

classical traditions — and those institutions promoting such ideals — into a movement which itself becomes internally divided on the issues of social realism versus individual representation.

Why should such a study be of value to those interested in Jewish history? The central theme of modernity seems to lead to an inexorable engagement with Jewish issues. Thus, cultural conservatives such as Lionel Lindsay in his work *Addled Art* (1942), defend established cultural traditionalism by associating modernism with 'Jewish' cultural degeneration. Conversely, with the outbreak of war, many of the radical artists join together to exhibit explicitly in the cause of anti-Fascism. Also of importance is the influence of Jewish refugees who have recent experience of European trends in art, and can provide welcome intellectual support for artists who feel isolated from the mainstream of European modernist art, through direct patronage (for instance, key exhibitions were held at the Kadimah), or through their own artistic endeavour. The key figure in this respect is Yosl Bergner, the son of the Yiddish writer Melech Ravitch, who becomes a leading figure among the social realists. His particular painting style, combined with his portrayal of social outcasts, whether Melbourne's poverty-stricken inner-city dwellers, aborigines or Jews in the Holocaust, challenged many of the assumptions of his contemporaries. His painting demonstrated that Australian art could transcend narrow national cultural themes and address universal human problems.

My few quibbles with Haese's treatment of Jewish issues revolve around matters of detail. Haese suggests that Bergner did not make contact with artistic groups and sympathetic Australian-Jewish cultural circles until 1939. In fact, the writer Pinchas Goldbar was a close associate of Bergner's father, and most certainly was in contact with Bergner from his arrival in Melbourne in 1937. Haese also perpetuates the myth that Melech Ravitch, during his earlier visits to Australia, visited the Kimberleys — this was never the case. Ravitch travelled no further than the Northern Territory. The new edition unfortunately does not update the bibliography and so no reference is made to the catalogue of Yosl Bergner's important 1985 exhibition at the National Gallery. Finally, Haese's rather patronising attitude to women artists (and failure to cite Janine Burke's recent work on Joy Hester) marks a still stimulating interpretation of cultural politics.

Pam Maclean

## THE DUNERA AFFAIR: A DOCUMENTARY RESOURCE BOOK

Paul R. Bartrop, ed., with Gabrielle Eisen. (Melbourne: Schwarz and Wilkinson/The Jewish Museum of Australia, 1990; 423 pp.)

Appearing appropriately on the fiftieth anniversary of the *Dunera*, Dr. Paul Bartrop (with the assistance of Gabrielle Eisen) must be congratulated most heartily in producing this lengthy and comprehensive documentary record of the affair, with an excellent general Introduction by the editor.

Virtually every declassified document relevant to the *Dunera* has been reproduced here — fifty-three in number — drawn from government archives and bureaucratic documents, together with an interesting selection of nearly one hundred photographs, and, in the third section of the work, 'unofficial' records such as newspaper reports, diaries, and memoirs. Several equally valuable Appendices include a complete list of all the 'Dunera boys', a table of their occupations, resource

centres and libraries relevant to the study of the *Dunera*, and *Dunera* 'songs and poems'. Few if any of these will be known even to keen students of this affair, and it is a tribute to the assiduousness of the editor to have unearthed so many records of this kind. Reading them allows us to view the *Dunera* through the primary materials of their actual history rather than through the interpretative eyes of the historian, and to draw our own conclusions. This places a considerable responsibility on readers, some of whom may have preferred to be spoon-fed.

As several excellent narrative histories of the *Dunera* have appeared, chiefly those by Benzion Patkin and Cyril Pearl, to say nothing of television mini-series, now readily available from video rental outlets, the Jewish Museum was, I think, entirely correct to honour the *Dunera*'s anniversary in so strikingly original a way, especially as the *Dunera* may be unique in Australian Jewish history in the depth of relevant official sources which the historian can consult. *The Dunera Affair* will be equally useful to tertiary history lecturers attempting to teach students how to grapple successfully with historical evidence, and is virtually a model of its kind in this respect.

Because of the attention it has attracted since the publication of Benzion Patkin's book in 1979 and Cyril Pearl's in 1983, followed by the popular television series, it is quite possible that the *Dunera* is, to the non-Jewish public, now the best known single incident in the whole of Australian Jewish history. Although several factors help to account for this, including, arguably, the element of 'Pommy-bashing' implicit in both the mindless deportation, and the brutality of the guards, as well as the fact that this is one of the few aspects of our history which impinge directly on the Holocaust, the continuing fascination of this affair is undeniable. Since Australians can take a considerable degree of pride in both their own humanity and the material benefits derived from those '*Dunera* boys' who remained here, this is understandable.

Nevertheless, as Dr. Bartrop wisely cautions us elsewhere in this *Journal*, it is important not to exaggerate the wickedness of the *Dunera* affair, and perhaps the most certain lesson to be drawn is that in democracies permeated by the rule of law, democracy, and tolerance, justice usually triumphs in the long run, however much their values may be mocked in the short term. This is precisely the opposite of that which obtains in totalitarian societies. Dr. Bartrop and the Jewish Museum have produced a volume whose implications are far-reaching indeed.

Professor W. D. Rubinstein

## THE DUNERA SCANDAL

Cyril Pearl (originally 1983; this edition Port Melbourne: Mandarin Australia, 1990; 193 pp.)

It is good to see the late Cyril Pearl's pioneering history of the *Dunera* affair back in print, this time in a popular paperback edition. Although Pearl — of course a leading and distinguished journalist and popular writer — did not write the first account of the *Dunera*, his was the version that brought national and international renown to the affair, when it was taken as the basis of the '*Dunera Boys*' television series. The account here is as clear and shocking as it is well-researched. Perhaps its major omission is the total failure to mention, at any place in the work, the first book on this subject, Benzion Patkin's *The Dunera Internees* (Cassell Australia, Stanmore,