

## TRIALS AND CHALLENGES

*Elchanan Blumenthal (Jerusalem Academy Publications, Jerusalem, 1994; 419 pp.)*

Rabbi Blumenthal holds a place in Australian Jewish history as the first, wartime principal of Moriah College, Sydney's first Jewish day school and arguably the earliest in Australia, although the claims of Mount Scopus, founded five or six years later, are also strong. While Rabbi Blumenthal lived in Australia comparatively briefly, from 1940 until 1949, he made an important contribution to the development of our community during this crucial period. His autobiography is thus most interesting and well worth the attention of Australian audiences for the light it sheds on our community at that time.

Rabbi Blumenthal was born in Germany and arrived in Australia as a "Dunera boy." (The *Dunera* voyage is well described here, and was marked by considerable anti-Semitic hostility by the British guards). After 1949 he lived in South Africa and, from 1951, in Jerusalem, where he became a well-known educator and commentator on Halakah. His memoirs are extremely interesting and well-written, and this work contains over 250 pages of his writings and commentaries on Jewish law and history.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## WITHOUT REGRET

*Louise Hoffman and Shush Masel (eds.) (Centre for Migration and Development Studies, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA, 1994, 399 pp., \$39.95)*

*Without Regret* contains the reminiscences of twenty-eight German and Austrian Jewish refugees and survivors who migrated to Western Australia between 1933 and 1952. Based upon an interesting oral history project and completed between 1991 and 1994, it is an outstanding work, very comparable, although more wide-ranging, to John Foster's *Community of Fate*. Those interviewed were mainly "ordinary" people unknown to the wider public, although Dr. Joseph Gentilli will be known to readers of this *Journal*, while Doron Ur (*né* Egon Stefan Rozsa) is, of course, one of the best-known contemporary Jewish leaders in Western Australia.

As a work of oral history among Holocaust survivors and refugees this is an exemplary book, richly varied and detailed, and it is also extremely well produced, with many interesting photographs. It is certainly to be hoped that *Without Regret* will become well-known in the eastern states and, indeed, internationally. Yet it also suffers from some surprising lapses. The most important is that nowhere on the cover or dust jacket is there the slightest hint as to what this book might be about, the dust jacket being taken up by potted biographies of the two editors. Similarly, nowhere in the introduction is the precise subject of this book clearly set out. The preface merely states that "an advertisement in the *West Australian* in 1991" led to \$500 being made available to the editors "to study aspects of immigration of German and Austrian Jews to Western Australia from 1933 to 1952" without explaining who actually funded the project, or what the involvement of the publishers, the Centre for Migration and Development Studies, might have been. This is simply amateurishness. A cogent subtitle such as "Twenty-Eight Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany in Western Australia Tell Their