussions and opinions on important questions. I was impressed. Joseph Giligich watched with tears of happiness in his eyes. I found only two words to say: 'Yasher koach! Well done, friend Joseph'.

I sat in the recreation room of the kindergarten, a splendid large room filled with sunlight. One teacher played at the piano, the children sang and clapped their hands and danced with their teacher, Tshuvah Krystal. I remember Tshuvah from our kindergarten in Warsaw, on Karmelitchka Street. I know of her journey through Russia, through China, up to her arrival here in Australia.

I also visited the Sholom Aleichem school. The same. Its own building. Its administrators plan on its large site a new building. The old one is too small. All the classes are filled with children. Who is the headmaster of the Sholom Aleichem school? The stage actor from Vilna, Jacob Waislitz. There were insufficient teachers in Australia. So they prepared and taught new young one-time youth leaders ... [?] Poland, students who themselves passed through the Yiddish schools in Melbourne.

The schools receive strong support from the parents. 75% of the budget is covered by fees. On Sunday mornings, the schools, the gardens around the schools, the waiting-rooms, become a kind of club for the parents. They bring the children in their cars or by bus.

I hear the proficiency of the older class in Yiddish folklore and poetry. I am in a kindergarten where - this is a practice with each child - the birthday of a pupil is being celebrated. Little Rachel Mittelberg is five years old; so everyone has come for her birthday - pupils and teachers. I get immense pleasure from sitting in on the lesson where the teacher is Shulamit Sher, herself a one-time pupil of the Vilna Yiddisher Real-Gymnasium and now a teacher at the Peretz school.

I have already mentioned the dedication/consecration of the Peretz school. Hundreds of parents around white-covered tables. It is not the dedication of only one school. It is a *Simchat Torah* for the whole camp of Yiddish-secular Jews. I hear the greetings of the President of the general Jewish community, of a representative of the Zionist Federation, of representatives of the teachers, parents, the Bund and the youth. I pay attention to the concert, the performances and recitations of the young students. Their recitations were warm and heartfelt; their faces radiant.

It was a good holiday for the Jews in Melbourne.

## CHAIM SHOSHKES, 1961

*translated from Yiddish by Serge Liberman*

In the summer of 1961 I flew for the third time to Australia. My first two visits were as emissary of the immigrant society HIAS and the third as emissary of YIVO.

Twelve years ago Australia had eight million inhabitants, despite the fact that its area was as great as that of the United States. Today Australia has more than ten million people - an impressive growth resulting from the intensive search for immigrants which the government conducted through special committees in all post-war camps. Twelve years ago the Jewish population numbered a little over forty thousand; today it is reckoned as close to seventy thousand - also a significant increase, considering that the Australian government did not specifically seek out Jewish immigrants in the camps.

The result is that Jewish communal life in Australia, particularly in Melbourne, has, because of this fresh incoming migrant stream, bloomed and become strengthened. The number of Jews in Melbourne has, since my first visit, almost doubled and now counts as more than 30,000; in Sydney there live about 25,000 Jews. The rest are in Perth (3000), Brisbane (2000), Adelaide (about 1500), and smaller numbers are scattered about the whole country. Their number is smallest in Tasmania (less than one hundred persons).

The Jewish communities are organised in the form of advisory Boards of Deputies, which are unified in a central executive whose site changes periodically between Melbourne and Sydney. Apart from this, there exists a diverse network of philanthropic, Zionist, cultural and sporting institutions, and numerous others that cater literally for all branches of the Jewish adult and youth population. For one who comes from America where Jewish communal life is so chaotically organised, it was a pleasure to see how the seventy thousand Jews in Australia - as many Jews as in two or three blocks in Brooklyn - are so incomparably organised.

Understandably, I do not undertake in the framework of a single article to give even a condensed picture of the colourful life in Australia. I shall therefore confine myself to that circle of Jews that live with, or show an interest in, Yiddish. May we begin with that institution whose fifty-year jubilee fell in December 1961.

Fifty years ago, there were almost no Yiddish-speaking Jews in Australia. The majority of the Jews in the small community had come from England. After the 1905 Russian Revolution began the first great immigration stream from Russia and Poland which brought with itself the new age of Jewish renaissance that had originated in the old home. There came Zionists and socialists, some Yiddish writers and several educators. With their participation, the 'Kadimah' was created fifty years ago. It was intended as - and has become - an institution through which



the new immigrants lived a Jewish life and served as an edifice against assimilation. The newly-arrived Yiddish-speaking element took over the *Kadimah* and it became the 'mother' of a series of important organisations which arose in Australia during the ensuing years: the Jewish Relief Fund which played such an important role in assisting new immigrants; the I.L. Peretz School (in 1935), the Sholom Aleichem School and, in the thirties, the Yiddish press. Today Melbourne possesses two Jewish weeklies with a large circle of readers and of a high literary standard.

Out of the *Kadimah* have been organised a considerable number of *landsmanshaften*. The cultural functions that the *Kadimah* conducts in Yiddish, both with its own and with invited writers and lecturers, are very popular and well attended. Not always can the large hall accommodate the entire audience, as instanced during the visits of the writers Abraham Sutzkever and D.B. Malkin from Israel, as well as the writer of these lines. It is, by the way, worthy of note that to my own lecture about my visit to the Soviet Union, the audience came in several hundred of their own cars, which reflects to an extent the material prosperity of this Yiddish-speaking section of the community, particularly of the newcomers, who have gradually, but quickly enough, worked themselves up.

Yiddish has also broken a path into the meetings of the Melbourne Board of Deputies where representatives of the *Kadimah*, *landsmanshaften* and the Yiddish schools speak Yiddish.

Over the past years, a Lubavitcher *yeshivah* with some hundred students has been established in Melbourne. The lessons are primarily explained in Yiddish and the *yeshivah* is therefore a strong factor and influence not only on the Yiddish, but also the Yiddishist, front. At this point, it is worth mentioning Mt Scopus College - the Jewish educational institution in English where a number of hours are given over to Hebrew and where some 1500 children are educated in a national spirit - as well as other day-schools (eg Moriah College, Adass Israel) and nine kindergartens. Special Jewish Sunday schools are active in the Melbourne synagogues. Altogether, one may say that seldom does a Jewish child find himself outside the framework of a certain upbringing in Jewishness.

The situation in Sydney is worse; there the assimilatory stream has ever been stronger than in Melbourne. There, one finds one Jewish day school of about two hundred pupils; besides this, approximately two thousand Jewish children receive some Jewish education once a week.

Economically, the condition of the Jews in Australia is a satisfactory one. There are not many millionaires as in South Africa or in the United States. It is a middle-class people of manufacturers and shopkeepers. It is worth noting nonetheless that particularly many of the newcomers from the camps in Germany and Russia have amassed considerable wealth thanks to the abilities they had already displayed in the old world before the Holocaust (for instance, the clothing manufacturers from Bialystok, the leather manufacturers from Radom, etc).

Let us tell the sad and romantic story of the Jewish community in Tasmania. Geographically, is the last normally-inhabited point on the globe. Beyond Tasmania to the South Pole there stretches a massive region of icebergs towards Antarctica and the as-yet unexplored ice-continents around the Pole. I flew three hours from Melbourne to Tasmania's capital city, Hobart. Not as emissary of YIVO, for on

the island there are almost no more Jews. There have remained only several dozen. Yet the university in Hobart had a discussion on Israel-Arab relations and a good friend at Melbourne University suggested that I present the Israeli side.

In Tasmania was eventually founded the first Jewish community in Australia. That was 130 years ago. In 1844, the community built a fine synagogue for its several hundred Jews. That synagogue is the oldest and most original in Australia: it is in the form of an old Egyptian temple and possesses a record-book in which are found the names of the founders - the Nathans, Jacobs, Benjamins, Abrahams. I saw the same names on the shingles of the rich stores in Hobart (and in Melbourne and Sydney). But the owners are no longer Jewish; they have long been assimilated or converted.

On Yom Kippur, there still come fifteen or twenty Jews to pray at the synagogue, of the forty who have remained. Every Sabbath, there comes a single Jew who hails from Frankfurt, puts on his *tallith*, opens the Ark and takes out a scroll to read the week's *sidra*. He prays together with an unseen *minyan* of the dead. He hears them say 'Amen'.

And the synagogue is so luxuriously decorated. The Ark shines as if with Jacob's gold around it. Inside it are four scrolls with colourful velvet mantles on which have been sewn the names of donors whose children have long long ago gone over to Christian alternatives. Looking upon those orphaned scrolls, I understood the saying of our Sages of Blessed memory: 'Everything depends on luck, even the *Sefer Torah* in the Temple'.

The contrast between the ebullient Jewry in Melbourne and the signs of our past in Tasmania is the best indication and consolation that life here continues, not through temples nor in permanent addresses, but in the moveable spirit of the people Israel, that wanders and strays and finds its eternal way and purpose.



## BERL FRIMER, 1965

*translated from Yiddish by Serge Liberman*

These lines are written while I am still in Melbourne. They are therefore brief and provisional. One cannot really get to know a community in a short time, in a mere five weeks. One must know and understand the country and the general surroundings in which the community finds itself. However Jewish and resistant to external influences a community may be, it is nonetheless a part of the local colour, culture and way of life of the non-Jewish world. And Australia is certainly a complicated, broad and in a way simple country. Nevertheless, I feel justified in expressing several opinions after dozens of meetings with groups, organisations and individuals, and after countless conversations.

One may characterise Jewish Melbourne as a close corner in a distant land, a small community with great ambitions and scope. The intimacy of the community and its deep-seated and worldly Jewishness is to be marvelled at. It is a remarkable thing. At the southernmost point of the furthestmost continent in the world, there is a Jewish oasis that resembles the most organic Jewish corners of the world. Geographically, it is indeed the end of the world, but in a Jewish context, the very heart of the world.

Here lies spread the entire panorama: synagogues and schools, parties and *landsmanshaften*, a hundred institutions, all of them active. It is an intensive boiling Jewish life, but not only that - Jewish Melbourne is close to everything that happens in Jewish life, at home, in the world, in Israel, everywhere. The community is well - and accurately - informed about everything that takes place in every corner of the Jewish diaspora. The ear is sharpened and sensitive and the wakeful heart wipes out the geographical distance.

The community has a little over 30,000 souls but, although numerically small, it is relatively one of the most Jewish and best communities in the world. It is one of those one can count on the fingers of one hand. To take several illustrative examples: In Melbourne there are seven Jewish day schools that cater for some 2500 children, about 40% of all Jewish children of school age. This is the highest percentage anywhere in the diaspora. But also in the general attendance in Jewish schools, the community can match the renowned Mexico City where their number exceeds 80%. In Melbourne there are two weekly newspapers, which are of a high standard and serious. The small community has an honoured group of Yiddish writers: the renowned essayist and critic I. Rapaport, the splendid prose-writer Herz Bergner, the learned essayist Itzhak Kahn, and a number of journalists of whom no earnest publication would be ashamed. There is a Yiddish theatre group, in existence already twenty-five years, that has sworn itself to a serious repertoire of high integrity and draws a faithful and intelligent audience. The Zionist Federation here is strong and influential. The Bund has one of the strongest groups



in the world. More than a million pounds a year is collected here for Israel, general Jewish and local appeals.

In communal life there is also method and direction and not a mere throwing together of organisations. The Board of Deputies conducts itself like a parliament. Even the *landsmanschaften* have established a federation and are crystallised as an important body. It is the good fortune of a community. One cannot explain everything by saying that the builders of the community were East European Jews. It is one reason, but not the only one. Rather it was the work of the fathers of the community who were avid for culture and very Jewish and who grouped and huddled themselves about the Kadimah, of which more later.

It does not mean, of course, that Jewish Melbourne is all-inclusive. The eternal problems, the dangers, the threats have not bypassed the community. Many locally-born young folk stand outside the community. Very few young faces are seen in communal circles, even in those which have long since gone over to English. One sees also the artificially speeded-up process of eliminating Yiddish. There is also present a considerable degree of superficial 'Australianism' which is alien even to many true Australians. Melbourne is 'blessed' with many disputes and controversies, but as one who knows a little of Jewish life in the world, I would wish that every place would be like Melbourne.

Jewish life, the Jewish community has taken a route quite opposite to that of Melbourne itself, the capital of Victoria. Melbourne has two million inhabitants and leads a quiet provincial existence while Melbourne Jews display the scope of a world metropolis. Several more illustrations: To the Israel Day and Independence celebrations there come five to six thousand Jews, to the Ghetto commemorations two to three thousand. Mount Scopus College looks like an empire and it seems to me that even Israel does not have an educational institution with such buildings.

The credit for much of this great activity and for its rich broad scope is due, in large part, to the Kadimah. The Kadimah was the first to bring lecturers from overseas and created a public numerous lectures in a short time. Its emphasis on culture and the loyalty of the people have democratised the community and have given it a delightful flavour. Another paradox - it is the poor-looking institutions in Carlton, and not the huge buildings in the wide streets, that have opened the doors to the world. The call, it seems, has come here from within, from the very roots.

## ADELAIDE-ISRAEL HERITAGE: A TRIBUTE TO ADELHEID TRAUB

*Helen Tversky-Steiner<sup>1</sup>*

### **Introduction**

In Adelaide, for nearly fifty years, Adelheid Traub's name, voice, and copperplate handwriting were immediately recognizable. No overseas or interstate Zionist emissary came to Adelaide without the request and intent to visit her. Her life, home, annual schedule, and daily activity revolved around a love for Israel and in particular, the United Israel Appeal. From the mid-1940s until 1990 when her physical health declined, she meticulously fulfilled its treasury and many other administrative aspects, often personally covering the expenses. With great sadness she retired from her life's mission.

When in 1989-90 the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation built its complex at the current Glenside site bringing under one roof the Synagogue, the Victor Ades Kindergarten, and Massada College, its Board of Management readily and generously continued to provide an office for Zionist activities. The State Zionist Council named it "The Adelheid Traub Office", thereby inextricably linking Adelheid's name with Adelaide and Israel. People willingly donated to outfit the office. Since that time, Adelheid provided a generous bequest specifically for the updating of office facilities.

In the early years of Adelheid's life, and the contemporaneous Jewish community of South Australia whose families lived both within Adelaide's environs and mid-north country centres<sup>1</sup>, the word "Israel" was the name of honour given to Jacob after his struggle with the angels, and later in the Book of Exodus (1:1) where it stated that his descendants were to be called "the people of the children of Israel". Of course, in 1948 the name was invested with another meaning, when the State of Israel came into being. In 1947 the United Nations General Assembly met in New York and convened a special committee to examine the problem of former mandated Palestine. Its chairman was Dr Hebert Vere Evatt, Australia's Minister for External Affairs, who often visited Adelaide and enjoyed its wines. The committee's recommendation was for Palestine to be partitioned into independent Jewish and Arab states. David Ben-Gurion declared the Jewish State into existence. Theodor Herzl's words, "if you will it; it is no dream" became a reality both halfway through Adelheid's lifetime and touching on the first centenary of the establishment of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This contribution is based on Helen Tversky-Steiner's "The Adelheid Traub Lecture" of the South Australian Friends of the Hebrew University on 11 February 2001.

### Evolution of a Title

The title of this article, 'Adelaide-Israel Heritage' came from a suggestion from Dr Jack Gubbay, the current President of the South Australian Friends of the Hebrew University. However, the actual rubric came about through a visit to Adelaide in 1997 of Eliyahu Honig, the Associate Vice President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for the revitalization of the South Australian Friends. During morning coffee with myself and husband Andrew,<sup>3</sup> Eliyahu asked me about my own background. I replied that one of my grandfathers, Samuel Baruch Saunders, was buried on the Mount of Olives, and that when I was in Jerusalem in 1986, I had his grave repaired. In 1879, a year after becoming a widower, Samuel had gone to live in Jerusalem where he established Moshev Zekenim, a home for city's poor and elderly folk, of whom there were many at that time.

Eliyahu felt that his grandfather had written about him, and sorting through my genealogical collection I found a long article in Hebrew, "Daat Kedoshim" written by RK Honig in 1891. It spoke at length about Samuel and Moshev Zekenim.<sup>4</sup> It was one of many pieces written about Samuel Baruch.<sup>5</sup> In the 1860s and 1870s four rabbis from Palestine visited Adelaide<sup>6</sup> - Rabbi Hayam Zevce Schneersohn, Rabbi Hayam Levi, Rabbi Zevce, and Jacob Levi Saphir - explaining the plight of, and collecting for, 'the poor on Mount Zion shelter houses - betel mahse'. Whether these visits inspired Samuel Baruch Saunders to later undertake his venture is a conjecture. This was a time when the Jews of South Australia were mainly of British and Russian backgrounds and their community was an outreach of Anglo-Jewry and looked to London for guidance on religious practice.

### 19<sup>th</sup> to the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, events in both eastern and western Europe were causing great difficulties for their Jewish communities. In 1862 in Adelheid's birth country, to be come known as Germany in 1871, Moses Hess published his "Rome and Jerusalem", in which he outlined an independent Jewish state. Ideas about a Jewish homeland were also germinating elsewhere. The Czars of Imperial Russia imposed twenty-five years of military service on Jewish boys of twelve years of age. Their heinous pogroms prompted Russian Jewish emigration to western Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the pioneering *Biluim* to migrate to restore the malarial swamps of central Palestine. Others travelled as far as Australia, some arriving in Adelaide. In France, the infamous Dreyfus Affair was to rage from 1895 until his reprieve in 1899 - its effect on Herzl is legendary. When Adelheid was a toddler, Australian Jewish families were among those mourning and welcoming home men from the Boer War.

At a time when the British Empire was flourishing, there was in England a fully committed philosemitic element of the Anglican Church, which included the Reverend William Hechler. We lived in Loxton, on the Murray River, from 1934 to 1942, where our father<sup>7</sup> was the headmaster of the school. Half a block away lived Mr Ern Hechler, the township's lawyer, and son of the Reverend William Hechler who was a devoted friend and one of the last people to be with Herzl before his untimely death in 1904.<sup>8</sup>



As happened during the Second World War, in the Great War of 1914-18, sons of Australian Jewish families camped and trained in Egypt, and a number fought in Palestine. Among them, the grandson of Samuel Baruch Saunders. Many Australian soldiers of the Middle East campaign are buried in the cemeteries of El Arish, Be'ersheva, Deir El Belah, Gaza, Ramleh, Haifa on the foot of Mount Carmel, and on the western slope of the Mount of Olives facing the Holy City. Samuel's grandson, Samuel Archie Saunders, was laid to his rest in the Boulogne cemetery in Europe in 1916. Much good will was generated between Australian troops and the Jews of Palestine in both World Wars.

In 1920, WIZO was founded in London, and in 1935/6 the Adelaide Women's Zionist Society functioned in South Australia. I have two precious copies of the journal 'The Daughter of Israel' printed in Palestine, that was distributed in Adelaide. WIZO in South Australia was created in 1948 of which Adelheid was a devoted activist since its inception. *Ahusat Yeladim*, the WIZO children's home on Mount Camel, Haifa, has landmarks associated with Adelaide - the Mrs Nat Solomons' playing field, the bequests from Mrs Noni Arnold, Mr Joe Netter, and sisters Mrs Osers and Miss Elkan.

The 1940s saw a number of Jewish youth - including some from Adelaide - off to *hachsharah* near Shepparton in Victoria, to acquire agricultural and horticultural skills in preparation for kibbutz life.

### Post Jewish Statehood

In 1950 we had an exciting occasion when Moshe Sharett, Foreign Minister of Israel, headed a visit by Knesset members to Israel including Adelaide. The Memorial Hall of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation in Synagogue Place was never adequate in size Israeli diplomats, when Israeli diplomats, at first consuls and later ambassadors, visited Adelaide and we hired reception houses. These were gala occasions. Similarly, we put on our finery when the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra visited - the first time it played at the Thebarton Town Hall, and later at Adelaide's Festival Theatre.

Israel has had to give special consideration to dry farming techniques. In these methods Australia was a world leader with the Waite Research Institute of Adelaide University in the vanguard. For some years in the 1960's, retired Israeli Colonel Pelz and his family were based at Port Augusta in this field of research. From there they made frequent visits to our Adelaide community. However, South Australia disproved one of his hypotheses. He believed that for every name of 'Cohen' in the phone book there were 800 Jews in residence. That fell apart at Port Augusta there was one 'Cohen' in the phone book but definitely not 800 Jews!

The War of 1967 brought access and Israeli administration to the Old City of Jerusalem and to the original *Moshev Zekenim*, later it was massively rebuilt in the suburb of Katamon. *Moshev Zekenim* 'the united home for the aged' on Ha'Omer Road, a wide tall three story building - one of the tallest in the Jewish Quarter - stood undamaged. Because of its strategic position it had been used as an Arab headquarter. The building bears a plaque stating, "it was founded at the initiative of Samuel B. Sanders from Australia in 1880", and then goes on to

relate its history. Currently it is being used as a hostel for students from *Yeshivah Aish-Ha'torah*.

### Today

Because of the determination of the State Zionist Council of South Australia, generous sponsors, *sh'lichah* and *sh'lichim*, and a voluntary *madrichah*, our young people are acquiring Zionist understandings by attending *Habonim*.

Those of us who are older, link to modern Israel through the JNF, WIZO, NCJW, UIA, ARZI, the Friends of the Hebrew University, and of course, Pam Mendel's 'The Jewish Half Hour'. The wife of a past shaliach, Raya Tsur, left a legacy of their years in Adelaide - the *parachot* in the two synagogues, and the stained glass window depicting 'Jerusalem' at Beit Shalom synagogue.

Under the auspices of the JNF, and during the reign of Henry Ninio as Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide, there were two plantings of trees in the famed Adelaide parklands to symbolize the local Jewish community's links with Israel. The first of these was in February 1994, called 'the Australia-Israel Forest'. This was part of the project to beautify the City of Adelaide from the airport in the west parklands on the northern side of Burbridge Road. The Minister for the Environment David Wotton, endorsed the project, and the Adelaide City Council provided the trees. We planted on 'Green Sunday' 1994. The second planting was in Rundle Park, in the eastern parklands bounded by Rundle and Fullartons Roads and North Terrace. Called, 'The Peace and Friendship Grove', was officially unveiled in March 1996 and was dedicated to the late President Sadat of Egypt and Israel's late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Present were the Consul General of Egypt, Mr Nabil Ibrahim, and the Israeli Consul, Mr Mordecai Yedid.

Since the establishment of the Jewish State as before, the Adelaide branch of Australian Jewish organizations has diligently supported Israel. Adelaide was extremely active when the UAI initiated and brought to fruition the wonderful 'Project Renewal' at Neve Golan near Jaffa.

There has long been a physical reciprocity in the linkage between the South Australian Jewish community and Israel. We have always had Israeli families living among us. They have come as students, visiting academics, and agricultural consultants. Many lifelong friendships have resulted. On the other hand, individuals and families from Adelaide have taken the path of *Aliyah*, some remaining and others (marked with an asterisk) who remained for varying periods of time. Those members of members of a particular family who took this road did not necessarily do so at the same time. The list includes:

Brother and sister, Jo and Leila Gould

Ralf Kaiser\*

Cousins, Marcel Lazare and Ronni Barkley

Dahlia Peisach\*

Mother and sons, Beeky, Ben and Morrie Sommers

Family Herbert: Gilbert, Valerie, Margie and Barry

Family Vulfson: Paul, Yanka, Benji, Natalie and Simon

Maria Misan

Brothers, Jack and Paul Steiner  
 Sonia Gouttman  
 Suzanne Fleming\*  
 Sisters, Ingrid Gubbay\* and Frances Danon\*  
 Rabbi Tobias and Rose Rafalowicz and daughter, Ruth\*  
 Jeanette Aillon\*  
 David Mendels\*  
 Joshua Shultz  
 Joel Gottlieb  
 Brother and sister, Ben and Gabriel Ninio.

## Conclusion

Every few decades demographers assert that small Jewish communities, and they will name Adelaide, will not survive. Yet it has, and the Israel-Adelaide and the Adelaide-Israel links have helped assure this. Three powerful factors have contributed to this continuity, each in their own way. There is the dedication of those who have made *Aliyah*, while organizations which replicate those of the bigger centres have stimulated this interaction. However, most significant, is the love of Israel of a determined, tireless person like Adelheid Traub whose unstinting commitment to Jewish life, and in particular *Keren Hayesod*, has kept Israel in the lives of all members of the Adelaide Jewish community. In recognition of her unfailing efforts and generosity, the South Australian Friends of the Hebrew University honoured her with "The Adelheid Traub Lecture". Adelheid passed away this year in her nineties.

## NOTES

- 1 Hirsch, M, "Jews in South Australia 1836-1936", W.E.A - Tutor, University of Adelaide, 1936, pp.35-46
- 2 *ibid*.
- 3 Andrew Steiner was born in 1933 in Budapest and migrated to Australia with his parents in 1948.
- 4 Moshev Zedanim's address, H'Omer Road, the Old City, Jerusalem
- 5 Articles were also written by Zalman Ben 'Iovim, Yeshoshua Ben-Arye, and Zion Ben, Hebrew University Library, Jerusalem
- 6 Minutes of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, Mortlock Library of South Australia
- 7 Abraham Tversky (my first husband) born in 1911 in Kishinev whose family lived in Palestine 1912-15, Egypt 1915-51, and then in Adelaide until his death in 1974
- 8 An article about Reverend William Hechler, "Vicarious Zionist", written by David Pilaggi appeared in the Jerusalem Post, November 8, p5



## FOOTPRINTS

*"The footprints of a stranger showed us where we had lost our way." Anon.*

*Bernard Boas QAM*

Much of the detail of this article comes from my book in preparation, "Kaddish to Kiddush: An Australian Transformation". From the perspective of a native-born Aussie – myself – it chronicles some of the changes in the life of Australian Jews caused by the arrival of newcomers, Jewish migrants from Great Britain and Europe, mainly in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

### **Australians of the Jewish Persuasion**

Sixty five years ago Australian Jewry was fast losing any of its distinctiveness and on the verge of assimilation. We saw little justification for preserving our separateness; we did see ourselves as different, but ease of living was sapping our different identity. Our neighbours didn't persecute us, but they hardly noticed our Jewishness at all. We were Australians of the Jewish persuasion, which sounded as we simply attended a different church. Jewishwise, the scene was moving rapidly towards the situation where a Kaddish for many middle class Australian Jews was a likely proposition. Israel did not as yet exist, and the growing cries of anguish from our brethren in Europe had hardly been noticed.

Suddenly there arose a need for us to cope with refugees. We wondered did they really want to cross the world to mix with us in our British 'White Australia'? Would they speak with a strong foreign accent? Might they make our neighbours think that all Jews were in essence, 'foreigners'? Is it possible they would bring anti-Semitism upon us like an infectious disease?

We simply did not want them here, and they certainly did not wish to leave the civilized life of Europe to move thousands of miles away to an unknown sunburned country devoid of family and friends. Nonetheless, they came. There was Karl Shipman from Germany, who hardly considered himself a Jew, or indeed, knew what a Jew was until Nazism included him in its dragnet. Eddie Klein, by a staggering co-incidence, escaped from post-Anschluss Vienna and crossed the continents of Europe and Asia to join other refugees in Shanghai. Andrew Fuerst had witnessed the German's bloody hegemony in Budapest. Then there was Fred Hopkins, a qualified lawyer, who had to re-establish himself professionally in a completely new land. These all became our friends. There were others from Russia, Poland, Holland, Rumania, and a dozen other places. We had not expected to meet such rootless strangers in our streets. My wife and I had never been outside this country. How could we have been so ignorant of the continent from which our ancestors had come, and so insensitive to our brethren's needs there? Understanding came slowly.

### A Kaddish and a Kiddush

I offer a Kaddish for our watered-down, weakened, and passive kind of Judaism. We were rather poor, but so were our neighbours and friends, but we did have freedom and space. There was little violence and few non-British strangers. Forgotten was the line from our Torah, "We were strangers in the land of Egypt". We had discovered nothing much to be proud of in our Judaism, were happy in our naivete, and never met anything much to be afraid of. Only meanings of the Torah for us were tradition and stories. We were islands of Judaism in a sea of Christianity. Like our neighbours we hung up our stockings on Xmas Eve for Father Xmas – a good Jewish family! No Xmas tree, but we knew the Christmas hymns almost as well as we knew Lecha Dodi and Maoz Tsur.

My father brought us from Perth to Melbourne in 1921, all six of us, all born in this country. On some Friday evenings, I went to shule with father. Then, not strict with the 'no riding rule' of orthodox Judaism, in the dusk, we would hurry home via a tram along Dandenong Road. It was quite a venture for me, a small boy, hurrying home in the dusk, holding father's hand, to the bright and welcoming house where we got a hug from mother. We were *Shabbos-Jews*.

Now I have a new 'family', a new religion, almost a new land. This modern place is not the 'White Australia' of once upon a time. The Shabbat services which I now enjoy, are a happy mix of Hebrew and English, of melody and recitation, of tradition and innovation, of joy as well as solemnity. We of the *Progressive* are even a little Chassidic.

My new Australia is full of interesting people, open to discuss almost anything, and now I have passed the over busy crush of midlife, living is exciting as it once was, though much more rich and varied. I rejoice to see the children and young people growing up to be the new Jews of this country.

### 100 Years Ago

In 1870, Adelaide (South Australia) welcomed Reverend Abraham Boas, my grandfather, a young Rabbi born in Holland and trained in England.<sup>1</sup> There was little money to pay rabbis (or most other ministers of religion), so the congregation supplemented his miserable income with gifts of chickens, fresh vegetables, or eggs. His biography pictures this rabbi as a kindly person, wise in his generation, liberal in his thinking, and self-sacrificing for the good of the Jewish communities in places all over Australia. He was not a distant law-giver, but a pastor to his flock as our Christian neighbours say of their good ministers.

A plaque exists in the pavement on North Terrace in Adelaide commemorating his life there. He and his wife (nee Elizabeth Solomon) produced ten children of whom nine survived to adulthood. Of the Rabbi's three sons, three brothers come into our story. The eldest, Lionel, married out, which broke his father's heart. The second, Eidy (Isaac), my father, strove mightily to fill the empty post of eldest as second sons often do. He became well-known as a scientist, as well as leader in the Jewish community. His younger brother, Harold, was an architect with the distinction of having designed both the Orthodox Synagogue and the Liberal Temple in Perth. Eidy married his cousin, Adela Isabel Solomon, the daughter of the chief fireman of Adelaide, a man who died in 1907, in a work accident when he fell through the roof of a burning building.

One, Vaiben Solomon, an earlier member of my mother's family, had entered the history books. He was Premier of South Australia for a few days. As my father told the story, it was on a Friday afternoon that Vaiben happened to be in the House of Representative in the South Australian Parliament as the Leader of the Opposition. At a certain moment, he realized that many members had gone home and that he commanded a majority in the House. There was just a quorum. So he put the motion of 'no confidence' in the governing party. It passed, and he went immediately to Government House and had himself sworn in as Premier of South Australia. He lasted about six days before the House had enough members together to displace him. Nonetheless, he had not just gained a place in the history books, but also a 'gold pass' which gave him free passage for life on any government vehicle – train, tram, or coach. Thereafter, he was known as *Sudden Solomon*.

My parents' generation formed a bridge to this land. Three of their parents had come from Europe. We in our turn were 100% Australian with strong close family ties, plus a strong conviction to marry Jewish mates. However, we were also familiar with the desert, the life on the farms, the open country with bushfires, and the somewhat harsh tones of our variety of English. I had first cousins in every capital city of mainland Australia, but could not accept as relevant to us the strangely dressed Jews we found in prayerbooks or illustrated stories about the Jewish people. Such relics of the ghetto were an anathema as we were *dinkum Aussies*.

Our childhood was in Subiaco, a suburb of Perth, until I was almost nine. On Saturday mornings, with my brother, father, and I walked together to the synagogue. On hot days we two brothers, together with our neighbour, Marcus Coleman, used to go across King's Park, with its tall trees, its bushes and shrubs, lizards and wildflowers, the mighty Swan River, and many empty paddocks. We could not relate to the city-bred Jews of Europe, with their background of wealth and crowded cities and ghettos, snow on the ground, shops everywhere, and political oppression. At home there were rules, but we had so much more freedom than children from the cities of Europe. In some ways, we still live in a transported piece of England. Our bluest blood came from convicts who arrived here early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We still boast of the two boys, Emanuel and Vaiben Solomon, aged about 13 and 11, who were deported to this country for stealing-Convicts! Our boasts shocked the newcomers.

We were more Australian than Jewish. Life was safe and unchanging, stable, and comfortable. We had place for playing and much independence. We walked half a mile to school on weekdays. Sometimes we might swim in the river and sometimes steal fruit from a neighbour's garden. Restrictions from being Jewish we hardly noticed. Butter would not be on the table if there was meat in the meal. We avoided eating pig meats and shell-fish; certain meats mother would soak in salt water before cooking, to remove much of the blood, as the Torah forbids us to eat blood. Nevertheless, I recall the weakly roast having what we called 'red gravy', which father, being also a scientist, doled out to us, knowing it to be highly nutritious. Being a scientist does not always fit well with being an observant Jew. Before sleeping, we would recite the first two verses of the Shema, but we



never thought of ourselves as being noticeably different from our neighbours and the other boys at school. 'Being a Jew' was simply not an issue.

So how Jewish were we in the second decade of the twentieth century? For us, a rabbi was a leader of services, a teacher, and socially, a clergyman. He could chant the Torah and give a sermon, either as D'Var Torah, or as a morality lesson as Christian clergymen do. Until my barmitzvah, I probably was unaware of Talmud except for a few lines in "Ethics of the Fathers", and I knew almost no spoken Hebrew and certainly no Yiddish. I had no mental distinction between my Jewish play-mates, and the non-Jewish ones. On Friday evening, there was a special loaf of bread under a cover, and it had a twist on top, which we children would share. We could smell the dried fish, the wine, and the fresh bread. Father blessed John and me together with the priestly blessing (the *Yevarachecha*) in Hebrew and English, as we stood against his knees. We read something from the psalms from which I especially remember, "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to guard thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee on their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone". Whenever I hear these words now, I have again the child's feeling of being invulnerable. Nothing can harm me as long as I remember these words.

I was nine years old when we took the road to Kalgoorlie and there changed to the Trans-Australian Railway, for a trip on the longest rail line in the world, right across the Nullabor Plains to Port Augusta. It took us five days to cross the desert about 15,000 kilometres. We passed groups of aborigines, poorly clad, not well fed, and very ignorant of English. In those days they were thought of as not truly human. On the rail trip, we sometimes crept through a group of these pathetic indigenes who called to us for newspapers and 'bacca' (tobacco), and money, 'tuckerpen' (sixpence). They must have picked up some pidgin English. It never occurred to us to think of sending the aborigine children to school; we simply saw them as 'different' and not civilized. It seemed natural to us that some white-skinned people rode in trains, most had shoes and could read. Coloured people were obviously inferior and could only be given the most simple jobs. Industry saw them as shiftless and unreliable. Such attitudes were only partly genuine, as we knew that the only real opinions were those of men. Women, children and youths had no real opinions of their own until we were maybe twenty years old. The book and film of "The Barretts of Wimpole Street" illustrate this observation very well.

Judaism at our level, a sort of pseudo-orthodox, was drifting into being a religion rather like Christianity in many ways, and had lost much of the majesty of its origins and the magic of its stories. Culturally, most of us had lost our way. In Melbourne, we went to St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, where Rabbi Jacob Danglow presided. He was a fine gentleman married to a Michaelis lady, and well regarded as our representative in the eyes of non-Jewish people. This earned him the dislike of those who saw this as treachery. We were horrified when the British were so vicious to Jews wanting to shelter in Palestine. How could our idealized defenders be so cruel to people in need? Those who clung to Eastern European meal customs saw us as "Jewish Goyim", and indeed, we did tend to avid bagels, gefilte fish, pickled herrings, and rye bread, and we disliked people referring to these as Jewish foods. We saw them not as Jewish but 'foreign'. Such additions to

our diet, together with a variety of cheeses and new cuts of meat have now improved the range of our ordinary foods. Father referred to the Hebrews as "People of the Book" and expressed this as a wish for us to study. This suited me, as I had always been a keen reader and a keen student.

So here is my beginning – a boy who had a rabbi for a grandfather, and a religiously observant father who also believed strongly in the freedom of thought including some very liberal ideas about Judaism.

### **Keeping the Seventh Day**

Our family was fairly observant, but we were permitted a good deal of free thinking and reasoned argument. We applied to Sabbath observance that same simplistic and practical rules as we applied kushrut. Some stories we took as factual, some as fairy stories, and others as distortions of true stories, a mixture of history, natural phenomena, moral messages, and the myths of wishful thinking. Perhaps, because we turned our backs, quite consciously, on the wisdom literature, on most of the Talmud, and on Kabbalah, we sometimes missed the traditional Jewish readings of the Bible stories as being susceptible to various interpretations. In general, I sat with a dozen youngsters for an hour after Services on Saturday mornings in what we called Sabbath School. We learned a little about Torah and history, but it was all rather superficial. We were not happy sitting there, impatient for lunch, for football, or for a swim if the day was hot. Meanwhile, on the steps of the Shule there loitered a collection of parents, some discussing congregational matters, others talking of matters of business. 'Going to Shule' was simply a part of our way of life, if we belonged to the families who came to the services regularly.

We went to Shule, so were we religious? We would not have known what to do with such a question. Were we Jewish? Oh, yes. That's easy to answer, but what did it mean? We rejected the possibility of being an ethnic group outside the British culture. We spelled out some rules for keeping the Sabbath. One should not go to work on the Sabbath. But some had jobs that required them to work on Saturday. Oh, well, if you had to, that's that. What is work? What does 'have to' mean in this statement? Should we play games on that day? On Fridays the railway station at St Kilda sold rail tickets and passes for Saturday, so the observant did not have to handle money on the Sabbath. In our youth, some 'frum' people considered carrying anything was work and therefore was permitted only in the home, or outside the Shule. The idea of an '*eruv*' had not appeared here. I recall Rabbi Brodie of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, in the 1930s, wearing his handkerchief on the Sabbath sewn to his sleeve so that it was a garment, not something carried. Such actions we strongly condemned, on father's initiative, as faking. Was this to dupe the Creator, or was it done just to impress on others how observant the wearer was? Thus rule kept the women with babies from coming to the Service at all – they had to be carried. The newcomers had no monopoly of unreasonable rules.

One of the changes that newcomers were later to bring us was a fear, a dislike, a mistrusting of non-Jews. We Australians had never known real anti-Semitism, except on a very minor and vulgar scale at school. In the Australia we knew, we feared and rejected many social differences, variations from the norm. We simply

saw that our country and our people were superior to others. After all, the Inquisitors, the auto-da-fes, the pogrom – all were far from us and had no relevance for what we regarded as a civilized country, where such things could never happen.

I regarded that Sabbath as part of the greatest single invention mankind has ever mastered. The Sabbath exists in Judaism, in Christianity, and in Islam. It was first spelled out, apparently with the Ten Commandments, though I believe that we can detect its beginnings with in the first encounter of Moses with the Pharaoh. It appears that Moses, our Teacher, had this wonderful inspiration, that was crystallized in the Ten Commandments, that we take off from work one day in every seven. More than a thousand years later, the great civilizations of the Romans still taught its followers to scorn the Hebrews for their foolish and uneconomic idea of giving even the slaves and the beasts of burden, a holiday on one day in every seven. I believe the Sabbath is a vital part of Judaism, as a religion and a philosophy. It is one step towards acknowledging all other humans as co-members of the human race.

### **A Different Sort of Church**

When I was at school, we were like the Christians, but we went to a different sort of church. Our rabbi was then a 'minister' in the Christian sense. Most of our middle-of-the-road rabbis wore what was called 'clerical garb' and were included in the social category of 'clergy'. They wore the clothing of the Christian ministers, including 'prayer bands', a sort of tie at the neck, with two widely divergent white strips where the layman would wear a tie. A rabbi was once a scholar, a teacher, the ultimate referee as what was correct Jewish procedure for anything. He usually had some other paid occupation and his rabbinical services were not paid, except by voluntary donations by the congregants. This was how he avoided the modern paradox, that the rabbi is often the only Jew in the Shule on the Sabbath who is earning his living there. They have, since World War Two, discarded the Christian dress, the short black coat of the Catholic priest, the prayer bands, and the back-to-front collar, also called the 'dog collar'. As I grew to young manhood, the Bible stories and the behaviour of rabbis confused me. Publicly, we heard that we were 'Australians of the Jewish persuasion', which put only feeble barriers in the way of marrying a non-Jew or even converting to another faith. Even when I neglected the Shule, I remained a staunch Jew.

My brother John and I went together to Sunday school, where we studied Hebrew and Jewish history, under the tutelage of Joel Fredman and Miss Hetty Feuerman in a hall at the side of the old St Kilda Shule on the west side of Charnwood Crescent, in St Kilda. When I was twelve, a few years before the planning of the new synagogue building, we were moved to a small Hebrew School conducted by Mrs Phoebe Phillips, in the Toorak Bowling Club rooms. I walked there, perhaps a mile from home. Here, I really began to learn and it was Mrs Phillips who was to prepare me for my Bar Mitzvah in 1924. She taught me to love the Hebrew language and the Torah. She taught me to reason out the stories and seek new meanings for them. When I was sixteen, I began to teach in that little Toorak school, and in that year, I sat for and passed what was called Leaving Honours Hebrew (Year 12), which was then one year beyond matriculation).



In recent years, the Jews from Europe with their more sophisticated approach to religious learning have given me opportunities to discuss such things. The Shoah showed us that Jews cannot easily disappear, so that some of those who came here reverted to the customs they had learned in childhood, and they added to the caring Jews in this country.

### **An Observant Jew Does Jewish Things**

I guess I'm sort of observant Jew. Brought up so, I largely lost the habit when I married at twenty six. I lost it, and for the next twenty five years I was a superficial observant Jew, going to Shule perhaps four times a year because my father wished it – and later would have wished it – and because I had a few friends there. We always had a Kiddush on Friday evenings and for almost all of that time, I was a collector for the Jewish National Fund. I don't eat forbidden foods, but I have not kept kosher at home. Right now, at the beginning of 2001, I have a different story. For the past thirty years, I have hardly missed a Sabbath Service at the Temple and this is directly due to the newcomers.

Some of the rules by which I live are about being Jewish, mix with Jewish people in some activities, attend meetings of Jewish organizations, are there at some religious Services, and have sent my children to Jewish schools. Publicly, I label myself as a Jew and stand up to be counted on this score when needed. Of course, publicly belonging, being socially observant, and being religiously observant, are not the same. So I think I'm an observant Jew and a religious one.

### **Proud to Be a Jew**

As children, we often heard that we should be proud to be Jews, but rarely did anyone express the reason for it. We had given the world many great scientists, including Spinoza, Kepler, and Einstein, and in 1933 my first ever public address on this topic. As a people, we could be proud of our contribution to science, music, and philosophy. So as I had to be proud of being a human animal, being male, a university graduate, white, British, Australian, etc, etc, I must also be so being Jewish. We were taught to be proud of the fact that, even in the wanderings, some three thousand years ago, the Hebrews were taught to wash their hands before eating, to put a spade-blade on the handles of their spears, so that that might, in the wild country, bury their excreta.

We were proud being British for many reasons, one being that when the Chinese gave us trouble, we sent a gunship up the Yangtse Kiang River and gave them a hiding. We were members of "an Empire on which the sun never set".

Any organization that did not succeed in teaching its young to be proud of their membership would tend to disappear. Being proud might mean raising its flag, singing its praise in "old school songs", national anthems, and traditional songs of praise. At primary school, I was taught to salute the Union Jack (Great Britain's flag) and swear loyalty to the King of England. We, being British, could conquer anybody else that dared to raise his voice among the nations. Nothing of this sort was attached to our Judaism.

After the Shoah, irrational though it was, we had to feel a little ashamed of the way in which Jews were just marched to their imprisonment and maltreatment and eventual death. Our pride was roused by being told of the ill-fated but

magnificent rebellion of the Warsaw Ghetto – pride from a desperate disaster, rather like the Anzac affair. Eventually, this was to be supported by the way in which the tiny community of Israel, in 1948, repelled the onslaught of the combined might of several Arab armies and, in 1967, succeeded in the Six Day War. Perhaps the mightiest upsurge of pride arose from the rescue of the endangered Jews at Entebbe. Now we could hold up our heads in the street.

Some years ago, I was a guest at a Jewish dinner party and happened to describe a certain politician as a ‘drongo’. To my astonishment, the lady to whom I was talking exclaimed “Drongo? You sound like an Australian.” I answered, “Of course I am Australian, a fourth generation one”. Then I puzzled over what she had meant and I realized that, in the nation from which she had come, Jews were not citizens of that country. Here, we Australians never had this problem. The German Jews were suddenly and shockingly deprived of their citizenship and became Jews who just lived there. This was one of the marks of several of the European countries and it did not apply here. We were born both Australians and as well as Jews, and not just the latter who happened to be born here. And we resented those Jews who thought this way. How dare they claim we were not citizens of this land? We could be proudly Australian and still be proud of our Jewishness as well.

### **Hebrew and Yiddish**

I recall there were only five or six other students when I sat for Leaving Honours (Year 12) Hebrew in 1928, two of whom were Christian clergymen. For us it was a foreign language, used for prayerbooks and Bible, not a living tongue.

When I began to collect the Blue Boxes for buying land in Eretz Israel, in the very first house where my mentor led me, the lady of the house asked me a question in Yiddish. I raised my eyebrows at my mentor and the lady asked:

“Don’t you speak Yiddish?”

“No”, I answered.

“Are you Jewish?”

“Yes, of course”.

“Well, why don’t you speak Yiddish?”

“We, Madam” I answered, “I was born in Perth 2000 miles west of here. When I was a young man, I worked for a year in Brisbane 1000 miles north of here. In all this distance, I never crossed any frontiers, nor did I meet anyone who didn’t speak English. Some were Jews, others were not, but they all spoke English. In all that distance, I was never asked for a passport, nor did I have to change my money from one currency to another. We live in Australia, where we are free to roam all over this huge continent, and I need never to speak anything except English. Why should I bother to speak Yiddish?”

At the time, it did not occur to me to think that the same question could be used to ask Jews to forget who they are and whence they came.

I say a hearty ‘thank you’ to the stranger, the newcomers who weaned me away from my childhood loyalty to Britain and taught me that I do have a divided loyalty. I am certainly both Jewish and Australian. They had one way of dealing with such a confrontation, and I had another. Now I think I can handle such

difficulties more sensibly. Just sometimes, Bernard Boas is lost in *Avraham ben Titzhak* (my Hebrew patronymic). It used to be a cliché that travel broadens the mind. I have found that meeting people from many lands has helped expanded mine.

### Role of Women

There is a part of the story of Adam and Eve that worries me and many others. The woman is told "*thy husband shall rule over thee*". It is a Divine command and so would seem to set women as always having the subordinate roles in life. The word for a 'man' in Hebrew is 'ish'. There is no corresponding term for a husband – at least in classical Hebrew. The word used is 'ish', meaning 'man' or 'baal', leaning a 'master'. I cannot accept the Genesis statement giving woman a secondary role.

In the conditions of Australia in the time of World War One, the country was largely inhabited by either farmers or labourers plus a small middle class. Women who worked lacked education, so the best of most they could attain professionally was to be a nurse (but almost never a doctor), a secretary (but very rarely the manager), or a small shopkeeper (but not the entrepreneur). The Physical labour kept the families functioning. Males having the greater physical strength and whatever education the family of origin could afford, by and large held the dominating roles. By the time of World War two things were changing. Australia had a number of wealthy families where the notion of barefoot and pregnant had become foreign. There were a few women with a real education. Now there was a women barrister, some women doctors, and a handful of women in positions of power and influence. Women had the vote. Many women who came to Australia in the 1940s worked as housemaids, waitresses, and kitchen hands. They knew, however, how valuable an education was in a new country with better opportunities. In wartime anyone could get a job and wives earnings could supplement their husband's.

Real change is always slow in developing. In 1926 my father was a member of the Board of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, and there was being planned the present building on the north side of Charnwood Crescent to replace the previous site on the west side of Charnwood Grove. The new building was open in 1927. Mat father had planned, with the support of Rabbi Danglow and the Board of Management that there would be two blocks of seats where men could sit together with their wives and children. These were two blocks immediately in the synagogue entrance, on either side of the main entrance, on the ground floor, seats now occupied solely by women. Apparently, the 1926/7 Board had the decision rescinded, so that these blocks were re-allocated being for women only.

While my second wife, Dorothea and I differ quite widely in many ways, we can share many activities partly because we also have separate fields of activity. I guess we both had some sort of inoculation against the bug of suppressing women. When I was President of our Progressive congregation, I put a woman Vice President on the *Bimah* during a Service and I received objections afterwards. These came from women, not from the Europeans, but Australians and English. Old habits die hard. Today, this has all changed. Some of the Europeans, but not



all have taught us to allow our women in the Progressive congregation a full vote in Jewish behaviour. This country gave women the vote before any European country, but they came and taught us to give more space and status to our daughters.

### **We Nearly Had to Say Kaddish**

We were nearly, we of the middle-of-the-road, so nearly ready to commit social suicide. Not because of our suffering for we didn't have any. Life was steadily becoming easier and closely concerned with 'earning a bob' and the earning was becoming easier. World war Two pulled us closer to Britain and the whole idea of a Jewish homeland was a small star on the horizon. Nearly, so nearly, we almost left the world stage as Jews - the Kaddish nearly came to pass. We had almost forgotten that we were Jews, except in the lip service of standard pseudo-orthodox shule services and the weakness of the bonds. One new word is spiritual. When did you first heard that spoken by a Jew in relation to our Services? - only since the newcomers woke us to our shame. Try 'Enjoyed going to shule' - I'm sure I never heard it said sincerely in the olden days. Think 'to meditate' - we used to leave it the Buddhists and the great throng of Jews left our empty Services to find some refuge in Buddhist meditations.

It wasn't the existence of Israel that saved us. For myself, though I was collecting for the Blue Box, I saw Israel as only for other people, mostly from Russia or Poland or maybe Rumania, people who were very foreign, mostly very poor, had deep accents in their English, and whom I really did not want sharing my secure retreat in a quiet corner of Melbourne. Their lives lacked the real freedom that we enjoyed as Australians. I could 'belong' as a Jew, but the need was small and mostly just habit. In my youth, I saw little need to be a Jew. We said we were proud to be Jews, but it meant nothing. We were on our way to disappearing, and this how near we were to needing a Kaddish for our Jewishness. The fading was to continue perceptibly for the next twenty years, until the waves of unrest could reach from Europe to our distant shores. The unhappy new arrivals brought with them a powerful message - 'You are also Jews', don't take refuge in your security. We thought we had it too. You may not see Judaism as important, but others do and they will kill you because of it.'

We believed that Australia had a classless society - any Australian was equal to any other. Prejudice? Well, there were a few.

Looking back from the age of the Internet, the cell phone, the almost universal car, the country that has absorbed huge numbers of people from various cultures, we see that seventy years ago we were fairly isolated. Britain was our defender and the U.S.A. was not too far away. One of them would help if we had any real trouble. Our news was sparse compared with today. Jewish contacts made our principal friendship circles. We were not only far from pogroms and shtetls, but also from earthquakes, wars, and almost all harm except drought. We muttered by the 'yellow peril' from China and thought we ought to have more defense - next year, so we went back to sleep on the beaches. Australia was ruled by the White Australia policy and must remain so. We Jews never saw ourselves as a minority and had little real sympathy for people who allowed themselves to belong to one. Getting sunburned all over presented no risk and I don't think we ever heard of a

hole in the ozone layer. Cosy and safe, comfortable, well fed, warm and young, as well as free. No wonder we had no understanding of other people's troubles. How intensely, I recall the days when I was walking out with the rabbi's daughter (much to my father's delight). From my seat, during Yom Kippur afternoon, I would signal her and we would set out on a long walk to some other shule for a break – halcyon days.

The Australian fear of the foreigner did not die with the White Australian Policy. Laws often fail to change the way people think. 'White Australia' has gone, but even today, we still have vestiges of it. In the days of the arrival of the newcomers, there were Australians who were openly dreaded the arrival of 'a serious influx of Jews.'<sup>2</sup>

Let me complete this article on the topic of Kaddish. Our Judaism was fading out and the gratitude I feel for the people. How grateful I feel for the rescue for the arrivals of refugees who had been so badly treated, grateful that we in Australia had the opportunity to rescue too few of them from despair, that they in return have filled our Jewish society here with new blood, new energy and a new hope for the future. It is wonderful to look back on those occasions when I accompanied my mother to Spencer Street Railway state to farewell father on this way to Canberra. There, as President of the Jewish Welfare Society, he would beg, plan, and plead for just a few more permits for the unfortunate refugees. Sometimes he got them. I remember how distressed he was when he failed to get enough permits to cover all the people for whom he pleaded. I thank God that for some, Kaddish did not have to be recited.

As W.S. Gilbert (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame) expressed it, "Every child that is born into this world alive is either a little Liberal or else a little conservative". We might add a third category, an Orthodox. When we were young, nobody overtly used the term 'Conservative'. Everyone who did now classify him/herself as Orthodox was a Liberal, a Progressive Jew, a mover towards the left and away from the routines of the set patterns of the Singer-prayer book. There were another variety, but we never overtly admitted them as being real Jews. They were people who forsook all formal religion, never went to shule, knew very little Hebrew, but had a fair grasp of Yiddish, and possibly played Bridge in a Jewish club. For us, you were either a religious observer or not a Jew.

My Hungarian friend complained that "No wonder the Australians put butter on their bread always, the bread is so poor it has to have something added." I stood for this for quite a while until I was in Europe. Then I wrote to him, "No wonder the Europeans don't put butter on their bread, the butter is so tasteless". Actually, we grew up to salted butter because it used to come from Britain by sailing ship and had to be salted to preserve it. The development of the Australian Jewish community permitted both of us to allow that the other fellow had a case. The xenophobic atmosphere that kept our shores unsullied of foreigners has now to support Chinese who sunburn with us, Japanese who photograph us, Koreans who make cars we drive, Indians, Cambodians and Vietnamese. The newcomers have leavened the loaf of bread we used to eat. The Jewish ones have certainly brightened our communities. *Lechayim* for the newcomers. *Kein Yehee Ratsoun Tamid*, "May it always be so".

- 1    Rosenberg, Louis, *Rev. Abraham Tobias Biography*, 1970, p.33 & 59
- 2    Benjamin, Rodney, *A Serious Influx of Jews*, Allen & Unwin,, Sydney, 1998 p.1

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## SCHMATTE TRADE IN FLINDERS LANE

*Leon Haskin<sup>1</sup>*

My grandfather, Nahum Haskin, arrived in Australia on the 12th December, 1900, and for the next sixty years there was at least one of the descendents in Flinders Lane. Today, one hundred years after his arrival, there are still members of our family in the clothing industry though not in Flinders Lane. My grandfather's first, and as it happened, only job in Australia was at Slutzkin's Factory at 104 Flinders Lane, where he worked until 1913 when he died as a result of a fall. Slutzkin's run by two brothers, Shalom and Lazar, employed many Jewish immigrants. In those days the factory stopped for morning and afternoon prayers. Many prominent families got their first job in Australia there, such as Sydney Myer and some of the Sharpe family.

Both of my grandmothers worked as out-workers from home for Slutzkin until 1919, when my paternal grandmother and three of her sons, including my father, started Haskin & Co (Mantle & Costume Manufacturers). The Slutzkin business still runs. John Slutzkin, Shalom's grandson, together with his daughter have a fashion business in Richmond. His wife, Beth, is the great granddaughter of Nahum Haskin. In another quirk of fate, my father Henry who arrived in Australia as a six month old babe in arms in 1900, purchased the Slutzkin Building in 1948 and renaming it Haskin House.

### **Comfort Zone**

Flinders Lane was a ghetto of one's own choosing. For the survivors of the prejudice, pogroms of the old world, and the Holocaust, Flinders Lane was a comfort zone, a safe haven where the majority of the people were Jewish. Most of them knew each other. Not only were the clothing businesses predominately Jewish, but also all the ancillary businesses. The coffee shops were run by Brian Marks, Sol and Mitta Simons, and the Dabscheck brothers. The tobacconist was Sam Cohen, the sweet shop Miss Friedman, the electrician Wally Donath, while Mick Ress was the hotelier at the Ress Oriental in Collins Street and the Ress Astoria on the corner of Flinders Lane and Exhibition Street. Abe Silk's night club Ciro's was in Exhibition Street.

Helmut Newton, Henry Talbot, and Athol Smith, the top fashion photographers were Jewish. One of the Morley brothers, Sol, did most of the alterations and building work in the Lane. The pleating and embroidery was taken care of was by David Morley's business, *French Art Pleating and Embroider*. The advertising manager at *Flair Magazine* - a K.G.Murray Publication - was Benny Cohen. For many years, Mandy Mandie (Sharpe), granddaughter of Roy Sharpe who had worked at Slutzkins, was on the staff of the fashion newspaper, *The Ragtrader*. The Zionist Federation and J.N.F. officers were on the corner with Elizabeth Street in Carlow House. There were the painters, carriers, and carpet layers like Harold Nathan and his brother. Travel was mainly transacted through Debra Joselson at Pan Am in Collins Street, Lionel Landman or Sammy Heifitz who were not far

from the Lane. Accountants to most of the shmatic trade were the Stantons, Benjamins, Sternfelds, and Raitmans.

### Imported Names

Even though the owners were generally not Australian born coming mainly from Poland or Russia, nobody called their business Bialistock Fashions or Kishenov Garments, but had either French, English or American names. There were, Samos French Modes, Hartnell Garment Co., Saba of California, Leroy Fashions, Margeux Hayes, Park Avenue Gowns, Champs Ellysee, Paris Gowns, London Fashions, Parisienne Models, Los Angeles Fashions, and Charlotte 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Fashions.

### A tolerant Lot

Those who worked in Flinders Lane were a multicultural lot long before the 'm' word had been heard, let alone become common usage. Greeks sat with Turks, Moslems with Christians, and Protestants with Catholics. In their own way, they all learnt that people from different backgrounds did not have forked tongues or tails. They attended each others' weddings and celebrations, learned to live together, and liked each other. I spoke at the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of Adrian Calil, an Arab Lebanese friend of mine. My first job in Flinders Lane was at Makower McBeath, a silk warehouse where the Makower was an English Jew, and his partner, Sir William McBeath, was from a very old waspy establishment family.

Theodore Dunaev was a Jewish manufacturer, and with his partner Elvie Hill, commanded a most successful label called *Duhill*. Morrie Oshlack, the son of Samos Modes, was the first person to make cloth under license, tying up the brand *Saba of California*, owned by a Lebanese called Saba. There was also an acceptance of those from the homosexual community, and they and their partners were always included in social or business functions.

### Belonging to a Community

There was a sense of belonging in the Lane. Even in the rare case when you did not know someone's name, you knew where they worked. When I started my own label in 1960 I had help from many suppliers like Michael Sanders who asked me "was I Solomon Wertheim's grandson". On the strength of that I received extended credit because my grandfather had met him at the boat when he arrived in Australia and had befriended him. Max Sturm, who never had children, took me under his wing and said I could owe him up to 5000 pounds. He effectively bankrolled me for around fifteen years until he retired. I had the honour, asked by his widow, to speak at his funeral. As he was not a religious person I took along paper cups and a bottle of brandy and drank a *L'chaim* to him. He would have liked that. According to him, I taught him to drink brandy!

John Barnes, the managing director of Bruck Mills, whose best friend was the Jewish Bert Wickens, the founder of AY ONE, saw me in his showrooms one day and asked me how I liked a particular fabric. When I showed interest, he said you can have it on your own. Then he called in his accountant, Ray McFaul, to tell him that this young fellow will pay you when he can, but don't send him an account. I ran that fabric very successfully for over seven years.

## **Charity**

The people of Flinders Lane were great givers of charity. Not only did they cope with Jewish charities, bazaars, and fetes, but were also customers of the Salvos, the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence, nuns, firemen, and police. Holiday jobs were provided for friend's children. If a person died prematurely, there would be an immediate collection for the widow and children. Funds were raised on occasions to ensure the children finished school. In the early days in the Lane there seemed to be jobs created for mentally handicapped people, most businesses having someone who did the menial tasks about the factory or office.

## **Happenings, Identities and Characters**

As a young boy of six or seven years I liked going to the Lane on Sunday mornings with my father. That was the day the rat catchers came with their fox terriers to catch their prey. Put under the floor boards, the dogs killed piles of them.

Many Jewish communal identities started or worked in the Lane. Among them were Sydney Myer, Solly Lew, Joseph Gutnick, Judge Merkel, and Graeme Samuel. There were also the characters, among them 'fireman' Schwartz, known for starting them. It was said that if the fire brigade heard there was a fire in the Lane they automatically went to Schwartz's premises. After his third or fourth fire the insurance companies refused to cover him anymore.

Albert Edson was someone larger than life. Flamboyant in his bright vests and touting nine inch long cigars, he always said, "it did not matter whether one was a millionaire or not, as long as you lived like one." Albert was a serious womanizer. Syd Stanton was the fabulous salesman who waited outside 50 Flinders Lane to accost retailers who came up the street urging them to view his range. He was so persistent that many went around the block to escape his attention. Jack Jacobs was another salesman who stood outside his business 'urging' customers to view his stock.

There were the rogues, also the role models such as Robert Sadler, Alan Rabinov, and Jack Shaw. Robert Sadler was a founder of the Garment Industries of Australia, the agency which lobbied government and major retailers to get better deals for manufacturers.

## **Final thoughts**

The big fabric houses - Brucks, Fibremakers, Courtaulds and Bancrofts used to entertained lavishly with dinners and parades. Life from the 1950s to the 1970s was one big party, though there was also hardship. The bars opened in many of our show rooms at 5pm each night when we would be joined by customers, competitors, staff, and models. Then we went to dinner.

We had great camaraderie with our competitors. Often we would get a call from Ken Pirrie that Jack Grey was in town. He would say that he would be finished at Ken's showroom at a certain time and for me to come up. I would meet Jack then pass him on the Geoff Bade. If someone was stuck with fabric or seeking it, there was help. We would see to it that our business interstate and overseas trips coincided.



The *Gown of the Year* was an absolute gala affair. The Governor of Victoria was in attendance, and all the newspapers gave it frontpage coverage. Today, it is barely rates the social page. Most manufacturers took a room or rooms at the Menzies Hotel where the gathering took place, and the following night the public could view the gowns on parade at the Melbourne Town Hall.

Not many people could say they enjoyed 99.9% of their working life, but I loved the atmosphere, the people, and events, of Flinders Lane.

1 A talk delivered to the Australian Jewish Historical Society, 17 July 2001

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## MEMORIES OF THE THIRD ST KILDA

*Stan Marks*

Hullawalla, Hullawalla, Yon Zip Aints. Hullawalla, Hullawalla, Saints, Saints, Saints. Third Saints, Third Saints, Hullawalla, Yah ! Yah ! Yah.

No- it's not the new chant of the St Kilda Football Club. But something that has over the years suddenly came into my mind in numerous foreign climes. While discussing war cries with famous Canadian Indian Chief, Chief Poking Fire, I asked him whether he knew it.

I spent a fascinating day with the Chief and his engaging people near Montreal, where I worked on the Montreal Star on a newspaper exchange. I must say, he did look quite bemused when I chanted the words. I did expect the drums to start beating any second. I was even on a mood to stand up and run around repeating my chant. "Who are these Saints, you so loudly chant about?" he asked. "Oh, very special saints, very special ones," I replied, no doubt about that, with a far-away look "It goes back to my boyhood," I explained.

"Ah," he smiled "you worshipped saints as a boy?" I did not go into a long explanation, merely replied "Oh, yes, what saints, Big Chief, the Saints of the Third St Kilda. Saint Rapke, Bernstein, Nathan, Danglow Perlstein, and so many others, many others. Ah what saints they, and of course yours truly were, and I am quite sure the Good Lord, He or She, would agree, although admitting, they did have a bit, some a lot, of the devil in them.

I'm sure that the words bring back many fond memories to a number of you here tonight of decades ago and to others of more recent occasions, while to others I probably sounded like I was intoning some ritual of centuries ago. Incidentally, Chief Poking Fire gave me some advice, an age-old Indian saying (also a Jewish one) "Never judge another person until you have walked in their moccasins for a period." But come and walk with me in an old scouts' old moccasins.

I am delighted to be here to talk about the Third St Kilda, Danglow's Own Troop, of which I was a member – not for an over long period, but long enough to be proud of what it set out to achieve and did achieve. And, without in any way trying to be puny, I can today really claim to be one-eyed about Third St Kilda. I recently had a detached retina and a sudden, emergency operation and am slowly recovering.

Incidentally, Jewish sages, suggested one should always begin a talk with humour. So, let me tell you that during the hour-long eye operation, for which I had a local anesthetic, the doctor had music of famous tenors in the background, and hummed away. Music to my ears and eyes, I guess. When I returned for some minor eye surgery, he played jazz and hummed. I told him: "I'm thinking of giving up my ABC concert tickets, coming and listening to you, and getting it back on HBA" I guess, in the true scout spirit my doctor was doing his Good Deed for the day – a double good deed.

Now, you'll see why I added the word chutzpah to the title of my talk tonight. I have found it a wonderful supplement throughout life, a tonic which every medico should advise in one form or another. A prescription, on health list of course for chutzpah.

Of course, you all know the meaning of chutzpah- believed to have originally been an aramaic word, which means arrogance, effrontery, presumption, daring and is often praised for how it helped a person or people, including we Jews. Would Jews have survived without it?

I guess, the best definition is of the man charged with the murder of his parents who pleads for mercy – after all, he is an orphan now. So what about the Third and Chutzpah?

How it was formed, my own registration as a member and how I came to write the Troop's history are good examples, in one way and another, of chutzpah. I was asked to write a brief history, a brochure-style work on the Troop to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Just a simple leaflet, I was told. Not too much work. Well, the not-too-much-work soon developed into a book. After a multitude of interviews, sifting through records, minutes of meetings, looking at photographs and talking to former and then present cubs, scouts, rovers and guides (I enjoyed talking to the guides the most, of course) the book was finally published.

One of the greatest hazards of writing a work such as about the Third was that memories and minds differed – an how they differed. I got into some arguments with former scouters, and there were a few who didn't talk to each other, or me, for a while after, feeling not enough relevance had been given to their memories and views. "My memory is better than..." was a complaint.

Get six former scouts together over a cup of coffee, or something stronger, and the memories differed. You get seven opinions. At times, there were nearly blows. "It wasn't you: I remember it was..." "My mother's food was always kosher" "Who gave you that date. It was later. I know: I was there" and so on and on. I guess, it was a matter of sorting it out, being a judge, having the wisdom of a Solomon, or a Rapke, or both. On the other hand....

I also discovered the chutzpah in just when I joined the scouts. According to the records, I was signed up 14 weeks before I was born, in London, not arriving in Australia until I was almost two years old. That's what I call BP- Being Prepared – the scout motto.

Incidentally, as a journalist, I always remember Judge Rapke's remarks at the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday dinner and book's launch. He said "In England, a man is innocent until he is proved guilty", "In France, a man is innocent until he is caught". "And, in America, a man is innocent until tomorrow morning's newspaper appears." I could add, in some cases, that's true today of Australia. Lord Baden-Powell started Scouting, which grew to be the world's largest youth movement, with a small group of boys in England in 1907. This has grown where today there are around 20 million young people involved in various scouting and guides activities in 150 countries. In Victoria today, more than 25,000 boys and girls are scouters and guides, all developing various skills and responsibilities which will assist them in becoming Australians leaders and world leaders, as many have done.



There are many things I remember about the Third St Kilda Troop. Above all, the people, the young men and women who comprised the scouts and guides, some might say, especially the guides. What a wonderful group of young people, dedicated to scouting and its principles. We forged links that, in some cases, exist today. We learnt about fellowship. I guess in these perfectly correct days, it would have to be described as peopleship, working together for individual benefit, for our community, the nation, international brotherhood and sisterhood and sharing. We sang together, enjoyed good times, sad times, even cried together when the Troops' members died. I think, above all, in my case, we laughed with and at each other. I think that's where I first realised that the Good Lord had meant for us, in His or Her wisdom, to have an 11<sup>th</sup> Commandment. Know it? Moses, in the rush inadvertently omitted it from those tablets. Thou shalt laugh, especially at thy self.

So how did the Third come into being. Dedication, inspiration, imagination, the book "Scouting for Boys" by Baden-Powell (bought at a Melbourne book store for the equivalent of less than a dollar) Rabbi Danglow's guidance and chutzpah.

In those early years, Harry Michael and Lou Cohen were members of the first Metropolitan Troop, run by Reverend Solomons, at the rear of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in Bourke Street. In the 1920s, the two young men discussed with Trevor Rapke the idea of starting their own Jewish Scout Troop. A Troop that would observe Jewish law and customs.

They were both fired with enthusiasm, and Trevor (later his honor Judge Rapke) was very taken with the suggestion and discussed it later with erstwhile Dudley Davis, as they ran around the oval at Wesley College. Amid the huffing and puffing, they exchanged ideas, agreed to pursue it, discussed it with Rabbi Danglow and- it became a fact. After all, if you will it, it need not be a dream. On Sunday, April 27, 1924, a meeting of boys interested in the formation of a Jewish Scout Troop, upholding Jewish traditions, was held. After a talk by Trevor Rapke, those who were willing to join, signed a cardboard. Thirty-four boys signed, or 32 did, as two, who were too small to sign for themselves, were aided by others. This remarkable souvenir still exists. In some ways another example of Chutzpah.

The Group was called the Third St Kilda because it was the third formed in the District. Its first meetings were held in the schoolrooms of the St Kilda Synagogue. Kenneth Benjamin acted as Scout Leader for a year until Io Levoi, a returned First World War veteran, took over.

Patrols were soon operating – Hawks, Seagulls and Kookaburras. Soon youngsters from all over Melbourne were anxious to join. Hikes became a regular feature. The boys met under the clocks at Flinders Street Railway Station, which was, at that time, a very popular meeting place among all sections of the Melbourne community. I can recall meeting a former scoutmaster in New York and agreeing that sometime in the near future, when we got back, we'd meet Under The Clocks and have a drink for old times sake. A soft drink, of course, as we scouters always did.

We also shook hands, left hands, as the hand nearest our heart. Maybe, somehow, left-handed shakes could become some international symbol of peace. I wonder.

Some scouts travelled long distances to get to the Railway station and also the scout meetings, explaining they has great preparation for the hikes before the hikes. Remember this was not an era of the motorcar, as we know it today, Tram trips were, in some ways, something youngsters looked forward to in those days. Not too many mums and dads did the drop and pickups common today. Or older scouters have their own vehicles or borrow the families.

When I joined the scouts, Trevor Rapke would often pick me up on his motorbike and give me a lift to the scout hall. It was always a thrilling ride. My mother would see us off, I'm quite sure asking herself, "Oy vey, what is my Stanley doing on the back of a motor cycle?" We would hurry along the Esplanade, from my Elwood home, described by other scouts, as "Trevor's Charge of the Light Brigade". But, dare one say it, Judge Rapke did me justice.

A cub pack was formed in 1926, A Group Parents' committee was also formed. A tradition had begun of forming a continuous service from father to son. It was during this period that the Group obtained the carriages which were to become the 3<sup>rd</sup>'s first real home, with unique patrol dens.

It followed Scottish ideas where old means of transport were used as halls. The idea caught the local imagination, but where to obtain such features? Three old railway carriages were eventually discovered at Spotswood, costing \$30, about 60 dollars then, worth a good amount of money in those days. But where to put them? A site was finally located at the rear of the Montefiore Homes, St Kilda Road. They were taken to the site by Yellow Express. And – they became bogged in mud. However, they were soon jacked up and sleepers placed under them. They were professionally painted and the electricity connected. It was an optimistic time for scouting.

With the carriages in position, it was named the Gunyah. It's interesting to note that while Gunyah is an aboriginal word for a hut, or a meeting place, it could also be taken for two Hebrew words "Gun Yah", meaning "Garden of the Lord."

Ah, I remember it well. Each patrol den was a compartment of a swing door box type carriage. At least once a year, we would redecorate and paint the dens. One carriage contained a kitchen. It was a home away from home, of warm friendship, memorable events, much banter and a feeling of belonging to a special group. There were nights of entertainment.

The Age wrote of the new carriages "It is unique in that it is comprised of three railway carriages laid out in the form of a rectangle. They are furnished, and make comfortable quarters for the boys." The Sun wrote "The cost of transport to St Kilda nearly equalled the cost of the carriages."

You have to remember that the 3<sup>rd</sup> scout group was formed in a changing world. In Australia compulsory voting was introduced. Lenin died in Russia. Greece became a republic. In 1925 the Melbourne cup was broadcast for the first time over radio – Windbag won, maybe appropriate for my talk tonight.

Over the years, many special events have taken place, such as the May 1927 ceremony of the dedication of the colours of the 3<sup>rd</sup> St Kilda in the new Synagogue, by Rabbi Danglow. The Group meet weekly and scouts enjoyed games, songs and talks.

There was great interest in morse signalling and first aid. There also were cooking lessons. Trevor Rapke wished the boys would have appreciated his rice efforts more than they did. There was one occasion at a Dromana camp when Trevor burnt the stew. Without a murmur – Rabbi Danglow ate it.

Trevor started his “flying fox” which really intrigued and puzzled scouts as to how the cunning animal knew so much about their doings and misdoings. It began at a camp held at Launching Place when all the boys were sent on a hike on the road to Gilwell Park at Gembrook. In the evening, after the hike, the Group gathered around the camp fire for a song. Without any warning, there was a sudden movement in the trees. All scouters gazed up. Someone called out, as arranged, it was a “flying fox”. Other agreed. Now, the Fox knew exactly what the boys had been up to, and what they had said during the outing. They did not know that their Scoutmaster had positioned boys at various secret and well hidden places to watch and report back on what was said and done.

Getting the facts.

Some of the messages were very embarrassing. Is there a Flying Fox hidden somewhere here now? MORE PROBABLY WITH A TV CAMERA, IF AT ALL. I wonder how all our wonderful and wonderous modern electronics assists scouting as did the Fox.

A popular innovation was the Troop’s own paper – “the rag” as it was affectionately known. Rabbi Danglow wrote to the editors of the Tenderfoot” after the first issue. He said the paper was a welcome addition to the 3<sup>rd</sup> which was going ahead in leaps and bounds. The 3<sup>rd</sup> had a special spirit and its members’ keenness and smartness made for a great success in upholding the scouting and Jewish traditions.

Trevor Rapke, an idealist, was a fund of seemingly endless ideas and wry humour. He was a delight to talk to, especially if his football team had just won a game.

He used a novel camp fire opening with his own words. It began “And as ye squat around the fire your Council fire aglow, let it devour envy and ire and the evils here below. Let it remind each mother’s son of that spiritual fire of our Great Chief lit in years bygone. Fan yet its flames the higher until its glow warms every heart. Its lights shine every eye. Point out the path to peace. Impart true love that never dies. As he completed the verse, Trevor would throw a mixture of magnesium sulphur and sugar on the fire, which would give a yellow flare, and the sight would make a deep impression on all the scouts.

Another innovation was the Scout Investiture Ceremony. The Scout Master would ask the boy whether he knew what honour meant. To which the scout would reply, it meant that he would be truthful and could always be trusted. The recruit would be brought forward by a Patrol Leader. The Scout Master would then ask the recruit, in that case, could he trust him on his honour to do his best, to do his duty to God and the King, to help other people at all times and to obey the Scout Law. The recruit would answer “Yes”. I often wonder what would have happened it, like at a marriage ceremony, someone could and did object and why.

Mothers concern about their sons were always well to the fore at camp times. It is fascinating to listen as grown men, including some of Australia’s most



respected senior citizens, discuss their early scout camps, especially how their mothers worried about "their sons". Were they getting enough to eat? Were they warm enough? Were they sleeping well? Were they being treated properly? Were they being walked too much?

Letters were always the mums concern. Anxious mothers contacted the Scoutmaster about their sons not writing home enough, if at all. Could something be done about it. One mother suggested a scout be delegated to send home regular reports of how their sons were faring, especially about their health, their eating habits and whether they were really looking after themselves. She hoped they were not exerting themselves. Gosh, I wonder whether it was my mother?

The mind boggles at what mothers might do today with email. And, a boggling mind isn't a joke.

Some mothers who anxiously sent their sons feather pillows to ensure added comfort and peace of mind. On one occasion, when a site was flooded, scouts were booked in at a nearby hotel for the duration.

Some mothers were delighted to be able to explain that their sons were "camping and hiking in the best hotel, as they should do."

Scouts were playing a role in synagogue services, especially for younger members. Both the Jewish and non-Jewish press devoted space to the Third's activities. The Children's services attracted much attention, with *The Argus* commenting on a children's service conducted by Trevor Rapke that "It is great proof that our scouts never forget their religious duties, as well as their civic ones." For those who don't know *The Argus* was a Melbourne morning paper which folded some years back. It's a slight detour, but a story against myself: Four of the daily papers I have worked for, including the Melbourne Herald and London News Chronicle, have closed down.

There is a saying "If you don't want to close, don't hire Marks. I guess BP, Be Prepared. Although they closed after I left them – maybe that's the answer. Don't let Marks leave - be really B P.

Incidentally, the war cry was introduced in 1928 by Bernard Boas who felt that the Troop really needed its own one, something that could be identified with the 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was introduced to great acclaim at a Sunday Parade.

A rover group was formed in 1938. Quite a number of the Rovers were among the first to join the services during the Second World War.

The Troop was particularly active during the Second World War in patriotic duties, especially collecting food for Britain, assisting the air raid precautions organisation and collecting large amounts of metal scrap for the war effort. Bikes were popular. Some scouts allege that they were, in those days of petrol rationing, offered small cars for their sturdy bikes. I find that hard to believe. BUT, THEN, WOULD SCOUTS LIE?

The 1930s were a time of Great Depression. The world, including Australia, in the early 30s was in economic upheaval. There were many soup kitchens to feed the unemployed, the hungry across the nation – the cost locally and internationally was beyond measurement.

With threats of air raids by approaching Japanese forces and even of an invasion, we dug trenches near the Gunyah. Rains soon filled them. Some scouts



ended up in the trenches, which were eventually filled in, -er, the trenches not the scouts!

THOSE WERE TENSE TIMES. I recall, how we all talked about which service we would join. Air force, army or navy. I wanted to join the air force. Among other things, the girls seemed to like the boys in blue the best. But then, with my four eyes, no one believed I'd make it.

"You'd be quite an asset to the enemy, especially in the infantry," I was told. We would gather around campfires, seeking ideas for what we might do to help the war effort, singing songs popular at the time and gradually hearing of what was happening to Jews in Europe. Including boys and girls of our own age, who could have become cubs, scouts and guides. It was a time when the word *be prepared* had meant nothing to a much warned Europe, and more than one and a half million Jewish children died in concentration camps. And millions of other children also perished. The world, including scouting, lost millions.

And we in Australia complained at minor things. How absurd it all seems now. We complained because we had to pool tea coupons and the butter ration cards, but there was enough bread, butter, jam and tea even if, especially at camps, the rest of the food was ruined by inexperienced cooks.

Because of rationing, every item for wartime camps was calculated carefully. Two slices of bread per boy, per meal per day for a ten day camp, and one ounce of butter, and two ounces of jam and tea.

With a shortage of petrol this often meant a 15 kilometre hike to collect the meat and bring it back during the night in a rucksack. This meant kosher meat for the next day, but it also meant a very tired "meat party", which was allowed to spine bash to recover.

The war years were a difficult period for recruiting for the Troop, which did struggle to keep going, while others groups were forced to close. But the 3<sup>rd</sup> did keep going, and the scoutmasters performed a great job in keeping the 3<sup>rd</sup> strong, active and progressive.

In 1943 the Troop began a savings campaign for the Baden-Powell Memorial, which would take the form of a hostel in London, after the war.

We learnt of scouts being killed in action.

There were marriages among scouts and guides. But, at last, the war ended. It was decided there should be some special commemorative mark for the ten 3<sup>rd</sup> scouts who had died in the war. Trees were planted in their honour at Gilwell Park. In 1967 new trees were planted at the new scout hall with the original commemorative plaques. In 1950 an honour board was erected in the Gunyah to remember all the 3<sup>rd</sup> scouts who had been in the services at home or abroad during the second world war, about 25% of those who had passed through the Troop to 1945.

The post-war period was very busy for the 3<sup>rd</sup>. By 1955 it was noticeable that the Troop was becoming much larger, a new patrol the Penguins was formed.

But after a few months, members decided it did not like the name and it was changed to Eagles. One could say, but I won't, the penguins got the cold shoulder.

An era was drawing to a close for the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Montefiore wanted to extend. The 3<sup>rd</sup> acquired the premises of the St Kilda-Elwood Talmud Torah for a new

home. The original carriages were left to be used as building sheds at the Montefiore Home. Some things went with the Troop. The new Hall was consecrated in December 1957. In 1955 the Troop added to its name Danglow's Own."

In my book on the third, I included comments taken from official records about scouts.

Let me pass on a few.

Resigned because of studies and mother's influence.

Untidy, never well groomed. Won't go far.

Reigned, due to inability to fit in with other boys.

Needs Practical experience.

A very, very lazy scout.

Very popular

Too much importance to muscles. Too noisy. Slow and naughty. Acts like a 12-year-old.

Very strong willed, but in wrong direction.

Little stupid. Easily influenced too much.

One report said: "his behaviour has been exceptionally good - simply because I have neither seen nor heard from him in the past four weeks."

Claude Billingeimer, in 1954, was made Patrol Cheer Up Master.

I wonder how I was described. One of the untidiest scouts, I feel, I recently met a well-known former scout who was in the Seagulls with me. He assured me, he was much more untidy than I had been. There goes my scout's claim to fame. So, there's a brief insight, certainly not an overall historical insight, into the Third. A Troop that has given, and continues to give, so much to the Australian community- Jewish and non Jewish.

What is its future? Ah, that's quite a fascinating question, especially in this 21<sup>st</sup> century of exploding communications, of a smaller world, of so many interests, entertainments and forces pulling at us, especially the young, almost as soon as they are born. Where advertisers are more and more appealing to young minds, where the internet has become part of the family. No one can really predict what will be invented next to seek our dollar, compete for our leisure and non leisure hours. To educate us, to stimulate our minds and progress - at almost any price.

But, I feel, scouting will continue. After all -The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movements have come along way and continued despite all sorts of other distractions, forces and competing influences.

It's up to parents to not only encourage their youngsters to join scouting and guiding, but to take an active interest in all its aspects. Use these new miracles of science, or communication, to scouting's advantage... I guess, being prepared for the very different 21<sup>st</sup> century we have entered. It won't be easy, but then, what that is worthwhile in life ever is simple, easy?

To the young among you, that is in years, not only in heart, I would stress the importance of scouting and guiding, of the friendships that can be formed, how it brings young men and women together, fostering understanding, curbing racism, hatreds and prejudices and showing how all of us are really part of one small planet, entrusted to us for a short period, and then passed on to another generation. At present, the ball is in our court. What are you going to do with it? You may not

kick a goal or place it in the net, but it's worth the try and the results can be mentally rewarding, beyond belief.

Thank you for travelling the scouting and allied roads with me.

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## ABOUT ANNIE

*Yetta Rothberg-Allen*

I stood at the front door, my stomach large and proud with the second child. The little boy next to me clutched my hand as we waited.

The cheerful, smiling face of Penny greeted us as usual, alongside her, stood the little lady, her small arms and hands fluttered in the air balancing her as she stood. Penny's capable arm encircled her, giving her support.

She stood neat, tiny. So petite!

The small bow on the top of the head tied two thin plaits of fine hair. The fine sallow skin was still firm and tight across the high cheekbones and the pointed chin. Little faded brown eyes smiled back at me and the child.

"How is your mudder dear?" She asked no one. My child looked up at me, then back at his grandmother.

"It's alright" I said "She means your other I think."

This was Annie.

Annie always seemed to be the youngest member of our family.

She could compete with anyone with her fine, perfect 'lockshen', her strudel was sweet, moist and delicious!

Annie was unique.

She was my mother.

My little Yiddishe Momma!

In Carlton days her fruit and vegetables were delivered by a Chinese fruiterer, who came by horse and covered cart. His colourful fruits and vegetables gleamed fresh from his market garden. There was little need to 'tup' his wares, only the best quality! They both seemed able to exchange goodwill and words comfortably. They had a wonderful rapport! She spoke Yiddish and he spoke Chinese. So it seemed to us who watched them. Annie seemed to have her own homespun philosophy for all situations. She was underestimated, overlooked in her own time. A devoted 'home body' who was worn out by a large family, illness and time.

Friday was the day of intense activity. Each week she worked to the point of exhaustion, until the white damask cloth was spread across the wide dining table, the brass shining candle sticks stood with their tall slender candles waiting for the family to assemble, washed, changed for the Sabbath service, the evening meal, and the weekend ahead.

Yet, in difficult economic times she contributed a great deal to the needs of the family with her small drapery shop in Brunswick. The depression years hung heavily, the factory wheels were still, and grocery bills were long and unpaid.

She welcomed her own friends at any time, as well as her children's friends, and later school companions and escorts. My children and all the children of the family liked her, liked to be left with her 'minding' them. They were fed with

cake, cups of tea sitting at a table with her, indulged beyond the permits of their parents or their own homes.

I never heard the word 'goy' in our household. "Are you Jewish?" she would frequently ask. "No? I didn't think you were". So long as the visitor was a 'mensch' or spoke in a reasonable, suitable manner they were always welcomed.

The first house which my father and mother owned was in East St Kilda. Here she chose her first wall-to-wall carpets. Her choice was curious, it was something of a tartan. I can remember walking into the house and wondering what had attracted her to this spread. The green? The yellow? The squares? I know I did not like it, but, somehow in time it seemed to fade under my feet and reduced in importance.

There was also the conventional lounge suite, two big settees, which, when turned around facing the wall acted as beds for the first two grandchildren, David and Wendy. The two young families lived within pram-distance, which enabled the young couples to go out for a special night or 'The Saturday night' entertainment.

Annie became fixated with the idea of a fur coat. Not for herself, but a fur coat for me. I was now 'an educated young woman' and a fur coat seemed to be essential for my status and my scene. So she plied and drilled my father, night after night, about The Fur Coat. Just as he was about to take his first bite of an evening meal, the subject was introduced. Her arguments were numerous, consistent, persistent. Finally in sheer desperation, for some peace and accord, he threw down his knife and fork and said "Buy the bloody coat and let me have some peace please". But behind the facade of anger a smile lurked.

When I was in a theatrical performance and Annie was there, I knew that she watched, listened, only to me. If I was in a small role or I made a final exit early, I made sure she was well informed that it was no good waiting or watching 'the wings' for me. Or when I procured tickets for them both to see a University Revue or some such show she sat through the whole performance watching me, wherever (perhaps in a box), with my companion. Her hopes and expectations were only of my future.

Guilt hangs heavily when I remember my irritability, annoyance and sharp tongue with her when I was managing my own problems, or some love had gone awry. Maybe it was the experience of exasperation between mother and daughter? I was often chided by a kinder escort.

At an early stage in our marriage, my husband was engaged in a dairy farming survey. There were times when I went with him, with him and his three-speed bicycle. I sat on a cushion on the carrier at the back whilst he pushed up and down the Gippsland hills.

On one occasion before he went off alone, my mother engaged him in a very private, quiet conversation. They were both very discreet. None of us knew about this until he arrived home bringing back a very large, weighty, full-size round of tasty cheese.

She had been very specific in her instructions - only the full-size. From then on she was slicing triangles out of it and asking my father to deliver it with good wishes to her neighbours, her friends or her relatives! The poor man pleaded with

my husband to promise never to bring home again a cheese of such proportions.

Very much the same procedure happened at Pesach, Passover time, but on a limited scale. She would send in to neighbours square or round wafers of matzahs or 'pesach' biscuits which she had spent hours, and money baking. Maybe in those days there was a limited supply. Maybe? But, 'a gift is a gift!' she said.

My husband was also responsible for putting locks on their doors, and introducing keys into the household. From then on, Annie was forever getting in and out of windows, until some type of agreement was settled.

Annie met a new neighbour and they became instant friends, which led her into a new interest and a new lease of life. Annie became a punter!

Never, never have the tracks known or seen such an unlikely punter! She could not read actually. Her sentences were mixed and her accent a mixture of English and Yiddish but somehow she more than managed. She defined and knew her horses, and chose her bets by the jockeys.

It was no joke.

It was serious.

She was a genuine gambler!

Her weekly punt was her pleasure. She placed her bets by telephone with a S.P. bookie late in the week, then on Monday morning two big burly blokes would arrive to collect 'the dough' or to give her 'the loot'. All would be settled amicably over a cup of tea.

My father was alive then, and he not only encouraged her but helped her find her candidates. Together they sat and studied 'form', surrounded by 'The Globe', the pink sheets, and sections of other papers and racing guides.

My brother Brae related the tale of the day he took her to the races. She was greatly excited, and they both enjoyed a really full, good day, even though the experience was demanding and exhausting. On the way home, suddenly, she enthusiastically suggested

"Let's go to the 'Dogs'?".

He could not deny her.

A meal en route.

They finished the day, much, much later. Tired, very tired but happy to be back home.

We were all discouraged, definitely, not to come to her place on the Saturday. Esther and I, with the children, came fairly regularly on Friday afternoon to visit. After a short time we were encouraged to collect our cakes and disappear.

Her interest and the bookies were constant and continued for many years. This was her exhilaration. Only later, much later when she flagged, did her interest diminish, and finally stopped.

But, at no time, were we allowed to talk of it, mention it or discuss it with others. Because they (others) might think it a 'shondah', a disgrace for a Jewish woman to bet!

She also thought it was a 'shondah', a disgrace that my father went out collecting donations for the 'Golden Book' (J.N.F.). A leather case was made eventually so that he did not have to hide the G.B. under his coat.

The move to North Balwyn with its open fields and grazing cows was an idyllic scene, but, it was a lonely, isolated area for the ageing Annie, bereft of husband and sister and friends.

She was lonely.

She became less active.

She took up a crochet needle and supplied us all with copious mats.

Her sons were consistently devoted and attentive to her needs and to her visits. Charles in particular was always in close relationship with her and lunched regularly with her.

But an unfair share fell on Brae, a single man, as he still lived with her. She would wait up for him at night. She would not accept that other members of the family could take her to a family event, she turned always to him. The onus of this type of life caved in on him, until he knew he must move out before it was too late.

She was adamant that she would not stay with me or anyone else. She still recognised and wanted her own home and her independence.

The difficulty of getting the right kind of help or companion was demanding enough at first but was exacerbated by her strong will and resentment of decisions being made for her. She resented interference. She dismissed these companions one by one.

But she aged gently, and settled into a twilight zone.

It was fortunate at this time somebody in the family met and employed this gem called Penny. Penny was young enough to be active, gentle and considerate, and old enough to have grown children who left her free and independent but with the need to support herself. She had a pleasant, cheerful competency, which must have accompanied her all her life.

Penny stayed and cared for Annie so long as the little lady identified with her own home. It was only when she had lost any sense of place and time that Penny asked if she could take her to her own home and nurse her there.

We visited Annie at Penny's place where she died in the midst much love and care.

This is about Annie.

A collection of anecdotes, vignettes.

In truth,

Always,

An unfinished tale.

Too little knowledge

Of the little lady,

Tired, ailing with asthma.

It remains a brooding,

Sweet sorrow

No child memories

No sense of touch

No sense of smell

No mother image.



I wonder  
At the anguish and the grief?  
The loss of the first child?  
The husband?  
The sister?  
Who was there,  
To cosset?  
To comfort?  
Later, later, I learnt to love  
The memory.  
But the regret,  
Remains.  
About Annie and Me.

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## FROM JEWISH NATIONALISM TO LEFT-WING ACTIVISM: MEMORIES OF A RADICAL CHILDHOOD

*Philip Mendes*

There are two myths about Jews prevalent in both the Jewish and non-Jewish community. One is that most Jews are wealthy, and that poverty amongst Jews is virtually non-existent. Another myth is that most Jews follow their natural class interests by supporting conservative political parties and policies. However, both of these myths conflict with my own upbringing and childhood experiences.

### **Family Background**

For a start, I was born into a working class family. Both my parents were white-collar workers. My father, who died recently in 1999, was employed as a clerk in the public service, whilst mum worked as a typist for an insurance company.

My father's childhood was anything but financially comfortable. To be sure, his mother had grown up in a middle class family, but later she had fallen into poverty when her husband left her pregnant and pretty much penniless at the beginning of the Depression. It is worth adding that despite her poor circumstances, she continued her association with the Anglo-Jewish elite of St Kilda Synagogue, and always regarded herself as a member of the aristocracy/higher classes.

My mother, in contrast, came from a Czech/Palestinian Jewish family who had fled to Australia from Hitler in 1938. Her family had enjoyed relatively more comfortable circumstances. Her father (a fundamentalist orthodox Jew), and later her Hungarian stepmother ran a series of sandwich shops and small businesses.

Neither of my parents had any time for the conservative Liberal Party. My father was a fanatical Labor Party supporter, particularly admiring the former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam who had helped low-paid workers like him attain better wages and working conditions. Yet at the same time, he was strangely conservative, detesting anything smacking of socialism, and highly suspicious of trade unions. My mother simply favoured those parties which assisted the underdog, but in general she kept her political views to herself.

My paternal grandmother sought to preserve her "genteel poor" status by voting Liberal. She was on first name terms with the local Liberal MP, Sir Edgar Tanner, and used to display a Liberal Party Board on her front fence at election time. She and my father used to have some dreadful arguments over politics. Yet in retrospect, their political views seem strangely similar or perhaps just strange which is perhaps why they had little influence on my own development.

One of the first decisions my parents made (which was to have a significant impact on my political views) was to send me to Mount Scopus College, that upper middle class private Jewish school located in the Melbourne suburb of Burwood. Or should I say that my paternal grandmother (better known as

"Memum") made the decision since her views generally held sway. Her concern was that her grandson should attend a school with other children of the better classes. In other words, the snob value was what counted.

My parent's preferences were more practical. Both had experienced anti-Semitism at school, and kindly wished me to avoid the experience. None of them really gave much thought to how they would be able to afford to pay Mount Scopus's very expensive tuition fees. Nor did anyone really consider whether it was a good idea to send a working class child to a school regarded by some as a home for the wealthy and snobs.

### **Early Political Influences**

The first memory I have of any political views or feelings dates from about the age of seven or eight when I used to watch the Epic Theatre series on a Sunday afternoon. Epic Theatre consisted of classic films on mainly historical subjects such as Ancient Rome and Greece, and sometimes more modern classics such as *The Man in the Iron Mask*. The themes of the films always seemed to be struggles for freedom and justice against unjust tyrannies. From these films, I developed a strong sense of support for individual rights and democracy, and a lifelong distrust of authority. I was a born rebel looking for a cause.

Around this time, I began to read books on ancient Jewish history at school. I was particularly fascinated by the struggles of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah to retain their freedom and autonomy against powerful conquerors such as the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and later the Romans. Sometimes, I was lucky enough to view these stories on television in modern-day films about King David and the Bible, featuring the exotic landscape of the Middle East. I quickly became an avid Jewish nationalist, associating the modern State of Israel with the ancient freedom fighters I so admired.

### **The Class Divide at Mount Scopus**

I was probably about 11 years old when I first became aware (however superficially) about class issues. Throughout my childhood, we lived in an old brick Caulfield house which had seen far better days. The carpets badly needed replacing, the walls urgently required repainting, and the large garden resembled nothing more than a jungle.

My parents never paid much attention to the house. My mother was too tired from work and various family pressures to do anything beyond the basic. My father was totally oblivious. It simply never occurred to him that anyone would look down on him for living in a house that was rundown. Money was also an issue.

At this point, an old friend who I had known in primary school came over, and made some pointed remarks about the state of the house. Further comments from other friends and acquaintances plus occasionally their parents reinforced these insights. I soon became paranoid about inviting friends over, fearing potentially humiliating putdowns. Although my parents made some improvements such as painting and wallpapering over the years, the house still shaped up poorly compared to most of my Mount Scopus peers. In retrospect, it wasn't so bad. As a social worker, I've seen far, far worse.

There were other more subtle messages about differences in wealth and class. For example, during Year eight or nine, our Earth Science teacher suggested that we go as a class overseas to visit some geographical phenomenon. I instantly panicked. I simply knew that my parents could not afford to send me overseas. Yet for most of the other children, this seemed as simple and every day as catching a tram to the city.

On another occasion, I felt dreadfully embarrassed when our class were asked to nominate the professions of their parents. Nearly all my peers referred to law or medicine or stockbroking or accountancy or business. Alas my father was a clerk. The laughter that greeted this statement suggested that this was no fit profession for a Jew.

In private, adolescent students were also prone to discuss the respective wealth of their parents. One day a friend asked me on the school bus how much money my father had in the bank. I exaggerated quite a bit, and said one thousand dollars. The real figure was probably closer to 300-400 dollars. My friend said his father had one hundred thousand dollars in the bank. I was shocked. How could any one person possibly have so much money?

The entrance of Jewish boys into manhood through the bar mitzvah ceremony also conveyed important class messages. Most of the Scopus students held huge ostentatious receptions in glamorous reception centres. In contrast, we struggled to place a small marquee in our overgrown backyard.

Not only this, but the presents even more dramatically symbolized the class divide. Scopus students generally gave gifts in cash or kind ranging from \$50 to \$100. For my parents, this was a major sum of money, and not something we could afford. But even more arrogantly, some Scopus students chose to forego their presents. Proudly and publicly, they announced that guests were being asked to make donations to the State of Israel in lieu of gifts.

This was something I could simply not fathom. My family needed the money from gifts either to cover the cost of the bar mitzvah party as my father preferred, or alternatively to provide a serious foundation for my bank account. How could anyone just give the money away? It was many years later before I realised that this gift was not just about mere generosity and love for Israel. Rather, the public spectacle of altruism was also about establishing one's community status and profile.

Social events provoked further embarrassment. I would be transported in our old 1970 Toyota Corolla with ripped seat covers inside, and dints on virtually every corner outside. In contrast, most of my peers (proudly self-identifying Jewish Australian Princes and Princesses) would arrive in new model Commodores, Fairlanes, and even BMWs and Mercedes. They would also wear brand name clothes whilst I presented in the latest style from Cheap Jeans. One could only cringe internally, and accept the status of a lesser being.

For many years afterwards, I blamed Mount Scopus for the existence of these class divisions and prejudices. I believed their educational philosophy had contributed to an accentuation, rather than a breaking down, of class and wealth disparities amongst students.

However, on further reflection, I now believe that these criticisms were at least



in part unfair. A school alone cannot be expected to transform the values of a religious or ethnic community. Recently, I was happy to contribute a chapter on my school experiences to Mark Baker's edited volume, *Tales Told Out of School*.<sup>1</sup> I was also pleased to be invited last year to participate in a panel at the Scopus Year 11 Beyond Alpayim seminar. The hostility is no longer there.

In retrospect, it is also clear to me that not all my peers at school fitted the dominant stereotypes of Jewish wealth and conservatism. To be sure, many were wealthy, and extremely politically conservative. But, at least some were not.

I now have friends from school who also came from working class or lower middle class homes. A number have entered helping professions such as psychology or social work. Others have moved into writing and journalism, and community law. I have also become aware from reports by Jewish Community Services that a considerable number of Jews in Melbourne and Sydney live in poverty.<sup>2</sup>

### **Formative Political Influences**

But back to the past. At the time, I sometimes talked to my parents about these issues. My father's views were very strange, although in a subtle way they influenced me in a socialist direction. His simple explanation for the wealth of my peers was that only those Jews who were rich had managed to escape the Holocaust. As for those whose parents were born in Australia, they had obviously inherited a fortune. The implication of all this was that wealth depended on luck and birth, rather than ability or merits.

During my adolescence, I began to read about socialist ideas and history. I found these ideas personally liberating. For the first time, I began to understand in a broader context some of the difficulties and struggles I experienced as a working class child amongst mainly middle class peers. The ideas of the class struggle served to explain both the social and economic injustices of the world, and the means of rectifying these injustices.

Of course, all this took time. My initial political views had been those of a radical liberal, rather than those of a socialist. But by Year 11, I had become a committed Labor Party supporter, favouring trade unions, income redistribution, and heavy taxation on lazy businessman who exploited their workers. I can remember loudly calling out "rubbish" with anger when our Economics class featured a video of neo-liberal economist Milton Friedman denouncing social justice and equality. Most of my fellow students thought I had lost the plot.

Another incident involved one very affluent young man who had joined the Young Liberals, and placed "Vote Malcolm Fraser" (the Conservative Prime Minister at that time) posters along the walls of the corridor during the 1980 Australian federal election. When I wrote "Vote Socialist" on one of the posters, I was vigorously dumped to the ground by the young conservative and three of his friends.

However, I was not yet a revolutionary. I still believed that it was possible in a democratic society for a Labor Party elected by a majority to implement radical changes and reforms without any necessity for revolution. I also still believed that communism was a bad thing because this was what everyone - the media, my

parents, the mainstream political parties - had taught us.

During my final two years at school, I became immersed in the experiences of the Russian and French Revolutions. In Year 11, I learnt (still with some wariness) about Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin. Then in Year 12, I engaged in a love affair with the French revolutionary, Robespierre.

For my Year 12 History option, I wrote a 50 page discursive on Robespierre and the French Revolution. For me, Robespierre was the overt representative of the French people's longing for freedom and justice from the outmoded tyranny of the monarchy. Yet, his life and actions also embodied the classical Left dilemma: how to ensure the will of the people without imposing a dictatorship that reflected the will of only one or a few.

### **Liberated by University Politics**

In 1982, I commenced an Arts degree at Melbourne University, later carrying on to complete a Bachelor of Social Work. On a personal level, I found university incredibly liberating, and became far more confident and outspoken.

The constant political debates were invigorating. Perhaps it just seemed this way at the time, but my memory is of an environment in which left-wing and radical ideas were welcomed and affirmed. In short, it was "cool" to be a socialist, and not "cool" to be a conservative. In fact, I can remember meeting very few people at university who supported the Liberal Party or conservative ideas. But then I largely avoided, or engaged in inverse snobbery with my former Scopus peers. So who knows what they were thinking?

To be sure, the campus environment was not as radical as it may have been in the 1960s and 1970s at the height of the Vietnam War and Australian Union of Students Middle East debates<sup>3</sup>. But there were still regular lunchtime speakers, public debates, forums, and student elections. All the socialist groups were represented: the Socialist Club (linked I think with the trotskyist International Socialists), Resistance (marxist Democratic Socialist Party), the strange Spartacists, Committee in Solidarity with Nicaragua and Grenada, Friends of Palestine etc.

I never joined any clubs. For one, I was very shy and found the rhetoric and gungho attitudes of many of the "politicos" quite intimidating. The other barrier was the question of Israel. As I have written elsewhere, all the left-wing groups were virulently anti-Zionist in a manner that left little room for rational discussion or dialogue. As time went by, I became increasingly critical of Israel, and strongly favoured a two-state solution that recognized Palestinian national rights. But, I was never willing to tolerate extremist views that endorsed the genocide of a whole State and its people.<sup>4</sup>

So most of my political development came from personal reading and research rather than organizational links. During the first two years of university, I literally scoured the modern history shelves on the second floor of the Baillieu library, reading biography after biography of famous socialist figures.

### **Political Mentors**

The three that particularly come to mind were those of Jean Jaures, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leon Trotsky. All were brave and idealistic figures, giving their

lives for the socialist cause and the liberation of humanity. Yet, all were in a sense tragic figures since none of them actually secured or at least retained State power.

Jaurès was murdered by an extreme French nationalist at the outbreak of World War One. Luxemburg (who criticized Lenin's seizure of power by military coup) was murdered by the German social democratic government in 1919. And, of course, Trotsky was elbowed aside by Stalin, and later murdered by a KGB agent in Mexico.

Perhaps for this reason, I found them more appealing (and perhaps more pure) than those such as Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, and Ho Chi Minh who actually seized and held power by violent means. I was also fascinated for a time by famous anarchists such as Emma Goldman and Peter Kropotkin, being particularly impressed by their critique of dictatorships of the Left.

Another issue central to my thinking at that time was the question of how to extend pure political (voting) equality to the economic sphere without undermining individual rights and freedoms. My belief then and now was that political freedom meant nothing without genuine equality of opportunity to exercise that freedom. As long as people were born with different opportunities through inheritance and unequal wealth distribution, political freedom was simply a farce.

But equally, I strongly opposed then and now the restriction of democratic freedoms by an elite minority in order to implement a so-called classless society. Not that I was opposed in principle to violent class struggle and revolution. However, the key question which Luxemburg and others posed was how to implement a revolution of the masses which would genuinely reflect the free and participatory views of the majority of the population. It was one thing to forcibly take from those who had too much and give to those who had too little. But, it was another to impose a dictatorship (however temporary) over the majority.

I totally rejected social democratic illusions about peacefully transferring wealth and power through the parliamentary system, but I was also reluctant to endorse a non-democratic style of government, however benevolent. There had to be a third way between Lenin and the Labor Party. But in retrospect, there probably wasn't.

A couple of other factors influenced my thinking at this time. One was my increasing knowledge of the malevolence of American actions in Latin and Central America. I vividly remember watching the film *Missing* in late 1982, and being shocked by the brutal actions of the US Government in supporting the 1973 military coup in Chile.

The hypocrisy was breathtaking. The US and other Western powers had always rightly criticized the lack of political freedom and democracy in the Soviet Bloc, but the US had persistently undermined attempts to introduce democratic and social reforms in Latin America. Instead, they had supported and sometimes imposed right-wing military dictatorships barely distinguishable from that of Nazi Germany. Books by former CIA operatives such as Philip Agee would provide first hand testimony on this appalling record.

Later, I would be equally appalled by US support for the Contra guerillas fighting the elected Sandinista Government in Nicaragua. In retrospect, a balanced interpretation of these events would have seen them in less black and white terms.



The US was not principally responsible for the often brutal political culture of Latin America, and the Sandinista regime was almost certainly less democratic than some of us believed at the time. Nevertheless, the US actions in Chile and elsewhere confirmed that certain rulers and elites would never allow socialist reforms to be implemented by peaceful means.

### **Back to Judaism**

Another influencing factor was my increasing knowledge of the long history of disproportionate Jewish involvement in the Left. During my second year at university, I began to read books by authors such as Arthur Liebman and Percy Cohen about the long tradition of Jewish involvement in left-wing movements. I was astonished to learn that so many of the leading socialist figures - Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Bela Kun, Kurt Eisner, Emma Goldman, Leon Blum, Danny Cohn-Bendit, Joe Slovo and many others - were Jewish. To say nothing of the masses of Jewish workers involved in the Jewish Labor Bund.

Equally, I was disappointed that so few Jews in Australia demonstrated any recognition of or pride in this tradition. Many years later, I would research the Australian scene, and find out that Jews were no less prominent in the local anti-Vietnam War movement of the late nineteen sixties.<sup>5</sup> So over time, I became far more confident that my socialism complemented my Jewishness.

Around this time, I began writing on contemporary public debates - initially letters to the Editor of newspapers and later longer newspaper and journal articles - both to express my political views, and to compensate for my shyness in public speaking, and reluctance to join organizations. Some of my letters condemned the racism of the extreme right, others addressed questions of equality, third world liberation, the gun lobby, the peace movement, and tertiary fees. Later as a social work student working in the red light suburb of St Kilda, I would also comment profoundly and all-knowingly on drug abuse, homelessness, mental illness, and prostitution.

My grandmother (still a very strong woman until her death at 86 years old in 1986) always encouraged me in this pursuit, commenting that the pen was mightier than the sword. I think she disagreed with about 90 per cent of what I said, but she always loved telling me that her friends at St Kilda Synagogue had commented on my letters, whether they had appeared in the quality broadsheet Melbourne Age, the Australian Jewish News, or the more humble Caulfield Southern Cross.

The letters also encouraged responses and comments from other peers and acquaintances, and acquired me a certain reputation. I became known as the one and only "radical" from Mount Scopus College. An apt, but ironic title in view of my preceding history.

My growing radicalism also influenced my choice of career. I was always interested in analysing people's social mores and behaviour and associated inhibitions, and initially commenced a Psychology Major as part of an Arts degree. However, I found psychology highly theoretical and clinical, and heavily biased towards middle-class individualism.

On switching to social work, I found a much better blending of the practical and the political. Social work was about addressing structural problems such as



homelessness, poverty and unemployment as well as helping families and individuals.

In my first year, I was lucky enough to complete a work experience placement at the Salvation Army Crisis Centre in Grey Street, St Kilda. This placement reinforced my increasing identification with non-conformist and often deviant behaviour, and my growing disdain for middle-class values and respectability.

On a daily basis, I was exposed to a combination of drug users, prostitutes, victims of domestic violence, cynical police, and the mentally ill. I soon became, or at least felt, part of the St Kilda street scene.

In later years, I worked as a child protection worker, a social worker at Centrelink, a political coordinator in the Jewish community (through the Australian Jewish Democratic Society), and as the Social Policy Officer of the Australian Association of Social Workers. Eventually, I found a niche as an academic teaching Social Policy and Community Development in the Department of Socialwork at Monash University. But that is another story.

### Conclusion

Today at the ripe old age of 36, I continue to hold pretty much the same political beliefs, although perhaps I have moderated in some areas. I would probably now use the term Left social democrat to describe my views rather than that of socialist revolutionary. I still believe that capitalism is an immoral system based on exploitation of labor by capital.

However, I currently see little indication of any serious vision for a political or theoretical alternative. Today's political priority is to protect the welfare state and the trade unions from the enhanced globalized fangs of the free market. Tomorrow, the revolutionaries are sure to return.

### NOTES

- 1 Philip Mendes, 'Philip Mendes reads Marx and fights a class-struggle in the playground' in Mark Baker (ed) *Tales Told Out of School: A Scopus Anthology*, Melbourne: Mount Scopus Memorial College, 1999, pp.125-129.
- 2 See Anton Hermann, 'Lifting the Lid on Community Issues', *Address to Jewish Museum of Australia*, 24 May 1998. See also Rodney Benjamin, *A History of Jewish Welfare in Victoria*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998, pp.358-367.
- 3 Philip Mendes, 'Australian Union of Students Middle East Debates, 1974-75', *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, November 1993, pp.188-210.
- 4 Philip Mendes, 'Teenage Memories of Israel, Zionism and Palestinian Refugees', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, November 1997, pp.130-135.
- 5 Philip Mendes, *The New Left, the Jews and the Vietnam War 1965-72*, Melbourne: Lazare Press, 1993.

## **A HUNDRED YEARS OF ESTABLISHING SYNAGOGUES IN VICTORIA (PORT PHILLIP) 1839-1939**

*John Cohen*

**1839**

The village of Melbourne in the district of Port Phillip held its initial Jewish services on Rosh Hashanah. It was one short of a minyan. Of the village population of 1500 persons, it has been estimated that 25 were Jews.

**1840**

Melbourne Jewish Community formalized with the High Holiday Services held in Collins Street at the rear of shop rented by Moses Lazarus.

**1841**

Port Phillip census indicates 57 Jews in Melbourne. Regular services commenced at the Mechanics School of Arts.

**1844**

Melbourne has 200 Jews. Port Phillip Government grants land off Bourke Street (Synagogue Place) to erect a place of worship.

**1848**

Melbourne's first synagogue in Bourke Street erected. The City now has a general population of 10,000.

**1849**

Geelong Philanthropic and Jewish Burial Society held its first Rosh Hashanah Services. The estimated Jewish population, 50.

**1853**

As a result of the Gold Rush in Ballarat, the first Rosh Hashanah services in Ballarat were held in the Clarendon Hotel.

**1854**

Geelong becomes the largest port in the newly formed State of Victoria in 1951. Its Jewish population is on the increase and a synagogue is built. Following the gold discovery in Sandhurst (Bendigo), there were Rosh Hashanah services held at the rear of the store owned by Mr Helbrum.

**1855**

First synagogue built in Ballarat.

**1856**

First synagogue built in Sandhurst (Bendigo) and regular services commence. The Jewish population around 200.

**1857**

Melbourne had a second synagogue, located at the corner of Little Lonsdale and Exhibition (then Stephenson ) Streets. Officially named the East Melbourne Synagogue, unofficially it was known as the Foreigners Shule because it catered for the influx of Foreign Jews caused by the Gold Rush.

**1861**

The original wooden synagogue in Geelong was demolished and replaced by the existing building erected in Yarra Street. The Jewish population is 128.

**1869**

A committee formed to build a synagogue in the St Kilda district, Rosh Hashanah services were held in the home of Moritz Michaelis.

**1870**

Services held in St Kilda Town Hall.

**1871**

St Kilda Synagogue established

**1872**

A more substantial synagogue is built in Bendigo to replace the previous structure established in 1856. Both the St Kilda Synagogue, and the Bendigo Synagogue are consecrated on exactly the same day, the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1872.

**1877**

The East Melbourne Synagogues moves to its current position in Palmeston Street.

**1912**

Carlton Hebrew Congregation commences services in Palmeston Street.

**1913**

Synagogue erected in Shepparton-Lemnos area to serve the Jewish agricultural community, largely from Palestine and Russia.

**1919**

A second synagogue is established in Pitt Street Carlton, and is nick-named the "Stones Shule" after the name of its benefactor.

**1925**

A synagogue operates at Berwick to serve an agricultural community similar to that of Shepparton, though on a smaller scale.

**1927**

St Kilda Synagogue moves to its current location in Charnwood Grove.

**1928**

Coburg Synagogue erected to satisfy the religious needs of the local Jewish community.

**1929**

Moonee Ponds Synagogue established to cater for the area's increasing Jewish population.

**1930**

Three synagogues were erected. The first was in Lord Street, Brunswick mainly for Jews living on the fringes of the Carlton area. Second, the Melbourne Synagogue, originally created in 1848, moves to its space on the corner of Toorak and St Kilda Roads. Finally, there was the Hascolah Talmud Torah in Rathdowne Street, Carlton.

**1936**

The first Liberal Movement Temple erected in Alma Road, St Kilda

**1939**

The Elwood Talmud Torah commences services in Dickens Street, Elwood.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### ORACHE CHAIM – THE HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE

*Melinda Jones & Ilana Lutman*

*(State Library of NSW in Association with Chapters & Pty Ltd)*

The history of the Central Synagogue 'Orache Chaim' which took almost nine years to complete was finally launched on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

The project was initially given to historian Ilana Lutman with instructions that it should conclude up to the time of the fire, which tragically destroyed the synagogue in September 1994. After spending 3 years researching the project, Lutman made Aliyah in 1995 and her relative Melinda Jones took over. The contents of the book were then extended to include a chapter on rebuilding the synagogue and to conclude until the official opening in May 1998. The book was ready for publication by mid 1998 but was stopped by the synagogue's management for minor additions and alterations.

The publication covers the history of Central from the time of the meeting held in the office of Elias Green in September 1912. Green became the congregation's first treasurer. Among those present was Wolf Ruta Cohen who served on the board of Central in numerous capacities for 31 years and was without doubt together with Felix Freeman and Sam Biner one of the great leaders of the congregation.

Cohen was one of the instigators to purchase the land on the corner of Dowling and Napier Streets in Darlinghurst which became Central's first home. He was also the prime mover in purchasing the land in Grafton Street, Bondi Junction on which the congregations second home was consecrated in 1923.

To the credit of Melinda Jones and Centrals executive no attempt has been made in the book to hide a number of upheavals and controversies that occurred at Central over the years. The Rabbi Kirsner curse, when he cursed the congregation after being bodily removed from the bimah following a dispute with the management it dealt with at length despite the fact that some Central officials do not believe that a curse hangs over the shule. It also mentions the fact that the Kirsner episode resulted in the formation of the Mizrahi Synagogue. The book also refers to the suggestion made in 1972 by Rabbi Dr Yohoshua Kemelman of how the curse could be broken, Rabbi Kemelman's suggestion was never taken up. However in 1998 Rabbi Selwyn Franklin suggested that "perhaps despite the fire and the fact that I am the longest serving minister of the congregation is proof that the Kirsner curse has finally been lifted". As we know the situation has changed since the rabbi Franklin has relinquished his position as chief Minister of Central Synagogue as from 27<sup>th</sup> January this year.

The book also deals fully with the numerous problems that Central has experienced with its Chief Ministers. Since the appointment of its first Minister,

Reverend I Bernstein in 1915 the shule has had 12 Chief Ministers. Apart from the Rabbi Franklin who has served for over 12 years; only, Rabbis Dr H Freedman – 9 years; M Alony – 8 years; and Dr Y Kemelman – 7 years; have stayed for any length of time. Of the other eight their length of service varied from one to four years. Rabbi Franklin has relinquished his position as Chief Minister of Central Synagogue as from 27<sup>th</sup> January this year.

The publication pays great tribute to Rabbi Ernest Wolff who has served Central for over 60 years and is the longest serving minister of any congregation in Australia. Rabbi Wolff is liked and respected through the community and has been a steadying influence in the shule in the face of the large turnover of Rabbis and cantors. Rabbi Wolff was honoured by Central on several occasions. A testimonial Dinner was arranged for him. Rabbi Freedman and Cantor Krass in 1962. In 1957 a special Kiddush was organized in his honour of completing twenty years of service and in August 1987 a capacity crowd of 500 packed Ilakoah to celebrate Centrals 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Rabbi Wolff's 50 years of service to the congregation.

Tributes are also paid to centrals to two other long service officials – Rev Cantor David Krass and Shamas Abe Golomb, each of whom retired after thirty years of service.

From Central's past leaders the one who receives most tributes is Felix Freeman who without doubt was the congregation's outstanding leader and served the shule for 40 years, 15 of which had been as President. Freeman was also involved in an executive capacity in other numerous Jewish organizations. He led the congregation during some of its most turbulent periods and the fact that it managed to pull through and grow during such times was due in no small measure to his leadership. The book makes no mention of Freeman's final message to the community, which was: "We must see the leadership of the congregation expresses the will of its members and not the opinions of the rich and influential few."

Two other executives from the past era – Sam Goodman and Sam Biner also figure prominently in the publication.

In the last chapter, "The Fire and Beyond", Dr Phillip Oystagh and Adrian Shurnik also receive honourable publicity. Both preside over the difficult period of rebuilding the synagogue after the fire.

A notable omission from the Honour Board at the end of the book are Life Members – a title which in most organizations is considered the highest honour given for services rendered. The List of the Boards of Management of Central since its inception contains several inaccuracies in relation to the length of service of some members. It appears that the proof reading could have been improved. Otherwise the book is well researched and presented and all people who have worked or been associated with central since its inception are mentioned. It should make interesting reading to members of central as well as the community in general.

George Keen

# WAR CRIMINALS WELCOME: AUSTRALIA, A SANCTUARY FOR FUGITIVE WAR CRIMINALS SINCE 1945

*Mark Aarons (Black Inc, Melbourne, 2001)*

Mark Aarons has played a key role in the Australian Nazi War Crimes debate. His 1986 radio series, *Nazis in Australia*, inspired the Hawke Government's inquiry into war criminals, and the subsequent passing of war crimes legislation. Aarons 1989 book, *Sanctuary*, crystallised the issues, and generated enormous controversy within and between the Jewish and East European communities.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry and its then President, Isi Leibler, strongly supported Aarons thesis alleging collaboration between western intelligence agencies including ASIO and Nazi war criminals. But whilst Leibler wrote a supportive preface to *Sanctuary*, other conservative Jewish groups and individuals such as Michael Danby and Colin Rubinstein from Australia/Israel Publications and Robert Manne from *Quadrant Magazine* bitterly attacked Aarons. Even the launch of his book became a major saga due to concerns that its publication at that time could potentially prejudice the prosecution and trial of alleged war criminals.

Aarons new text, *War Criminals Welcome*, has appeared with much less fanfare. It updates his earlier research on Nazis, and extends his investigation to war criminals from more recent conflicts. Supported by a foreword by ex-Prime Minister Bob Hawke, Aarons argues that the mistakes made by Australian governments 50 years ago are being repeated. Today, Australia is a sanctuary for war criminals from Cambodia, Afghanistan, Latin America, and the former Yugoslavia.

Aarons text is divided into five sections. Part One commences with a reference to Justice Minister Amanda Vanstone's unfortunate statement that alleged Nazi war criminal, Konrads Kalejs, was "welcome" to return to Australia. Aarons comments reprovingly that war criminals have been welcome for over 50 years.

Just as Jewish victims of Nazism identified their former tormentors in the 1950s, so survivors of more recent conflicts have found their former persecutors living in close proximity. One of these ironically is a Sydney Jewish dentist accused of being responsible for torture and murder whilst a member of the post-war communist Hungarian secret police. Both the accuser and the accused are Holocaust survivors.

Yet, Australian governments have done virtually nothing to investigate these allegations. Aarons points out that Australia has no legislative framework to take action against such people since the existing War Crimes Act is restricted to the European theatre of World War Two. He recommends a number of program and legislative measures to bring Australia into line with the Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

Part Two explores the careers of some of Australia's most notorious Nazi war criminals. For example, Aarons details the wartime record of Karlis Ozols, the Latvian mass murderer, who quietly passed away in Melbourne earlier this year. Attention is also drawn to many other Latvian mass murderers who found refuge in Australia.

Of particular interest is the story of Konrads Kalejs, currently facing extradition to Latvia. Kalejs was a member of the Arajs Commando, the Nazi-controlled Latvian security police, which murdered over 70,000 Jews. Later, Kalejs was appointed to the important position of documentation and processing clerk at the Bongeilla migrant camp. He was able to use this position to facilitate the migration of other war criminals to Australia. After attaining Australian citizenship, Kalejs shifted to the United States in 1959 where he resided for 35 years.

However, allegations of war crimes then led to Kalejs expulsion from three western countries: the United States, Canada, and Britain. All three jurisdictions accepted evidence from former members of the Arajs Kommando that Kalejs had directly participated in mass killings.

Other chapters in this section describe the careers of prominent Ustashe war criminals such as Srečko Rover. Aarons suggests controversially that many of these mass murderers were aided and abetted by Western intelligence agencies which sought to recruit them for the battle against Communism. One known killer, former Latvian Nazi Argods Fricsons, was even paid by the Americans to spy on left-wing Jews in post-war Germany.

Part Three examines the political cover-up in Australia. Aarons documents the actions and decisions taken by successive Labor and Liberal Governments to hide the presence of war criminals in Australia. Despite considerable evidence of acute anti-Semitism and pro-Nazi sympathies amongst groups of Central and Eastern European migrants, authorities turned a blind eye.

In addition, many of these murderers were recruited by ASIO to spy on alleged communist agents in their own ethnic communities. Others attained prominent roles in mainstream right-wing political parties including the Liberal Party and the Democratic Labor Party. Many were active in the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, a coalition of Nazi emigre groups, which received the formal endorsement of leading Liberal Party figures.

Aarons also grants considerable space to the Jewish campaign against German and Nazi immigration in the post-war period. However, at least some of this discussion is marred by historical inaccuracies. Many of these could possibly have been avoided if Aarons had consulted the many historical tracts written on Australian Jewry and the Cold War by authors such as David Rechter, Bill Rubinstein, Sarah McNaughton, Alan Leibler, and myself.

For example, Aarons implies that the campaign was run by the controversial left-wing Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism. In fact, the campaign was controlled and directed by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, and subcontracted to the Council only in Victoria. It is, however true, that Council operatives Sam Cohen and Walter Lippmann (through their respective positions as Chairman and Honorary Secretary of the ECAJ Public Relations Committee) played key roles in coordinating the campaign.

Aarons also describes the campaign as having ceased in 1953, but it was actually suspended during the April 1951 federal election campaign, and never resumed.

In addition, Aarons alleges that the campaign was ended due to blackmail threats from the Immigration Minister, Harold Holt. To be sure, Holt bitterly



resented the Jewish campaign on two grounds: it destroyed the previously existing bipartisan political consensus on largescale immigration, and potentially threatened public support for the entire program. Consequently, he threatened to block Jewish donations to Israel, and freeze Jewish immigration to Australia, unless it was stopped.

However, Holt's bluster almost certainly had less direct impact on the ECAJ than Aarons suggests. It is far more likely that the campaign's cessation reflected the emerging reconciliation between Israel and West Germany via the reparations agreement, and the associated Cold War pressure on Jews to accept the inclusion of Germans in the western alliance. Other factors included the strong support granted by a number of powerful organisations including the RSL and the mainstream media to German immigration, and the increasing political divisions between the Jewish Council and its conservative critics within Victorian Jewry.

Part Four explores the relationship between ASIO and Nazi war criminals. Aarons devotes particular attention to the case of Ljenko Urbancic, a war time Nazi collaborator and propagandist in the Yugoslav republic of Slovenia. Given the title of "Little Goebbels" by the Yugoslav War Crimes Commission, Urbancic remarkably became and remains a prominent player in the NSW Liberal Party. Yet other pro-Nazi propagandists such as the infamous British collaborator, William Joyce, were executed for their crimes. This section also details the notorious terrorist activities of the Croatian Ustashe, and the famous 1973 raid on ASIO headquarters by Labor Attorney General, Lionel Murphy.

Part Five examines the Australian debate about Nazi war criminals from 1961 to the present day. Aarons critiques Sir Garfield Barwick's 1961 statement which rejected the Soviet request to extradite Latvian mass murderer Ervin Viks, and effectively declared an amnesty for war criminals. Aarons does not discuss whether the ECAJ or other Jewish groups protested against this outrageous decision. I wonder whether the Jewish community may have deliberately played down disagreements over this issue given that it coincided with the separate and ultimately successful VJBD campaign to persuade Barwick to raise the question of Soviet anti-Semitism at the United Nations.

Aarons then turns to the later debate about the Nazi War Crimes Bill, and the subsequent decision by the Keating Government to shut down the Special Investigations Unit. Strangely, Aarons makes no reference to the bizarre Demidenko Affair which was closely linked to the political campaign against the War Crimes Bill, and provided an opportunity for some former opponents of the Bill such as Robert Manne to revise their positions.

Overall, this is a weighty and meticulously documented text which unapologetically seeks justice for the victims of mass murder and persecution. It should be required reading for those Australian officials and politicians who have provided, or who continue to provide, a safe haven for war criminals.

Philip Mendes

## THE FIVE WALKING STICKS

Henry Lew (AMC Publications, Melbourne, 2001)

Biographies of working journalists are undoubtedly few and far between, so the story of the life and times of a Jewish journalist in colonial Australia is an extremely rare treat. Henry Lew's "The Fives Walking Sticks" is about one such journalist, Maurice Brodzky, a European sophisticate amid a controversialist who lived in "fabulous Melbourne" in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century into the very early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In the manner of the proverbial wandering Jew, the narrative moves from the Western Europe of his youth to his early adulthood, the post-gold rush Victoria and its fall from grace, then during his last thirteen years, to the United States and back to England.

Brodzky, born in East Prussia on November 30, 1850 into a middle class family is given a thorough Jewish education. The language of his early childhood years is in fact, Hebrew. And it is this learning that not only helps to provide him with financial sustenance later, but is the grounding from which he feels he is a position to bemoan the state of Jewish teaching and learning when he arrives in the Antipodes. While studying at the Sorbonne in Paris, he becomes caught in the maelstrom of the Franco-Prussian War, finds himself in penury - not to be the only occasion - and ends up in London. From England he takes passage to the unknown whites of down-under, only to be shipwrecked when arriving in Melbourne. Though he spoke six languages, his first job is as a Hebrew teacher. He then moves into journalism, becomes the owner of *Table Talk* until rash litigation against Rabbi Blaubaum of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation and editor of the *Jewish Herald* brings him finally undone. In his rather advanced years he obtains journalistic posts in San Francisco, New York, and finally London.

As told here, Maurice's life path is criss-crossed by the elite and avant guard of Melbourne, both Gentile and Jewish. These figures include Theodore Fink, wit, art lover, and lawyer's lawyer, Alfred Deakin, who worked hard for Federation and was three times Prime Minister of the nation, and Marcus Clarke, who had a penchant for antisemitism. But there were also the artists of the Heidelberg School, colonial politician Sir Henry Parks, suffragette Vida Goldstein, writers Edward Alexander Vidler amid Max Hirsch, and later American newspaper mogul Randolph Hearst, for whom Maurice worked.

Though he became a more assimilated Jew, Maurice felt the need to marry a Jewish girl. That is not to say he did not have relationships with women outside the fold, and indeed, there is a suggestion he might have fathered a child out of wedlock. At the age of thirty, he marries the well-connected opera singer Florence Kahn. As a journalist, but particularly as editor of *Table Talk*, he propagates ideas and attitudes on such Jewish matters as conversion, the state of the Jewish community and its Jewish knowledge, the quality of the local rabbinate, antisemitism and Zionism. As a modernist and liberal, among the many mainstream topics he covered were women's suffrage, freedom of the press, the state of the economy, the Aboriginal question, and the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the emerging Labor Party.

Lew presents Maurice's personal journey as an eventful and rollicking ride. His technique of biography masquerading as autobiography however has its limits. For one it is unclear where the boundaries lie between the author and his subject. Second, the in-his-skin approach fails a little where comment is introduced of events, such as the Holocaust, which occurred well after Brodzky's death. And over all, there is a tendency to be didactic rather than let the audience make up its own mind. This notwithstanding, this book is a very easy and enjoyable account of the life of a quite remarkable man. The artwork at the beginning of each chapter also adds an atmospheric dimension to the narrative.

Rodney Gouttman

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## **AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORY ESSAY COMPETITION**

The Australian Jewish History Competition was funded by the generosity of The Godfrey and Myra Cohen Charitable Trust. Both Godfrey and the late Myra nee Davis are descended from early pioneer families and have been members of this Society for many years and are indeed Patrons of that organisation. The Trust is also a major sponsor of the Australian History Gallery at the Jewish Museum of Australia.

Godfrey who is now aged 92, is a successful, self made businessman who founded Godfreys the Vacuum Cleaner Specialists some 70 years ago. He is a sporting enthusiast, philanthropist, and an all round kind and gentle man of goodwill. He and Myra were devoted to each other, She was involved for many years with the Jewish Womens Guild and gave a great deal of her time to helping at the Montefiore Homes

When Howard Freeman approached Godfrey to sponsor this essay Competition, Godfrey was delighted at the opportunity this offered to foster interest among Jewish youth in their Australian Jewish heritage. It is both creative and inspiring and a welcome change to focus upon some of the more positive stories surrounding our people.

Godfrey and Myra's children, Natalie, Daryl and Trevor have all been involved in various communal organisations, and Trevor, who is the immediate past President of this Society was the founding Chairman of the Jewish Museum of Australia,

Godfrey would like future competitions to be open to all Jewish students including those attending non Jewish schools.



## A SELECTION OF THE WINNING ENTRIES

*Anti-Seimitism in the 20th Century in Australia*

Freda Werdiger

*This Diary Belongs to James Lara*

Candice Lever

*Dr Fanny Reading and My Grandparents*

Natalie Kaye

*A Ballad in Honour of Sir John Monash*

Melanie Koss

*ANZAC Essay*

Avreme Cohny

*Diary of a Jewish ANZAC*

Avi Travers

*Aaron Ronald Castan AM QC*

Josh Levy

*Esther Abrahams*

Romy Peterfreund

*The Man They Couldn't Hang*

Peter Teleki

## ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IN AUSTRALIA

*Freda Werdiger - Year 10, Beth Rivkah Ladies College*

Generally, Australia is a very tolerant country. But like other countries, Australia has had it's worse years, when Australians harbour racism, for example, succumbing to the anti-Semitism that had the rest of the world interrupted in the 1930's and 40's. Although Australia refused to participate in the Second World War, Nazi Germany made its mark. During other times, such as the 1920's, anti-Semitism was virtually non-existent. It is only when the rest of the world, the USA, the UK, or Europe display acts of anti-Semitism do Australians participate. As well as the Holocaust, episodes such as Israel Independence in 1948, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973 interrupted the tolerant attitude that Australians are known to have.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were negative reactions to claims that a number of Jews, with estimate ranging widely, would be assisted to settle in Australia. This reaction came mainly from media, as papers such as *The Age* declared that "to the Jew, as a Jew ... no Australian would take the slightest exception." In the late 1890's, the Trade and Labour Council complained that Polish and Russian Jews were the "worst offenders" and, later that decade, John Norton, a one time editor and proprietor, released an anti-Semitic paper entitled *Truth*. In 1905, in *Truth*, Norton justified Russian pogroms, claiming that Jews deserved them for the death of Christ. Many used Jews as scapegoats, such as Francis George Ansley, who blamed Jews for the outbreak of the war. Jews were also negatively portrayed in literature and theatre. In Marcus Clarke Short Stories, Jews were often put as moneylenders and bookmakers, often involved in criminal activity, such as prostitution. Henry Lawson, a poet, blamed Jews for the 1890s depression. He wrote once, "the dirty Jew talon reached from palaces and slum, till a hundred thousand Englishmen died to stop the farmer's drum." A well known Sydney Jew, Walter Benjamin, provided London's *Jewish Chronicle* with his reason why poor Russian migrants were undesirable migrants, stating that "Australia sympathises with the Russian Jews ... but would strenuously object to receive a class of migrants likely to provide a burden to state."

In the 1920's, virtual absence of institutional anti-Semitism was a feature of Australian society. This explains the high rate of assimilation during this time, as opposed to the low rates in the UK and USA due to discrimination. In an editorial in the *Evening News*, is said that anti-Semitism in Australia was virtually unknown and few Australians held Jews responsible for their problems. It urged that "persecution of Jews in unworthy of a civilised people." If a Jew applied for a job, there were no questions asked regarding his religion, and clubs and organisations readily accepted Jews. Some upper class people displayed anti-Semitism. Jews were not allowed in exclusive clubs, such as the Union club, Australia Club, Royal Sydney Golf Club, and the Melbourne Club. They achieved

this by blackballing Jews. Jews were still successful in professions and business, but to overcome barriers such as these, one had to be truly exceptional, like Sir Isaac Isaacs. Before 1930, Australian traditions of democracy and tolerance did not include prejudice; hence Jews could enjoy the tolerance of a new country.

The 1930's saw the emergence of extreme right wing anti-Semitic political movements in Australia. As Reike Cohen sadly reflected after receiving an anti-Semitic letter not allowing her to publish a letter in the paper, "gone are the days when Australian Jews could boast: 'There is no anti-Semitism in Australia.'" The Depression had an extremely disruptive effect, which resulted in loss of work. A Quasi-military organisation, led by Eric Campbell, entitled *New Guard*, formed in February 1931, in an attempt to remove LT Lang from New South Wales Premiership. Campbell was not an initial anti-Semite. As a matter of fact, some of his supporters and closest friends were Jewish, but after visiting Germany in 1933, he became influenced by Nazis, praising them for being orderly, patriotic, and determined, hence, his public statements became more anti-Semitic. By the end of 1933, *New Guard* split. Its development shows that even in Australia, a potentially dangerous right wing movement could foster anti-Semitism. In 1934, the 'Douglas Credit' party formed to support the ideas of Major C.F. Douglas. Anti-Semitism was not a central idea, but was taken up by some followers. A paper called *New Era* was created to promote its policies, and published some anti-Semitic articles. It also published the activities of noted anti-Semite's Eric Butler, Father Coughlin, and Henry Ford. With the outbreak of the war, the first overtly anti-Semitic article, written by Douglas, was published stating the aims of the war. The influence of Nazism was an important factor to the growth of anti-Semitism. Nazi Germany also financed publication of pro-Nazi propaganda and its distribution to Germans in Australia.

Like the 1930's, the 40's saw some of the worst acts of discrimination against Jews in Australian history. This was mainly resulted from attacks on refugees from xenophobic citizens. Many newspapers, such as the *Bulletin* and *Smith's Weekly* joined the attack. The *Canberra Times* stated in an editorial "where black markets and illegalities flourish, Jewish refugees are plentiful in evidence." It also noted that Jews are rich and stubborn, urging that "Jews are incapable of governing others, and are unwilling themselves to be governed." One of the most notorious letters ever published, by Henry B Gullet, was one of the most vicious attacks made by and Australian on Jews. Gullet claimed that Jews "brought upon themselves the persecution they subsequently suffered (The Second World War)". Most instances of bigotry had an element of half truth, including the alleged "Queue-jumping", where rumors told of the Jewish refugees who pushed and paid to get places on refugee boats while it was believed would-be British migrants and even Australian servicemen were left behind.

The 40's also brought reactions from terrorist and extremist attacks concerning Israeli and Palestine relations that led on the coming of Israel as a Jewish state in 1948. Acts, namely by the *Irgun*, led to outbreaks in anti-Semitism. An example is the hanging of British sergeants in 1947 as a reprisal for the execution of *Irgun* members. This developed into the most extreme and far-reaching anti-Semitism in Australian history. Citizens often blamed Jews for housing shortages, claiming

that rich Jews bought houses and rented them off expensively, but when asked what the cause of housing shortages was, only 3 per cent answered Jews. In 1949, over one hundred people were asked what they thought was causing wars and depressions, and none answered Jews. It was only when negative prepositions about Jews were put as questions, did people respond anti-Semitically.

Again, it is quite evident that Australians only display anti-Semitism as a reaction to what happens in other countries, out of the media influence.

The 1950's saw the introduction of the "Iron Curtain Embargo", a policy excluding migration from iron curtain countries after it was clear that the number of Jewish migrants in Australia would exceed its limit. This policy was lifted in 1954. In 1950, Harold Holt came to power and introduced a policy of non-Jewish German Migration to Australia announcing that "ex-members of the Nazi party should not necessarily be excluded in selection of migration from Germany." Towards the mid 1950's, government policy towards the Jews began to ease. By the time of the Hungarian revolution in late 1956, there was no evidence of discrimination toward Hungary Jews. As well as this, up until now it was difficult for *Sephardi* Jews to enter, and by now, this too was easing, but policies were not fully changed until the 1960s. In 1964, 68 per cent of Australians answered in surveys that Jews were *desirable* migrants. During this time, the media was more positive in reporting events in Israel. This pro-Israel reporting contributed to the changed perception of Jewish migrants.

After the 1973 Yom Kippur war, pro-Palestine feelings increased in Australians, particularly on University campuses. The Australian Union of Students (AUS) brought two PLO spokespersons to Australia to debate on campus, and also on television. In 1975, an AUS member, Dennis Altman, also a homosexual rights activist, described the atmosphere towards Jewish students to that of a homosexual. While the PLO members were in Australia, and when they again returned in 1983, Jewish students were successful in preventing an anti-Israel motion from being accepted by Australians. After this, two Jewish students were accepted into AUS in 1978, after there had been none for some years. This was a time for Jewish youths to act against the anti-Semitism that threatened to rise on campus, as well as in the rest of Australia. In the 1980's, non-english language press, especially those that were Arabic, were of some concern. Two complaints against anti-Semitism in Arab press were brought successfully by the NSW Board of Deputies to the Australian Press Council. B'nai Brith also brought a successful judgment to a Croatian paper in 1986. A matter of concern was also the general press. In 1985, ECAJ took the *National Times* to the press council for publishing a cartoon, which contained anti-Semitic features, and was successful. For the first time in years, Jews in the 70's and 80's no longer felt they needed to take an apologetic stance, and stood up for themselves.

While remaining at a very minimum level, anti-Semitism in the 1990's still raised levels of concern. In the period from 87-97, there had been a number of disturbing episodes. In 1990, leaders of the Neo-Nazi movement were arrested for anti-Semitic firebomb attacks. This group also verbally attacked Jews and were responsible for graffitising synagogues as well as putting up posters stating "the Holocaust is a lie" and "he (Hitler) lives". A 1990 ASIO report raised concerns



about right wing extremist groups while activities of the league of right continued to tolerate anti-Semitism. They also attempted to support David Irving, a Holocaust denier, whose entry into Australia had been barred. In the wake of the Gulf War, five synagogues were attacked in Sydney, as well as many incidents of violence and intimidation in the mid 1990s. At the end of 1990, a rise in anti-Israel attacks occurred, due to rising conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. This, like in 1991, created a sense of concern to increase security levels.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was one of ups and downs for the Jewish community of Australia. It is clear that Australia's rise in anti-Semitism during times such as the 30's and 40's was only a result of Australians succumbing to the trends of other countries, such as the UK, USA, and Europe. Australia is well known for its tolerance and multiculturalism, but also for following other countries, whether is be for Australia's benefit or loss. The media is also certainly where most Australians get their negative perceptions of Jews, as is evident from when the press stopped writing pro-Palestine editorials, and Australians lightened up towards Jews. As the years go on, the Jewish community is becoming willing to go to a public forum to combat anti-Semitism. The approaches taken in the 1970's and onward contrast sharply with the earlier, more conservative attitudes, avoiding public confrontation. Jewry no longer feels the need to take an apologetic stance. This is certainly a step toward the end of anti-Semitism in Australia.

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## THE MAN THEY COULDN'T HANG

*Peter Teleki - Year 9, King David School*

### Film Script

*This film script 'The Man They Couldn't Hang' is based on the life story of Joseph Samuel. He was a Jewish convict sent to Australia. This is an interpretation of his life story and it shows the audience how he earned his title, 'The Man They Couldn't Hang'*

### ACT 1

#### Scene 1

Petticoat Lane - is in a poor section of London, England. The lane is always busy, full of people trying to sell anything. The houses are all small and 'boxed together'. The nearest police station is only three kilometres away because many robberies occur in this part of London. Joseph Samuel and his accomplice are from this part of town and in order to eat, they must steal. They are not part of a gang, but they act 'gang-like' (speak rudely, dress inappropriately etc.). Joseph Samuel and his accomplice have broken in to one of these houses.

Joseph Samuel: This was a great idea to break into this house. There is so much stuff here, which must be worth a lot, hey man?

Accomplice: Yeah, with all of this stuff, we'll eat tonight. All this stuff must be worth heaps. Hey did you check in the bedroom?

*Joseph Samuel & Accomplice are moving through the house, messing it up and taking all the things that look valuable to them.*

Joseph Samuel: WOW! Let's take this bed and table linen and also this piece of cloth, it looks mad!

Accomplice: Oo, oo, don't forget these sick two silver tablespoons.

Joseph Samuel: Oh yeah, we rule Let's get outta here before the cops come.

Accomplice: Hey, how much do you think all this stuff is worth anyway?

Joseph Samuel: I dunno, definitely enough for dinner, hopefully enough for breakfast as well.

Accomplice: Cool man! Let's split before the cops come.

*Joseph Samuel & Accomplice begin to run outside of the house. They are about to leave the premises, until...*

Bobby 1: Hold it, stay there or I'll split you in a moment.

Bobby 2: Hey good call, you're coming with us to the station, you two little thieves.

*Joseph Samuel & Accomplice walked with the two policemen to the station.*

## Scene 2

The Police Station - it is an old building and contains many cells where there are prisoners yelling and screaming. It is part of the poor neighbourhood, which Petticoat Lane is situated. The policemen and policewomen are ruthless people who believe that everyone is guilty. They treat the prisoners poorly and keep them in non-inhabitable cells. They are interviewing Joseph Samuel in an interview room.

Bobby: How do you plead Joseph Samuel?

Joseph Samuel: Guilty

Bobby: You're a smart boy, how old are you?

Joseph Samuel: I'm fourteen, why in god's name do you want to know my age?

*Bobby: stands up and yells at Joseph Samuel. Samuel crouches in the corner because of the cop's yelling.*

Bobby: I ask the questions around here. You got a smart mouth for your age. For the record, say the crime for the tape, also say that it was worth 75 shillings and how you plead.

Joseph Samuel: Yeah ok, coppa. I stole some stuff from this house, worth 75 shillings and I plead guilty. Happy?

Bobby: Yep. For the court case, you are allowed a lawyer for your defence.

Joseph Samuel: When is the court case anyway?

Bobby: The 20th of May 1795 at the Old Bailey Court House.

Joseph Samuel: Yeah, can I go now?

Bobby: No! You are going to be in custody until that date, you thief

*Bobby shows Joseph Samuel to his cell. Samuel is alone in his cell and waits the 20th of May.*

## Scene 3

Old Bailey - is a courthouse. It is a large building and it contains many courtrooms and cells. Next door is the gaol. It was common in those days for judges sentencing people to death or transporting them to Australia, a new land that the English discovered. One of the reasons they were looking for a new land is because the hulls were getting full and they needed a new place for convicts to be kept. Joseph Samuel's hearing is taking place in one of the courtrooms.

Judge: How do you plead Joseph Samuel?

Joseph Samuel: Guilty

Judge: Prosecution, opening argument to take place now.

*Prosecution lawyer stands up*

Prosecution: Your honour, Joseph Samuel admitted to this crime of theft and breaking and entering. He should have the maximum punishment.

*Judge interrupts.*

Judge: Please take into account that he is only a child.

Prosecution: Certainly, your honour. Because Joseph Samuel is young, it is more like that he will, as he grows older, commit harsher crimes, for example murder.

*Prosecution sits down.*

Judge: Joseph Samuel, where is your defence?

Joseph Samuel: Sorry judge, no one wanted to represent me.

Judge: You may represent yourself and call me Your Honour NOT judge.

Joseph Samuel: Sorry my honour bu..

*Judge interrupts again and shouts.*

Judge: Call me Your Honour!

Joseph Samuel: Ok, ok, your honour, no need to pee in your pants.

*Judge shouts.*

Judge: Watch your mouth. Not only do I believe the prosecution, I believe that I don't want to hear your side of the story.

Joseph Samuel: What? You can't do this!

Judge: Yes I can and I am. I find Joseph Samuel guilty of theft and breaking and entering. Your punishment is 7 years transportation. However, due to your young age, in 1801, you will be transported. You will be transported to Australia because the hulks are too full. In addition, sending you to Australia is giving you an opportunity to start a fresh. Next case.

## **ACT 2**

### **Scene 1**

Australia - Joseph Samuel arrives with only a few months still to serve. After he served out his sentence, in Sydney, he becomes a free man. He lives in Sydney, in a poor suburb. The streets are full of ex-convicts, like Joseph Samuel. He lived in Glebe, a suburb next to Kings Cross, which is in no doubt, the worst part of Sydney. Samuel was poor, living in an apartment. The streets were full of beggars and the Bobbies were watching the suburb of Glebe closely because many people had the mind for revenge. This scene takes place in Glebe, in front of Mrs Breeze's house. (Isaac Simmons is a person on the street that Samuel bumped into).

Joseph Samuel: Hey, you that Jewish convict that became a constable?

Isaac Simmons: Yeh, why?

Joseph Samuel: I dunno, wanna be friends?

Isaac Simmons: Yeh, alright. Hey you wanna have revenge over the Bobbies by stealing?

Joseph Samuel: Yeh, I would love to. Whose house?

Isaac Simmons: I dunno, that one over there perhaps.



Joseph Samuel: Yeh, alright. Looks to be some alright stuff to steal.

*Joseph Samuel and Isaac Simmons robbed Mrs. Breeze's house. Constable Joseph Luker inspected the case and announced...*

Joseph Luker: After careful inspections, I believe that Isaac Simmons and a few mates of his did it, but I will be patrolling tonight, in case of any further action.

*Joseph Samuel and Isaac Simmons hear this and go to Mrs. Breeze's house that night.*

Joseph Samuel: Lets get that idiot Luker back.

Isaac Simmons: Yeh! Let's kill him!

*That night Joseph Samuel and Isaac Simmons approach Luker*

Isaac Simmons: Say your prayers, Luker cause' their going to be your last!

## Scene 2

This scene takes place in an interview room, in a police station between Samuel, Simmons and a bobby. The police station is noisy and dirty. The bobbies are nasty and give many people the whipping for unnecessary reasons. The interview room is filled with a desk, chairs, a light and a tape machine. On one side of the desk is one chair (for the bobby) and on the other side of the desk are two chairs (for Isaac Simmons and Joseph Samuel). Samuel, Simmons and the bobby are in the room.

Isaac Simmons: Joseph Samuel confessed to the robbery. Why am I here?

Bobby: Hold on. All I want is to get to the bottom of this. OK?

Joseph Samuel: I don't know who that Joseph Luker fellow is.

Bobby: Did you, Joseph Samuel take the money from Mrs. Breeze?

*Joseph Samuel takes a long pause.*

Joseph Samuel: Yes. I confess to the robbery, but only to the robbery.

Isaac Simmons: See, see, I told you so. Now I want to get outta here.

Bobby. Ok, ok. Simmons, you can go.

*Isaac Simmons and Joseph Samuel stand up and prepare to leave. Interviewer (cop) stops Joseph Samuel from leaving.*

Bobby: Where do you think you're going Joseph Samuel?

Joseph Samuel: I'm going with Isaac Simmons.

Bobby: No you're not. Sit down NOW!

*Isaac Simmons leaves the room and Joseph Samuel sits down with a scared look.*

Bobby: Due to your confession of the robbery, your punishment is death.

### Scene 3

The gallows - Joseph Samuel was sentenced to death. He was going to die from being hung. Public hangings were common and usually drew a big crowd. Joseph Samuel was going to be hung with James Hardwicke, another thief. The streets were filled with people going shopping. One free settler tried to grab the crowd's attention because he wanted them to watch the hangings. Little did they know that they were going to witness a very historic event.

Free settler: Come on everyone; let's watch this event

Crowd: Yeh, great idea man!

*Crowds built up to watch this event. Joseph Samuel started to state his confession.*

Joseph Samuel: My confession is that I would never be in this position if Simmons didn't tell me where the money was.

*The executioner pushed the cart away and Joseph Samuel was hanging.*

Crowd: Yay, Down with convicts! Die, die!

*However there was a problem with the rope, it was separating from the centre and broke. Samuel remained motionless on the ground.*

Crowd: Boo, you were meant to die, kill him!

*The executioner put the cart back to its original position. Then, once again, he pushed the cart away. The rope slipped till Joseph Samuel's legs just touched the ground.*

Joseph Samuel: I'm innocent, I didn't kill anyone, please spare my life.

Crowd: Maybe he's telling the truth? Let him go!

Executioner: No. I was told to hang him and I will!

*The executioner attempted it for the third time, but it failed because when the rope strained it snapped and Joseph Samuel lay on the floor. The Provost Marshall ran to the governor.*

Provost Marshall: Governor, governor, the executioner attempted three times to hang Joseph Samuel, but it failed all three times. What shall we do?

Governor: Who is he, Superman? I shall change his sentence to life imprisonment.

*The camera turns to the ropes being tested and each rope supports seven weights of fifty six pounds, without breaking*

### Scene 4

Joseph Samuel was transferred to the dreaded penal settlement of Kings Town, now named Newcastle, on the Hunter River north of Sydney. This settlement was almost uninhabitable. The coal mine (which is next to Mr. John Green's house) where this scene takes place, was dirty, too small for 50 people to fit in, the only noise came from the guards either shouting or whipping or convicts groaning and the conditions were very unhygienic.

Bobby: Keep working you lousy, idiotic people. You will be dead once I have finished with you!

*The convicts worked under fearful conditions in coal mines*

Joseph Samuel: Hey guys, this sucks. We get treated worse than the rubbish.

Other Convicts: Yeah, but what can we do about it?

Joseph Samuel: I dunno, but that chest over there looks real nice.

Other Convicts: Hold on Samuel, that chest belongs to Mr. John Green.

Joseph Samuel: So what, who cares? Lets see what's inside.

Other Convicts: Yeah ok.

*Joseph Samuel and the other convicts take the chest.*

Joseph Samuel: Cool. Lets open it on the beach, so no bobbies will catch us.

*Mr Green contacts the police.*

John Green: Bobby, bobby, someone stole my chest.

Bobby: Ok. I'll go to the beach to look for it.

*Bobby sees a group of convicts at the beach and confronts them.*

Bobby: Where did you put that chest?

Joseph Samuel: What chest?

Bobby: I don't like your attitude Samuel. I'm charging you with theft and your punishment is whipping.

Joseph Samuel: I'm not afraid of you!

Bobby: Ok Samuel.

*Bobby starts whipping Samuel*

Joseph Samuel: I'm sick of this place. I'm getting outta here. Who's with me?

Other Convicts: Yeah we are. Lets go!

*Joseph Samuel and the other convicts steal a boat.*

## Scene 5

The boat that they steal is quite a large boat. It is an old boat. There are plenty of rooms on the boat, thus each convict can live in their own room. The conditions are much different to the ones when they came here as convicts because they are not locked up in cells. This scene takes place on the boat.

Joseph Samuel: This is the life hey guys?

*The sky begins to turn grey.*

Other Convicts: Yeh, this was a great idea. Samuel, I think there is a storm coming up.

Joseph Samuel: No problem, does anyone know how to steer the boat through a storm?

Other Convicts: No, we thought you knew.

*There is tension in the air between all of the runaway convicts due to this dilemma of someone not knowing how to steer a boat.*

Joseph Samuel: Ok, ok I think I can manage this job.

*The ship begins to flip.*

#### Post Script

*This script is written on the screen*

In December of 1805, something happened that changed his life. This next part happens in the same settlement. Joseph Samuel and seven other convicts escaped in a boat. Fate caught up with him, because in May 1806, it was announced that the eight men had drowned in a storm.

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## THIS DIARY BELONGS TO: JAMES LARRA

*Candice Lever - Year 7, Mount Scopus College*

### 30 November 1789

I'm off to a land that I don't even know the name of. This is horrible! I honestly don't know how I'm going to survive out there, in a world I've never known. My heart pounds furiously every time I think about it.

It all started on the 20th October. I remember as if it was yesterday. A dark and foggy day, where people were wondering the streets with no particular destination in mind. I was one of those people, I hadn't eaten in days, only because I couldn't afford some decent food. But that's normal for a Jew. Then I saw it. The local inn, known for it's delicious meals and fine liquor. The lights were twinkling and I could hear the faint sounds of laughter from within. As I stood staring at the warm, comforting inn from the dark and cold streets, I felt a hunger that I had never felt before. I felt that if I didn't have a morsel of food at that moment I would collapse right there in the crowded street. I needed to do something about it. I snuck around the back of the building and saw a door that I thought must lead to the back room or the kitchen. I opened the door and found myself standing in a room full of barrels. I wasn't so sure what was in the barrels so I opened one and looked inside. Wine. Precious wine. I had to take it home. I thought I could get away with it. How stupid I was, thinking I could get away with stealing a whole barrel of wine! I took the barrel and carried it under my arm. I opened the door and crept outside, trying to be as quiet as a mouse. Just then, a wealthy looking man strolled out of the inn and looked in my direction. He must have seen my guilty face, or maybe the fact that I was carrying a huge barrel of wine tipped him off. He ran back inside the inn and I heard frantic yells, suddenly, two policemen came running out of the building. I started to run. Faster, faster. But they eventually caught me.

I am currently in a dark jail cell with my only friend, my journal. I must sleep now, I will write again, soon.

### 16 December 1789

I have recently over-heard the guards talking about a fleet. They said that the first ship had already arrived in the foreign land. Now the second ship of convicts should be leaving soon. I have a sick feeling that I will be on that ship.

### 28 December 1789

The food here in jail is just awful! I'm lucky if I get a piece of bread, some kind of soup (that looks like tar) and a bit of water to last me for the entire day. Luckily I don't have to live like this for much longer. I am now certain that I will be on the second ship of convicts that should be leaving soon.

**5 January 1790**

I LEAVE IN A WEEK! I've just received the news. Well, all right, I overheard it. I am so nervous that I cannot even think straight. Pacing around my cell is about all I can think of. Whenever I sit down on my bed, I leap back up and start wondering around. This is just awful! I don't know how much longer I can take being locked up in a cell, shut away from the light of day. I will write again soon, but for now I must sleep.

**12 January 1790**

Well, today is the big day, I don't know if I'm happy or sad, or maybe even a little confused. For months I have pondered what this day would be like, but now that it has actually come, I don't think that I ever expected myself to be this worked up. I might even die on my voyage: I've heard about the dangerous maybe even the deadly diseases that you can contract while aboard a ship. I don't know what awaits me on the other side. Maybe a new home, a new family, but I am certain that in this new country, I will have a new life.

**15 February 1790**

We have been sailing for about a month now and already I am sick of it! I am constantly feeling nauseous and often, I throw up over the side of the ship. The food here is pretty much the same as I got in jail. (So much for a new bill of fare). The people here just wander around on deck with no expression on their face. I have to admit that I don't think I can last much longer on this ship. I wonder how long it will take us to get to the foreign land that I have heard so much about.

I do not think I will be writing any more in this journal as long as I am on this ship. Every time I look down at my paper, I feel like throwing up. So, until I am on dry land and am feeling well again, I bid you farewell.

**21 April 1799**

I cannot believe that I have not made another entry in this journal since I got off the ship! I know that this might sound hard to believe, but I have already spent nine years in what I thought would be a strange country. However, I must admit that when I started off here, it was hard. But ever since I've settled down, things have been going rather well for me. First, I received a conditional pardon after only four years in the colony! Now people are proud of me and look up to me, which is a welcome change from life in England. Second, I'm married and even though I have no children, I am currently taking care of the daughters of John Harris. (He and I are good friends). I will write again soon.

**6 August 1803**

I have some good news and some bad news. First, the good news, I applied for and received a licence to sell liquor. Now I have my own inn! I've named it *The Freeman's Arms*. Business is booming even if I do say so myself. Now for the bad news. My wife has taken ill lately and it does not look too good for her. We went to the doctor but he was unable to diagnose a definite disease. I fear it might be fatal.

**18 April 1806**

Well, as the years have progressed, sadly my dear wife's health has deteriorated. She is now bed ridden and cannot walk properly. I am still doing very well with my inn but I still care about my wife more than any business of mine. Her health is getting so bad that I fear for her life.

**25 May 1811**

My worst fears have come true! My dearly loved wife passed away last night. I don't know how I will live without her. The nights will be so lonely and the days will feel so empty. But I know in my heart that even I do marry again, I will never love anyone else as much as her.

**4 October 1817**

Well, time has gone by and since my previous wife passed away, I have married again. Her name is Mary Ann Clarke, a young actress, but there's something about her. Something that I don't trust. She is constantly borrowing money from me, yet she never explains what she spends it on. I have a sick feeling that she's up to something. I know, I know, it is a shocking basis for a marriage, but I'm starting to think that marrying her was the wrong idea.

On a different note, my inn has not been doing too well and I have had to mortgage it to a man called Samuel Terry. But I don't know if I even trust him. I've heard rumours that he lends people money and when they do not pay him back promptly, he sells their properties. I do not know what will happen now.

**6 November 1828**

Well, here I am sitting in a jail cell (for the second time). Somehow, my wife Mary Ann managed to leave the country and desert me. Now, I have been imprisoned by the debts incurred by her. To make things worse, in 1825 I was declared bankrupt! Yet I suppose I have lived a rather full life, I am already 79 years of age.

**13 July 1839**

My dear journal, my last days on earth have come and I am indeed sure that I will die in this rotten place. But being here has given me a lot of time to think about my life. I started off as a poor peasant in England, got transported to a foreign land where I got married, did extremely well financially and even got a conditional pardon. Yet, even after all that has happened to me in my lifetime, I still manage to land up in jail, right where I started. But now that I am certain I will die here, I must let people now that I was not to blame for the debts incurred by my estranged third wife. The only thing I would want to be remembered as, is a man who not only tried to make good, but also, an honest Jew.

Goodbye.



## DR FANNY READING AND MY GRANDPARENTS

*Natalie Kaye - Year 7, Mount Scopus College*

Whether they liked it or not almost every living Jew was affected during the time of the Second World War.

My grandfather cared about his country. He served in the Australian Air Force as a cadet when the war started. He hoped to participate during the war with the Air Force, but missed out on that opportunity, as he was too young. He was only a young boy of 16, yet my grandfather was still willing to risk his life for his country.

The Second World War did not affect my grandmother personally, but it did impinge upon her mother's life. My great-grandmother lost a number of close ones during the war, which changed her personality. My grandmother was too young to serve in the army so she knitted balaclavas and socks for the soldiers.

My other grandfather served in the Royal Australian Navy. He trained as an anti submarine officer and served in the ships HMAS Warrigo, HMAS Cowra and for a very short time, he served in HMAS Bundaberg. Most of his naval service took place in the South West Pacific. My grandfather married my grandmother during the war.

Meanwhile, my grandmother was also participating in the war effort. She worked in the Navy Office, where she plotted the movements of the ships in the seas. This meant that my grandmother always knew where my grandfather was, and if he was in danger. Sometimes this was to her disadvantage.

Here we see Jews doing their bit for their country in the Second World War. But what is the difference between Jews helping out their country and people of other religions doing the same thing? What is the difference between the First World War and the Second World War? What is the difference between men helping their country and women doing the same thing?

A Jew called Dr Fanny Reading also did her bit for Australia and for other Jews. Fanny arrived in Melbourne as a child in the 1890's. Fanny and her mother made the long journey from Russia and arrived in Melbourne not knowing anyone. Fanny never forgot that friendless, lonely feeling and vowed that one day she would do all she could to help the new arrivals to this country. In later years Fanny was known as one who would give help and hospitality.

Fanny won a scholarship to Melbourne University, gained a Diploma in Music in 1914, and then began to study medicine. When my grandmother started doing pharmacy a friend of her father's said to him: "Why are you wasting your money educating a girl? She'll only get married!" No one would dare say that today, and I think that they have no right to. During the period of the First World War the few women doctors qualifying in Australia found it increasingly difficult to gain positions and experience as medical officers in the hospitals. One Sydney hospital used the lack of adequate bathroom facilities as an excuse for not employing women. Once again I find this extremely unfair and sexist.



After graduating Dr Fanny opened a tiny hospital in Surrey Hills with six other women doctors. They provided free treatment for poor women and children, and a training centre for the younger women doctors. Dr Fanny soon found herself as an Honorary Medical Officer at Rachel Forster Hospital, which was a larger version of the Surrey Hills Hospital.

In 1923 Dr Fanny addressed a group of women and explained the need for voluntary work. This was how the National Council of Jewish Women was founded. It was an Australia-wide project and was the only women's organisation working for both Jewish and non-Jewish causes. I think that it is important that people from the Jewish community have both Jewish and non-Jewish friends. On the weekend I play tennis competition for a non-Jewish tennis club. I find the people there very kind and considerate, and there is no reason for Jews to dislike them. Fanny was National President of NCJW Australia for more than thirty years, after which she continued her work as Honorary Life President for the rest of her life. Dr Fanny Reading was devoted to her charity work and died in 1974.

When interviewing my grandmother for a recent project at school, I asked her what jobs she has had. She explained that the only job she has had was in Navy Office, and that was poorly paid. You might be wondering what my grandmother has been doing with all her time. She has not been wasting her life, she has been involved in a project, which interests her. As soon as my grandmother's children were old enough for her to cope with full-time charity work, she has become a member of Project Jonah, which is a save the whale organisation. At that stage Australia was killing 900 sperm whales a year off the coast of Albany. They then went to the Prime Minister and said that this must stop, and since then my grandmother says that Australia has been a leading nation in trying to protect whales and dolphins worldwide. My grandmother feels that it still requires a lot of work, and sometimes she works 16 hours a day on it. This is very much like what Dr Fanny Reading was involved in, and she too looked forward to progressing in such an organisation. They understand the importance of these jobs, and work just as hard as any paid worker.

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## A BALLAD IN HONOUR OF SIR JOHN MONASH

*Melanie Koss - Year 8, Mount Scopus College*

As different times pass, a new hero comes along,  
Who helps us through the hardest times and tries to right a wrong.  
This person shines a little hope and helps us see the light,  
And shows us that we shouldn't give up, not with out a fight.

And it's the influence of the heroes that all of us admire,  
It's their bravery and strength, which is the object of our desire.  
Sir John Monash was one of these heroes, and better yet one of our own,  
Not only was he Jewish but he was also home grown.

Louis and Bertha immigrated to Australia in 1864.  
After originally coming from a town in Poland called Warsaw.  
Sir John Monash was born in Melbourne in June 1865,  
Needless to say more than a whole lifetime before I was alive.

In Melbourne at that time there were lots of varieties,  
Of different kind of people, and different societies.  
But the Monash's thought that it'd suit their family quite well,  
If they didn't make large impact, and so they kept to themselves.

Monash was enrolled into Scotch College in 1874,  
The following year he was to be a man, according to Jewish law.  
His Bar Mitzvah was at East Melbourne Shule, his teacher Isidore Myers,  
He sang under Louis Pulver, in the synagogue's choir.

But by 16 Monash had changed, he had turned away from his religion,  
He didn't enjoy the responsibilities, or Jewish tradition.  
Later he noticed Blashki girls, but their orthodoxy wasn't appealing,  
He accepted moral teachings, but couldn't ignore what he was feeling.

Monash's parents were not at all active in the Jewish community,  
So John didn't feel much for Judaism, nore its continuity.  
As time went on, his lack of care for religion was persistent.  
And by the time of his graduation it was almost non - existent.

Besides his doctorate in engineering, John graduated from Uni in Arts and Law,  
The amount of versitility he displayed, left many people in awe.  
In 1913 John became the president of the Victorian Institute of Engineers,  
He was well known after his service there, being president for 2 years.

War broke out all over the world, and Australia was sent in for aid,  
 In 1915 at Gallipoli, Monash commanded the fourth infantry brigade.  
 In May 1918, now as Lieutenant General, a more honorary position than before,  
 Monash was appointed to lead the ANZACS, whilst the world was still-at-war.

Monash's troops played a decisive part, on the Western front,  
 In breaking the German lines, and their wicked man hunt.  
 Monash gained a reputation of being a hero, for what he achieved,  
 Honorary degrees from Oxford, Cambridge and London, are what he recieved.

Sir John Monash died in 1931, in his 66th year,  
 After a lifetime of achievement, his accomplishments we still hold dear.  
 He changed his opinion about his identity, his love for it only grew,  
 He was a proud Australian hero, and a proud Australian Jew.

"We who are living in Australia have a double responsibility, both as Jews and  
 citizens, to do our share in rebuilding the land of Israel and reviving the  
 cultural and spiritual centre of Judaism." (Sir John Monash 1865-1931)

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## ANZACS ESSAY

*Avreme Cohnsey - Year 8, Yeshivah College*

**10th February 1915**

Adam walked into Shule late, because he was talking to some friends. He got in just in time to catch the last words of Reverend Danglow's speech.

Therefore, we must all enrol into the Australian army, so we can prove to the rest of Australia that we are not only loyal to our fellow Jews, but that we are also loyal to Australia. Good Shabbos."

"What was he on about?" I asked my father, sliding into the seat next to him.

"I'll tell you after the service," he whispered in my direction, as the sound of people praying filled the synagogue again.

"So, how did you like the service?" my father asked me, as we were walking home from Shule.

It was okay," I answered, "but what was Reverend Danglow talking about when he said we should enrol in the army?"

"Reverend Danglow wants the Jews to enrol in the army so that the other Australians know that we also care about Australia, not just ourselves. I think that Rabbi Cohen in Sydney is also telling Jews to enrol."

"Why should everyone enrol in the army all of a sudden?"

"Because there is a war going on. A big war. So Australia needs lots of people to send to the war front."

"Can I enrol? It sounds like so much fun, fighting against the bad chaps and then coming home to all the cheers of everyone! What an adventure!"

"We'll talk about it at lunch. Adam. Now come inside and eat the delicious food your mother made for us."

I helped myself to some salad and sat down.

"So Dad, can I enrol in the Army?"

My mother looked me at questioningly.

"What do you mean, go into the Army? You're too young!"

"But all my friends will be going! I have to go!"

"I think he can go," said my father.

"Well, if you say so," my mother said, I am not going to argue. Nevertheless, I have one question. How will Adam get in the Army? He's too young!"

"Don't worry," my father said, "He can go as Dean."

"What?!" my brother entered the conversation, looking up from the chicken he was eating. "That little kid is not going as me!"

"Yes he is," my father said, calmly, "unless you want to go?"

"No, thank you," Dean said, I am a pacifist. All right, but he had better not do anything stupid!"

"Yes!" I thought to myself, excitedly, "I'm going to the Army!"



**20th February 1915**

"Are you sure that you have enough clothes?"

"Yes, Mum."

My mother was going through the last few minutes before I would leave as if she would never see me again. I was going to depart on HMAS Mildura in fifteen minutes. The enrolling had gone fine. I was now officially Dean Taggart, soldier in the 5th Battalion, 2nd Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Force.

"Dear, do write to me!"

"Don't worry Mum, I'll write to you as often as I can!"

After a few final kisses and hugs, I boarded HMAS Mildura, looking forward to what I hoped to be an exciting adventure. It turned out that I would be involved in one of the biggest calamities ever in war.

After a few peaceful weeks at sea, we arrived at our destination, Cairo, in Egypt. There, waiting to greet us, were a few Australian and British soldiers that were stationed in Egypt. The head commander, Lieutenant-General William Birdwood, greeted us and then we all marched a couple of kilometres to the training site. It was a pretty camp, with long lines of trees lining the road, small neat barracks and a huge field, where we would train. Nevertheless, today, we only went to the dining room, had something to eat and then went straight to bed.

The next day, I arose early, to the chirping of the birds. I got up, dressed, and hurried off to the dining room, where breakfast was being served. As soon as I had gulped down a bowl of porridge and some toast, the bell rang. It was time to assemble outside.

Waiting for my squad in the long, oblong training ground which resembled a football ground with no football posts, was a short, bald man who looked like a very strict principal.

"Greetings, 5th Battalion, 2nd Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Force! Today, you will start training. My name Captain Bill Manger and I will be your commander for the rest of your time in the army. I expected strict discipline for the whole time that you are under my command. Any toe out of line will be dealt with accordingly. Now, I want 20 laps of this field done in 30 minutes. Hurry up and start!"

After a few more hours of vigorous training, the lunch bell went. Exhausted, I flopped into a chair, not even able to talk. After a few minutes, I started talking to the person next to me. I did not want to be lonely in the army and the person I was talking to was a very nice person. His name was Bartholemew Wise and he came from Sydney. I later found out his name was Barouch but he preferred to answer to the name 'Bazza'. He was also Jewish and he had only applied for the army because Rabbi Cohen had encouraged it.

When the lunch bell went, signalling the end of lunch, Bazza and I followed the rest of battalion 5 onto the training ground, ready for more training. By the end of the day, I, and everyone else in my group, was exhausted. Just before I went off to sleep, I realised that I had not written to my parents yet. So, I took out some paper and pen and started to write.

Dear Mum, Dad and the rest of the family,

How are you? I am exhausted! I am in Cairo, training with Battalion 5. I have

one friend so far, Bartholemew Wise from Sydney, also known as 'Bazza'. He is also Jewish and his Jewish name is Barouch. There is only one thing wrong. We do not have any prayer books and do not have a Torah Scroll. Please try to do everything that you can do to bring us some prayer books. We long to have a Torah Scroll but I do not know how we could ever get one.

Love to everyone,

Dean Taggart

After putting it on my bedside table to give to my commanding officer tomorrow, I fell into an exhausted sleep.

"Wake up, Dean, or else Captain Manger will have your neck!"

Bazza was trying to get me up. For some reason, I had a heavy rock in my head.

"Thanks Bazza, I owe you one!" I said, gratefully.

"Just get up already!"

A few minutes later, I arrived in the dining room. I just had enough time to eat a slice of bread when the bell went, signalling a start to the day training. However, when I got to the training field, something unusual happened. We were in the middle of lining up when a message was sent.

"Will all Jewish Australian soldiers please come to the front of the camp."

Bazza and I looked very puzzled but, with encouragement from our fellow soldiers, we made our way to the front of the training camp. Senior soldiers were also there, looking just as baffled as Bazza and I did. Then, the head commander came, followed closely by a smiling man with a pleasant face and a funny looking book.

"Thank you all for arriving promptly. I will get straight to the point. This is Reverend Freedman and he will be your chaplain. He has a few prayer books and a Torah Scroll. For the next few minutes, Reverend Freedman will brief you on the times of the services and the location."

Reverend Freedman proceeded to tell us what exactly was happening and then dismissed us. As we went back to the training grounds, Bazza and I talked excitedly to each other.

"A real Rabbi. Would you believe it?"

"And he has a Sefer Torah!"

Silently I thought to myself that my prayers had been answered.

## 20th March 1915

Now that we had a Rabbi in our camp, Bazza and I were inspired to work even harder. We got praises from our commanding officers and were just starting to enjoy the army life when an unexpected visitor arrived. It happened in the middle of lunch, one rare rainy day. Everyone was chatting idly, filling in the time, by either playing 2-up or writing letters. Suddenly the dining room door crashed open. The entire dining room went completely silent. You could hear a pin drop. A dark figure stood in the doorway, the storm raging on behind him. He moved into the light and we could now see his appearance. He was a strongly built man with a ragged beard and water dripping down from him onto the floor. He spoke in a hoarse voice.

"Where is your commanding officer. I need to speak to him urgently."

A few officers led him in the right direction and, as the door closed behind them, the dining room burst into talk. Everyone was talking about the stranger. Nevertheless, we all knew that we would have to wait to the next day.

Sure enough, the next day, the entire camp was lined up, waiting for the commanding officer to appear. The cloud from the previous day had disappeared and the Mediterranean sun shone brilliantly.

After a few minutes delay, Lieutenant-General William Birdwood stepped out of his office, along with the stranger who had appeared so suddenly only yesterday. Now, the stranger's beard had been shaven and he was a great deal drier. Lieutenant General William Birdwood looked around a few times before he spoke.

"As you all surely know, yesterday, we had an unexpected visitor. This visitor has travelled a long way to get here. His name is 2nd Lieutenant Alexander Robertson. Now, I would like you all to give your undivided attention to Lieutenant Robertson."

Lieutenant Robertson cleared his throat a couple of times and then began to speak.

"Thank you, head commander. I have been sent on an urgent mission from my commander. You see, my battalion is at the war front. Currently, we are sailing towards Gallipoli, Turkey. A big battle is looming. The troops situated there will not be able to defeat the Turks single, handedly. Therefore, my commanding officer sent a few other soldiers and I to get more help. I was sent here, to Egypt. Last night, I gave the message to your head commander. He agreed to come and as I speak, three battleships are arriving in Cairo to transport all of you to Gallipoli. The only thing that there is left to do is go back to your barracks, pack your gear, and board your ships. Now, your head commander will dismiss you to go to your cabins. Thank you."

Lieutenant Robertson stepped back and the head commander dismissed us. As he dismissed us, my battalion hurried over to Captain Manger and started complaining.

"We're not ready to go to the war front, we've only been at training for 3 weeks!"

Captain Manger put his hands up and everyone fell silent.

"It's not up to me. If the head commander said it, I can not overrule it. In addition, I think that all of you will do a fine job. Now, go pack."

Still grumbling, Battalion 5 made their way to their barracks and began to pack.

## **25th April 1915**

We had been on board the Queen Elizabeth for a couple of days when we arrived at Gallipoli. On the ship, we were briefed on what we had to do. Everyone was divided into smaller groups; each assigned with a different task. Luckily, Bazza and I were in the same group. Our leader was 2nd Lieutenant William McLeod. He was looking very tense. We all piled into a rowboat and rowed to shore. Before we had even reached the shore, Lieutenant McLeod ordered us to

bail out of the boat. He did this in order that the Turks would not hear us land. We waddled silently towards the shore. As soon as we reached it, we charged up the narrow beach. Although we had no armour, we overpowered the Turks in the first trench. We regrouped and then slowly marched up the rocky slope. It was hard work. But I had not a lot of time to brood about it. A second Turkish trench was up ahead. This one was ready for us. As soon as Lieutenant McLeod gave the signal, we charged at the Turks. I started firing. All around me, I heard people scream, shout out for help, and the on going rat-a-tat-tat of guns. A bullet whizzed passed my ear. Then, I was hit. I felt a pain in my leg and I stumbled over. I fell to the ground, my leg, a sea of red. I thought to myself, this is it. I am dead. I shouted out, "Shema Yisroel!" and fell into blackness.

There was a bit of light ahead. I must be in heaven, I thought to myself. I slowly got up. A man was standing over me, looking at me queerly. I shrank back.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"My name is Simpson. You look as if you have been wounded badly. Let me see your leg."

He spoke so assuredly that, for a second, I thought everything would be all right. But then I realised where I was and looked at him anxiously.

"Am I in heaven?" I asked, dreading the answer. The man, Simpson, smiled.

"No, you are at Gallipoli. Do not worry. My trusty donkey will carry you back down safely. You have nothing to fear."

Nevertheless, I was full of questions.

"What are you doing here?"

"I rescue fallen soldiers. I treat the wounded and then bring them back to the camp. Now, climb on my donkey and then I will take you back."

Gingerly, I stood up on my good leg and, with a lot of help from Simpson, managed to get on the donkey. What seemed like an age actually took about 15 minutes and before I knew it, I was at the foot of the mountain again. Then I blacked out.

When I came to, I was in a big tent that was lined up with small collapsible beds. I must be in the hospital, I thought. A nurse came up to me.

"How are you feeling, sonny?"

"Pretty good. However, where is the man who saved me?"

The nurse looked at me blankly.

"What man? We found you at the foot of the mountain. There was no man there."

"But the man," I said weakly, "The man, Simpson was his name, and his donkey."

The nurse looked at me smilingly.

"You have a good rest and we will talk more tomorrow."

I sank back into my hard pillow, thinking about the events that had happened, and thanking Simpson and his loyal donkey from the bottom of my heart.



## EPILOGUE

*Dean Taggart went on to fight in Egypt and was part of many famous Australian victories. He did come home to the cheers of everyone and received a few medals.*

## NOTES

*Dean Taggart is a fictional character whose story is based on what real soldiers actually did.*

*Captain William Douglas Stewart (Bill) Manger was in the 5th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. He was born in Berwick, Victoria. Died of Wounds at Wandsworth, London, England, on 21 July 1915, aged 24.*

*2nd Lieutenant William Harold McLeod was in the 5th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. Born at Wollongoon Station, Mortlake, Victoria, he was killed in action at Helles, on 8 May 1915, aged 30.*

*2nd Lieutenant Alexander John Robertson, 11th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. Born Bundalaguah, Gippsland, Victoria. Killed in action at Leane's Trench, southern Anzac, on 6 August 1915, aged 28.*

*Lieutenant-General William Birdwood was the leader of a training camp in Cairo, Egypt. Lieutenant A. T. White, one of General Birdwood's 'English clerks' is believed to be the one to have made up the acronym 'A NZA C'.*

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## DIARY OF A JEWISH ANZAC

*Avi Travers - Year 8, Yeshivah College*

### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 1914: Melbourne**

War, that's all my friends and I talk about now. England is fighting the Germans. We're excited because the papers say that Australia is going to join in with England.

School is hard and the teasing I put up with for being a Jew doesn't make it any easier. Rabbi Abraham's classes, on Sundays, are really interesting now, that I can read Hebrew, it really helps. I wish I could go to Rabbi Abraham's classes all week instead of school. Everyone there goes through the same thing that I do.

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 1914**

It's not fair all of my friends are signing up in the infantry, well maybe not all, but Joseph Issacs and Samuel Freeman certainly have. I wish I could but my mother wouldn't hear of it. Father is more on my side, he says that Jews have to fight otherwise they stand out too much.

### **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1914**

Something happened at school today, that really made me angry. Someone had stuck a cutting from the Bulletin on the school notice board. The cutting had a picture of a fat man with a big nose, obviously a cartoon of a Jew. I just wish I could prove that I'm not greedy and selfish, just wait till I join the army, then I'll prove that I'm as good as them.

### **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 1914**

I just had to do it, didn't I? I just had to bring it up and ruin our Friday night meal.

Friday morning we were delivered a brochure, in which was a form to enrol in the army. It offered a free tour to Great Britain & Europe. It had mentioned some requirements, but I fit them all except for the age and what's more I would be paid. When we received it Father gave it a quick glance and said I was only 17, which was too young.

After synagogue on Friday evening, Father and I returned home. We sat down at the table, Father made the blessing on the wine then we started the meal. As Mother was bringing out the soup on a tray I brought up the topic of the brochure.

"You're too young," Father kept saying, "So there is no question of you joining up." Father seemed to have changed his mind about the army and me. I told him that I could easily pass as eighteen. Just then Mother grabbed the brochure and tore it in half.

"You're not going and that's final!" she cried out as she burst into tears. After she'd stopped we finished our meal but no one looked at each other and Mother ignored me for the rest of the meal. I really hate it, when she does that. I don't care what they say. I'm going to go to the army even if I have to run away to do it.

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

Signs and poster are up everywhere. I wish my parents would realise the opportunities involved in fighting for Australia. It's just so frustrating wanting to be part of it but not being able. The school term is almost over, I'm thinking of running away to join the army, if it isn't too late.

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

School finished yesterday and I'm glad it's over, well at least for three weeks. Mother and Father are out, there's a speech by Rabbi Danglow in the synagogue. I'm thinking of running away now. I'll start packing some things and then I'll write a goodbye letter, then, well I'll leave.

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

I don't believe it, Danglow's done it. Mother and Father came home before I'd had a chance to leave. They came in arguing about me. Father was saying that I had to go but Mother was saying that I couldn't.

"You heard what Danglow said!" Father shouted back at her. "There are just some things that you have to do and this is one of them!" he continued. Mother looked defeated and was silent.

Father came into my room and told me that next Tuesday we would go and I would enlist in the army. I'm so excited, my dream has come true.

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

This morning Father took me to the fair ground and I joined the army. As I said my last goodbyes I realised what a big step forward in my life I was making. For the first time I was leaving my parents' home. I wouldn't see them for who knows how long. I would be showing them that I'm an adult. Of course, after the war I would see them but I would probably get married, have a job and a family.

I have joined up with three friends, Jacob Gold, John Finch and Michael Ward. Jacob is Jewish like me. John and Michael are basically the only non-Jews who realise that I'm no different from them.

After I had my measurements taken and was accepted into the army I joined Jacob, John and Michael, to walk around the barracks. In the evening we had a party with some of our friends who hadn't joined up. From sleeping in a nice comfortable bed at home, I now sleep on the ground in a tent but I don't mind. It adds to the atmosphere.

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

We've been doing basic training for a week now and I'm starting to feel like a soldier. Jacob, John, Michael and I share a tent. We tend to spend most of our time together. I now know most of the men in the barracks but there are always new recruits coming in. Only one week ago I was the new one but it feels like much more than that. Now that I have a gun and uniform I want to go and fight the Germans already. However, we have to wait until we're told that we're going. There are rumours going around the camp that we're going to Egypt, why Egypt? I don't know. I hope that while I am in the army I will get to see some warplanes and I will have a chance to fire a machine gun. My gun is nothing compared to a big powerful machine gun.

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 1914**

Today we found out that we are all going to Egypt for intensive training. I thought we were going to go and fight. I was really looking forward to going to Europe. Jacob and Michael feel the way I do but John says that the more training the better because we'll be more prepared for when we come in contact with the enemy.

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 1914**

Wow! What a farewell. It started this morning as all the Infantry paraded through the city streets of Melbourne, making its way to the port where there was a large ship waiting. After we all boarded, the ship sailed away from the dock. We all stood by the railings of the ship as we sailed away. Waving farewell to the thousands gathered to see us off. To my dismay, I never saw my parents (I was so hoping to see them). As the crowds eventually disappeared from view we slowly started going indoors to our cabins.

Once again I am sharing my cabin with John, Jacob and Michael but this time there are a few other men with us. One of them is Jewish. He asked me about the High Holidays coming up, if I knew when they were. I answered him, that I do and that we could organise something special in our cabin for them.

The captain just told us the schedule for tomorrow. Early morning exercises on deck, breakfast, leisure time, then more exercise, lunch, leisure time till dinner, a speech by the Major then we will be free the rest of the evening.

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 1914**

This is like a luxury cruise. Most of our time is spent lazing about, reading, talking, playing two-up or eating. We do a bit of exercise in the mornings then take it easy for the rest of the day. Jacob, Abe (the other Jew in our cabin) and I are planning on making a little party for all the Jews we know, to celebrate the High Holidays. We are going to ask if we can have the hall for it. If we aren't allowed we'll organise it in several cabins where there are only Jews and believe me there are quite a few.

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

The party was great, we were permitted to use the hall and the cooks provided food, even honey cake. Everyone sat around laughing, joking, eating and playing games. The atmosphere was great and most of the ship turned up. They knew what the reason for the party was and to my surprise they respected it.

We are meant to be arriving in Egypt in three days. Our surroundings have changed from towns to ocean to desert. It really makes things interesting. I can hardly wait till we land.

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 1914: Egypt**

This afternoon we arrived. What a comfort to see land again. After marching through the desert with tents and stores loaded on camels we arrived at the spot where we were to make camp. We spent the rest of the afternoon setting up camp.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 1914**

This afternoon, after training, Jacob, John, Michael, Abe and I went exploring.



**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 1915: Egypt**

*Dear Mr and Mrs Cohen*

*You would probably know of the death of your son. I first met your son in Melbourne at the training camp and was his mate until the end. I felt that I should tell you exactly how he was killed.*

*The Turks had made an attack trying to drive us back towards the coast, where we had come in from. Thousands of them came pouring out of their trenches running and firing as they came down the slopes. We had no choice but to move towards them with our rifles ablaze. I was shot in the leg and fell to the ground unable to move. Your son grabbed me, lifted me up onto his shoulders and started running towards the hospital tent. When we finally got there, he lifted me off his shoulders onto a stretcher when he doubled over and lay on the ground not moving. At the back of his head was a buffet hole. He had died a painless and instant death, saving a friend.*

*When my belongings were passed onto me from the trench, I found your son's diary amongst my things. I remember seeing him write in it since the day we joined the army. Given that he died saving my life I felt that it was my responsibility to return the diary to you.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jacob Gold*

*P.S. I send my greatest sympathies to you and your family.*

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## AARON RONALD CASTAN AM QC

*Josh Levy - Year 8, Mount Scopus College*

Aaron Ronald Castan AM QC was a great Australian, and his recent death was not just a loss to his family, but a loss to the nation and to humanity. He was a guiding light and an inspiration to all who knew him.

Aaron was much better known as simply Ron Castan, which is what he was called by everyone from the high and mighty to the lowly and underprivileged. There were so many great things about Ron, his dedication and passion for his work, his unsolicited help to those in need, his persistence to revolutionise a law so robust in its standing nobody had challenged it before him. But the greatest thing about Ron, as many of his colleagues and friends pointed out, was that every minute of his life was carefully spent, and every word carefully chosen.

When my mother was a young lawyer she wanted to become a barrister. In order to become a barrister, you must first spend some time in the office of a more senior barrister, learning as you go. This practise goes by the name of "reading".

My mother was fortunate enough to read with Ron Castan, and with him she not only learned of his professional skills as an advocate, but also about the sterling qualities of his character. I also know that he would have been absolutely delighted with my mother's recent appointment as a Judge on the County Court of Victoria.

Mr Castan was appointed a Queens Counsel in 1980. He had a wonderfully distinguished career in the law and was also a well-respected leader of the Jewish community. He appeared in a number of major cases and most of Ron's major cases almost always concerned issues of social justice. He championed the rights of the less than fortunate and for this the citizens of Australia will always remember him.

The case he was most recognised for was the famous Mabo decision by the High Court of Australia, which was a landmark legal decision correcting a very ancient wrong against the Aborigines of this country.

What was the Mabo case all about? Eddie Mabo was a native of the Torres Strait Islands in the far north of Australia. Eddie Mabo and his people simply wanted it to be acknowledged that they were the owners of their own land.

It may be difficult to grasp the fact that when the British dug their flag into their territory in 1879, they claimed the land for the British government. At that moment, the islands were declared "Terra Nullus" or "Empty Land" as if no one had any rights to it before the British came.

Try to imagine a contingent from Lebanon, travelling to Israel and planting their flag on top of the Western Wall, and declaring it was now part of Lebanon. Lebanon was now in charge, and what went before didn't matter, and the Israelis would now have to conform with the Lebanese government's wishes.

This is how it was for the Aborigines when the British arrived, and this continued right up until the Mabo decision in the High Court of Australia.

When Eddie Mabo took the case to the highest court in the land it was Ron Castan who represented him. As Justice Kirby of the High Court pointed out, Ron Castan and his colleagues rewrote one hundred and fifty years of settled land laws.

To use Justice Kirby's own words, Ron Castan's plan was "breathtaking in its boldness; it challenges fundamentals; it did so in an area resistant to change in every legal system of rights in land.

Ron Castan achieved so much in a life that ended far too early

He never sought the limelight- in his modest unassuming way, he worked the corridors of power, walking up and down them to attain the necessary support for the causes he fought for;

To name a few,

The Gordon below Franklin Dam case

The Timor gap case

Theophanous versus the Herald and Weekly times (an issue of freedom speech)

But the "real Australians," the aboriginal natives of this land, will remember Ron Castan for Mabo, and all its ramifications.

When Ron Castan died, people said they were sorry. But Ron's grandson, in a speech at his grandfather's funeral, suggested that Ron would have far preferred people to say sorry to the aboriginal people of Australia, in recognition of all the injustices heaped upon them since Australia was colonised. Unfortunately, this task seems too hard for some, and that includes those who hold the highest offices in the land.

We should also be aware that indigenous people, the natives of Australia, fought for this country in war, and were willing to lay down their lives for a country that did not recognise their rights to land. This shows courage and respect for a land, which did not recognise their rights as humans.

Like these heroic men, Ron Castan, regarded it as an honour and a privilege to serve, and he managed to achieve so much, in such a short time.

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## ESTHER ABRAHAMS

*Romy Peterfreund - Year 8, Mount Scopus College*

34 Olson Street  
Chamberville, 45839  
London England

Miss Abrahams  
136 Maple Avenue  
Bondi 4521  
Sydney, Australia

Dear Miss Abrahams,

Esther Abrahams went through her early life as a convict. With much regret and sadness we would like to apologize for what your mother went through. Her harsh life and sad story remains in your ancestor's history and your mother will always be remembered for she was a notorious woman. We understand that your mother hardly committed a crime of stealing, but because of the harsh and old age decisions that were made in those days, she was convicted of a crime that was to help her daughter, you.

Her story is famous and she is one of the brave and secure women who were convicts and we hope you will accept our apology. We realize that what your mother went through can not be forgotten but we wish for you to accept our apology and an included amount of compensation. Remember we are on your side and we agree with you. The world has changed and we are a different government.

We have also been asked to publish a book about Jewish, Australian convicts who fled from England to escape the cruelty of crime. If you agree and enable us to publish the book we would greatly appreciate your help. The book will include facts and values about your mother's life as well as 'her' story.

As you probably already know, you and your mother were on the first fleet to Sydney and as a result Esther met Lieutenant George Johnston whom she married and had other children with. We are not sure if you knew about your other half siblings, but they will be receiving letters too and if you wish, we would be very willing to help you meet up with them.

You may ask why we are being so helpful and encouraging. We think as well as others, that your mother's life was special and that the whole world should know her story. We hope one day children will be writing essays and speeches about your mother's story.

There are many celebrities and famous people in the world but they are famous for who they are. We would like it if there were people who were famous for their



stories and lives, like you and your mother's story.

Esther, who received seven years in jail for stealing two cards of lace, became known as the "first lady" on board the first fleet to New South Wales. After all she had been through she had six children and lived in a mansion. We would like to teach others about how she went from being a poor young woman to a rich "first class lady" - a classic rags to riches story. When Johnston became one of the colony's best citizens, she became the mistress of a mansion in a great estate of Annandale. Esther, as you may know was a very pretty young lady with long dark hair, almond eyes, small lips and a long straight nose. Johnston was attracted to her almost instantly. His dream was to found a colonial dynasty and in 1808 she was the colony's first lady. Both of them had great power and when he was away she took care of you and the estate in which you lived. She was also said to be one of the most capable, bold, self-reliant and amazing women. But when Johnston died in 1823 she became eccentric and unstable. She began to drink and started to become insane.

We realize that you already know all this information for it is your's and your mother's life. However we wish to show you, if you don't already know, realize what an amazing woman she was and we encourage to our fullest that you enable us to make her a famous well-known woman. We know that you loved and idolized your mother for we saw that you kept the family name as did she, "Abraham", as well as that you called your first born daughter Esther. Lots of great women are recognized for their strength and courage as women, your mother was recognized for her beauty, notability and notoriousness. In today's society the women of the world are recognized far more than they were in your mother's time, which is another reason why your mother was so great and different.

We would much appreciate your help and a reply to this letter and we hope to see you in the near future.

Once again we apologize for the painful and hard time your mother had and we wish you and your family all the best for the future. May your mother be remembered for the great woman that she was but also for her strength and wisdom throughout her time as a convict.

Sincerely yours

Bill Henley  
Department of Social Security  
English Government  
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## REPORT TO MEMBERS

Our year commenced with the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2001 at the Jewish Museum of Australia. Elections resulted as follows: President: Dr Howard Freeman; Hon. Secretary: Mr Ronald Aarons; Hon. Treasurer: Mr Phillip Stanton; Honorary Archivist: Mrs Beverley Davis, OAM. Committee in alphabetical order: Dr David Cohen, Dr Harvey Cohen, Mr Trevor Cohen, Mr Clive Fredman, Dr Rodney Gouttman (who has taken on the enormous task as Journal Editor), Rabbi Dr John Levi, AM, Dr Phillip Mendes, Mr Isidor Solomon and Mr Andrew Strum. The President welcomed the new members of our committee, namely Phillip Stanton (who has taken over the position of treasurer) and Andrew Strum.

In his report to the members, the President advised that our membership is extremely healthy and we have currently have approximately 500 members. The AJHS is searching for a number of volunteers, ie a newsletter editor to assist Ron Aarons, a desktop publisher to produce the November Journal each year, a reference librarian and an archivist to manage our fabulous collection.

Dr Freeman also advised that two of our recent speakers have just published books. Fred Lowen has published his memoirs in a book entitled "*Fred Lowen, Dinera Boy, Furniture Designer and Artist*". Dr Harry Lew also has published his latest book, "*The Five Walking Sticks - The Amazing Story of Maurice Brodsky*".

Dr Freeman stated that Makor Library is going full steam ahead with indexation of our reference library and that his discussions with the State Library of Victoria about the protocols of the State Archives at this stage have not resulted in anything definite. He also advised that negotiations with the new president of Melbourne Hebrew Congregation about the final disposition of the remaining archive material look promising.

Dr Freeman then spoke about Mr Godfrey Cohen, who he called The Australian Jewish Historical Society's "Living Legend". He referred to Mr Cohen's Order of Australia Award in the recent Australia Day Honours and announced that Mr Cohen had agreed to sponsor prizes for the AJHS Jewish History Essay Competition to be known as "*The Myra and Godfrey Cohen Prize*". These essays are to be submitted by school students on some historical aspect of the Australian Jewish experience (in this year of the Centenary of Federation).

Following the formalities of the AGM, guest speaker Professor Geoffrey Opat presented a talk entitled "*The Who's Who of Past and Present Jewish Scientists in Australia - Who is a Jew? Who is an Australian? Who is a Scientist?*".

On 17 May, 2001 at our meeting at the Jewish Museum of Australia, well-known writer, humourist and excellent speaker, Stan Marks recounted stories of "*Chutzpah and the 3<sup>rd</sup> St Kilda Scout Troop - A Lighter Side of Scouting*". Stan proved to be a "true Boy Scout" by attending the meeting despite only coming out of hospital the previous day after his second eye operation in two weeks.

This was also a special meeting when AJHS Members were asked to vote on changes to our Model Rules regarding winding up or cancellation and adding a Non Profit clause. These changes were required by the Taxation Department to satisfy our status as a Deductible Gift Recipient. All aspects were passed accordingly.

Our next meeting was held on 19 July, 2001 at the Jewish Museum of Australia, when Schmatte Business Personalities Leon Haskin and Robert Salter amused our members with stories of "*Flinders Lane: Memory Lane - Memories of the Schmatte Trade*".

### **THE AJHS JEWISH HISTORY ESSAY COMPETITION THE MYRA AND GODFREY COHEN AWARDS**

Our final meeting for the year was a highlight of the AJHS year, when our Patron, Sir Zelman Cowan presented "*The Myra and Godfrey Cohen Prizes*" for the most outstanding entries of The AJHS Australian Jewish History Essay Competition 2001. During the evening, Sir Zelman related some of his early memories as a boy in St Kilda. Our judges, Dr Malcolm Turnbull and Dr John Levi considered that the entries were of such a high standard that it was too difficult to choose an outright winner of each section, therefore the prizemoney was divided equally amongst the following students: **Year 7:** Natalie Kaye, and Candice Lever of Mount Scopus College; **Year 8:** Avreme Cohny of Yeshiva College, Josh Levy, Melanie Koss and Romy Peterfreund all of Mount Scopus College and Avi Travers of Yeshiva College; **Year 9:** Feygi Zylberman and Or Cain, both of King David School, Claire Cyngler, Romi Goldschlager and Talia Zucker, and Peter Teleki all of King David School; **Year 10:** Freda Werdiger of Beth Rivka Ladies College. The topics were extremely diverse nature, ranging from early settlers such as Esther Abrahams, Anti-Semitism, and Jewish personalities including the late Ron Castan, QC.

It is with sincere gratitude that we acknowledge a number of generous donations this year from Mr & Mrs Morry Smith, Mrs Annette Falconer, Mr Tony Martin-Jones, Mr Peter Kornfeld, Mr Godfrey Cohen, Mrs J Tsoulos and Mrs A Friedman.

Ronald B Aarons  
Honorary Secretary, AJHS Victoria Inc.

### **MEMBERS JOINED AJHS VICTORIA INC Since November, 2000**

Mr Paul & Mrs Michelle Wise

And we are delighted that the following members have rejoined us after some years' absence:

Ms J Albert, Mrs N Castan, Prof & Mrs R Davis, Mr I Davis, Dr B Falk, Mr & Mrs A Feiglin, Mr J Gandel AO and Mrs P Gandel, Ms H Rowley and Mr H Ross.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Dr Rodney Benjamin O.A.M.** is a former President of the Australian Welfare Society and the Federation of Australian Welfare Societies. He authored '*A serious influx of Jews: a history of Jewish welfare in Victoria*'.

**Bernard Boas O.A.M** has lived all his long life in Australia, been a scientist, a psychologist, and with the help of Makor, his autobiography, '*The Five Books of Boas*' is about to be published.

**John Cohen** is a member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society-Victoria Inc.

**Lorraine Freeman** is a long-time member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society-Victoria Inc, and the regular compiler of '*100 years Ago*'.

**Berl Frimer**, was an emissary from I.I.A.S.

**Dr Rodney Goultman**, editor of this journal and also the Australian Journal of Jewish Studies, is an associate of the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilization at Monash University, and a historian of the relationship between Australia and Israel.

**Leon Haskin** is a businessman and fashion personality.

**George Keen** is a former engineer, and a long-time communal identity in the Sydney Jewish community.

**Dr Serge Liberman**, is a nationally recognized author.

**Stan Marks** is a Melbourne writer, raconteur, and humourist.

**Dr Philip Mendes** is a lecturer in Social Work at Monash University, book reviewer, and historian of the Jewish Left in Australia.

**Jacob Pat** was an emissary from Y.I.N.O.

**Yetta Rothberg-Allen** is a Melbourne writer. Her publications include *A tale to Tell* and *The charwoman and the child*.

**Chaim Shoshkes** was an emissary from I.I.A.S.

**Helen Tyersky-Steiner** is a former high school teacher and long-time activist in the South Australian Jewish community.







## **VICTORIAN BENEFACTOR MEMBERS**

GODFREY COHEN  
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TREVOR S COHEN, LLB  
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LEN LEVIN, BCom  
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GEORGE REVELMAN (dec.)

## **VICTORIAN BENEFACTIONS IN MEMORY OF**

Rev. ISAAC AMBER BERNSTEIN  
PHYLLIS BRONSTEIN (by East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation)  
EILEEN BUCHNER & LEO B BUCHNER  
Rabbi MATTUS HONIG  
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Sir JOHN MONASH  
ADA PHILLIPS  
PATRICIA ALMA REVELMAN (by husband George Revelman)  
ZARA REVELMAN  
RALPH SAMUEL, MBE, JP (by his family)  
Rabbi Dr HERMAN SANGER

## **WESTERN AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Founded 1988

Chairman, David Mossenson, AO, ISO, MA, BEd, PhD, FACE

**Vice-Chairman:** Jeffrey Pearlman

**Committee:** Harry Atlas, Professor Keith Shilkin

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SUBSCRIPTIONS COMMENCE FROM JANUARY 1<sup>st</sup> EACH YEAR.

CURRENT CATEGORIES AND FEES MAY BE ASCERTAINED FROM THE HONORARY SECRETARY.

## **AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY – VICTORIA INC.**

**Founded 17 October 1949 (Incorporated 1989)**

**Patron:** The Right Honorable Sir Zelman Cowen  
AK, GCMG, GCVO, QC, DCL

**President:** Howard A Freeman BSc, LDS

**Honorary Secretary:** Mr Ronald Aarons

PO Box 608, Carnegie, Victoria 3163 (**Newsletter Editor**)

**Honorary Treasurer:** Phillip Stanton

### **Committee**

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Rodney Gouttman, BA, Med, PhD, Dip. Teach (**Victorian Journal Editor**)

## **AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

**Founded 21 August 1938 (Incorporated 1988)**

**Patrons:** Rabbi Raymond Apple, AM, BA, LLB, Mlitt  
MZ Forbes, OAM, BA, LLB

**President:** Suzanne D Rutland MA(Hons), DipEd, PhD (**NSW Journal Editor**)

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Judith Shapira, BA, DipEd

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c/- 385 Abercrombie Street Darlington NSW 2008

**Honorary Treasurer:** Miriam Solomon, JP

**Honorary Auditor:** GA Marx, FISA, CPA

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**Honorary Historian:** Louise Rosenberg, OAM

**Newsletter Editor:** Bruce Le Bransky, Bcom(Hons), Mec

## **AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY (ACT)**

**Founded 9 April 1984**

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**Honorary Secretary:** Greg Marks, BA, DipEd, MintLaw  
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**Honorary Treasurer:** Clive S Landau, MSc, BEc, CPhys

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