

Zionists, Bundists, liberal assimilationists — rejected Marxism from Day One. The era of Communism is now, happily, ended, and common sense has, in the long run, prevailed.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

MIRACLES DO HAPPEN: MEMOIRS OF FELA AND FELIX ROSENBLOOM

(Scribe Publications, Newham, Victoria, 1994; viii + 192 pp.)

This is the unusual joint memoirs of Fela and Felix Rosenbloom, Auschwitz survivors from Poland who migrated to Australia in 1952. It is of special note in being told from the viewpoint of committed Bundists, and the account given of the internal debates in Bundist circles over the establishment of Israel in 1947-48 is extremely interesting. Their son Henry is now a well-known publisher in Victoria. Like many Jewish survivors who migrated here, they never regretted their choice.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

A NEW AUSTRALIAN, A NEW AUSTRALIA

Paul Kraus (The Federation Press, Annandale, NSW, 1994; 148 pp.)

Paul Kraus' previous autobiographical work, *The Not So Fabulous Fifties* (1985), is regarded by many persons, including this reviewer, as a little-known classic of contemporary multi-cultural autobiography. I know of no book which brings to life in so realistic a way the experiences of post-war Jewish refugees to this country, presenting as well an outstandingly vivid depiction of early post-war Australian society. The author, born in Budapest in October 1944 to two Jewish parents who, miraculously, managed to survive the War (his birth certificate, reproduced in *A New Australian ...*, bears the swastika stamp of a Nazi official in its corner), migrated to Sydney as a child of five in 1949, and came to maturity in Australia where the long Menzies years were about to give way to the enormous cultural changes of the 1960s.

This new work is also an autobiography, but extends the material of Kraus' earlier work in two directions. First, he deals frankly and at length with the identity crisis created for him by the fact that his parents, although Jewish, had become Christians in Hungary (as many others did) and in Australia were practicing Anglicans — a topic not mentioned in his previous book — as well as the many other progenitors of marginality and isolation caused by his Hungarian Jewish immigrant origins in the Sydney of the 1950s. Secondly, he weaves his own story round an account of the historical events and changes undergone by Australian society in this era.

It is not a foregone conclusion that the resulting work would be outstanding. All autobiographies communicate either the universal — that is, the mundane — or the particular — what is experienced by only one person — to readers who are bored by one but find the other to be someone else's problem, for, as de la Rochefoucault put it so well, we all have strength enough to bear the misfortunes of others. Autobiographies which link their author's life to wider events also often fail, seeking a nexus between the infinite ambiguities of individual life and the black-and-white certainties of newspaper headlines