

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



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Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect an official position of the Society.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

The superb marble bust of E. M. Montefiore fittingly illustrates the cover article for this edition – sculpture being once regarded as the primordial form of portraiture. The sculptor, Theodora Esther (Theo) Cowan (1868–1949), also Jewish, was then commissioned to create the ‘strikingly realistic’ busts of Sir Edmund Barton and Sir Henry Parkes.

Strangely, considering his major place in Australian affairs, Eliezer Levi Montefiore has no entry of his own in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Instead he is mentioned in the entry for his uncle, Joseph Barrow Montefiore.

Hugh Hudson’s richly detailed cover article, which at his request has been peer-reviewed, complements the article on E. L. Montefiore by Rodney Benjamin that appeared in this *Journal* in November 2004.

In a real sense, Australia’s intellectual and aesthetic life began with the arrival of Eliezer in Adelaide, probably from Hobart, in 1842. He moved to Melbourne in 1853 and then to Sydney in 1871. Dr Hudson’s article describes this remarkable intellectual’s influence on art and letters in secular Australia, at a time when the colonies were hardly distinguished by an interest in the finer things of life! Indeed, Eliezer was said to have wished that art should be ‘doing its best to federate the colonies’.

Unlike his uncles, Jacob and Joseph, the merchants and financiers, Eliezer was not distinguished by activity within the Jewish community. However, his marriage, to a first cousin, was performed by Barnett Nathan ‘according to the rites and ceremonies of German Jews’. Whilst not estranged from the Jewish community, Eliezer became a seat-holder of the Sydney synagogue only five days before his death in 1894.

Dr June Factor tells us of Yosl Bergner and Wolfgang Sievers, two other significant contributors to the arts in Australia, but of a much later period and having a much different story of arrival. Another arrival in the pre-war years, Kurt Offenburg, is virtually forgotten today but Walter Struve deservedly brings him back to life for us in his carefully researched article on this pioneer of public affairs in Australia.

The papers of Sir John Monash are contained within some 250 boxes, distributed over a number of collections, and include some 75,000 letters. Dr Ann Mitchell is the one academic most familiar with the correspondence. She, together with her English colleague, Peter Fraenkel, have translated and written an introduction to a remarkable letter, originally in Old German on poor paper, from among those documents. The letter was written in 1861 by Louis Monash, then in Melbourne, to his brother Max Monasch in Krotoschin, Posen Province. This was some four

years before the birth of Louis' son, John. The letter reads as an early promotion for what later in the decade was dubbed 'Marvellous Melbourne'.

Rabbi Dr John S. Levi was certainly in his element when delivering the sermon at the sesquicentenary of the opening of the Ballarat synagogue – we are grateful that he gave us a transcript of this address for publication.

Associate Professor Philip Mendes gives us two perspectives about the Jewish Left involvement in various aspects of the indigenous rights movement, a subject that has been neglected but on which Philip has done much research.

Yiddish language and culture was a rich characteristic of Carlton in the 1930s and 1940s, and Deborah Gurt in her article explains that this was a response to what the new arrivals saw as the demise of Jewishness brought on by assimilation. She draws a picture of a durable and resilient community that survived by retaining both its language and culture.

The dreadful toll taken by the conflict of 1914–18 on Australian Jewish families is described in graphic and personal terms by Dr Rodney Benjamin. After his father Oswald Benjamin died, Rodney discovered Oswald's wartime diary, begun on the eve of his participation in the Great European War. This forms the basis of the moving article Rodney has written about his father and uncles during those terrible years.

Three books, on very different topics, are reviewed for us, and we again include the popular extracts from the *Australian Jewish Herald*, 100 Years Ago.

As always, the editors express their gratitude to our ever-obliging publishers, Louis de Vries and Anna Blay of Hybrid Publishers, and to our tireless honorary secretary Liz James for all that she does for this Society.

Dr Howard A. Freeman (Editor)
Dr Hilary L. Rubinstein (Associate Editor)

A JEWISH PHILANTHROPIST IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA: ELIEZER LEVI MONTEFIORE'S PAPERS IN THE AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION OF THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

Hugh Hudson

(This article has been peer-reviewed.)

If he is not a household name today, Eliezer Levi Montefiore (1820–94) is certainly an important figure in nineteenth-century Jewish, cultural, and business history in Australia. His achievements in each domain are significant and well documented.¹ However, the fact that there was a collection in the State Library of Victoria of over 140 letters and other documents concerning him, his family, and business associates, written by European royalty, leading British and Continental artists and celebrated Australians appears to have escaped the notice of historians. The majority of these papers were presented to the Library by his daughter Caroline Levi Montefiore in 1929,² and are now part of the Library's Autograph Collection.³ Here they were catalogued and housed in numerous files arranged alphabetically by their authors' surnames. It may be because the correspondence is distributed in this way that the full scope of this material has been overlooked.⁴

In his endeavours as an artist, writer, and philanthropist, Eliezer Montefiore was extraordinarily active and successful. A list of his achievements makes for hard reading, because it is so long. He was one of Australia's first etchers and a talented artist of charcoal sketches and watercolours, he was an exhibitor with the Victorian Society of Fine Art (1856), a donor to the National Gallery of Victoria (1869), a founding trustee of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria (1870), a founding member of the Victorian Academy of Arts (1870), a founding member of the New South Wales Academy of Art (1871), a member of the Royal Society of New South Wales (1875), and a donor to the Australian Museum in Sydney (1884)⁵ and the National Art Gallery of New South Wales (as it came to be known occasionally in the 1870s, and regularly from 1883 until 1958 when 'National' was dropped from the title). As one of the founding trustees of that gallery, he lobbied government for funds for the Gallery's buildings,⁶ as well as public lectures⁷ and travelling scholarships.⁸ He was made the Gallery's first director in 1892 to acclaim from artists,⁹ and was an early president of the Photographic Society of New South Wales (1894),¹⁰ not to mention a frequent correspondent in newspapers¹¹ and journals¹² and a public speaker on the arts.¹³

Montefiore carried on his philanthropic correspondence from his place of work, as is clear from the scribbled notes concerning maritime insurance

occasionally found on the reverses of his letters. He was a doodler also, and there is the odd portrait sketch and word game in pencil on the backs of his letters. His correspondence grew to the point that he must have been sending and receiving numerous letters daily in the 1880s. When the National Art Gallery of New South Wales was opened in a new building in 1885, his fellow trustee Eccleston Du Faur noted in his speech that Montefiore's 'extensive correspondence on all matters connected with art was well known to most of those present'.¹⁴

What is contained in his correspondence in the State Library of Victoria that was not already known from other sources? It seems not to have been noted before that Eliezer Montefiore was the Belgian Consul for Adelaide from the end of 1850 until the beginning of 1853, or that he was made a Knight of the Order of Léopold (Chevalier de l'Ordre de Léopold) by the King of Belgium in 1883. It is clearly the Order that Montefiore is wearing in the posthumous marble bust of him carved by Theo Cowan in 1898, housed in the Art Gallery of New South Wales (see the cover). The Montefiore family had many connections with Belgium. In 1863 Jacob Levi Montefiore (1819–85) was made the Belgian Consul in Sydney.¹⁵ It has been recorded that Eliezer's father died in Brussels in 1839.¹⁶ According to an obituary for Eliezer, he spent time there as a youth, as did his brother George, who stayed on to become a senator.¹⁷ From the letters it emerges that George acted as a point of contact for Eliezer in his dealings in Belgium, whether it be buying literature from one museum or donating books on Australian natural history to another. It may not be incidental that Eliezer favoured the Belgian artists Cattier and Bossuet with commissions. Another brother, Edward (Édouard Lévi Montefiore, 1826–1907), worked in the Paris branch of the Belgian finance house Cahen d'Anvers et Compagnie.¹⁸

Another revelation of the letters is the extent to which Eliezer and his brothers were involved in the numerous international exhibitions that took place every few years in cities around the globe over the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They were involved in at least seven international and two intercolonial exhibitions. Edward was a commissioner for New South Wales for the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867.¹⁹ Eliezer was a commissioner for Victoria for the Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition in 1870, and was involved in the display of art in the Intercolonial and International Exhibition held in Sydney in 1873. Jacob lobbied the colonial government to support representation for New South Wales at the Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876,²⁰ and was made a commissioner for both the Philadelphia International Exhibition and the Victorian Intercolonial Exhibition of 1877.²¹ Jacob and Eliezer were made commissioners for the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1878. Both lobbied for and then helped stage the Sydney International Exhibition of the following year, together with Edward in Paris. Eliezer was a jury member and competitor at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880–81, and was a commissioner for New South Wales at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886.²² Eliezer's uncle Jacob Barrow

Montefiore (1801–95) was an honorary commissioner for South Australia at the latter exhibition.²³ Their brother George, an internationally recognised electrical engineer and metallurgist, also represented Belgium in international exhibitions.²⁴

Eliezer moved among the social elites in the Australian colonies and in Britain in his work for the various international exhibitions, and later for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales. Among his correspondents were the explorer Charles Sturt, the eminent botanist Sir Ferdinand von Mueller, the president of the trustees of the Public Library in Melbourne, Sir Redmond Barry, the author and librarian Marcus Clarke, the politician Sir Henry Parkes, the colonial artists Eugene von Guérard, George Folingsby and Nicholas Chevalier, as well as numerous governors of the colonies and their wives. He also corresponded with some of the leading figures of the art establishment in Britain, chief among them Frederick Leighton, president of the Royal Academy and a knight of the realm, who was later made a lord. In a notable episode, Eliezer co-opted the conservative artist in a concerted effort to remove the newly made relief sculptures by Tommaso Sani in the spandrels of Sydney's General Post Office building.²⁵ It seems the whimsical sculptures were considered to be in poor taste. Their efforts were in vain, however, for the sculptures survived, despite Leighton's blistering attacks on them in his letters to Montefiore, quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1886.

Another leading light of the British art establishment was John Everett Millais, and Montefiore's correspondence shows just how keen Eliezer was to acquire one of the artist's works. He wrote to private owners of Millais's works and apparently visited the artist's studio in 1884. These efforts culminated in the purchase for the Gallery in 1885 of the artist's *The Captive*, a half-length depiction of a beautiful young woman in Near-Eastern costume. Overall, Eliezer's taste may be described as conservative, and few of the works purchased for the Gallery were by artists of such great reputation or sophistication as Millais. As discussed below, this may have reflected a desire to build a collection that would appeal to a broad audience, some of whom did not necessarily have much experience of the fine arts. Such populist works can lose their appeal with changes in taste and knowledge, and a number of works acquired in Montefiore's time have, perhaps understandably, since been de-accessioned.

Montefiore had his own collection of etchings by Old Master and contemporary artists, including Rembrandt, Berghem, Paulus Potter, Hollar, Callot, Della Bella, Landseer, Lalanne, Haden, Millais, Jaquemart, Appian and Otto Weber. He used these works to illustrate a paper on etching he delivered at the Royal Society of New South Wales in 1876.²⁶ In 1923, Montefiore's daughter offered some etchings by Dürer and Fromentin to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, which probably came from her father's collection.²⁷ In addition to prints, Montefiore also collected Old Master drawings by Angelica Kauffman, Francesco Bartolozzi, Il Bamboccio, Il Padovanino, Bernardo Castelli and Thomas Gainsborough, some of which the late Nicholas Draffin showed were donated to the National Gallery

of Victoria and the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.²⁸

The correspondence also helps to provide a context for Montefiore's own art-making. His surviving drawings and etchings most frequently depict natural or urban views, recording the natural beauty of the landscape or its exploration and colonisation. Social occasions and portraits are also common. An example of the latter is the etching *Nicholas Chevalier, 1868* (an example is in the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, inventory number P2/117), a charming half-length portrait of the artist in costume as the Flemish painter Rubens. Montefiore's works are now divided between the State Library of Victoria (a sketchbook, an album of sketches and photographs, three small sketchbooks, an etching, and a watercolour drawing), National Gallery of Victoria (five etchings), State Library of New South Wales (a group of 60 drawings, mostly portraits and some landscapes, of which the attribution of some is uncertain, three sketchbooks, an album of sketches and watercolours, nine separate sketches – some of uncertain attribution, and five etchings), Art Gallery of New South Wales (22 etchings, an album of 94 ink drawings after works in the collection, and a sketch), State Library of South Australia (a pencil sketch and an etching), National Library of Australia (two etchings, and possibly a watercolour – the attribution has been contested), and National Gallery of Australia (three etchings), with a few works still in private hands.

While he had obvious talents, Eliezer's art does not aspire to great technical difficulty, compositional sophistication, or innovation, and perhaps had it done so it would have risked being mistaken for the work of a professional artist, something that would have undermined the genteel dynamic of the social exchanges in which his art eventually partook.²⁹ Some of his albums of drawings served as a private visual diary of the sights from his voyages around Australia, some individual pieces were exhibited publicly, and a series of drawings was made after works in the collection of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, which appeared in the book *Catalogue of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, with Illustrations Drawn by E.L. Montefiore and Others*, first published in Sydney in 1883. However, what the letters show is that Montefiore increasingly used his artworks as gifts, in particular to governors' wives, visiting royalty, and friends in the colonial establishment – in other words, to people at the top of the social hierarchy, people who, it might be added, had the influence to assist his philanthropic work.

Unlike the libretto written by Jacob Levi Montefiore for the opera *Don John of Austria*, in which a love affair is at first thwarted by the beloved's Jewishness, there seems to be little that reflects Montefiore's religion in his artwork. A bust-length etching of the celebrated Jewish philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore – who was Eliezer's mother's first cousin – is signed 'E. L. Montefiore 1879' (an example is housed in the Jewish Museum of Australia, Melbourne). However, this is perhaps Edward Montefiore's work, as the catalogue of the exhibition *Jewish Art and Antiquities*, held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London in 1905, lists a print of Sir Moses by Edward Montefiore.³⁰ There is just as little direct evidence

of Eliezer's Jewishness in his collection of documents in the State Library of Victoria. He did receive two letters from the Jewish writer Benjamin Leopold Farjeon (1838–1903), who has been described as 'a novelist of, at best, middling abilities who achieved a modicum of popular success working in the sentimental realist tradition'.³¹ Yet, religion does not figure explicitly in these or any of the documents in the State Library of Victoria.

It could be argued that the importance of the extended family in Montefiore's life, even when it was scattered across the globe, reflects the Jewish experience of the Diaspora. While the name Montefiore is Italian, Eliezer's family were Sephardim who rose to prominence in England in the nineteenth century, but spread out as far as the West Indies, where Eliezer's parents lived for some time, before returning to England. If it is not clear why some of the family then settled in Belgium, it does seem possible that the search for business opportunities in an environment of relative religious tolerance helps account for the Montefiores' involvement in the colonisation of South Australia.³² Jacob Barrow Montefiore had been one of the commissioners appointed in 1835 by the Crown under the Act for Colonizing South Australia, and his nephew Eliezer was among the first to settle there in 1842. While the commissioners' early reports indicated that the colony was intended to be a place of religious tolerance, it was specified that this meant harmony between Christian congregations.³³

Similarly, while the land rights of indigenous Australians were recognised early on in the colonisation of South Australia, in reality their treatment was hardly more favourable than in the other colonies.³⁴ It is interesting to consider Eliezer Montefiore's attitude to indigenous Australians. They appear in the foreground of his etching *Melbourne from the Falls, 1837* (an example is in the National Library of Australia, Canberra), however, this image must have been copied from another artist since Montefiore only arrived in Australia in 1842. Similarly, Montefiore's sepia drawings *Aboriginals Making Fire* and *Bushmen Preparing to Fire on Aborigines' Camp* (State Library of New South Wales) have been said to be copies after works by S. T. Gill.³⁵ In any event, the fact that Montefiore made these works, particularly the latter two, does suggest an interest in indigenous Australian subjects, and one that was not perfunctory, but to some degree sympathetic. By 1879 Montefiore had acquired a collection of ethnological artefacts, although details of its contents at this time are lacking. In a letter of that year Sir Redmond Barry lamented his inability to buy Montefiore's collection for his museum, for want of funds, noting that with every passing year obtaining such material became more difficult. In the months after Montefiore's death, his daughter Caroline donated thirty Melanesian objects to the Australian Museum, followed by another piece in 1928, no doubt from her father's collection.³⁶

There was, of course, considerable international interest in the anthropological study of indigenous peoples in the nineteenth century. At a meeting of the New South Wales Academy of Art an arrangement was discussed that would see

exchanges made between French and Australian scientific institutions. Among the items the French expressed interest in acquiring were: 'skeletons and crania of men belonging to the races and tribes (whether existing or extinct) of Australia'. Edward Montefiore, Eliezer's brother in Paris, had expressed a willingness to act as a conduit in potential exchanges.³⁷ What, if anything, became of this proposal is uncertain. Research paints a disturbing picture of the approach of a number of French and British anthropologists to indigenous Australians and their bodily remains in the nineteenth century.³⁸ It is probably quite significant, then, that all the items that Edward Montefiore is known to have donated to French institutions were cultural artefacts or photographs, and that of all the forums that he might have chosen to present material, he chose one with a singularly enlightened attitude to questions of race, and indigenous Australians in particular.

In 1869 Edward donated a boomerang to the Société d'Ethnographie Americaine et Orientale in Paris. After making his presentation to a meeting of the Société, including a first-hand account of seeing boomerangs in use by indigenous Australians at Yass, a discussion ensued among the members about what conclusion concerning indigenous Australians could be drawn from the evidence of the boomerang. Joseph Silbermann stated that he 'refused to believe in the inferiority so often attributed to the race that could invent the boomerang, which had such a marked aptitude for mechanics and calculus'. Léon De Rosny, while sceptical of what conclusions could be drawn from the evidence of the boomerang alone, nevertheless affirmed 'that black Australians have a reason to be on our planet, and have an inalienable right to land and freedom through education, that they possess a moral feeling worthy of existence or better of increasing their people, and that the destruction and the wholesale invasion of their people and their country by the English must be condemned'. The group also quoted from Henri Perron d'Arc's *Voyage en Australie*, published in Paris in that year,³⁹ which reported that cranial measurements had shown the facial angle of indigenous Australians was very similar to that of Caucasians, and the group affirmed: 'We reject absolutely the scientific value of theories that divide mankind into inferior races'.⁴⁰

In the same year Edward Montefiore also donated a group of indigenous Australian axes and shields to the Musée d'Ethnographie of the Musée de Saint-Germaine,⁴¹ six photographs of indigenous Malays, Chinese, and Indo-Chinese to the library of the Société d'Ethnographie in 1871,⁴² followed by five photographs of indigenous New Caledonians and their customs in 1873.⁴³ He also made another presentation to the Société d'Ethnographie, on Japanese temples, illustrated with one of his own etchings.⁴⁴ In 1877 a certain Herbert L. Montefiore (relationship unknown) gave a Solomon Islands mother-of-pearl inlaid wood canoe and wood paddle to the British Museum, London.⁴⁵

Eliezer Montefiore's role in the foundation of the Art Gallery of New South Wales must be regarded as his most important public achievement. Although the

story of the Gallery's founding has been told before, it is worth telling again with a view to recognising the extent of Montefiore's contribution. In 1874, following an enquiry into problems in the management of the Australian Museum,⁴⁶ the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales voted £500 towards a state art gallery. Two days after this was announced in the *Sydney Morning Herald*,⁴⁷ Montefiore wrote to the editor of the same newspaper suggesting that, in his experience, if a school of art were established in which students could copy from models, a gallery could be provided to which local benefactors might be expected to donate works of art 'forming the nucleus of a valuable art collection'.⁴⁸ Having been one of the founders of the Academy of Art in 1871,⁴⁹ Montefiore was among a delegation to the Minister for Education, which successfully lobbied for the parliamentary vote to be made available to the Academy for the development of a school of art and design.⁵⁰ Duly, the Appropriation Act of 1875 contained £1,000 'for the New South Wales Academy of Art as per Resolution of Assembly', and the same amount was provided annually for the next four years.⁵¹ Montefiore's brother Jacob Levi Montefiore (1819–85) was appointed to the Legislative Council on Henry Parkes's recommendation in July 1874, an indication of his influence in government, something that might have helped to sway the decision to grant the delegation's wish.⁵²

The trustees appointed for the administration of the parliamentary vote towards the formation of a gallery were Sir Alfred Stephen, president of the Academy of Art, Eliezer Montefiore, vice-president, James R. Fairfax, council member, Eccleston Du Faur, honorary secretary, and Edward Combes.⁵³ They decided that with the limited funds available it would be wise to acquire watercolours – less expensive than oil paintings – with £50 spent locally and the rest forwarded to the London Selection Committee.⁵⁴ The decision to reserve a portion of the funds to acquire works by colonial artists is certainly in keeping with Montefiore's views. In a letter from Sir Charles Gavan Duffy to Montefiore (when they were trustees of the Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery of Victoria) Duffy had supported Montefiore's proposal to adopt this policy for the Melbourne Gallery.

In 1875 £50 was spent to buy Conrad Martens's Apsley Falls – now regarded as the first work by an Australian artist to enter the Art Gallery of New South Wales's collection.⁵⁵ It is probably no coincidence that Martens's watercolour *On the Falls of the Apsley* had been commissioned through Montefiore by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1873.⁵⁶ Eliezer himself already owned a watercolour by Martens, and may, in turn, have benefited from the fact that his uncle, Joseph Barrow, and brother, Jacob, had commissioned works from Martens in the 1840s.⁵⁷ It had been publicly acknowledged in Sydney that Montefiore's experience with the more advanced National Gallery of Victoria would stand him and his colleagues in good stead in New South Wales.⁵⁸ Montefiore had been one of the 18 founding trustees when the Melbourne institution grew to become the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria in 1870. He attended the trustees' meetings regularly

for a year, and was active in them. Notably, he moved that Eugene von Guérard be appointed instructor of painting, seconded by Duffy.⁵⁹

It is probably not a coincidence either that two of the first London Selection Committee members were Nicholas Chevalier and Colin Mackay Smith,⁶⁰ each close to Montefiore, as his correspondence in the State Library of Victoria shows. While the etching of Chevalier implies a degree of familiarity in 1868, the letters show that Chevalier and Montefiore were cooperating regularly in various activities from 1869. Smith was the manager of the London branch of the Pacific Fire and Marine Insurance Company of Sydney in 1871,⁶¹ the company of which Montefiore became manager in the same year.⁶² Among the Montefiore correspondence in the State Library of Victoria are a number of letters addressed to Smith but forwarded to Montefiore, as though Smith were acting as a secretary for Montefiore.

Martens' watercolour was lent from the state collection to an exhibition at the Academy of Art in 1875.⁶³ Early in 1876 the trustees for the administration of the parliamentary vote were re-appointed, with James Henry Thomas replacing Edward Combes, who was out of the country.⁶⁴ By mid-1876 an exhibition including nine works from the collection was organised by the Academy. These were all watercolours, seven that had been bought in England and two locally. It was reported that no oil painting had been acquired due to an inability to find anything suitable.⁶⁵ According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the Art Gallery of New South Wales was inaugurated on 2 June that year when the Honourable Joseph Decker, Minister for Justice and Public Instruction, attended the opening of the public exhibition (on the premises of the New South Wales Academy of Art), where he was welcomed by Sir Alfred Stephen, Eliezer Montefiore, James R. Fairfax, and Eccleston Du Faur.⁶⁶

For the media, which was apparently impatient to launch the enterprise, it seems the inauguration of the Gallery could be dated from the first major public exhibition of the works bought for its collection, with the initial arrangements for its administration and housing understood to be transitional. Apparently, the collection was first housed at the Academy of Art in Elizabeth Street. Clark's Assembly Hall in the same street was rented for £250 per annum at Montefiore and Du Faur's expense to exhibit the collection from 1875.⁶⁷ The Academy of Art was officially wound up and its assets transferred to the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1880. On this occasion one of the founding and still current members of the Academy, Edward Combes, was singled out as one who had 'commenced the Art Gallery'.⁶⁸

Combes (1830–95) was an engineer, politician, and an amateur artist.⁶⁹ It was said to be largely through his efforts that the first parliamentary vote of £500 had been made.⁷⁰ If he lacked senior office in the Academy of Art, was not a contributor to the Gallery's rent at Elizabeth Street, and was not available to be a trustee of the second parliamentary vote, he was in a position to advise on the purchase of art in England when he was there. He recommended that the trustees

spend £500 on Ford Madox Brown's *Chaucer at the Court of Edward III*. In 1876 it became the first oil painting bought for the Gallery, amidst some controversy concerning its merits and suitability. When the art critic for the *Sydney Morning Herald* criticised the work, Combes responded with a letter to the editor citing praise of the work by numerous British critics.⁷¹

This in turn drew two responses from an anonymous writer 'X.Y.Z.', who, while acknowledging the work's virtues, also cited criticisms of Ford Madox Brown in Britain, pointed to the work's small price for its large size as an indication of a lack of market interest, and questioned the work's suitability for the Gallery, in view of the still nascent art training in the colony, which left audiences unprepared for the work's distinctive characteristics.⁷² This may be a reference to the antiquarian subject matter and wealth of historical detail. It is quite possible that the pseudonym 'X.Y.Z.' was a cipher for 'E.L.M.', the initials used by Montefiore in his letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* a few years earlier.⁷³ Comments in the press also suggest that the trustees distanced themselves from the acquisition of Madox Brown's painting, because its price precluded them from further increasing the size of the collection.⁷⁴

For the Sydney International Exhibition in 1879 the state collection was moved to the Fine Arts Annex in the Botanic Gardens, with Montefiore, Du Faur, and Combes largely responsible for the installation of the works.⁷⁵ In 1880 the building was handed over by the government to the trustees of the Gallery, and after refurbishment by Montefiore and Du Faur it was re-opened by Governor Lord Loftus as the Art Gallery of New South Wales.⁷⁶ In addition to the usual £1000 for the Academy of Art, the Legislative Assembly's Appropriation Act of 1880 included £5000 specifically for purchasing works of art, no doubt works that had been exhibited at the International Exhibition.⁷⁷ The appropriation acts of the following three years each contained £5000 'Towards the Establishment of an Art Gallery', in addition to £1000 for purchases of works of art.⁷⁸ This might suggest that the Annex in its current form was not considered a long-term solution to the problem of housing the state collection.

Although Combes had become a trustee by 1884, Montefiore and Du Faur had cause to write to *The Sydney Morning Herald* to contradict statements made by him allowing the impression that the Fine Arts Annex was an adequate housing for the state collection, given the exposure there of the watercolours to damp. Such criticisms must have found their mark, for in 1885 the collection was moved to a new transitional building in the Domain. This was built in a humble manner on the site of the present gallery, with the intention that it would eventually be hidden from view by the permanent facade.⁷⁹ The appropriation acts of 1885 and 1886 contained sums for this ongoing construction work.⁸⁰ Following numerous disputes about the design for the final Gallery building,⁸¹ the first stages of the present building designed by Walter Vernon were eventually opened in 1897.⁸²

Perhaps the crowning moment of Montefiore's association with the Gallery,

judging by contemporary accounts, was the acquisition of Sir Edward John Poynter's large painting *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon*, bought in 1892 for the highest price yet paid for a work of art by the Gallery. The work is still considered Poynter's masterpiece and a jewel of Victorian painting.⁸³ Its self-evident quality would have recommended it to the London Selection Committee. Still, it seems appropriate that this depiction of the great Jewish king was acquired two months after Montefiore reached his ascendancy at the Gallery as director.

Why the Minister for Public Instruction appointed a director of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales for the first time in 1892 is unclear, but amongst the debates surrounding the design for a permanent building to house the collection in the late 1880s and early 1890s, it may be that Montefiore's history of lobbying for the building, participation in Sydney's architectural debates, and demonstrated knowledge of the conservation requirements for the collection all recommended him as a candidate for the position, as did the fact that he was already president of the trustees. If others had held more senior or immediate positions in the lobbying for, acquisition, and administration of the collection prior to 1892, few had contributed as generously, consistently, or as knowledgably. Just two years later when Montefiore died, as a mark of respect the trustees ordered the Gallery be closed on the day of Montefiore's funeral.⁸⁴

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This annotated catalogue of the correspondence and other documents donated by Caroline Levi Montefiore, and now or previously housed in the Autograph Collection of the State Library of Victoria, is arranged in chronological order where it can be established.

Montefiore settled in Adelaide in 1842.

1. 22 October 1845, [Sir George] Grey [Adelaide]: letter to Montefiore, thanking him for wishing him future happiness and inviting Montefiore to visit him. Grey (1812–98) was Governor of South Australia from 1841–45.⁸⁵
2. 20 September [1849?], Charles Sturt [Adelaide]: letter to Mr Montefiore, seeking financial assistance in repaying a mortgage on property called The Grange, which had been taken out with a Captain Allen, on the basis that Montefiore may have sold books in which Sturt had a financial interest. Sturt's *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia during the years 1828, 1829, 1830 and 1831*, was published by Smith, Elder and Co., in London in 1833, with a second edition in 1834, and his *Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia, Performed Under the Authority of Her Majesty's Government, During the years 1844, 5, and 6: Together with a Notice of the Province of South Australia, in 1847* was published by T. and W. Boone in London in 1849. In 1841 Sturt had mortgaged property to a Captain Allen for £500 with interest to be paid quarterly until the principal was repaid.⁸⁶ Sturt (1795–1869) is best known as an explorer of central Australia, and notably, the first to chart the Murray River.⁸⁷ Montefiore

presumably sold Sturt's publication at his store in Adelaide. A pencil sketch of Charles Sturt and an etching after it by Eliezer Montefiore are now housed in the State Library of South Australia (inv. nos B6687 and B6687/1), and an album with a diary of Charles Sturt's from 1844–45 and sketches was donated to the Mitchell Library in Sydney in 1929 by Dora Montefiore, the wife of Montefiore's cousin George Barrow (inv. no. Safe 1/23b).

3. 17 December [1849],⁸⁸ Cha[rles] Sturt [Adelaide]: letter to E. L. Montefiore on the *Grecian*, asking him to take care of six birds he had put on board for delivery to London.
4. 19 September 1850, signed (M.C. d'Hoffschmidt?) Minister for Foreign Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*) in the Belgian Government, Brussels: letter to Mr Montefiore, Adelaide, notifying him of the King of Belgium's decision to nominate him the Belgian Consul in Port Adelaide.
5. 23 October 1850, King Léopold of the Belgians, Brussels: commission making E. L. Montefiore the Belgian Consul in Port Adelaide.
6. 23 October 1850, signed Léopold, King of the Belgians, (M.C.) d'Hoffschmidt, Minister for Foreign Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*) in the Belgian Government, and C. Materne, the Secretary-General (Secrétaire-Général du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères), Brussels: decree declaring E. L. Montefiore the Belgian Consul in Port Adelaide, 'New Holland'.
7. 7 December 1850, signed Maurice Delfosse, the Belgian Chancellor (*Chancelier*) in London, for Sylvain Van der Weyer, Special Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister of the King of the Belgians (*Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire de la Roi des Belges*): patent in the name of the King of the Belgians asking all authorities to give free passage and assistance to Eliezir [sic] Montefiore and his belongings.
8. 20 October 1851, signed Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom, co-signed by Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary: approbation of the appointment by the King of the Belgians of E. L. Montefiore as the Belgian Consul in Port Adelaide.
9. 22 October 1851, Sylvain Van der Weyer, London: letter to E. L. Montefiore, accompanying his patent as Belgian Consul in Adelaide and the approbation of the same from Queen Victoria.
10. 16 November 1852, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs [M. C. d'Hoffschmidt], Brussels: letter to Mr Montefiore, acknowledging receipt of his eighth report, of 30 June 1851.

Montefiore settled in Melbourne *circa* early 1853.

11. 29 March 1853, signed for Léopold, King of the Belgians, Brussels, signed for Henri de Brouckere, the Minister of Foreign Affairs (*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*), and signed by C. Materne, the Secretary-General (*Secrétaire-Général du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*): letter acknowledging the resignation of E.L. Montefiore as the Belgian Consul in Port Adelaide.
12. 6 September 1858, Ja[me]s H. Ross, Lieut. Col., Commander of the R[oyal] Y[eomanry] C[avalry], Melbourne: letter nominating and appointing Montefiore a sergeant of the Corps, and requesting him to acknowledge his acceptance in writing.
13. 24 June 1863, [Sir] Redmond Barry, Melbourne: letter to an unidentified addressee, thanking them for their 'liberality'.⁸⁹ Barry (1813–80) was a judge and a founding figure of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria, of which he was the first president of the trustees.⁹⁰
14. 7 November 1866, [Sir] Redmond Barry, Melbourne: letter to an unidentified address, thanking them for their etching of Melbourne in 1837, and noting that it would soon be the 27th anniversary of Barry's arrival (in Australia), and thanking the addressee for their generous words concerning Barry's contribution to the 'country'.⁹¹
15. 12 February 1867, B[enjamin] L[eopold] Farjeon, Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore accompanying a gift of cigars.
16. 14 December 1869, W. H. Bradley, Staff Commander of *H.M.S. Galatea*, Penang: letter to E. L. Montefiore, Melbourne, informing him that he has sent a box with a consignment of Chevalier and Montefiore's on board the ship *Whirlwind* for delivery to a Miss Martin of Heidelberg. Nicholas Chevalier (1828–1902) was a Russian-born Swiss artist who lived in Australia from 1855. In 1869 he was invited on board *HMS Galatea*, sailing to London via the East and the Pacific Islands.⁹²
17. 2 January [c. 1869], [Lieutenant-Colonel] Arthur B. Haig [RE], Melbourne: letter to unidentified addressee, presumably Eliezer Montefiore, thanking him on behalf of the Duke of Edinburgh for the gift of the sketch *The Site of Melbourne in 1837*. Haig was Equerry to HRH Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh from 1864–80.
18. 3 February 1870, Tho[ma]s Webb Ware, for the Under-Secretary, Melbourne: letter to E. L. Montefiore, stating that the governor has appointed him a trustee of the Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery.
19. Undated [before Montefiore moved to Sydney in 1871], [Sir Charles]

- Gavan Duffy, Hawthorn [Melbourne]: letter to E. L. Montefiore, sending his apologies for not being able to attend a meeting (of the Sectional Committee of the National Gallery of Victoria or of the Trustees of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria?) owing to a clash with a meeting of the Select Committee of the (Victorian Legislative) Assembly on Federation of which he was chairman, and expressing regret that he would not be able to support Montefiore's proposal to spend a portion of the Gallery's grant on works by colonial artists, and wondering if such a question were not left to the discretion of a committee of the Gallery what such a committee might be good for Montefiore settled in Sydney in 1871.
20. 9 April 1871, [Sir Ferdinand Jacob Heinrich von] Baron von Mueller, Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for his good wishes, explaining his mixed feelings about the fate of his department, given that he had not yet been summoned before a commission while unfounded allegations in *The Age* and *The Argus* that he had spent £100, though baseless, might mean that he will be. He also indicates that he is willing to assist Montefiore with the provision of plants, as far as the department's resources allow. He excuses himself for not having bid Montefiore farewell as he had intended. The reference to a commission is possibly to the Royal Commission on Foreign Industries and Forests, to which von Mueller was appointed as a commissioner, investigating the possible introduction of Continental European agricultural industries, which was established in Victoria in early 1871.⁹³ Von Mueller (1825–96) was a government botanist and director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens from 1857.⁹⁴ On the reverse of the letter is an unfinished word square in pencil based on the name 'Loftus', apparently in Montefiore's hand.
 21. 13 October 1871, [Sir Ferdinand Jacob Heinrich von] Baron von Mueller: letter to Mr Montefiore, asking him not to worry about the loss of some 'photograms' although the loss of the original plate is regretted. He recounts his worries concerning the examination of his employees by the commission, which he believes will embody the views of his 'enemy' Josiah Mitchell. Von Mueller states he is sure Montefiore is missed by his colleagues at the Industrial Museum.
 22. 17 March 1872, [Sir Ferdinand Jacob Heinrich von] Baron von Mueller: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for some 'photograms' valuable for their artistic merit and the 'liberality' of their views.
 23. 19 August 1872, Ben[jamin] L[eopold] Farjeon, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, discussing his successful writing career, his decision to remain single out of a commitment to his writing, and his decision not to accompany Chevalier and his wife on a trip to Switzerland.

24. 23 February 1873, [Johann Joseph] Eugene von Guérard, Melbourne: letter to E. L. Montefiore, noting that [Nicholas] Chevalier had sent an order to Mr (John) Degatardi⁹⁵ in Sydney for a dozen photographs, of which he had received one, with the other eleven being sent to Montefiore, and explaining that he had given twelve shillings to Edward Combes to give to Montefiore to pass on to Chevalier in compensation for expenses arising out of his taking care of one of von Guérard's paintings sent for exhibition in London and Germany. Von Guérard also discusses the acquisition of a landscape by a Mr Martens for the National Gallery of Victoria. This is no doubt Conrad Martens' watercolour *On the Falls of the Apsley*, commissioned in 1873 through Montefiore.⁹⁶ Finally, von Guérard asks that if he were able to send his own works for the forthcoming exhibition in Sydney that they be hung favourably. This is apparently a reference to the Intercolonial and International Exhibition held in Sydney in 1873.⁹⁷ Von Guérard (1812–1901) was a leading landscape artist of German origin in colonial Australia and among his many achievements, was master of painting in the National Gallery of Victoria Art School from 1870–81.⁹⁸
25. 2 April 1873, Marcus [Andrew Hislop] Clarke, Melbourne, letter to Mr Montefiore, explaining the delay in sending a sum of money, and mentioning the third exhibition of the Victorian Academy of Arts. He also noted Herberts' selections of (the oil paintings) Bamborough Castle (by Alfred William Hunt) and Travelling Tinker (by Edward Opie) for the National Gallery of Victoria, works he thought ill-suited to the Gallery. He expressed the view that artists did not make good selectors, and opined the loss of Thompson. Clarke (1846–81), best known as the author of the novel now called *For the Term of His Natural Life*, was secretary to the trustees and then sub-librarian at the Public Library of Victoria.⁹⁹
26. 27 August 1873, [Sir] Redmond Barry, Melbourne, letter to an unidentified addressee, apologising for not having provided timely information regarding the addressee's requests in connection with his meeting some artists. Barry explains that he had spoken with some artists for an hour, on the rise and fall of the Italian schools of painting, among other things. He mentions preparations for an exhibition, including the choice of a motto from Virgil's *Georgics*: *Ditissima terra* ('richest lands'). An example of a medal from the International Exhibition, dated 1873 and bearing the motto, is in the collection of Museum Victoria (accession number NU 17913).¹⁰⁰
27. 30 July 1874, P. L. Richards, Staff Officer, HMS *Challenger*, Fiji: letter to Mr Montefiore, regarding his pleasant stay in Sydney and voyage plans. From 1872–76 HMS *Challenger* was on a global cruise in a pioneering effort to gather scientific data about the deep seas.¹⁰¹
28. 12 August 1874, [Sir] Henry Parkes: note to an unidentified addressee, apologising for the delay in returning some books. Parkes (1815–96) was a prominent New South Wales politician, who briefly became Premier in 1877.¹⁰²

29. 2 September 1875, Adelaide Ristori del Grillo, Melbourne: note to an unidentified addressee, thanking him for the offer of an album, and sending her best wishes. Ristori del Grillo (1822–1906) was a celebrated Italian tragedienne who played to audiences all over the world in the second half of the nineteenth century, including playing Medea, with her company, in Melbourne in 1875.¹⁰³
30. 21 November 1875, Bianca Capranica del Grillo, Adelaide: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him in connection with the taking of photographs of her by a Mr Newman in Melbourne, and describing her unpleasant trip from Melbourne to Adelaide and her mother's first performance in Adelaide to a crowded and appreciative audience including the governor and his wife.
31. 7 June 1876, Adelaide Ristori del Grillo, Paris: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for sending his publication in the *Herald*, and giving news of her travels and occupations. It is unclear to which publication Adelaide Ristori del Grillo refers, it may be the unattributed 'Madame Adelaide Ristori, To the Editor of the Herald', which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 10 August 1875 (p. 5), complaining about the poor attendances at her performances in Sydney.
32. 6 October 1876, W[illiam] W[ellington] Cairns, Brisbane: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a photograph of Sydney, and describing his health and the weather. Sir William Wellington Cairns (1828?–88) was governor of Queensland from 1875–77.¹⁰⁴ On the reverse of the letter is a pencil sketch of a balding man's head, presumably by another hand, perhaps Montefiore's.
33. 16 March 1878, G[iovanni] Capranico del Grillo, Rome: letter to Mr Montefiore, about illness of his sister and the death of the Italian King Victor Emmanuel, the new pope, and asking for news of an Abate Pacifico in New South Wales. Giovanni Capranico del Grillo was Adelaide Ristori's husband.
34. 11 May 1878, Adelaide Ristori del Grillo, Rome: letter to an unidentified addressee, concerning her travels, health of her family, performance of Medea at the Politiana theatre, the forthcoming Paris exhibition, and acknowledging receipt of the addressee's illustrated paper.
35. 12 December 1878, signed Albert Edward P. [Prince of Wales], president of the Royal Commission for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878: letter to Eleazar [sic] L. Montefiore thanking him for his contribution as a member of the Commission for New South Wales for the Paris Universal Exhibition (*Exposition Universelle*) of 1878, and sending as a token a proof of his portrait. Eliezer's brother Edward Montefiore was also a member of

- the 1878 Paris Commission,¹⁰⁵ having already served in the same role at the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle.¹⁰⁶
36. 1 March 1879, [Sir] Redmond Barry [Melbourne], letter to Mr Montefiore, rejecting an offer from Montefiore to sell the Museum ethnological artefacts, due to a lack of money.¹⁰⁷
 37. 27 August 1879, signed Arthur Edward Kennedy, Governor of Queensland, Brisbane, for Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom: patent appointing Eliezer Levi Montefiore a commissioner for Queensland to the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition. Eliezer Montefiore in Sydney and his brother Jacob in London had been among the instigators of the Exhibition.¹⁰⁸ Their brother Edward Montefiore in Paris was also proposed as a commissioner for the Exhibition.¹⁰⁹
 38. 25 October 1879, Maxime Lalanne, Bordeaux: letter to Eliezer Montefiore, regarding the four framed drawings and eight etchings he had sent for the Sydney International Exposition, with prices given for: 1) *Parc du M. de Balzac à Villeneuve St Georges*, charcoal drawing (*dessin au fusain*), F1,500; 2) *Vue de Bordeaux, pres de la place Richelieu*, charcoal drawing (*dessin au fusain*), F1,200;¹¹⁰ 3) a frame of 20 etchings, F400; and 4) a frame of two etchings: *Ruines du Palais Gallien à Bordeaux* and *Bordeaux, effet de neige* (now in the Art Gallery of New South Wales),¹¹¹ artist's proofs, F150. Lalanne (1827–86) was a French artist known for his etchings and charcoal drawings (*fusain*), on which he published separate books of instruction.¹¹² Both techniques were taken up enthusiastically by Eliezer.
 39. [c. 1879] C[harles] Landelle, Paris: letter to unidentified addressee, agreeing to sell to the Art Gallery of New South Wales two paintings, which had been sent to Sydney: *Coptic Woman (Femme Copte)* (de-accessioned by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, February 1959,¹¹³ present location unknown) for £150 and *Nymph of Diana (Nymphe de Diana)* (now in the Art Gallery of New South Wales under the name *Ismenie, Nymph of Diana*) for £200. Landelle (1821–1908) was a French genre painter, particularly of Orientalist subjects, and a portraitist. The two paintings were shown in the Sydney International Exhibition.¹¹⁴
 40. 2 January 1880, Frederick Villiers, on board the ship *Zealandic*: letter to Mr Montefiore, asking for a sketch of the site of the Sydney International Exhibition from Lady Macquarie's Chair, and asking for a photograph of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Villiers (1851–1922) is known chiefly as a war correspondent,¹¹⁵ and was described in the *Brisbane Courier* on 16 July 1879 (p. 5) as the special artist of the *Graphic*, who was then in Melbourne, on his way to Sydney.

41. 15 [January 1880?], [Sir] Fred[erick Aloysius] Weld [Sydney]: letter to Mr Montefiore, requesting that Montefiore meet him at 9 am at the exhibition picture gallery before going on to the school of art, together with Weld's two elder daughters. This is probably a reference to a return visit to the Sydney International Exhibition, which opened with Weld present as governor of Tasmania on 17 September 1879.¹¹⁶ Weld (1823–91) was governor of Tasmania from 1875 to 1880.¹¹⁷
42. 16 February 1881, Colin Hunter, London: letter to C. M. Smith regarding the ownership history of his painting *The Salmon Fishers* (formerly in the Art Gallery of New South Wales,¹¹⁸ deaccessioned in February 1959).¹¹⁹ Smith was the Manager of the Pacific Fire and Maritime Insurance Company of Sydney's main office in 1864¹²⁰ and its London Branch in 1871. Hunter (1841–1904) was a British painter of coastal landscape and marine subjects, of no great reputation now, but whose death was reported in Australia.¹²¹
43. 18 February 1881, Colin Hunter, London: letter to unidentified addressee, regarding the ownership of his painting *The Salmon Fishers* by Joseph John Elliott (1835–1903), who had made an offer to the government of New South Wales for the painting's sale. On the back of the letter is a note in pencil and in a different hand about the misfortune of the ship *Republic*, which left the port of Melbourne and had foundered in the port of Calais. Elliott was the business partner of Clarence Edmund Fry (1840–1897). Together they ran a very successful photography business at 55 Baker Street, Portman Square, London, where they made many *cartes-de-visite* of leading figures of Victorian society. The address provided for Elliott in the letter mentioned in this note is his studio at 55 Baker Street, and the address for him in the letter cited in note 45 (below) in Barnet was his home. His partner Fry was an early patron of the artist Hubert von Herkomer.
44. 20 February 1881, [John] Seymour Lucas, London: letter to C. M. Smith, regarding the sale of his painting *The Gordon Riots* (now in the Art Gallery of New South Wales),¹²² then at the Melbourne Exhibition, for £400–500. Seymour Lucas (1849–1923) was a British historical and portrait painter.
45. 22 February 1881, Joseph J. Elliott, Barnet, Hertfordshire: letter to C. M. Smith, about the sale of two paintings, Hubert von Herkomer's *The Last Muster* (now in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool), which is the property of his partner, Mr Fry, and Colin Hunter's *The Salmon Fishers*, for which he asks £900. Von Herkomer (1849–1914) was a British painter of German origin who specialised in genre subjects.
46. 18 March [c. 1881], Georgina G. M. Kennedy, Toowoomba: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for some flowers, sending him a *carte (de visite)*,

and noting how pleasant the weather was in Toowoomba compared with the extreme heat in Brisbane, where she had just visited the Ellesmeres. This is probably a reference to Lord and Lady Ellesmere, who visited Queensland in 1881.¹²³ Georgina's father, Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy (1810–83), was Governor of Queensland from 1877–83.¹²⁴

47. 29 March 1881, E[ugenio] P. Cecchini, Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore, discussing his involvement in the judging of artworks exhibited at the (International) Exhibition in Melbourne, noting that it had been decided to revise the judging and that there was an expectation that more medals would be awarded than first planned.¹²⁵ He explains that the artist De Tomassi had not replied to his request to reduce the price of a watercolour, but had asked a dealer Mr Hines to sell it at the close of the exhibition, and that Hines would be in a position to quote a price. Publio de Tommasi (1849–1914) was an Italian artist, who won a gold medal at the Melbourne International Exhibition in the watercolour class.¹²⁶ His works were indeed later with the dealer Hines. His *Roman Letter Writer* was in the National Gallery of Victoria by 1882,¹²⁷ and his watercolour *The Game of Chess* (1882) was acquired for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1883. Cecchini (1831–1896) was an Italian artist best known for his realist paintings of Venetian marine subjects, who represented Italy on the jury for the art exhibits at the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880–81, as Eliezer Montefiore did Belgium.¹²⁸ Cecchini's painting *Cape Gris Nez* was donated to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1882 by the Honorable C. J. Ham, Mayor of Melbourne.¹²⁹
48. 5 April 1881, [Sir] H[erbert] B[ruce] Sandford: letter to Mr Montefiore, detailing the move to award more prizes at the Melbourne International Exhibition, to England in particular, and to present medals to the jury members. Sandford was the official representative of the Royal British Commission at the Melbourne International Exhibition.¹³⁰
49. 4 May 1881, Frank W. W. Topham, Isle of Wight: letter to C. M. Smith, regarding the prices of his works. Topham (1838–1924) was a British painter of genre subjects and landscapes.
50. 4 May 1881, [Sir] George Verdon, Melbourne: letter to E. L. Montefiore, informing him that a satisfactory resolution to the difficulties regarding the awards for the Fine Arts (section of the Melbourne International Exhibition) had been reached, which he thought acceptable to artists and the public. Peter Hoffenberg cited this letter in his 2001 discussion of British Empire exhibitions as evidence of Montefiore's role in reconciling the competing interests of artists, commissioners, and the public as an arbiter of taste.¹³¹

51. 29 May 1881, S[amuel] Thompson, Melbourne: letter to E. L. Montefiore, seeking advice on obtaining literary or administrative work in Sydney.
52. 16 June 1881, [Lord] Augustus Loftus, Sydney: letter to E. Montefiore, inviting him to dinner with him, his wife, and Marshall Wood. In 1881 eight of Marshall Wood's sculptures were exhibited in the Art Gallery of New South Wales.¹³² Lord Loftus was Governor of New South Wales from 1879–85.¹³³
53. 7 July 1881, E[ugenio] P. Cecchini, Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore, notifying him of his imminent departure from Australia, and making arrangements with Montefiore for the framing of a series of portraits (?) of the art Jury for the Melbourne International Exhibition to be presented to Mr [R. H.] Kinnear [Chairman of the Jury],¹³⁴ with one provided by Montefiore.
54. 8 August 1881, Reverend J[ohn] N[eale] Dalton, H.M.S. *Bacchante* [Sydney?]: letter to Ch. [sic] Montefiore, regarding Prince [Albert] signing a portrait (photograph) made by Messrs Newman of Sydney. Dalton (1839–1931) had recently been appointed Governor to Queen Victoria's grandsons, Prince Albert and Prince George.¹³⁵
55. 7 October 1881, Basil Bradley, London: letter to H. I. Johnston [London], regarding a visit to show him a little sketch and a photograph of *The Orphans* (de-accessioned by the Art Gallery of New South Wales in November 1946,¹³⁶ present location unknown), which is nearly finished.¹³⁷ Bradley (1842–1904) was a British painter of genre scenes, whose watercolour and gouache over pencil *Wayside Friends* was acquired for the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1884 and remains in the collection.¹³⁸
56. November 1881, signed Albert Edward P[rince of Wales], London: letter to E. L. Montefiore, thanking him for his work as a member of the International Jury at the (Melbourne) International Exhibitions and presenting him with a medal. He also won a First Order of Merit for his own entries in the Steel Engravings and Etchings section.¹³⁹
57. 14 December 1881, Geo[rge] F[rederick] Folingsby [Melbourne]: letter to Montefiore, notifying him of the receipt of a sketch and photograph, reminding him that a small sum is due for sending his work [to Sydney], and lamenting that the Sydney gallery seems to have money for art unlike the one in Melbourne. Folingsby (1828–91) was an artist of Irish origin who emigrated to Melbourne, and was appointed Master in the School of Painting at the National Gallery of Victoria School of Art in 1882, and Director of the Gallery and Master in the School of Art later in the same year.¹⁴⁰
58. 5 January 1882, Marshall Wood, Adelaide: letter to E. L. Montefiore, regarding the sale of his works. Wood, the British sculptor, died later in

- 1882, the National Art Gallery of New South Wales having acquired his *Song of the Shirt* ¹⁴¹ (de-accessioned in September 1958 along with the same artist's *Hebe* and *Persephone*, present location unknown).¹⁴²
59. 24 January 1882, Andrew [Carrick] Gow, London: letter to Mr Chevalier, regarding the cracking of his painting *The Relief of Leyden* (formerly in the Art Gallery of New South Wales ¹⁴³ and now in a private collection, having been de-accessioned in February 1959,¹⁴⁴ together with the artist's *A Jacobite Proclamation*,¹⁴⁵ purchased in 1882), noting that it had been painted with *siecalif de Haarlem*, and was only once varnished, some two years after it was painted. He offers to restore the work. Gow (1848–1920) was a British painter of historical, and genre subjects and a portraitist. Some years later, Montefiore and Eccleston Du Faur wrote to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* to affirm, in part in contradiction of Edward Combes, that though the cause of the cracking of oil paintings such as Gow's *Relief of Leyden* may not be environmental, the mildew affecting watercolours in the state collection was likely to be due to the unsuitable materials in the building in which they were housed.¹⁴⁶
 60. 24 October 1882, Fred[erick] Leighton, Rome: letter to illegible addressee, regretting that he has no suitable sketch of his painting *Wedded*, which had already been sent to Australia (now in the Art Gallery of New South Wales),¹⁴⁷ to illustrate a catalogue of the Gallery's collection, noting that the Fine Art Society was publishing a photogravure of the work. He states that he is happy to critique a copy of his picture *Arts of War* that he had ordered before it leaves the country. This is perhaps a reference to George Morton's watercolour copy of Leighton's mural painting *Arts as Applied to War* made in 1884 (now in the Art Gallery of New South Wales).
 61. 20 April [1882–1883?], Andrew [Carrick] Gow, London: letter to C. M. Smith, regarding his not having had the time to look at the restoration of *The Relief of Leyden*. The work was returned to Sydney restored by March 1884.¹⁴⁸
 62. 19 January 1883, [Myles] Birket Foster, Witley: letter to N. Chevalier, accepting a commission for a painting for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, but saying that it could not be undertaken for a year due to his existing commitments. Foster (1825–99) was a British watercolourist and engraver of genre subjects. The artist's watercolour *Barking, Springtime* was acquired for the Gallery in 1887.¹⁴⁹
 63. 15 March 1883, T[homas] Armstrong [London], letter to Sir Herbert Sandford, advising that the photography of Sir Frederick Leighton's cartoons for the *Arts of War* and *Arts of Peace* mural paintings (in what

is now the Victoria and Albert Museum, London) was in hand for his 'Australian friend', and that an oil painting after a figure from the *Arts of War* could be commissioned from an assistant, together with watercolour copies of both works, and a painting in plaster by Leighton after a head in the *Arts of War*. Sir Thomas Armstrong (1833–1911) was Director of Art in the Department of Science and Art of the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) between 1881 and 1898.

64. 8 May 1883, Georgina G. M. Kennedy, Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a gift of some papers and expressing her sorrow at having seen Montefiore so sad, perhaps a reference to the death of his wife Esther Hannah on 10 July 1882.¹⁵⁰ She also explained that her 'unhappy' brother had followed her and her father to Melbourne, where he had seemed penitent, but had not been heard of since. An Arthur Kennedy, identifying himself as the son of Sir Arthur Kennedy, was later charged with fraud in Sydney.¹⁵¹
65. 15 May 1883, Peter Graham, London: letter to C. M. Smith, regarding an unspecified work of his which is no longer available for sale to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, having been sold, but offering to make arrangements for another painting. In 1888 the London Selection Committee purchased the artist's *Rising Mists*.¹⁵²
66. 25 May 1883, Georgina G. M. Kennedy, SS *Orient* '1/2 way between Adelaide and Suez': letter to Mr Montefiore, mainly on the subject of her brother's personal problems, which are alluded to more than described.
67. 11 June 1883, signed for King Léopold of the Belgians, signed for the Minister of Foreign Affairs (*Ministre des Affaires Etrangères*), Frère Orban, and signed by the Secretary-General for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Brussels (*Secrétaire-Générale du Département des Affaires Etrangères*), Mr Lambermont, Laeken: patent naming E. Montefiore, Sydney, a Knight of the Order of Léopold (*Chevalier de l'Ordre de Léopold*).
68. 23 June 1883, Mr Lambermont, Secretary-General for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Brussels (*Secrétaire-Générale, pour le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères*): letter presenting E. Montefiore the insignia of the Chevalier de l'Ordre de Léopold and a copy of the decree in which he is so named.
69. 10 September [1883], [Lady] E[mma] A[ugustus] Loftus, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for agreeing to deliver a parcel intended for her daughter in England, and wishing Montefiore and his daughter a pleasant trip. Lady Loftus was the wife of Lord Loftus, governor of New South Wales.

70. 23 September 1883, [Adolphe Jacques Barthélemy] Appian, Lyons: letter to unidentified addressee, in response to one sent to Goupil, giving a price of F600 for Appian's drawing *Environs de Collioure*. This work seems not to have been acquired for the Art Gallery of New South Wales.¹⁵³ Appian (1818–98) was a painter of genre subjects, still-lives, and landscapes, as well as an etcher and draughtsman.
71. 23 October 1883, Max[ime] Lalanne, Paris: letter to Mr Montefiore, regarding the works he sent to the Sydney International Exposition that were described in the letter of 29 October 1879.
72. 22 November 1883, Léon [Augustin] L'Hermite, Mont-Saint-Père: letter to unidentified addressee, regretting that his works exhibited at the Triennale were already sold,¹⁵⁴ but offering to show others in his studio for the acquisition of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales. L'Hermite (1844–1925) was a French realist painter.
73. 23 December [1883?], [Lady] E[mma] A[ugustus] Loftus, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a card, wishing him and his a happy new year in spite of his loss (presumably of his wife), and returning some drawings he had given her of the (Garden) Palace (of the International Exhibition Building in Sydney).
74. 27 December 1883, Henry Mosler, Paris: letter to unidentified addressee, via Ed(ward) Montefiore in London, responding to a request from Edward to send a photograph of Mosler's work *The Wedding Morning* (*Le Matin de la noce*) exhibited at the Salon in 1883, and bought for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales,¹⁵⁵ for reproduction in *The Art Journal*. Mosler (1841–1920) was an American artist, trained in Europe, whose subject matter encompassed historical, genre, and realist subjects.
75. [c. 1883] Marcus [Bourne] Huish, London: letter to C. M. Smith, London, regarding the future publication in the British journal *The Year's Art* of a piece written by Montefiore about colonial art. Huish (1843–1921) was a British barrister, art dealer, writer, and editor of the journal *The Year's Art*.
76. [c. 1883–1884?] Marcus [Bourne] Huish, London: letter to C. M. Smith, London, regarding the printing of proofs of *Wedded* for Chevalier and Smith/Montefiore, and Eliezer's liking for a Romonoff drawing.
77. [c. 1883–1884?] [Pierre Armand] Cattier [Brussels?]: letter to unidentified addressee, regarding the sending of the bust of the addressee's brother, and arrangements to send photographs of the same. He hopes to have moulds of the 'two little groups' in a few days and should have them executed in stone soon. In pencil is written at the top in a different hand 'Paul Derouledé' i.e., Déroulède] and 'Les Chants des Soldat s' [i.e. 'Chants du soldat']. Cattier

- (1830–92) was a Belgian sculptor of French birth.
78. 1 January 1884, Oswald W[alters] Brierly, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, Brussels, thanking him for a sketch and a photograph of Iguanodon, a ‘monster kangaroo’. The Art Gallery of New South Wales had acquired Brierly’s watercolours *A Fresh Breeze off Revel, France* in 1875, *Whale Boats off the Cape of Good Hope* in 1880, and *Weather Clearing after Rain, Venice* in 1883.
 79. 11 January 1884, Fr[ançois Antoine] Bossuet, Brussels: letter to unidentified addressee, replying to one sent to him by a Mr Hanssen, regarding a painting bought by the addressee the night before, its measurements and method of packing. Bossuet (1798–1889) was a Belgian painter of architectural subjects and landscapes. His painting *La Place de la Constitution* was acquired for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1884, and has been on loan to the New South Wales Parliament House since May 2007).¹⁵⁶
 80. 12 January 1884, J[oseph] M[iddleton] Jopling, London: letter to Jacob L. Montefiore, offering to sell his painting *The Tea Rose* by Millais,¹⁵⁷ as well as works by Landseer, Opie, Kate Bischoff, Gill, Barnett, and Rosetti. Jopling (1831–84) was a self-trained artist influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, and a close friend of Millais.
 81. 14 January 1884, J[osé] J[ulio] De Souza-Pinto, Brolles: letter to unidentified addressee, advising that the price of his work *The Torn Breeches* (*La Culotte Déchiré*) (exhibited at the Salon in 1883 ¹⁵⁸ and sold at Sotheby’s in Monaco in 1990, present location unknown) is F10,000. De Souza-Pinto (1856–1939) was born in the Azores, grew up in Portugal, and trained as an artist in France, where he came under the influence of the Naturalism of Jules Bastien-Lepage.
 82. 14 January 1884, Miss J[ane] L. Griffin, London: letter to unidentified addressee, offering to make an appointment for the addressee to see her painting *Out of the World* at her studio. Griffin’s *A Labour of Love* was loaned to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales by the artist, and subsequently given to the Gallery by J. G. Griffin in 1918.¹⁵⁹
 83. 16 January 1884, J[oseph] M[iddleton] Jopling, London: letter to E. L. Montefiore, regarding an unspecified painting by Millais exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1879 and available for sale at 1,000 guineas.
 84. 16 January [1884?], Max Rooses, Curator of the Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp: letter to Mr (George) Montefiore, Senator (Sénateur), Brussels, informing him that he has sent to his address a copy of the Museum’s *Cristophe Plantin* volume bought by his brother that morning. Plantin was

- a Renaissance humanist, printer, and publisher.
85. 18 January 1884, J[oseph] M[idleton] Jopling, London: letter to E. L. Montefiore, about having visited Holman Hunt's studio, where he was finishing his painting *Flight into Egypt* (versions are in the Tate Gallery, London, and the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, under the name *The Triumph of the Innocents*). In January 1884 Holman Hunt was working on the version now in Liverpool, while the London version was being relined. The Liverpool version was exhibited in Melbourne in 1888 to unfavourable reviews.¹⁶⁰
 86. 18 January 1884, [Pierre Armand] Cattier, Brussels: letter to Mr Montefiore, regarding two works *Spring* and *Autumn*, and the bust in bronze of his brother, and the photographs he promised. No work of Cattier is now listed in the Art Gallery of New South Wales' registration database,¹⁶¹ so perhaps *Spring* and *Autumn* were de-accessioned.
 87. 27 January 1884, Oswald W[alters] Brierly, London: letter to E.L. Montefiore, London, sending an etching and a sketch made at the coast, and thanking him for Montefiore's own work.
 88. 27 January 1884, Paul J[acob] Naftel, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a smoke (charcoal) drawing. Naftel (1817–91) was a Guernsey artist, whose watercolour *A Stream from the Dochart, Perthshire* was acquired for the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1875, and is still housed there.¹⁶²
 89. 29 January 1884, Oswald W[alters] Brierly, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, (London), offering to send a photograph of himself when one is made, and offering to paint a 'Venetian subject' when he gets the first opportunity.
 90. 31 January 1884, E[benezer] Wake Cook, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, notifying him that he has sent three framed drawings to the address that was given him, costing 35 guineas, for *St Martha's Hill from near Albury Surrey*, *A View on the River Wye near Symond's Gate*, and *Silver Strand, Loch Katrine*. He also promises to make progress on another large one for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales. This would most likely be the watercolour view of the Wye and Severn rivers from the Windcliff discussed in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in November 1884¹⁶³ (acquired for the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1884 and still in the collection with the name *Junction of the Rivers Wye and Severn*).¹⁶⁴ Cook (1843–1926) was a British artist who migrated to Melbourne in 1852, where he became an assistant to Nicholas Chevalier, and was a founding member of the Victorian Academy of Arts.
 91. 31 January 1884, W[illiam] Holman Hunt, London: letter to E. Montefiore, returning signed a photograph of himself sent by Montefiore, and express-

ing the hope of seeing Montefiore again one day when his studio is not as crowded with large canvases as it was the other day when he visited. Holman Hunt (1827–1910) was a British artist and a founder of the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

92. 1 February 1884, Marcus Stone, London: letter to E. L. Montefiore, returning a photograph signed by him. The artist's *Stealing the Keys* was bought for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1890 by Vokins.¹⁶⁵ Stone (1840–1921) was a British painter of historical and genre subjects.
93. 1 February 1884, Paul J[acob] Naftel, London: letter to Mr Montefiore [London], concerning plans to have a photograph made of himself.
94. 5 February 1884, [Samuel] Luke Fildes, London: letter to unidentified addressee, sending a photograph of himself as a memento. The artist's *The Widower* was acquired for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1883.¹⁶⁶ Fildes (1843–1927) was a British painter and illustrator interested in social realist subjects as well as genre subjects and portraiture.
95. 6 February 1884, John [Everett] Millais, London: letter to unidentified addressee (London), making an appointment for the addressee to visit his studio.
96. 10 February 1884, B[enjamin] W[illiam] Leader, Worcester: letter to C. Montefiore, expressing his gladness that he admired his *Parting Day*, exhibited at Bethnal Green, and promising to paint another version early in the summer. Leader (1831–1923) was a British landscape painter who painted two version of this subject (present location unknown).¹⁶⁷
97. 20 February 1884, E[douard] Dupont, Director of the Musée Royal d'Histoire Naturelle de Belgique [Brussels]: letter to E. L. Montefiore, acknowledging the offer through Senator (*Sénateur*) Montefiore of three books on Australian natural history.
98. 22 February 1884, Fr[ançois Antoine] Bossuet, Brussels: letter to unidentified address, sending him his *Traité de perspective*, a résumé of the treatise, two photo portraits, and his biography. He expresses his belief that his treatise will be useful to the addressee's intentions to establish in Sydney a school of drawing and painting.
99. 6 June 1884, signed [Sir] Alfred Stephen, Henry C[ary] Dangar, Ja[me]s R. Fairfax, E[cceleston Frederick] Du Faur, and Edward Combes, Sydney, letter to E. L. Montefiore, from members of the Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery (of New South Wales), expressing appreciation for Montefiore's efforts on his recent trip to Europe to acquire works for the collection and to promote the institution.

100. 12 June 1884, [Pierre Armand] Cattier, Brussels: letter to E. L. Montefiore, Sydney, promising to send his two terracotta groups *Spring* and *Autumn* commissioned by Eliezer, as well as another portrait.
101. 30 June 1884, [Pierre Armand] Cattier, Brussels: letter to Mr Montefiore, concerning the two terracotta sculptures, *Spring* and *Autumn*, sent previously, and asking for a copy of the catalogue of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.
102. 18 July 1884, Fred[erick] Leighton, London: letter to C. M. Smith, returning photographs sent to him with an 'expression of his amazement at their implacable vulgarity and of concern that the energetic efforts of the true lover of art in N. S. Wales should be thus nullified'. This is apparently a criticism of the quality of relief sculptures made for the spandrels of the General Post Office, referred to also in his letter of 20 July 1884.
103. 20 July 1884, Fred[erick] Leighton, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, expressing his disgust with the contents of some photographs forwarded to him (of relief sculptures made for the spandrels of the General Post Office): 'I take the most sincere interest in the prospect of art [...] my countrymen beyond [the] seas and it is very [?] disappointing to find them tolerating caricatures so grotesque and so [...] as those of which I have just seen reproductions – you have indeed an uphill fight where such things are possible.'¹⁶⁸ He encloses a photo of himself at Montefiore's request.
104. 27 October 1884, Fred[erick] Leighton, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for the new edition of the catalogue of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales and praising his efforts to raise a building for the Gallery. He also writes: 'Let me take this opportunity of expressing the satisfaction – I should rather say the relief – with which I hear that your efforts to save a great public building in your fine city from what I can only describe as a shameful [...] are likely to be crowned with success. [...] I should regard the retention of the Post Office bas reliefs with feelings of dismay as well as discouragement.' Frederick Leighton's criticisms of Tommaso Sani's reliefs in the spandrels of Sydney's General Post Office building (second phase completed 1883) were rejected by James Barnet, Colonial Architect, under whose direction they were made, and supported in an anonymous letter to the Editor from a writer who was 'many years an art student' in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1886.¹⁶⁹
105. 28 November 1884, Edouard Reménye (Hoffmann), Sydney: a note for E. L. Montefiore, expressing pleasure following a visit to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales. Reménye was the stage name of a Hungarian violinist who famously employed Johannes Brahms as his accompanist during the composer's early career.¹⁷⁰

106. 22 March [1885],¹⁷¹ [Lady] E[mma] A[ugustus] Loftus, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for some cards he had made and given her, suggesting he should do some of the moonlight view of the harbour, and complimenting him on the pictures acquired for his gallery and on the success of the exhibition.
107. 31 May 1885, J[oseph] Ruston, London: letter [to M. B. Huish] saying that he would surely have purchased Millais' *The Captive* if it had been offered to him at less than £2000.¹⁷² Ruston (1835–97) was a British engineer, politician, and art collector. His collection was sold in 1898.¹⁷³
108. 24 June 1885, Fr[ançois Antoine] Bossuet, Brussels: letter to unidentified addressee, presumably Eliezer Montefiore, Sydney, explaining that a Mr Hanssens had given him F700 for the painting *Atalayas, near San Roque (Spain)* (*Atalayas, près de San Roque (Espagne)*) (present location unknown). He also expresses his happiness at having been nominated Commander of the Order of Léopold for two paintings exhibited at the last Exposition Internationale des Beaux Arts in Brussels in 1884. Included is a receipt for Eliezer Montefiore for F700 for the painting.
109. 2 July 1885, [Baroness] Elizabeth [Loch], Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a copy of the catalogue of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales and a photogravure of *Le Matin de la Noce* (Henry Mosler's *The Wedding Morning*). Elizabeth's husband, Henry Brougham Loch, 1st Baron Loch of Drylaw (1827–1900), was Governor of Victoria from 1884–89.¹⁷⁴
110. 26 September 1885, Fred[erick] Leighton, London: letter to Mr Montefiore, regarding *Wedded*, with an assurance that it is his work despite not being signed.
111. (undated, after 22 March and before December 1885) [Lady] E[mma] A[ugustus] Loftus, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a moonlight drawing of the garden at Government House he had given her, and stating that she had wished he would come on the last two nights of the moon when they (she and her husband?) waited till eleven hoping that Montefiore would appear. She returns the drawing with a photograph of the trees in the garden.
112. 26 January [1886], [Lady] E[mma] A[ugustus] Loftus, Mentone, French Riviera: letter to Mr Montefiore, detailing her return trip home to England, via the Riviera on account of concerns for her husband's health in view of the English winter and his sensitive throat. At Mentone they were visited by their son from Florence. The writer mentions that the captain of the *Caledonia* had given her a photograph from Montefiore. She also expresses

- hope that (Lord) Carrington will enjoy his post (as governor).
113. 10 May 1887, Ishbel [Maria Gordon, née Marjoribanks, Marchioness of] Aberdeen [and Temair], Ohinemutu: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for the gift of drawings and a book. Lord and Lady Aberdeen made a tour of the Australian colonies in 1887.¹⁷⁵
 114. 9 July 1887, signed Anne [Countess of] Brassey, on the ship *Sunbeam* R.Y.S.: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for some photographs. Lady Brassey died of a fever on board the *Sunbeam* some three months after this letter was written. Already her writing was weak and almost illegible.¹⁷⁶
 115. [c. 1887] Sidney [Carr Hobart-Hampden-Mercer-Henderson], 7th Earl of Buckinghamshire: letter to Eliezer Montefiore. The earl came to Australia with the Grosvenor Gallery Intercolonial Exhibition in 1887, which toured Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide.¹⁷⁷
 116. 18 May [1887?], Fred[erick] Leighton: letter to Mr Montefiore, stating that permission would have to be obtained to send artworks from the exhibition in Adelaide (perhaps the Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition of 1887)¹⁷⁸ to another exhibition in Sydney, and giving his blessing for such an arrangement for his own works.
 117. 2 [?] 1887, [Cecilia Margaret] Lily [Wynn-] Carrington [née Harbord-Hammond, Marchioness of Lincolnshire], Sutton Forest: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a pack of cards that he had given her (that he had made?).
 118. 2 September [c. 1887–89?], Harriet Fairfax: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a smoke (charcoal) drawing. Her husband, Rear-Admiral Sir Henry Fairfax, was flag officer commanding the Australian Station 1887–89.¹⁷⁹
 119. [undated] Wednesday [February 1888?], [Cecilia Margaret] Lily [Wynn-] Carrington [née Harbord-Hammond, Marchioness of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a sketch by him that she received on the last day of the celebrations for the Centenary of New South Wales. An official ceremony was held to mark the occasion on 29 January 1888,¹⁸⁰ which date would seem to relate to the title of Montefiore's sketch, *Evening Party in the Garden, January 1888*, given in the letter from Lily Carrington of 31 December, described below.
 120. 12 June 1888, [Charles Robert Wynn-] Carrington [Marquess of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, asking his opinion about the subject of a letter from a Frank Hill, apparently working as a photographer. Carrington (1843–1928) was governor of New South Wales from 1885 to 1890.¹⁸¹

121. 31 December [1888?], [Cecilia Margaret] Lily [Wynn-] Carrington [née Harbord-Hammond, Marchioness of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a New Year's card, which she promises to keep in a scrap book with the sketch *Evening Party in the Garden, January 1888*, likewise given to her by Montefiore.
122. 3 January 1889, [Cecilia Margaret] Lily [Wynn-] Carrington [née Harbord-Hammond, Marchioness of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore thanking him for a New Year's card and a sketch of Arundel Castle.
123. 4 [January 1889?],¹⁸² [Lady] E[mma] A[ugustus] Loftus, London, letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for photographs that reminded her of her time in New South Wales. Other topics include her painting, Lord Loftus' health, and that Jack the Ripper was still at large.
124. 21 January 1889, [Baroness] Eliz[abe]th Loch, Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore, introducing the artist Carl Kahler, who was trying to exhibit in Sydney two paintings, one called *Derby Day* and the other a New Zealand landscape based on photographs and oral accounts. In a letter to the editor of the *Argus*, Kahler denied suggestions that he solicited or accepted payment to paint portraits of individuals in his picture of the Melbourne Cup.¹⁸³ A photogravure after Kahler's *The Derby Day at Flemington* was published by Pfaff Pinschof & Co. of Melbourne on 1 January 1890 (a copy is in the National Library of Australia, Canberra), and the original painting is now in the collection of the Victorian Racing Club, Melbourne.
125. 29 January 1889, [Baroness] Eliz[abe]th Loch, Melbourne: letter to Mr Montefiore, sending him some photographs of herself, informing him that Sir Henry (her husband) will send on a photograph when it arrives, noting that she had received her picture back from its exhibition, and thanking Montefiore for sending a New Year's card of Govett's Leap (in the Blue Mountains). A drawing by Montefiore called *Govett's Leap, Mount Victoria* is in the Art Gallery of New South Wales (inv. no. 44.1998).
126. 19 March 1889, [Charles Robert Wynn-] Carrington [Marquis of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, offering to write a letter to Lord Lorne in relation to asking Princess Louise to send a picture to Sydney, if the exhibition continues for long enough, but suggesting that it would be difficult to justify the expense of a telegram.
127. 12 April 1889, Oswald W[alters] Brierly, London: letter to E. L. Montefiore, concerning arrangements for the pictures of Lord Brassey, the Queen, and the Duke of Westminster made by (Thomas L.) Devitt. Brierly details negotiations between himself, Chevalier, and the artist John Brett about a proposal to exchange Brett's painting *The Boulders*, which had apparently

already been selected for purchase, for another work they liked better, with a further payment of £200. Brett insisted they could only do so by offering a total payment of £1000. A painting called *The Boulders* was among the works sold from the artist's estate in 1901. It went for 36 guineas.¹⁸⁴ Brierly also asks for another catalogue of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales' collection, and mentions that a painting by Long was bought for the Gallery. This would be Edwin Long's *A Dorcas Meeting in the Sixth Century* (now in the Art Gallery of New South Wales).¹⁸⁵ The pictures of Lord Brassey, the Queen, and the duke of Westminster are evidently the seven, one, and seventeen paintings, respectively, lent to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales in March 1889, having been sent on from the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888–1889.¹⁸⁶ Brierly writes coyly of increasing the Gallery with contributions from the highest quarters, suggesting they keep such negotiations confidential lest another of the colonies benefit from their endeavours. The Duke of Westminster had donated his Turner painting *Dunstanborough Castle, North-east Coast of Northumberland, Sunrise after a Squally Night* to the National Gallery of Victoria in December 1888.¹⁸⁷

128. 27 July 1889, Adelaide Ristori del Grillo, Rome: letter to an identified addressee, thanking him for writing about her book, and writing about the ill health of her husband, her intention to be in Paris for the International Exhibition, and her son studying painting.
129. 6 August 1889, [Charles Robert Wynn-] Carrington [Marquis of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, offering a gift, to be presented anonymously, of £50 for the purchase from Julian Ashton of a portrait of Sir Henry Parkes, which was acquired for the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.
130. Wednesday [c.1889], W[illiam] Ayerst Ingram [Sydney]: letter to Mr Montefiore (Sydney), notifying him of his imminent departure on board the ship *Olga*, and offering to sell his and Thomas Cooper Gotch's painting of a shipwreck, *Helpless*, to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales at a discount on the condition that it goes to New Zealand first. The painting was exhibited at the Gallery to faint praise in 1889.¹⁸⁸ Ingram (1855–1913) was a Scottish landscape and marine painter, while Thomas Cooper Gotch (1854–1931) was a British Pre-Raphaelite painter and book illustrator. Both were founding members of the Anglo-Australian Society of Artists, with Ingram the President. Their first exhibition was held in 1889 at the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.¹⁸⁹ Ingram's watercolour *Near Exmouth* was acquired for the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1889.

131. [undated, c. 1889–92]¹⁹⁰ [Lady] Sydney [Charlotte] Kintore, Sydney, note to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for photographs of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.
132. 15 July [1889?], [Cecilia Margaret] Lily [Wynn-] Carrington [Marchioness of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a catalogue of the year's exhibitions at the Fine Arts Gallery and making an appointment with him to show her around the current exhibition. This is perhaps a reference to the Anglo-Australian Society of Artists' exhibition at the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, opened by Governor Carrington on 11 April 1889, with Eliezer Montefiore present as chairman of the board of the Gallery's Trustees.¹⁹¹
133. 18 March 1890, [Sir] Henry Parkes: note to Mr Montefiore, saying that he will take a picture at £50, and regretting that he had left something undone. The former is presumably a reference to the portrait of Parkes by Julian Ashton mentioned in the letter of 6 August 1889 by Charles Robert Wynn-Carrington.
134. 29 April 1890, [Charles Robert Wynn-] Carrington [Marquis of Lincolnshire], Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, informing him that Sir Henry Parkes is agreeable to sit for a portrait by Julian Ashton and asking how the arrangements may be made with the artist.
135. 10 January 1891, [Sir] Henry Parkes, note to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for a Christmas card with a sketch of Parkes' 'Hampton Villa', which he notes wryly is the only residence where the Cabinet Councils of the government have been held for three months. The sketch would, he wrote, be engraved by the *Town and Country Journal*. Hampton Villa had, it seems, previously been Montefiore's own residence.¹⁹²
136. 25 August 1891, M[argaret] E[lizabeth Child-Villiers, Countess of] Jersey, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him for offering her a choice between two of his smoke (charcoal) drawings. Margaret's husband, Sir Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, 7th Earl of Jersey (1845–1915), was governor of New South Wales from 1891 to 1893.¹⁹³
137. 3 December 1891, Dorothy Stanley, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, confirming a meeting on the following day. Dorothy Stanley (née Tennant) and her husband, the explorer Henry Morton Stanley, toured Australia in 1891.¹⁹⁴
138. 7 December 1891, Gertrude Tennant, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, praising Eliezer's etching *Port Philip Harbour, The Rip*, which they have, and returning *The Sounds of New Zealand*. Gertrude was the mother of Dorothy Tennant and a significant figure in London cultural circles in her own right as a hostess and correspondent with leading writers.¹⁹⁵

139. 9 December 1891, [Sir Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, 7th Earl of] Jersey, Sydney: note to Mr Montefiore, apologising for not being available to see him when he called the previous day, and expressing his desire to talk to Montefiore about the proposal to start an academy of arts. A deputation was made to the Minister for Public Instruction in November 1891 to urge him to recognise the the Australian Academy of Arts, which had been formed to represent the interests of artists,¹⁹⁶ in an effort to broaden the representation that was then offered by the Art Society of New South Wales to painters of easel paintings.¹⁹⁷
140. [December 1891] Sir Henry Stanley [Sydney]: domestic note instructing someone to find a key for him.
141. 1 January 1892, Gertrude Tennant, on board *The Star*, Auckland: letter to Mr Montefiore, asking for an introduction for a friend of hers from London, a marine painter called Brett, to a Miss Walker from Sydney, then in London.
142. 1 January 1892, M[argaret] E[lizabeth Child-Villiers, Countess of] Jersey, Moss Vale: letter to Mr Montefiore, thanking him the artistic manner in which he sent his greetings, and sending in return her own best wishes for the New Year.
143. 10 February 1892, [Sir Victor Albert George Child-Villiers, 7th Earl of] Jersey, Moss Vale: note to Mr Montefiore, asking his advice on whether he should become a patron of a society referred to in an enclosed letter from a Mr Bevan. This may be a reference to the Art Society of New South Wales whose spring exhibition Lord Jersey opened in 1892,¹⁹⁸ and in which the artist Edward Bevan exhibited a watercolour.¹⁹⁹
144. 26 August 1892, [Sir Joseph] Geo[orge] Long Innes, Sydney: letter to Mr Montefiore, congratulating him on being appointed director of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, and enquiring as to arrangements for the return of a French book. Innes (1834–96) was a judge, politician, and trustee of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.²⁰⁰
145. 2 September 1892, signed by J[ohn] Gibson, for the Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction, Sydney: notice to E. L. Montefiore, that the governor had appointed him director of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, on a salary of £400, with effect from 1 September.
146. undated, Léon [Joseph Florentin] Bonnat: letter to an unidentified lady regarding a date for dinner. Bonnat (1833–1922) was a French painter of mythical and Orientalist subjects and a portrait artist.
147. undated, J[ohn] B[agnold] Burgess, London: letter to unidentified addressee, thanking them for a letter and a catalogue, and promising to send a photo-

graph of his most recent work. Burgess (1829–1897) was a British artist known for his genre and historical paintings. On the back of the letter in pencil, apparently in Montefiore's hand, is a list of books by W. D. Howells and an attempt to make an anagram of William Ewart Gladstone (British prime minister) out of 'a wild man who felled a tree'.

148. undated, [Sir] Alfred Stephen: letter to Montefiore, apologising for missing an appointment, explaining the business that had kept him distracted, and regretting that he is unable to keep appointments unless reminded of them in the morning. Stephen (1802–94) was chief justice and a legislator in New South Wales.²⁰¹
149. 26 April 1820, envelope only, addressed to the Rev. H. J. Richman, in Dorchester, Dorset, and franked Geo[rge] Canning, London, with a coat of arms in black sealing wax. Canning (1770–1827) was president of the Board of Control in Britain from 1816 to 1820, and was briefly Prime Minister before his death in 1827. It is unclear how Montefiore might have obtained this envelope, although it could be related to his interest in collecting celebrity memorabilia. It is perhaps also worth noting that the envelope dates from the year of Montefiore's birth.

Montefiore died in Sydney in 1894.

Appendix: Other collections of Eliezer Montefiore's correspondence

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Research Library and Archive, MS: 19/1881, 10 August 1881, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding De Neuville's *Rorke's Drift*; 2/1884, 6 January 1884, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding art matters abroad; 8/1884, 7 February 1884, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding various art topics abroad; 13/1884, 22 February 1884, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding various art topics abroad; 26/1884, 28 June 1884, E. L. Montefiore letter to National Art Gallery regarding Trustees' appreciation of his efforts whilst abroad; 30/1884, 4 August 1884, E. L. Montefiore, for National Art Gallery, minute regarding purchases of works by Australian artists; 70/1886, 2 October 1886, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding the selection of works; 96/1886, 15 November, 1886, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding works from Mr A. C. Garrick; 61/1887, 12 August 1887, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding work by Bisbing; 8/1876, 25 May 1876, E. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding articles of agreement for forming Art Union; 43/1883, 22 September 1883, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding visit abroad; 57/1883, 15 November 1883, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding art matters in Paris; 60/1883, 29 November 1883, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding art matters in Paris; 64/1883, 14 December 1883, E. L. Montefiore letter

to National Art Gallery regarding art topics abroad; 67/1883, 22 December 1883, E. L. Montefiore letter to National Art Gallery regarding art matters abroad; 68/1883, 27 December 1883, E. L. Montefiore letter to National Art Gallery regarding art matters abroad; 69/1883, 28 December 1883, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery, regarding art matters abroad; 29/1877, 14 May 1877, Montefiore and Du Faur, letter to National Art Gallery regarding articles of agreement for forming Art Union; 87/1888, 12 October 1888, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding the purchase of work by C.E. Hern; 100/1888, 20 November 1888, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding purchases etc; 19/1889, 7 February 1889, E. L. Montefiore letter to National Art Gallery regarding the purchase of *Great Britain in Egypt* by Horsley; 157/1889, 18 December 1889, E. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding amount to be paid to Mr Salamon; 68/1890, 3 September 1890, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding purchase from Art Society of works by Mather, Lister, and Roth; 69/1891, 30 May 1891, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding his position as Selector; 60/1892, 16 June 1892, E. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding money for purchases in Paris; 71/1900, 13 September 1900, C. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding works stored in the Gallery; 7/1907, 24 January 1907, C. L. Montefiore, letter to The Secretary regarding order for Sèvres cup and saucer on loan to Gallery (delivered); 55/1909, 12 April 1909, C. Montefiore, letter to E. F. Du Faur regarding offer of presentation of portfolio of Italian works (already have it – declined with thanks); 139/1909, 7 July 1909, C. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery regarding a portrait of E. L. Montefiore; 161/1909 13 August 1909, Miss. C. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery requesting the return of photo of father (returned); 21/1912, 2 February 1912, C. T. Rolfe, letter to The Trustees, regarding offer of pen and ink drawing of Sir Moses Montefiore by E. L. Montefiore (declined); 47/1923, 23 February 1923, C.L. Montefiore letter to National Art Gallery regarding an offer of etchings of the works of Dürer and Fromentin; 47/1923, 21 March, 1923, C. L. Montefiore, letter to National Art Gallery indicating that carriers failed to call but will despatch as soon as possible; 17/1879, 12 August 1879, Du Faur and Montefiore and Fairfax, letter to National Art Gallery regarding the unsuitability of rooms at International Exhibition. This information was kindly provided by Steven Miller, Head, Research Library and Archive, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 4 November 2010.

State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Manuscripts Collection, MS 7593, Series II: Victorian Academy of Arts 1870–1888, 580/1 a, (i) Inward Correspondence: Eliezer Levi Montefiore to James Robertson: 3 March 1870, obtaining a room in the Public Library; 5 March 1870, obtaining a room in the Public Library; 14 May 1870, obtaining a room in the Public Library; 4 June 1870, granting a room for Victorian Academy of Arts use in the Public Library; 30 August 1870, holding the first Victorian Academy of Arts exhibition in the room; 17 October

1870, meeting of the sub-committee; 11 April 1871, expressing satisfaction with having been elected an honorary member of the Victorian Academy of Arts for 1871 and sending £1.1.0 in lieu of a picture; 28 June 1871, describing the progress of the N.S.W. Academy of Art; 11 November 1871, expressing pleasure at the progress of the Victorian Academy of Arts in securing space and regret at the slow progress of the N.S.W. Academy of Art, mentioning a proposal for an exhibition of works of colonial artists, and offering to look after any works sent by the Victorian Academy of Arts; 11 January 1872, arrangements for a N.S.W. Academy of Art exhibition, expressing hope that members of the Victorian Academy of Arts will contribute to it, and offering to take charge of any works sent by them; 1 February 1872, expressing pleasure that the Victorian Academy of Arts will be sending works to the forthcoming exhibition of the N.S.W. Academy of Art; 12 February 1872, raising the possibility of works lent by the Victorian Academy of Arts to the N.S.W. Academy of Art exhibition being lent also to an exhibition organised by the Agricultural Society; 28 February 1872, regretting that there will not be greater Victorian representation at the N.S.W. Academy of Arts exhibition and asking if there is any objection to the display of the pictures at the Agricultural Society exhibition; 8 March 1872, explaining that medals were awarded to Mr [Chester] Earls for *Allegro* and Mr [E. Wake] Cook for *Maori Leap* at the exhibition; 22 March 1872, sending thanks for catalogues of the Victorian Academy of Arts exhibition, discussing the success of the N.S.W. Academy of Art exhibition, and making plans to avoid a clash in scheduling in future. 580/1 b MSM 479, (i) Inward Correspondence Montefiore, Eliezer Levi to James Robertson: 10 May 1872, N.S.W. Academy of Arts and honorary members; 16 May 1872, the growth of the N.S.W. Academy of Arts; 28 May 1872, sending to the Victorian Academy of Arts copies of the N.S.W. Academy Annual Report; 6 June 1872, annual exhibitions; 10 June 1872, concerning the presentation of medals by Sir Redmond Barry; 13 June 1872, sending a receipt for Turner's picture; 25 June 1872, presentation of medals; 9 July 1872, agricultural societies medal for Chester Earles; 23 August 1872, concerning Academy exhibition; 17 July 1874, concerning a letter from Mr Carde. 582/5 a MSM 480, (ii) Outward Correspondence from Montefiore, Eliezer Levi, 25 February 1870, a room in the Public Library for Victorian Academy of Arts' use; 4 March 1870, letters written to members to form a deputation to the Public Library Trustees; 18 March 1870, the Victorian Academy of Arts' deputation; 27 August 1870, soliciting his aid regarding the delay in granting the use of the Carriage Annexe for the first Victorian Academy of Arts exhibition; 3 April 1871, liquidation of Victorian Academy of Arts debt; 20 April 1871, money received towards liquidation of the debt; 17 May 1871, the N.S.W. Academy and progress of the Victorian Academy of Arts picture sale; 13 June 1871, the N.S.W. Academy and the second exhibition to be held by the Victorian Academy of Arts; 19 February 1872, the awarding of medals at the N.S.W. Academy exhibition and Robertson's own works; 18 March 1872,

awarding of medals to C. Earles and Cooke, and the N.S.W. Academy Exhibition; 8 July 1872, the presentation of awards; 17 August 1872, presentation of medals and Sir Redmond's address on the progress of art. This information is based in part on the online finding aid: Records of Victorian Academy of Arts 1870–88, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Endnotes

- 1 For their discussions and assistance in the preparation of this article, I am grateful to Shane Carmody, Kevin Molloy, Sandra Burt, Lois McEvey, Jeff Brown, Rabbi Emeritus Dr John Levi, Dr Colin Holden, Steven Miller, Paula Perugini, Josef Lebovic, and Dion Peita. On Montefiore, see: G. F. J. Bergman, 'Montefiore Eliezer Levi (1820–1894), *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. V, 1974, p. 269; R. Faerber, 'Eliezer Levi Montefiore', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal of Proceeding*, vol. VIII, part 4, 1977, pp. 185–94; N. Draffin, 'An Enthusiastic Amateur of the Arts: Eliezer Levi Montefiore in Melbourne 1853–71', *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, no. 28, 1987, pp. 93–108; H. Johnson, *The Sydney Art Patronage System: 1890–1940*, Grays Point, 1997, pp. 13, 16, 20, 26, 43, and 128; R. Benjamin, 'Eliezer Montefiore (1820–94): Artist, Gallery Director and Insurance Pioneer – The First Significant Australian Jewish Artist', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, 2004, pp. 311–40; J. S. Levi, *These Are the Names: Jewish Lives in Australia, 1788–1850* (Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2006), pp. 538–39; and R. Russell, 'Eliezer Montefiore: From Barbados to Sydney', *National Library of Australia News*, December, 2008, pp. 11–14.
- 2 E. La Touche Armstrong and R. Douglass Boys, *The Book of the Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery of Victoria, 1906–1931* (Melbourne: Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery of Victoria, 1932), p. 82.
- 3 On the Autograph Collection, particularly with a view to its literary material, see: C. Elmore, 'Autograph Manuscripts in the State Library of Victoria', *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 22, October 1978, pp. 39–44.
- 4 N. Draffin, 'An Enthusiastic Amateur', p. 101, n. 45: M4970, published the letter dated 3 February 1870, notifying Montefiore that he had been appointed a Trustee of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria. Otherwise, R. Benjamin ('Eliezer Montefiore', p. 313) noted in 2004 that 'None of his personal correspondence or documents appear to have survived.' If the Autograph Collection letters are not of an intimate or familial nature, neither are they only related to business, and they do provide some insight into Montefiore's personal life, albeit mostly as reflected in the way others wrote to him.
- 5 'Australian Museum', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 August 1884, p. 13.
- 6 'The National Art Gallery', *ibid.*, 30 July 1887, p. 8.
- 7 'Subsiding an Art Lecturer', *ibid.*, 5 December 1891, p. 5.
- 8 'Travelling Art Scholarships', *ibid.*, 6 April 1889, p. 8.
- 9 'Art', *ibid.*, 19 September 1892, p. 7.
- 10 'Amateur Photographic Society of New South Wales', *ibid.*, 13 June 1894, p. 3.
- 11 For example: 'Victorian Artists in the National Gallery, To the Editor of the Argus', *Argus* (Melbourne), 19 April 1890, p. 12.

- 12 For example: [E. L. Montefiore], 'The Art Gallery of New South Wales', *The Year's Art*, 1883, pp. 174–75.
- 13 E. L. Montefiore, 'Etching and Etchers', *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, vol. X, 1877, pp. 307–10.
- 14 'The National Art Gallery, The Opening of the New Building', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 1885, p. 7.
- 15 J.S. Levi, *These Are the Names*, p. 542.
- 16 National Library of Australia, Canberra, MS 3142, The Montefiore Family Tree, 1972 Manuscript [p. 2].
- 17 Anon., 'Obituary', *The Magazine of Art*, vol. XVIII, 1895, p. 160, as noted in R. Benjamin, 'Eliezer Montefiore', p. 312.
- 18 J. B. Schreiber and P. Pierret, *Orientalisme et études juives à la fin du XIXe siècle: le manuscrit d'Émile Ouverleaux* (Brussels: Devillez Institut d'études du judaïsme, c. 2004) p. 171.
- 19 [*Société d'Ethnographie*] *Memoires de la Société d'Ethnographie*, vol. XI, 1871, p. 2.
- 20 'Representation of New South Wales at the Philadelphia Exhibition', *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 25 February 1875, p. 4.
- 21 'Government Gazette', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1875, p. 3.
- 22 [London] *Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886: Official Catalogue*, London, 1886, p. xvii.
- 23 *ibid.*, p. xx.
- 24 For one instance, see: C. W. Quin, 'Paris Universal Exhibition: Belgium and Prussia', *The Laboratory: a weekly record of scientific research*, 31 August 1867, pp. 378–80, at p. 378.
- 25 The controversy is discussed in J. Kerr, 'The Architecture of Scientific Sydney', *Journal and Proceedings of The Royal Society of New South Wales*, vol. CXVIII, Parts 3 and 4 [issued March, 1986], pp. 181–93.
- 26 E. L. Montefiore, 'Etching and Etchers', *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, vol. X, 1877, 307–10, p. 310.
- 27 Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Research Library and Archive, MS: 47/1923.
- 28 N. Draffin, 'An Enthusiastic Amateur', pp. 103–04.
- 29 My thanks to Colin Holden for reminding me of the importance of maintaining an amateur status in nineteenth-century 'genteel' society.
- 30 [London] *Exhibition of Jewish Art and Antiquities*, exh. cat. Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 7 November–16 December ([London] Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1905), p. 4: no. 18.
- 31 M. Persell, 'Capitalism, Charity, and Judaism: The Triumvirate of Benjamin Farjeon', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. XXVII, no. 1, 1999, pp. 203–18, at p. 203.
- 32 On the involvement of the extended Montefiore family in the settlement of South Australia, see: H. Munz, 'The Montefiores. Jews and the Centenary of South Australia', *Australian Quarterly*, vol. IX, no. 1, March 1937, pp. 83–88.
- 33 See, for example: [Colonisation Commissioners for South Australia] *Fourth Annual Report of the Colonization Commissioners for South Australia* [London], 1840, p. 8.

- 34 S. Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 2007, pp. 35–37.
- 35 N. Draffin, ‘An Enthusiastic Amateur’, p. 98.
- 36 I am grateful to Dion Peita, Collections Co-ordinator, Cultural Collections and Community Engagement, Australian Museum, Sydney, for bringing to my attention the donation of thirty Melanesian objects by 8 December 1894, presented with a note written by C. L. Montefiore at Oak Lodge, Trelawney Street, Woollahra in Sydney (personal communications, 11 and 18 April 2011). This was Eliezer Montefiore’s address at the time of his death on 22 October 1894 (‘Death of Mr. E. L. Montefiore’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1894, p. 5). Due to a misunderstanding, these donations had been listed on an Australian Museum catalogue as from an ‘E. C. Montefiore’. A further donation of a Melanesian cava bowl in 1928 was correctly recorded as coming from C. L. Montefiore. The accession numbers for these donations are E004915–E004919, E004922–E004925, E004928–E004929, E004932–E004933, E004939, E004941–E004952, E004954–E004957, E004959, E004961, and E031538.
- 37 ‘New South Wales Academy of Art’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May 1875, p. 5.
- 38 For two recent discussions of the subject, see: S. Anderson, ‘“Three Living Australians” and the Société d’Anthropologie de Paris, 1885’, and P. Turnbull, ‘British Anthropological Thought in Colonial Practice: The Appropriation of Indigenous Australian Bodies, 1860–1880’, both in *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race, 1750–1940*, B. Douglas and C. Ballard (eds.) (Canberra: Australian National University E Press, 2008), pp. 229–55 and 205–25, respectively.
- 39 H. Perron d’Arc, *Voyage en Australie: neuf mois de séjour chez les Nagarnooks* (Paris: L. Hachette, 1869, pp. 307–09.
- 40 [Société d’Ethnographie Americaine et Orientale] ‘*Ethnographie australienne: M. Montefiore offre a la Société un boumerang, arme australienne sur l’emploi de laquelle il donne des explications*’, *Revue Ethnographique*, vol. I, 1869, pp. 260–9; M. Silbermann ‘*se refuse à croire à l’infériorité si souvent attribué à la race qui a pu inventer la boumerang et qui a une aptitude si marqué pour la mécanique et le calcul*’. M. De Rosny stated that: ‘*les noirs Australiens ont une raison d’être sur notre globe, qu’ils ont un droit imprescriptible au territoire et à l’émancipation par l’instruction, qu’ils possèdent un sentiment moral digne de faire vivre ou mieux de faire éclore leur nationalité, que leur destruction et l’envahissement général de leur nationalité, que leur pays par l’Angleterre doit être condamné [...]*’; and it was recorded that: ‘*Nous contestons absolument la valeur scientifique des théories qui divises les hommes en races inférieures.*’
- 41 *Matériaux pour l’histoire primitive et naturelle de l’homme*, vol. IV, 1868, p. 503.
- 42 [Société d’Ethnographie] *Memoires de la Société d’Ethnographie*, vol. XI, 1871, pp. 2 and 259.
- 43 [Société d’Ethnographie] *L’Ethnographie*, vol. VII, 1873, p. 172.
- 44 *Athénée Orientale*, 1871, p. 95.
- 45 Inv. no. Oc1877,0208.1 and marked with the registration no. 77,2–8.2, respectively. The donation is recorded in: [London] *Accounts and Papers of the House of Commons*, London, 1878, p. 19.

- 46 'Sydney Museum Enquiry', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1874, p. 3.
- 47 'Tuesday, March 17, 1874', *ibid.*, 17 March 1874, p. 4.
- 48 E.L.M., 'An Art School, to the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 19 March 1874, p. 7.
- 49 'The New South Wales Academy of Art', *ibid.*, 25 April 1871, p. 5.
- 50 'Social', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1874, p. 5.
- 51 New South Wales Legislative Assembly: Appropriation Act of 1875, p. 54, no. 142; Appropriation Act of 1876, p. 74, no. 163; Appropriation Act of 1877, p. 21, no. 162; Appropriation Act of 1878, p. 37, no. 159; and Appropriation Act of 1879, p. 246, no. 210.
- 52 M. Rutledge, 'Montefiore, Jacob Levi (1819–1885)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. V, 1974, pp. 270–71, and 'Government Gazette', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 July 1874, p. 8.
- 53 D. Thomas, 'The Art Gallery of New South Wales', *Quarterly (Art Gallery of New South Wales)*, January 1960, vol. I, no. 2, 10–15, p. 12.
- 54 E. Capon, *Art Gallery of New South Wales: Highlights from the Collection* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2008), p. 16.
- 55 H. Kolenberg, A. Denham Ryan, P. Mary James, *19th Century Australian Watercolours, Drawings & Pastels from the Gallery's collection* ([Sydney] Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2005), p. 34.
- 56 C. Clemente, *Australian Watercolours 1802–1926 in the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1991), p. 54.
- 57 N. Draffin, 'An Enthusiastic Amateur', p. 103.
- 58 'The New South Wales Academy of Art', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1871, p. 5.
- 59 State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, MS12855, Trustees of the Public Library, Gallery and Museum pre 1945, Minutes, MSF vol. 14, pp. 2 and 30.
- 60 'Art in New South Wales', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 June 1875, p. 5.
- 61 'Pacific Fire and Marine Insurance Company of Sydney', *ibid.*, 4 February 1871, p. 2.
- 62 'Special Advertisements', *ibid.*, 26 October 1871, p. 4.
- 63 'The Loan Exhibition', *ibid.*, 9 August 1875, p. 5.
- 64 'Government Gazette', *ibid.*, 26 February 1876, p. 3. On the early history of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, see: L. Gibson, *The Uses of Art*, St. Lucia, 2001, pp. 38–44.
- 65 'Art Gallery of New South Wales', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 June 1876, p. 8.
- 66 'Art Gallery of New South Wales', *ibid.*, 3 June 1876, p. 5.
- 67 'New South Wales Academy of Art', *ibid.*, 17 April 1875, p. 7 and 'The Art Gallery of New South Wales', *ibid.*, 23 September 1880, p. 3.
- 68 'Academy of Art', *ibid.*, 24 November 1880, p. 7.
- 69 B. Nairn, 'Combes, Edward (1830–1895)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. III, 1969, pp. 445–46.
- 70 'The Art Gallery of New South Wales', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 September 1880, p. 3.
- 71 'Additions to the Art Gallery, To the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 30 December 1876, p. 8.

- 72 'Chaucer before the Court of Edward III, To the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 3 January 1877, p. 3, and 'Mr Brown and his Pictures, To the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 9 January 1877, p. 6.
- 73 E.L.M., 'An Art School, to the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 19 March 1874, p. 7.
- 74 'Summary of News', *ibid.*, 3 August 1877, p. 2.
- 75 'The Art Gallery', *ibid.*, 10 November 1879, p. 5.
- 76 'The Art Gallery of New South Wales', *ibid.*, 23 September 1880, p. 3.
- 77 New South Wales, Legislative Assembly, Appropriation Act of 1880, p. 104, nos 216–17.
- 78 New South Wales, Legislative Assembly: Appropriation Act of 1881, p. 39, nos 186–87; Appropriation Act of 1882, p. 104, nos 231–33; and Appropriation Act of 1883, p. 107, nos 292–4.
- 79 'The National Art Gallery, The Opening of the New Building', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 1885, p. 7.
- 80 New South Wales, Legislative Assembly: Appropriation Act of 1885, p. 7, no. 165; and Appropriation Act of 1886 p. 74, nos. 194–6.
- 81 For one contribution to the discussions, see: H. C. Dangar, 'To the Editor of the Herald', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 September 1886, p. 10.
- 82 'The National Art Gallery', *ibid.*, 25 May 1897, p. 7.
- 83 Montefiore's great pride in the acquisition is reported in: 'The Solomon and Sheba Picture', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1892, p. 7. On the painting, see: A. Inglis, 'The Queen of the South': Archaeology and Empire in Edward J. Poynter's *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon*, *Melbourne Art Journal*, no. 5, 2001, pp. 25–40.
- 84 'Death of Mr. E. L. Montefiore', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1894, p. 5.
- 85 [Melbourne] 'Grey, Sir George (1812–1898)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. I, 1966, pp. 476–80.
- 86 'Law and Police Courts', *South Australian Register* (Adelaide), 1 March 1848, p. 3.
- 87 H.J. Gibbney, 'Sturt, Charles (1795–1869)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. II, 1967, pp. 495–98.
- 88 The *Grecian* was in Port Adelaide from 24 September 1849 and from 13 October 1850. On the second visit the ship was stranded while trying to enter Port Adelaide and was lost (R. Parsons, *Migrant Ships for South Australia: 1836–1860*, Adelaide, 1988, p. 87. Sturt left Australia on 19 March 1853 (H.J. Gibbney, 'Sturt, Charles (1795–1869)').
- 89 This letter has been removed from the Autograph Collection and is now housed in Box 599/2 (k). I am grateful to Lois McEvey of the Australian Manuscripts Collection, Access and Information Division, State Library of Victoria, for locating this and the three other letters from Sir Redmond Barry in the same location, of 7 November 1866, 27 August 1873, and 1 March 1879.
- 90 P. Ryan, 'Barry, Sir Redmond (1813–1880)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. III, 1969, pp. 108–11.
- 91 This letter has been removed from the Autograph Collection and is now housed in Box 599/2 (k).
- 92 M.J. Tipping, 'Chevalier, Nicholas (1828–1902)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. III, 1969, pp. 387–88.

- 93 'Monday, November 20, 1871', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 November 1871, p. 4; *Regardfully Yours: Selected Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller*, 3 vols, R. W. Home, A. M. Lucas, S. Maroske, D. M. Sinkora, J. H. Voigt, and M. Wells (eds.) (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 1998–2006), vol. III, p. 18.
- 94 D. Morris, 'Mueller, Sir Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von [Baron von Mueller] (1825–1896)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. V, 1974, pp. 306–8.
- 95 John Degartardi was a printer and photographer of Austro-Hungarian heritage in nineteenth-century Sydney. K. Burke, 'Degotardi, John (1823–1882)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. IV, 1972, p. 40.
- 96 C. Clemente, *Australian Watercolours*, 1991, p. 54.
- 97 'Intercolonial and International Exhibitions', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 April 1873, p. 7.
- 98 M. J. Tipping, 'Guerard, Johann Joseph Eugen von (1812–1901)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. IV, 1972, pp. 306–07.
- 99 B. Elliott, 'Clarke, Marcus Andrew Hislop (1846–1881)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. III, 1969, pp. 416–18.
- 100 This letter has been removed from the Autograph Collection and is now housed in Box 599/2 (k).
- 101 C.W. Thomson, J. Murray, G.S. Nares, F.T. Thomson, *Report on the Scientific Results of the Voyage of H.M.S. Challenger during the Years 1873–76 under the Command of Captain George S. Nares and the late Captain Frank Tourle Thomson* (London: Neill, 1889).
- 102 A.W. Martin, 'Parkes, Sir Henry (1815–1896)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. V, 1974, pp. 399–406.
- 103 'Madame Adelaide Ristori', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 28 August 1875, p. 5.
- 104 R.B. Joyce, 'Cairns, Sir William Wellington (1828?–1888)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. III, 1969, pp. 330–31.
- 105 'Paris Exhibition Commission', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 March 1878, p. 3 and 'The Paris Exhibition', *ibid.*, 29 April 1878, p. 6.
- 106 J.L. Montefiore, 'To the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 3 August 1866, p. 5 and W. Macleay, 'To the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 5 August 1866, p. 3.
- 107 This letter has been removed from the Autograph Collection and is now housed in Box 599/2 (k).
- 108 'International Exhibition in 1879', *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 21 July 1877, p. 3. On Eliezer Montefiore and the Sydney International Exhibition, see: L. Gibson, *The Uses of Art: Constructing Australian Identities* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2001), pp. 39–40 and J. Strecker, 'Colonizing Culture: The Origins of Art History in Australia', in *Art History and its Institutions: Foundations of a Discipline*, E. Mansfield (ed.) (London and New York: Routledge, 2002, 100–12, pp. 106–07.
- 109 'Projected International Exhibition in Sydney', *The Queenslander*, 4 August 1877, p. 18.

- 110 These two items seem to have been exhibited at the Salon of 1875, Janson, *Paris Salon de 1875* [Paris], 1977, p. 362 nos 2446 and 2447.
- 111 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 112 M. Lalanne: *Traite de la gravure a l'eau-forte* (Paris: Lamour Éditeur, 1866 (all editions) and *Le Fusain* (Paris: L. Berville, five editions between 1866 and 1875).
- 113 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 114 'Art Gallery at the Sydney International Exhibition', *The South Australian Advertiser* (Adelaide), 27 November 1879, p. 6.
- 115 S. Bottomore, 'Frederic Villiers – war correspondent', *Sight and Sound*, vol. XLIX, no. 4, Autumn 1980, pp. 250–55.
- 116 'Vice-Regal', *The Mercury* (Hobart), 1 October 1879, p. 1. The letter is dated 'Thursday 15' and after the opening of the Sydney International Exhibition the next Thursday 15 was in January 1880.
- 117 T.S. Louch, 'Weld, Sir Frederick Aloysius (1823–1891)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. VI, Melbourne, 1976, pp. 377–79.
- 118 'The Picture Galleries – II', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 November 1880, p. 7. The State Library of New South Wales has a photograph of the work (call no. Government Printing Office 1, 08544).
- 119 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 120 'Pacific Fire and Marine Insurance Company of Sydney', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 October 1864, p. 2.
- 121 'Death of an Artist, Mr Colin Hunter', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 1 October 1904, p. 15.
- 122 R. Free, *Art Gallery of New South Wales: Catalogue of British Paintings* ([Sydney] Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1987), p. 116–17. Here the work's provenance is given as: 'Purchased Melbourne, 1880'. However, as this letter discussing the proposed sale of the work is dated 1881, it seems the sale must have been effected in that year or later.
- 123 'Queensland', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 March 1881, p. 5.
- 124 P. Boyce, 'Kennedy, Sir Arthur Edward (1810–1883)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. V, 1974, p. 15.
- 125 Caroline Jordan has discussed the controversies surrounding the judging of the fine arts section of the Exhibition ('Tom Roberts, Ellis Rowan and the Struggle for Australian Art at the Great Exhibitions of 1880 and 1888', in *Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World*, K. Darian-Smith, R. Gillespie, C. Jordan, and E. Willis (Melbourne: Monash University E-Press, 2008), 15.1–15.16 (sic), p. 15.6.
- 126 [Melbourne] *Official Record: Containing Introduction, History of Exhibition, Description of Exhibition and Exhibits, Official Awards of Commissioners, and Catalogue of Exhibits* (Melbourne: Melbourne International Exhibition, 1882), p. 261
- 127 'Thursday January 19 1882', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 19 January 1882, p. 5.

- 128 Montefiore is listed in the *Official Record* of the Exhibition (1882, p. 21) as a jury member for Belgium. This was also reported in *The Argus* ('Exhibition Notes', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 18 March 1881, p. 6). Nevertheless, a few days later *The Argus* reported that the Belgian commissioner had withdrawn the country's pictures from the competition because there was no member for the country on the jury ('Exhibition Notes', *The Argus*, 14 March 1881, p. 6). The fact that Montefiore received a letter from Prince Albert thanking him for his work on the jury indicates that he was on the jury, although not necessarily which country he actually represented.
- 129 J. McCulloch, 'Report of the Sectional Committee of the National Gallery', *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library, Museums, & National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery of Victoria), 1882, 33–34, p. 34.
- 130 [Melbourne] *Official Record*, 1882, p. xxiii.
- 131 P.H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c. 2001), pp. 72 and 313.
- 132 'Mr Marshall Wood's Statuary', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 June 1881, p. 3.
- 133 [Melbourne] 'Loftus, Lord Augustus William Frederick Spencer (1817–1904)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. V, 1974, pp. 99–100.
- 134 [Melbourne] *Official Record*, p. 21.
- 135 Untitled, *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 4 October 1879, p. 7.
- 136 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 137 Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1875, H. Blackburn (ed.), *Academy Notes*, London, 1875, p. 51, no. 531.
- 138 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 139 'Melbourne Exhibition Awards', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 February 1881, p. 6.
- 140 R. Zubans, 'Folingsby, George Frederick (1828–1891)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. IV, 1972, pp 193–94.
- 141 'The Late Mr. Marshall Wood', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 28 July 1882, p. 6.
- 142 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 143 *The Argus* (Melbourne, 8 June 1884, p. 6) records the exhibition of the work at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and that the work was lent to the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, in 1884.
- 144 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 145 R. Free, *Art Gallery*, p. 75.
- 146 E.L. Montefiore and E. Du Faur, 'The Art Gallery, To the Editor of the Herald', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 September 1884, p. 9.
- 147 R. Free, *Art Gallery*, p. 111.
- 148 'Fine Arts', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 March 1884, p. 5.
- 149 'News of the Day', *ibid.*, 14 February 1887, p. 7.

- 150 'Births, Marriages, and Deaths', *Brisbane Courier*, 11 July 1882, p. 1.
- 151 'A Peculiar Fraud', *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 19 August 1892, p. 5.
- 152 R. Free, *Art Gallery*, p. 75.
- 153 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 154 Exposition Triennale (Triennial Exhibition), Paris, which ran from 15 September to 31 October 1883.
- 155 As reported in J.W. Leonard and F.R. Holmes, *Who's Who in New York City and State*, vol. IV, 1909, p. 961.
- 156 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 157 Interestingly, a work called *Tea Rose* was listed as Jopling's a few years after this letter was written (C. C. Perkins and J. D. Champlin Jr. (eds), *Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings*, 4 vols, New York, 1886–1887, vol. II (1886), p. 353). Whereas, the work of Millais' with the closest title is *The Last Rose of Summer* (private collection) exhibited at the New Gallery in 1888 ([London] *Millais: An Exhibition Organised by the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool and the Royal Academy of Arts*, London, January–April, 1967 (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1967), p. 60, no. 111). Is this a case of misattribution?
- 158 [Paris] *Livret illustré du Salon: supplément au catalogue illustré du Salon*, [Paris, 1883] p. 69.
- 159 R. Free, *Art Gallery*, p. 77.
- 160 J. Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), vol. I: *Paintings*, pp. 238–41.
- 161 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 162 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 163 'A New Picture for the Art Gallery', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1884, p. 9.
- 164 Information kindly provided by Paula Perugini, Registration Department, Art Gallery of New South Wales, personal communication, 8 December 2010.
- 165 R. Free, *Art Gallery*, p. 191.
- 166 *ibid.*, p. 58.
- 167 R. Wood, *Benjamin Williams Leader R.A. 1831–1923: His Life and Paintings* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1998), pp. 67, 84, and 142: Leader painted two versions of *Parting Day*, in 1883 and 1886.
- 168 The contents of this letter were communicated to the press, as quoted in 'The Post Office Carvings', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 December 1884, p. 4.
- 169 'The Post Office Carvings' and 'The Post Office Carvings, To the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 20 April 1886, p. 4.
- 170 J. Brahms and T. Billroth, *Johannes Brahms and Theodor Billroth: Letters from a Musical Friendship*, edited and translated by H. Barkan, Norman [1957], p. 102.
- 171 The letter is dated 'Sunday March 22', from which it can be deduced that the year was 1885.
- 172 R. Free, *Art Gallery*, p. 128.

- 173 Christie, Manson and Woods, *Catalogue of the Highly Important Ancient and Modern Pictures and Water-Colour Drawings of Joseph Ruston, Esq.* (London: Christie, Manson and Woods, 1898).
- 174 A.G.L. Shaw, 'Loch, Henry Brougham [Baron Loch] (1827–1900)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. V, 1974, pp. 98–99.
- 175 'Lord and Lady Aberdeen', *Launceston Examiner*, 13 April 1887, p. 3.
- 176 'Death of Lady Brassey', *The South Australian Advertiser*, 14 October 1887, p. 5.
- 177 'The Grosvenor Gallery Intercolonial Exhibition', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 26 September 1887, p. 6. On the Melbourne leg of the tour, see: A. Inglis, 'Aestheticism and Empire: The Grosvenor Gallery Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne, 1887', in *Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World*, K. Darian-Smith, R. Gillespie, C. Jordan, and E. Willis (Melbourne: Monash University E-Press, 2008), pp. 16.1–16.17 (sic).
- 178 Leighton was President of the Department Commission organising the loan exhibition in Adelaide of works by British Artists towards which the British Parliament voted £1,000 (*Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series: Commencing with the Accession of William IV*, London, vol. CCCXX, 1887, pp. 1519 and 1523).
- 179 C.J. Durand, *Elizabeth College Register 1824–1873 – A Chapter of Island History* (Guernsey: Frederick Clarke, 1889), p. 160.
- 180 [Sydney] Centenary of New South Wales: Order of Service at the United Religious Celebration in the Exhibition Building, Prince Alfred Park, on Sunday, 29 January 1888 at 3 p.m, Sydney, 1888.
- 181 A. W. Martin, 'Carrington, Charles Robert [Marquess of Lincolnshire] (1843–1928)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. III, 1969, pp. 358–59.
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- 183 'Herr Kahler's "Lawn on Cup-Day"', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 18 January 1888, p. 4.
- 184 *The Art Record: A Monthly Illustrated Review of the Arts and Crafts*, vol. II, 1901, p. 785.
- 185 R. Free, *Art Gallery*, p. 115.
- 186 'Paintings from the Melbourne Exhibition', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 March 1889, p. 8.
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- 188 'Anglo-Australian Society of Artists, Exhibition at the National Art Gallery', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 1889, p. 5.
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- 194 'Mr Stanley's Visit to Australia', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 August 1891, p. 5.
- 195 D. Waller, *The Magnificent Mrs. Tennant: The Adventurous Life of Gertrude Tennant, Victorian Grande-Dame* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press [c. 2009]).
- 196 'The Australian Academy of Arts', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 November 1891, p. 6.
- 197 J. G. de Libra, 'The Academy of Arts, To the Editor of the Herald', *ibid.*, 21 November 1891, p. 10.
- 198 'Art', *ibid.*, 19 September 1892, p. 7.
- 199 'The Art Society's Exhibition', *ibid.*, 2 September 1892, p. 2.
- 200 K.G. Allars, 'Innes, Sir Joseph George Long (1834–1896)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), vol. IV, 1972, pp. 459–60.
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BERGNER AND SIEVERS: TWO 'ALIEN' ARTISTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

June Factor

During the Second World War, men volunteered or were conscripted to serve in what the Australian army variously called Employment Companies, Labour Companies, Labour Corps and Work Companies. The Companies were established to ensure that the Australian Defence Force had a large corpus of soldiers dedicated to essential labouring tasks, the hard physical labour needed to maintain the war effort and support the fighting forces.

By the end of the war the army had established 39 of these Companies, 11 of which largely consisted, apart from the officers, of non-British subjects – foreigners, or 'aliens', as they were called.

Across the 11 Companies there were approximately 4000 men from more than 20 nationalities. The 'alien' companies were not armed: the men were soldiers without guns. They camped at places like Tocumwal and Albury on the New South Wales/Victoria border, where an earlier history of state rivalry led to the stupidity of differing rail gauges. There they worked on the trains, loading and unloading military and civilian supplies. Across the country, parties of Employment Company soldiers were directed to factories for packing and transporting goods; others worked on the wharves, repaired roads and drove trucks loaded with military equipment. In the words of a journalist: 'Men who were not allowed to carry arms spent their days loading bombs on trucks.'¹ Some of the Chinese in the 7th Employment Company built small ships for the United States military. A number of the Koepangese from the 23rd Company became members of the sabotage units in Z Force, sent to report on and infiltrate Japanese-occupied Timor.

Not only nationality differentiated these men. Among the Europeans who constituted the majority of the soldiers in the Employment Companies there were scholars and farm labourers, musicians and textile workers, communists and royalists, men of a variety of religious faiths and of none. Many had little or no experience of the demanding physical work they were required to perform. The fastidious and the rough-and-ready lived in tents and huts in crowded proximity. A shared camaraderie among 'the boys', as they called themselves, supported both the hard work and a varied social and cultural life that included concerts, study groups, gambling, political debate and sometimes hunger strikes – when, according to the painter Yosl Bergner, in the 6th Employment Company 'we had home-cooking in our tents and ate more than ever'.²

The present account, part of a longer work, focuses on the lives of two artists, both 'aliens', one Jewish, the other of Jewish descent, whose time in the Employment Companies enriched and shaped their lives.

Yosl Bergner was born in Vienna in 1920, but spent most of his pre-Australian life in Poland, first with his paternal grandparents in Radymno, and then with his own parents and sister in Warsaw. When he was a child, his father left a good job in a Vienna bank to return to Poland in order to be an active participant in what was called the Yiddish Revival, a cultural movement focused on the Yiddish language and mostly progressive politics. The family lived in poverty in Warsaw, but Bergner remembers it as a life full of interest: books, theatre, lively argument, and an enormous sense of cultural and political energy. He writes:

There was Jewish poverty, there was Polish poverty, but there was hope: socialism, the Bund [a Jewish socialist organisation], communism, Zionism. They all gave people hope. Tremendous cultural activity went on among the poor.³

Bergner came to Australia in 1937, when he was 17 years old, following his sister who arrived a few months before him. Their permits and travelling money were arranged by their father, who recognised the threat Hitler posed to Jews in Europe, and who was already in Australia negotiating with the government to establish a Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys.⁴

On his way to Australia, an extended journey that took almost six months, Yosl Bergner stopped off in Paris to stay briefly with relatives and to look at art. He had already told his father he was going to be a painter. 'I went to the Louvre,' he later wrote, 'and saw the originals of all the paintings I knew from father's books. I felt a closeness to all the painters, but most of all to Daumier.'⁵

Bergner's initial response to Australia was straightforward: 'I saw Australia and hated it immediately. At first I was homesick and wanted to go back to Poland.'⁶ This is a reaction I have heard from a number of the Employment Company men I have interviewed, and can be found in many a migrant memoir. But Bergner's attitude changed quickly. Australia in the late 1930s was still in the slough of the Depression, something that paradoxically for the young painter was both good and bad. On the one hand, he says 'the minute I came to Melbourne I felt comfortable... From the Warsaw street I mover straight into the Melbourne street.'⁷ The poverty here was comfortingly familiar. On the other hand, his well-developed social conscience was outraged. Bergner's early Australian paintings express both empathy for the poor, and an implicit anger at the system that allows such poverty to exist.

Both his background and the circumstances of the time drew him to the political Left. Before he joined the army in 1942 he was already part of a loose group of artists and writers – men like Albert Tucker, Arthur Boyd, George Luke, Jim Wigley, Noel Counihan, Vic O'Connor and Judah Waten – some of whom

were communists, most of whom saw themselves, in Tucker's words, as 'politically conscious neo-realists'⁸ (though later Bergner insisted that he was a social humanist)⁹. Frank Klepner, a fellow soldier and friend of Bergner who produced a fine book about him, pointed out that 'It was a time, especially for the younger artists, when to be a 'modernist' automatically placed one into the radical, anti-establishment, politically active camp, almost invariably of the committed Left.'¹⁰ While Bergner's period of membership of the Communist Party of Australia was short, his identification with the poor and downtrodden remained a powerful motivator of his art for many years.

Bergner brought the new perceptions and techniques of expressionism and modernism to Australian art. He and Danila Vassilieff – another immigrant – are regarded as the first modernist painters in this country. His influence on his fellow artists was considerable. Tucker, whose politics soon diverged from those of Bergner, acknowledged his debt:

Vassilieff and Bergner were 'carriers of another and totally different tradition... [leading to] a widening of my whole conception of what art and artists were about... [They] more or less made a physical reality out of the whole expressionist idea for us.'¹¹

Arthur Boyd similarly acknowledged that it was Bergner, the first 'alien' artist he had met, who led him from naturalism to what the art historian Bernard Smith calls 'an expressive realism concerned with human beings and the problems confronting them.'¹²

Bergner also claims to be the first artist to paint urban Aborigines.¹³ He seems certainly to have been the first significant white painter to have moved beyond an anthropological or Noble Savage representation of indigenous Australians. Bernard Smith has pointed out:

Bergner was not only the first to introduce a new art here. He was the first to bond his own alienation to that of the Aboriginal people he encountered in Melbourne, the first white artist to feel at home with them as fellow human beings.¹⁴

Bergner later explained:

One of the first things that I did see here was an Aborigine playing on a gum leaf near the Town Hall. And I saw this terrible displacement... and identified immediately, and that was my subject.¹⁵

I saw an Aborigine... somehow, to me, he looked like a Jew, with a hat on... So then I painted Aborigines, identifying them with Jews.¹⁶

Till the war broke out. The minute the war broke out I started painting what I imagined was happening in Europe and Poland.¹⁷

The fate of those left behind – not just family, but all the Jews and ultimately all those diminished and destroyed by the Nazis – became Bergner's main subject matter while he was in the army, although he continued to paint Aborigines who lived on the river bank outside Tocumwal, near the 6th Employment Company camp. He remembers: 'Here I was, a so-called Australian soldier, with a slouch hat, with Greeks, Italians and so on, and [Aboriginal] people not owning their own country... The attitude to the Aborigines was very rough. Unjust.'¹⁸ A fellow left-wing painter, Noel Counihan, wrote in a letter at the time to Bernard Smith:

B is as usual our most significant painter in my opinion... He is in a Labour Company away in the bush and is painting magnificent studies of Aborigines. For the first time these abused people are being painted by a painter with an understanding of their sufferings and exploitation. It has taken a Polish Jew to interpret the aborigine realistically without patronage or sentimentality.¹⁹

Frank Klepner remembered, in my interview with him, the circumstances that gave rise to the later Aboriginal paintings:

There was much black and white segregation... perhaps even worse in some of the country towns. There were a number of Aborigines who lived in their humpies down by the riverside [near Tocumwal] made out of bits of rag and tin... and they made quite an impression [on us]. A lot of these [Aborigines] were represented in Bergner's paintings.²⁰

It is clear from my interviews that, unlike most Australians at the time, almost every Jew in the Employment Companies, and the majority of men from Europe who were not Jewish, focused on the European war with much greater intensity than on the war in the Pacific. Umbilical cords to family, home and country are not easily severed. For these men, it was the Allies' battle against the fascist armies, which were invading country after country in Europe, that gave their participation in the Australian army a convincing validity. For most, it outweighed their frustration at not being in the fighting forces, and the drudgery, physical effort and isolation from the civilising cities that characterised much of life in the Employment Companies. But I know of no one other than Bergner who was able, in a work of art, to transmute the experience of alien soldiers in the Australian army into a requiem of loneliness and loss.

There is a painting in the Australian War Memorial, where it is called 'Tocumwal – loading the train'; elsewhere it is titled 'End of a Day's Work, Tocumwal'. It was painted some time between 1942 and 1944, while Bergner was in the 6th Employment Company.²¹

Bergner loved to paint what he saw around him, and at the simplest level this painting depicts four Employment Company men tired after a day's work. But that is not the feeling of the painting. It is laden with sorrow, and a sense of lonely hopelessness, emphasised by the men's drooping hands and the vacant or

covered eyes. Only one man looks at another, at a man who hides his face, and it is a look of pity, or regret. The look reminds me of the stories I have been told by men in the Employment Companies of the compassion felt when one of their number heard fateful news of family destroyed. It is a painting of suffering far exceeding the aches and pains that resulted from loading and unloading the trains at Tocomwal. This is indeed the work of a man who declared himself 'a specialist in displacement',²² and who saw his mission – his work as an artist – 'to make Australians aware... of what was going on [in Europe]'.²³ Remarkably, some of Bergner's paintings of the Warsaw ghetto were created before much detail of that human tragedy was known in Australia.

When Yosl Bergner came to Australia from Warsaw in 1937 he spoke no English, was very young, poor and talented, and ardently Jewish – it was not uncommon for him to introduce himself with the words 'I am a Jewish painter from Poland.'²⁴ When Wolfgang Sievers arrived in 1938 from Berlin he spoke good English, was 35 years old, a married man, highly educated, a sophisticated European, and Jewish only in the sense that his mother – already dead when Hitler came to power in 1933 – was of Jewish descent. He brought with him much luggage, including the camera equipment which had originally provided him with a pleasant hobby, and in his last years in Europe a way of earning his living. He had wanted to study archaeology, but the Nazis made that impossible because, although he was brought up as a Lutheran, his maternal grandfather was a Jewish doctor. So he decided 'my best choice [was] to use my hobby and turn it into a profession'. He recognised that 'you had to have a practical profession to enable you to survive in another country.'²⁵

Sievers's father was a highly regarded art historian in Berlin who until 1933 was 'in charge of the cultural department of the German foreign office'. He was 'dismissed by the Nazis because he had supported what the Nazis called "depraved art", which was anything that was modern'.²⁶ His mother had been a writer and Director of an Institute for Educational Films.²⁷ When speaking of his life, Sievers always expressed gratitude for the rich intellectual and cultural world his parents made accessible:

Thanks to my parents' intense involvement with the arts, I benefited from living through the most exciting years of the Weimar Republic when Berlin had become the cultural centre of the world.... [T]he very best of Germany's and Europe's culture was so lovingly given to me by both my parents...²⁸

Sievers brought the traditions of high European culture with him along with his furniture and cameras.

He came to Australia because of his father's urging:

'Father, where should I go?' I said. He said, 'Well, two things. As far away from Europe as possible. And go to a British country.' I

said, 'Why to a British country?' He said, 'Because it is better to be suppressed by the British than by anyone else.' And I think he was right. He was very sensible.²⁹

Sievers decided on Australia because a German scientist who had been there told him it was 'a marvellous country',³⁰ and his family's good connections helped him get the sponsors he needed to settle here.³¹ This was a fortunate man even in bad times – he stayed with the Nazi regime's German Ambassador in Lisbon (an old friend of his father) where he built a dark room in the embassy cellar³² – and his good fortune followed him to Australia.

Sievers was already a skilled professional photographer when he stepped off the boat in Fremantle to be greeted by one of his sponsors, the university academic Dr John Reynolds. His first impression of Australia – the corrugated iron roofs of Fremantle – horrified him. 'I would have gone back to Germany immediately,' he said, 'if the Gestapo wouldn't have been waiting for me at the other end.'³³ But when he settled in Melbourne – he couldn't stand Sydney's humidity – a friend drove him into the country. 'We went through huge forests that had been ringbarked', he said. 'I saw the bush for the first time... It was wonderful.'³⁴

Wonderful too was his introduction to Melbourne. He spent his first evening dining at the Florentino with an American friend, and the friend's mother's friend – who happened to be Mrs Whiteman, the owner of Le Louvre, one of the most exclusive shops in Melbourne. And soon he met Mrs Casey, the wife of the conservative MP Richard Casey. This is Sievers's description of what happened:

I was introduced to Mrs Casey on my first night in Melbourne... I had an American friend who knew Mrs Whiteman from Le Louvre, and she took me to dinner at the Florentino... [She] took me to Mrs Casey, and I became one of her young men... I was a friend of Mrs Casey, the very clever woman of an idiotic husband, and [later] I lived with them in East Melbourne...³⁵

He also became friends with Richard's Casey's brother Dermot, who was an amateur archaeologist. It was Dermot who saved his cameras when the war broke out and enemy aliens – people with 'enemy' nationality – were forbidden to keep a camera.³⁶

When the war began, Sievers tried but failed to join the military. With wry amusement, he remembered his experience:

When war broke out I went to the Town Hall on the first of September and the military asked me where I came from. 'German, you said? Get out, you bastard!' Then, a couple of months later, I was accepted into the air force, the RAAF, to be a teacher at Point Cook. But as soon as that became known in Canberra they protested, and I was called up to army headquarters here [Melbourne]. I said, 'Why can't I do it?' He said, 'Well, because an enemy alien cannot be an officer.' I said,

'I don't care a damn whether I'm an officer or not, just a private [will do].' He said, 'No, this job carries the rank of an officer.' Bureaucracy forever.³⁷

He kept busy for a time taking photographs of servicemen, many sent to him by his friend Dermot Casey.³⁸ He also began to take pictures of his new environment, and his training and background in the Bauhaus tradition drew him to the symmetry and power of man-made objects – a subject that in post-war years would make him one of Australia's most significant photographers. Always, he said, 'my Bauhaus training was... to photograph craftsmanship, the divinity of man and industry.'³⁹

This cultured man, who chose to live in a suburb far from Bergner's Carlton and Fitzroy, and who became friends with establishment figures as well as artists, architects and fashion photographers, was never captive to the world of glamour or power. He had a sharp, critical eye. He spoke scornfully of the Melbourne rich, who had Cézannes on their walls but 'where the men would stand at one end [of the room] and talk dirty jokes and the women would stand far away at the other end and talk about babies... It was an unbelievable thing to see this ancient business...'⁴⁰

When he joined the 4th Employment Company in March 1942 he readily accepted his fellow-soldiers – the Italians and Greeks and Hungarians and Jews from Poland, as well as the many aliens in this Company who came from Germany and Austria – but his attitude to some of the officers was more critical (a not uncommon view):

In Albury, our captain was Captain Walker, VD, which we immediately translated into venereal disease... I think he was half-drunk most of the time, and he addressed us in a slurred voice: 'Well, I notice a lot of you chaps are Germans and Austrians. I just want to tell you the only Germans and Austrians I like are dead ones!' That was our introduction to the Australian army.⁴¹

While he enjoyed the polyglot company, the cultural activities, including a choir – 'we sang Russian songs in Russian'⁴² – Sievers chafed at the waste of skill and knowledge as they loaded and unloaded trains in Albury. The Americans showed more sense, he believed: 'they [were] clever enough to use people like us to put into the army and have right in front, because of their local knowledge. Whereas here, we were in stupid work and not allowed to go overseas and fight.'⁴³ He did not have a high opinion of the military hierarchy – a not uncommon response among the Employment Company soldiers.

Even when he saw Australian behaviour that at one level appalled him, he recognised something appealing: a casual, egalitarian spirit and a reluctance to condemn. On one occasion, he was working as a checker at the Albury railway station when he saw 'a German U-boat captain in his full uniform' hiding in a carriage under a tarpaulin. There had been a breakout from Cowra prisoner-of-

war camp. Sievers writes:

I called some of the civilian labourers who were also at the platform. I said, 'Look, I've got this chap here. Please watch him while I quickly go and get the military police.' ... They said, 'Ah, let the poor bugger go.' It was unbelievable. I said, 'This is a German U-boat captain.' They said, 'Ah, let him go.' ... I went and rang up and 10 minutes later the [military police] came with submachine guns. There were the 3 labourers sitting playing cards with the German submarine officer. If that wasn't Australian! ⁴⁴

Later he was to say: 'I am fiercely Australian, but I am also fiercely European.'⁴⁵

Sievers and Bergner are just two of the aliens who spent the bulk of the war as labourers, soldiers who never fired a shot. Their work was essential, and entirely unglamorous. They have largely vanished from public memory, and the war historians have generally overlooked them. Most of these men stayed on in Australia after the war. They never lost the invisible luggage of memory and hope they brought here. A few, like Bergner and Sievers, became eminent. Almost all contributed immensely to the post-war flowering of the Australian economy and its culture.⁴⁶

Endnotes

- 1 Alan Gill, 'How a Maori officer became a father figure to the "misfits"', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 March 1992.
- 2 Yosl Bergner, letter to 6th Employment Company reunion, 16th February 1994.
- 3 Yosl Bergner, *What I Meant to Say: Stories and travels as told to Ruth Bondy* (Israel: Hed Arzi Book Publishing, 1997), p. 43.
- 4 Bergner's father, Zacharia Chana Bergner, was a poet, essayist and leading Jewish cultural activist in Poland who took the name Melech Ravitch. He came to Australia in 1933 in search of a possible 'Jewish homeland' in the Kimberleys, and lived here until 1937. For Yosl Bergner's matter-of-fact account of his father, see his memoir, *What I Meant to Say: Stories and travels as told to Ruth Bondy* (Israel: Hed Arzi Book Publishing, 1997).
- 5 Bergner, op. cit., p. 82.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 88.
- 7 Cited by Frank Klepner, *Yosl Bergner: Art as a Meeting of Cultures*, Macmillan, Melbourne 2004, pp. 67, 70
- 8 Bernard Smith, *Noel Counihan: Artist and Revolutionary* (Melbourne: OUP, 1993), p. 184.
- 9 Bergner, ABC Melbourne radio interview, [in week beginning Monday, 8 October 1990]. See also Richard Haese, *Rebels and Precursors: The Revolutionary Years of Australian Art* (Ringwood: Allen Lane, 1981), p. 85.
- 10 Frank Klepner, op. cit., p. 74.
- 11 Cited in *ibid.*, p. 77.
- 12 Smith, op. cit., p. 167.

- 13 Bergner, op. cit., p. 113. Frank Klepner's Book *Yosl Bergner: Art as a meeting of cultures* includes three pencil sketches of Aborigines dated 1938, a painting titled 'Aborigines in Fitzroy', dated 1941, and then a number of paintings of Aborigines done between 1942–44, part of the period Bergner spent in the 6th Employment Company. Klepner has an interesting chapter in the book discussing Bergner's interest in Aborigines as an influence on other painters (pp. 91–107).
- 14 Klepner, op. cit., p. 9.
- 15 Bergner, ABC radio interview, op. cit.
- 16 Klempner, op. cit., p. 91, citing an article by P. Heinrichs, 'Wandering Son Returns', *The Age*, 26 August 1978, p. 19.
- 17 Bergner, ABC radio interview, op. cit.
- 18 Bergner, in a film made by Yarra Bank Films in 1987, called *Painting the Town: A Film about Yosl Bergner*, written by Charles Merewether and Sharon Connelly, directed by Trevor Graham, narrated by Max Gillies.
- 19 Cited in Smith, op. cit., p. 182.
- 20 Yosl Bergner, interview with June Factor, 16 April 2002.
- 21 The Australian War Memorial dates the painting 1944. Klepner calls it 'End of a Day's Work, Tocumwal', and dates it 1942–43 (op. cit., plate 40). Before him, the art historian Richard Haese uses the same title as Klepner but gives the date as 1941 (op. cit., p. 158). As Bergner is notorious for both not dating his pictures and changing their names ('Sometimes I date my paintings and sometimes not' (Klempner, op. cit., p. 105), this confusion is understandable, although Haese's date is definitely wrong, as Bergner didn't join the 6th Employment Company until April 1942.
- 22 Klepner, op. cit., p. 91.
- 23 *ibid.*, pp. 51, 72.
- 24 *ibid.*, p. 41.
- 25 Wolfgang Sievers, interviewed by Barry York, 20 March 2000, National Library of Australia Oral History Section, p. 36.
- 26 Wolfgang Sievers, interview with June Factor, 15 June 2003.
- 27 Wolfgang Sievers, *Images of Germany: Australian Insights*, small pamphlet-size publication, nd, p. 13.
- 28 *ibid.*
- 29 Sievers, interview with Barry York, op. cit., p. 30.
- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 Sievers, interview with June Factor, op. cit.
- 32 Sievers, interview with Barry York, op. cit., pp. 23–4.
- 33 *ibid.*, p. 41.
- 34 *ibid.*, p. 47.
- 35 Sievers, interview with June Factor, op. cit., Maie Casey, was the wife of Richard Casey, then a cabinet minister in the conservative Australian government. Mrs Casey was interested in the arts and enjoyed the company of artists.
- 36 *ibid.*
- 37 *ibid.*
- 38 Sievers, interview with Barry York, op. cit., p. 65
- 39 *ibid.*, p. 97

40 *ibid.*, p. 61.

41 Sievers, interview with June Factor, *op. cit.*

42 *ibid.*

43 *ibid.*, p. 55.

44 *ibid.*, p. 70.

45 *ibid.*, p. 116.

46 In his book *The Hitler Refugees* (Chatto & Windus, London 2002), the British historian Daniel Snowman has explored the remarkable cultural contribution made to Britain by refugees from Nazism.

KURT OFFENBURG IN AUSTRALIA

Walter Struve

He saw through all shams and pretensions and felt profoundly disturbed by what he saw going on in the world at large; but he was a man of great humanity, in personal matters as I saw him, and in his way of extending his personal touch over the air, as he did to you.

H. McDonald¹

Kurt Offenburg was born German and Jewish, and probably arrived in Australia about 1927. In November 1936, he became an Australian citizen.² He was then one week short of his thirty-eighth birthday and was working for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, preparing insightful radio commentaries on foreign affairs; nine and a half years later he died of heart failure, on his way to broadcast a 'Notes on the News' program.³ By then Offenburg was recognised as 'one of the most popular and provocative radio speakers in Australia'.⁴

He was committed to 'a community that upholds individualism, humanism and reason', as Offenburg wrote in July 1938.⁵ 'He became an Australian', it was later stated, 'because he could not live in a country in which speech, writing and discussion were throttled'. Charles Bean, a fellow journalist who had been Australia's first official war correspondent 'and later perhaps our most respected war historian',⁶ said this when – one week after Offenburg's death – he stepped in to deliver what would have been Offenburg's broadcast. Earlier, in a tribute published the day after Offenburg's death, Bean wrote:

Kurt Offenburg could no more live willingly among lies than he could live under water. He hated hypocrisy, social, national or international; and the opportunity for free, direct, sincere public speech and writing was the breath of his existence. That, apart from a fragrantly happy marriage, caused his delight in his Australian life.⁷

This delight in 'free, direct, sincere' speech – coupled with intelligence, curiosity and an extensive knowledge of world affairs, gained through his commitment to 'zigzag travels'⁸ – generated radio broadcasts that were a rare, invaluable contribution to the Australian intellectual landscape at a time when, as W. Macmahon Ball wrote in 1938, Australian broadcasting on world affairs tended to be 'very poor, fragmentary and inadequate'.⁹ 'In knowledge of foreign affairs generally we have no commentator in his class,' wrote the ABC's Federal Talks Controller in August 1936,¹⁰ a position shared by his successor, who wrote in January 1940: 'Kurt Offenburg is one of our best news commentators.'¹¹

While Offenburg's speaking voice and German accent did cause problems – 'I shall be glad if you will instruct Mr. Offenburg to speak more slowly and to take even more care in current pronunciation of English', wrote the ABC's General Manager in 1938¹² – his broadcasts struck chords with listeners. A letter of May 1940, by Gladys Marks, a lecturer in French at the University of Sydney can be cited here. Referring to what she and various colleagues thought about ABC news commentators, she wrote:

We were all – save one – agreed that Kurt Offenburg was the most capable, the best informed and enlightened of them all, and we wondered why he wasn't put on the air more often. The Vice-Chancellor – I am sure he wouldn't mind me mentioning his name – said to me that 'Offenburg was the only man from whom one learned something', and that 'he was *very* good'. Professor Trendall also thinks him outstanding.¹³

In June 1940, an article on international affairs commentators in *The Home* magazine noted that 'Mr. Kurt Offenburg has a large "public" on the air and commands respect by his clarity of thought and economy of words'.¹⁴ A.P. Elkin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, was another who singled out Offenburg's work. In his study of August 1941, *Our Opinions and the National Effort*, Elkin wrote:

In a cross-section of the community, the news commentators on the national network are seldom mentioned, although a couple of the fairly regular men have their 'educated' following. But the papers prepared by Kurt Offenburg... are appreciated by a greater number; Mr. Offenburg gives the impression of 'having been there'.¹⁵

Offenburg gave unstintingly, even when it was affecting his health.¹⁶ My aim in this article is to touch on what we know of his life. An underlying hope is that – 65 years after his death – someone reading the article may yet recall, or know of, aspects of Kurt Offenburg the person, writer and broadcaster, so that a fuller picture of him can yet emerge.

Born in Offenburg

An entry in a German directory, the *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon*,¹⁷ tells us that Kurt Offenburg was a writer, poet, essayist and translator;¹⁸ he was born on 25 November 1898, lived in Frankfurt am Main and later in Australia. The entry is rounded out with a listing of four books,¹⁹ three from 1924–25 and the fourth from 1928: *Der Englische Boccaccio: Den erbaulichen und kecken Canterbury-Geschichten des seligen Herrn Chaucer* [The English Boccaccio: The blessed Mr Chaucer's bold and edifying Canterbury Tales], 1924; *11/10: Ein zeitgenössischer Roman* [11/10: A contemporary novel], 1925²⁰; *Arbeiterdichtung der Gegenwart* [Workers' literature of the present], 1925; and *Der ewige Garten: Ein Buch der*

Einkehr [The eternal garden: A book of contemplation], 1928.

An Australian biographical register, published one year earlier,²¹ described Kurt Offenburg as a Sydney journalist born in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, in 1899;²² he was married to Irene Cook (sic)²³ and died in Sydney on 16 May 1946. Other details included in this entry are: Offenburg served in the German Army during the final two years (1917–18) of the First World War; he worked for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*; he was a leading anti-Nazi; he was a foreign correspondent in China and Japan; he came to Australia in the late 1930s;²⁴ he was naturalised; and he wrote four books.²⁵

It needs to be noted that the compilers of this register did warn against ‘taking the *Biographical register* entries as fully researched statements’,²⁶ rather than as starting points for investigation. In the case of Offenburg it is well to heed the warning, as Offenburg was a complex, private person who did not set out to leave behind him smooth narratives for obituary writers to string together. Lou Kepert was one who recognised this. In a long review of Offenburg’s last book – a collection of articles and stories from Offenburg’s early twenties onwards – Kepert wrote:

It is not easy to fit this book into a category. It is not autobiography. It is not a travel book. It is not a novel, nor even a collection of short stories. You might call it a ‘spiritual Odyssey’, except that the phrase would pompously overshadow the book’s charm of unpretentiousness. Some of the author’s wanderings into the corners of three continents arose from his earlier duties as a foreign correspondent. But do not come looking for an anecdote of what he said to the Foreign Commissar or how he drank whisky with the President. His product here is a series of delicately sketched vignettes in which the author is only reflected in glimpses.²⁷

In this last book, Offenburg included an essay – ‘The Black Wing’ – in which he described an encounter in China with a German nun from the same part of Germany as Offenburg,²⁸ and it is only in this oblique way that one learns where in Germany Offenburg was from. The nun had arrived in China at the age of 19 years and, by the time of this encounter, had lived in the interior for 23 years. Offenburg met her in April 1932 on a Yangtze River steamer.²⁹ He first observed from a distance and noted: ‘The black hood of her habit seemed like the great powerful wing of one of the royal birds which live in unapproachable heights, in an air so clear and fine that no breath of this earth reaches the icy beyond of its silence and humility’.

On the following day he saw her ‘in conversation with two Chinese gentlemen, sleek and suave in their European suits’, and noted occasional English expressions. Meanwhile he studied – ‘in short unnoticed glimpses’ – her face:

The skin had the softness, the luminous transparency of one of those white roses whose leaves combine the softness of velvet with the precious coolness of crystal. The small plane of the cheeks – lit up by a pink of the tenderness of the last minutes before dawn is overcome by the first appearing rays of the sun – ran down to a firm chin, joyfully parted by the small valley of a dimple.

It was then that the words ‘Black Forest’ were spoken, followed by ‘South Germany, near the Swiss border’. Offenburg now joined the conversation and it soon became apparent that both he and the nun had been born there:

And at once we began to speak in our native tongue. All afternoon and most of the next day and the next one we talked about the Black Forest, that most southern part towards the Swiss border with its dense and dark pines, its great snow-covered mountains, its low thatched houses and the old villages...

They spoke also of fears and of the modern world. Three days after they arrived in Shanghai, the nun sailed for Europe, with a promise to send Offenburg a postcard from the Black Forest. But a postcard never arrived; the voyage to Europe ended in disaster and ‘the opalesque blue-green depths of the Indian Ocean closed forever over the black wing’.³⁰

Offenburg’s essay is an elegy for the nun and also the corner of southwest Germany they both came from. Offenburg was indeed born close to the Black Forest and – across the Rhine on the west – Strasbourg in France; he was born in the city of Offenburg,³¹ the eldest child of Josef Dreifuss (1866–1915), a master upholsterer, and Rosa Dreifuss, née Halle (1873–1916). Josef was from the nearby village of Schmieheim,³² a son of Wolf Dreifuss (1831–1918) and Deborah Dreifuss, née Hannover (1833–1916);³³ Rosa was from Hockenheim, a town further north, near Mannheim.³⁴ She was a daughter of Hermann Halle, a cigar manufacturer, and Friedericke Halle, née Wallenstein.

Josef and Rosa had five children: Kurt (1898–1946); Paul (1902–1950s); Ilse (1908–?); Egon (1910–1981); and Friedrich (1912–1960).³⁵ They ran a furniture business – ‘Möbelmagazin Josef Dreifuss’ – in the inner city, close to the town hall and a statue commemorating ‘Sir Francis Drake, disseminator of the potato in Europe, 1586’.³⁶ The statue was a gift to the city of Offenburg from the Strasbourg sculptor, Andreas Friedrich,³⁷ who had intended it originally for Strasbourg. It was unveiled in Offenburg in July 1853 and stood before the town hall until the night of 8 November 1939, when it was destroyed.³⁸

Could it be that this statue of a legendary English seaman who had circum-navigated the world in 1577–80 played on Offenburg’s imagination as a child? In an essay – ‘Symphony of Travel’ – he later wrote: ‘Ships lived in the phantasy of the boy at a time he had not even seen a proper sailing boat; and ships still remain the magical unit for the man at a time when the Seven Seas have become a second home.’³⁹

And could this statue of an Englishman have led Offenburg also to Geoffrey Chaucer, 'the morning star of English literature' whose 'grandiose and considered humour simmered in all of his stories, even the serious ones'?⁴⁰ Offenburg's first book was a shortened re-telling of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in gently flowing German prose, beginning with Chaucer's description of springtime awakening mankind's ancient yearnings for travel and grace. (Or was this book a commission that the young author was keen to fulfil?)

It was from this world of Offenburg – in the German state of Baden⁴¹ – that Kurt Dreifuss emerged as Kurt Offenburg, writer.

Writer, traveller, Weimar democrat, Australian

The pieces collected by Offenburg in *World in Dust: A Personal Record* represent his attempts to distil the 'spiritual significance' of experiences that had shaped him. In the epilogue he wrote: 'I suddenly realise, as never before, that twenty-five years have gone into the making of these pages'.⁴² The epilogue was dated 'Sydney, November 1944', the month Offenburg turned 46.

A short essay – 'The Hand' – forms the first chapter and reveals to us how Offenburg chose to introduce himself to readers: a youngster on the Western Front during the First World War and his first encounter with death. Offenburg and two older men were stumbling across fields that had been 'ploughed by shells'; he was weighed down with a heavy kitbag, new boots that were too large and an overcoat also too large and too heavy. White clouds in the autumn sky turned his thoughts to Fra Angelico. They then came upon groundsheets covering something; as they got closer they saw a dead man's hand sticking out, a golden wedding ring on the third finger. Offenburg described the scene and also how he then had to hurry to catch up with the others who had continued. They kept walking and walking, 'just the three of us, and myself the youngest, who had now made his first acquaintance with Death, the ever-present company for many a year to come'.⁴³

As far as I have – so far⁴⁴ – discovered, he has not written of his Jewish background as Kurt Dreifuss in Offenburg, or of Jewish communities in either Baden or – across the Rhine – in French Alsace.⁴⁵ But his novel of 1925 does portray a Jew from Kolomea (now Kolomyia)⁴⁶ who, in the first chapter, is a door-to-door salesman in Munich, selling books he was carting in two suitcases. Step by step this character – Ruben Erzmann – becomes a powerful Berlin-based publisher. It is an ambitious, sometimes sharp novel describing the inner workings of the German book trade in the years before, during and after the First World War.⁴⁷ If there is a 'Kurt' character in the novel, perhaps it is Raphael, Ruben's younger son who, towards the end of the novel, was living in a small university town where he was studying Oriental languages and was having thoughts of converting to Catholicism.

The thoughts of both father and son that ensue give the rest of the novel a reflective tone. Raphael's final word was: 'If I do not follow my conscience, then

I shall be a broken man'.⁴⁸ It is then Ruben who travels – to places like Khartoum and Benares – and 'often it seemed to him as if he were approaching his own father or some relatives in Kolomea'.

It is a novel written in the light of the First World War. Interestingly, when the Second World War was ended and it happened to be the birthday of the writer Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), Offenburg devoted his evening 'News Review' broadcast to this Jew from Düsseldorf on the Rhine, seeking to present him as a political thinker:

The Heine of the poems is well known; if it be only through Robert Schumann's compositions, setting much of Heine's lyrical work to music.⁴⁹ But Heine the prose-writer, the clear-sighted analyst and foe of Prussianism, is scarcely known. And yet Heine, the political thinker, the leader of a movement which substituted for the doctrine of the sword the doctrine of world emancipation – he is as modern today as a century ago and more.⁵⁰

We know that Offenburg was – between September 1908 and July 1915 – a student at the *Oberrealschule* in Offenburg and that, subsequently, he was based in Frankfurt/Main. We know also that he had been 'a soldier of 1917'.⁵¹ He was much taken with workers' literature and was sceptical of intellectuals from the middle classes.⁵² We know that Offenburg – during 'the Roaring Twenties and the beginning of the Hungry Thirties' – had observed the League of Nations in Geneva 'from the inside'. He mentioned this in a broadcast of 10 January 1946, the day when the first General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations – successor to the League of Nations – was to open in London. 'Certainly', he stated, 'it is easier and much less troublesome to be a perennial optimist than to remember the bitter international realities which lead from the white League of Nations building to the battlefields all over the world'. But Offenburg did care to remember and did care about 'harsh' realities:

One had attended too many Conferences, both as a detached newspaperman and a trained sociologist, as not to be sceptical: and as not to see the famous men of the day, the politicians and so-called statesmen, as the meticulously-dressed and polished puppets, who dangled in front of the reverent public: while beneath them, invisible to the Great Public, very different forces, and mightier forces, were the real policy-makers. These may seem harsh words: but the issue of peace or war *is* a harsh issue.⁵³

The range of Offenburg's travel is remarkable. A note included in all three of his short books from 1941–42 – *War in the Pacific?* (March 1941), *Does Russia Matter?* (July 1941), and *Japan at our Gates: The Thermopylae of Australia is at Singapore* (early 1942) – outlined them as follows:

In the last 15 years he has been in the United States, British Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Celebes, Philippines, China, Manchuria, Japan. Some of these countries he visited two and three times. As Special Correspondent for one of the leading European newspapers⁵⁴ he covered the first and second stages of Japan's conquest of Asia.⁵⁵ He knows intimately most European countries between the Baltic and Black Seas, and has met scores of leading figures, statesmen and adventurers, both in Europe and the Far East.

The fruits of Offenburg's travels come through most clearly in his ABC broadcasts. While the earliest script to be found in the National Archives of Australia is from 28 August 1940,⁵⁶ traces of earlier broadcasts can be found in the books of 1941–42 and elsewhere. That the broadcasts did sometimes raise eyebrows can be seen from a letter of complaint by a listener in Queensland, written on the evening of 22 September 1936 and sent to W. M. Hughes, the then Minister for Health and Repatriation, who had been Prime Minister of Australia between 1915 and 1923:

My appeal is this. Must we be subjected to the insult of a German sneering and making disparaging remarks about the Empire's other great fighter and loyalist, Mr. Lloyd George?⁵⁷ Tonight, over the A.B.C. network, after the news at 7.15 p.m., a gentleman – so called – named Herr Offenburg, or something equally German, spent ten minutes sneering at Mr. Lloyd George's remarks on Nazi Democracy. Even had the said remarks been capable of being proved, in some measure, incorrect, is it patriotic to allow a foreigner, particularly a German, to belittle a British subject over the air. I have written a protest to Mr Moses, telling him that I do not think that we can ever attain world peace while we lower our prestige in this way.⁵⁸

Offenburg's broadcast – over 2BL at 7.24 p.m., 22 September 1936 – had been on 'Mr. Lloyd George's Belief in [the] Nazi Ideal'. Frank Dixon, the ABC's Federal News Editor, wrote a response to the letter of complaint and sought to give context to Offenburg's talk. He mentioned also that: 'Mr. Offenburg deemed it necessary to draw on his own experience of the tyranny of Hitlerism to warn the people that Germany's "peaceful" protestations must not be taken too seriously.'⁵⁹

It is frustrating that Offenburg's text has not survived.

Remembering Kurt Offenburg

One year after Offenburg's death, Richard Boyer – Chairman of the ABC since April 1945⁶⁰ – wrote in his capacity as chairman of a Kurt Offenburg Memorial Fund:⁶¹ 'We who listened to his talks and admired his deep love of all mankind, and his clear understanding of what is needed if peace is to be preserved, feel that what he said should not be allowed to fade from the memory of the Australian

people.' The aim was 'to establish a Fund for the delivery of lectures and broadcast talks, etc., by which more and more people may come to share the faith for which Kurt Offenburg lived and fought and died'.⁶²

The Memorial Fund's General Committee included a distinctive array of individuals, among them Emery Barcs, Charles Bean, Ian Clunies Ross, H. D. Black, John Hope, A. H. McDonald, Walter Murdoch, Florence Musico, Vance Palmer, and Bishop Pilcher, as well as the Director of the Chinese Information Bureau and the Consuls-General for America, Argentina, Belgium, China, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland.⁶³ An Executive Committee included Angus McLachlan, B. H. Molesworth, and Julius Stone.⁶⁴ Sadly, two volumes of typed minutes of the Fund's Executive Committee, which had been lodged with the State Library of Victoria, no longer appear to be available;⁶⁵ however, a brief newspaper article of 18 December 1947 spelled out all too clearly that insufficient money had been collected for 'a regular series of lectures to assist the cause of international understanding for which the late Kurt Offenburg worked'.⁶⁶

By then the Memorial Fund's Honorary Secretary, Paula Pentley, had sounded out Colin McCallum, Chief Librarian at the Public Library of Victoria (now State Library of Victoria) with a proposal to establish 'a Memorial collection of books furthering International Understanding in a Public Library, with the late Kurt Offenburg's books on International Affairs as a nucleus and to use the interest of existing funds to add, from time to time, books on the subject'.⁶⁷ This then occurred, with Melbourne becoming the home for this 'Kurt Offenburg Memorial Collection'. Paula Pentley continued to nurture it – with great and touching diligence – for the rest of her life.⁶⁸

But gradually the collection lost its glamour and its prominence, and was quietly retired to closed-stack areas. And so Kurt Offenburg's name also faded. His life was one that urged rational perseverance with dignity:

If disenchantment is the price one pays, it is worth the result, because at last one has gained that inner freedom of no longer caring what others think. The tragedy of life becomes bearable, even enjoyable: for by transmuting its horror and disappointments, its griefs and humiliations into something greater than one's own mortal reactions, life has been purged of its terror and pity. It is ancient Aristotle's ever-new catharsis.⁶⁹

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Endnotes

- 1 Alexander Hugh McDonald (1908–1979), Professor of Ancient History at the University of Sydney, began his ‘Notes on the News’ ABC radio commentary on 17 May 1946 with this ‘reference to the sudden passing of my friend, Kurt Offenburg’. McDonald’s opening paragraphs are quoted in Alan Moyle, ‘Report to the Nation’, *Talk*, vol.1, no.3, June 1946, p. 7.
- 2 Technically, naturalisation in 1936 led to a person becoming a ‘British subject’; it was not until Australia’s *Nationality and Citizen Act* (1948) came into force on 26 January 1949 that one could be an ‘Australian citizen’.
- 3 Offenburg died on 16 May 1946; he had been broadcasting weekly ‘Notes on the News’ programmes (generally on Thursdays at 1.15 p.m.) as well as ‘News Commentary’ programmes (at 7.15 p.m. on various days of the week) and – less frequently – ‘News Review’ programmes (at 9.05 p.m. on various days of the week).
- 4 ‘Will miss forthright voice of Offenburg’, *The ABC Weekly*, 1 June 1946, p. 40.
- 5 Kurt Offenburg, ‘Cum Civis Britannicus’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 July 1938, p. 13.
- 6 C.E.W. Bean, ‘Broadcast Commentary’, 2 FC, 1.15 p.m. 23 May 1946, National Archives of Australia (NAA): SP300/1, 1946/Bean, Dr CEW.
- 7 ‘Dr. Bean’s Tribute’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May 1946, p. 4.
- 8 Offenburg used this expression when – on writing on the Pacific – he argued that, in order to understand the political and economic conditions of an area, it helps to travel extensively: ‘To have travelled the Pacific is one of these great object lessons. The more frequently and more extensively you have done so, the better. In every direction, from North to South, and with many a detour: from San Francisco to Honolulu, through the South Seas to New Zealand, from Australia via new Guinea and the (apparently insignificant) Caroline Islands to the Philippines; and from here from the Western slowly into the North Pacific – via Hong Kong to Formosa and Japan. Shorter excursions, such as to Singapore and Java, from Australia to the New Hebrides, Tonga and Fiji help one to round out this picture. The foremost and decisive result of such zigzag travels is the knowledge: this *largest of all oceans* is more than merely a tremendous expanse of water (at the other side of the world, if one sees it from the narrow corner of Europe).’ See Kurt Offenburg, *War in the Pacific?*, Sydney: Gayle, 1941, pp. 19–20.
- 9 W. Macmahon Ball, ‘Broadcasting and World Affairs’, *Press, Radio and World Affairs: Australia’s Outlook*, ed. by W. Macmahon Ball, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1938, p. 130. Ball (1901–86), described as ‘a pragmatic yet idealistic liberal democrat’, was a distinguished academic, journalist, broadcaster, administrator and diplomat who became the University of Melbourne’s first Professor of Political Science; see Graeme Osborne, ‘William Macmahon Ball: Making Communication Visible’, *Australian Journal of Communication*, vol.24, no.3, 1997, pp. 65–84.
- 10 Rudolph Bronner, Memorandum to the General Manager, 6 August 1936, NAA: SP1558/2, Box 36.
- 11 B. H. Molesworth, Federal Talks Controller, to Crosby Morrison, Department of Information, 18 January 1940, NAA: SP1558/2, Box 83. Molesworth was Federal

- Talks Controller from 1937 until his retirement in 1955, and was remembered 'as a quiet, self-contained, very modest person, as little assertive as he was, outwardly at least, unmoved by irrational and partisan criticism'; see Lascelles Wilson, 'B.H. Molesworth: A Tribute', *Australian Journal of Adult Education*, vol.11, no.3, Nov. 1971, pp. 151–2.
- 12 C. J. A. Moses, Memorandum to the Federal News Editor, 28 May 1938, NAA: SP1558/2, Box 36.
 - 13 Gladys H. Marks, Department of French, University of Sydney, to the Manager, News Department, Australian Broadcasting Commission, 27 May 1940, NAA: SP1558/2, Box 36. Sir Robert Strachan Wallace (1882–1961) was the Vice-Chancellor, and Arthur Dale Trendall (1909–95) the Professor of Greek (later also Professor of Archaeology) at the University of Sydney.
 - 14 'Embodied Voices: Commentators on International Affairs', *The Home*, vol. 21, no. 6, 1 June 1940, p. 16.
 - 15 A.P. Elkin, *Our Opinions and the National Effort*, Sydney: Australian Medical Publishing Company, 1941, p. 72.
 - 16 One obituary noted that: 'During the later war years, as events moved to a climax in Europe and the Pacific, Mr. Offenburg overtaxed his strength in preparing regular commentaries and writing on world affairs. For months his life hung in the balance, and hopes for his recovery were more than once abandoned.' See 'Vale Kurt Offenburg', *A.B.C. Federal Publicity Bulletin*, no.386, 9 June 1946. Offenburg's death certificate noted 'coronary sclerosis' and 'cardiac infarction' one year and four months before his death; see New South Wales, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 1946/007195.
 - 17 *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Biographisch-Bibliographischer Handbuch*, 3rd rev. ed., vol.11, ed. by Heinz Rupp and Carl Ludwig Lang, Bern: Francke, 1988. The Offenburg entry was written by Anna Stüssi.
 - 18 Offenburg's entry in *Kürschners Deutscher Literatur-Kalender auf das Jahr 1930*, p. 892, indicates that he was a translator for English and French.
 - 19 A fifth book, *Profile Europäischer Romanciers: Essays* [Profile of European novelists: Essays], 1925/7?, was consistently (as late as 1945) listed by Offenburg as one of his published works. It seems that it was indeed 'published', but the publisher folded; Offenburg's attempts to move to another publisher – and also get all of his previous books re-published – were unsuccessful, although the publisher he had been negotiating with – the Büchergilde Gutenberg in Berlin – did publish Offenburg's next book. It needs to be added that *Profile Europäischer Romanciers* is included in the Offenburg entry (did he write this entry himself?) in *Kürschners Deutscher Literatur-Kalender auf das Jahr 1930* and its publication date there is given as 1927.
 - 20 An English translation, by the Australian scholar/poet, Christopher Brennan, was later published in Sydney (Kurt Offenburg, *These Glorious Crusaders: A Contemporary Novel*, translated by the late C. J. Brennan, Sydney: Macquarie Head, 1934).
 - 21 *A Biographical Register, 1788–1939: Notes from the Name Index of the Australian Dictionary of Biography*, comp. and ed. by H. J. Gibbney and Ann G. Smith, vol.2, Canberra: Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University, 1987, p. 151.

- 22 The place and year of birth given here are both incorrect.
- 23 Dulcie Irene Cooke (1897–1972) was Offenburg’s second wife (her surname was ‘Cooke’, not ‘Cook’); they were married in Sydney on 19 December 1938. Offenburg’s first marriage – in Frankfurt am Main on 29 April 1922 – was with Olga Abramson (1895–1955), from Libau, Latvia. There was one child from this marriage, Ruth (1922–85), whose daughter, Judith Hamilton, lives in the UK; Kurt and Olga divorced on 16 May 1923.
- 24 Offenburg’s death certificate, for example, states that he had been ‘19 years in Australia’ (which takes one back to 1927). Further, it seems that it was in 1929 that Christopher Brennan had been ‘induced’ to translate Offenburg’s novel by Offenburg’s ‘friend’, Conor Macleod (c.1868–1934), leading one to ask when and where Offenburg’s friendship with Conor Macleod was formed. Records held in Frankfurt am Main show that Offenburg had travelled in 1925, 1926 and 1930 (but do not give destinations, aside from Italy in 1925).
- 25 Nine books were published (ten if one counts the Brennan translation of Offenburg’s novel), but how many were actually written – and how many were still in progress at the time of his death – is difficult to determine. In a 1930 interview, Offenburg mentioned a second novel and two plays (see ‘Interesting visitors at “The Australia”’: Mr. Kurt Offenburg’, *The Australia Handbook*, vol. 6, no. 3, Dec. 1930, p. 17); reference to ‘a travel book entitled *Invisible Cargo*, which will be published in Australia’ (*The BP Magazine*, vol.17, no.1, 1 Dec. 1934, p. 25), and ‘a new novel dealing with contemporary Europe, [which] will shortly be published in London’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 Feb. 1939, p. 19), need to be noted, although I have so far found no trace of either book. The *Sydney Morning Herald* obituary stated that, ‘at the time of his death, he was engaged on several books, as well as a collection of his poems’.
- 26 *A Biographical Register, 1788–1939*, vol.1, p.vii. The Offenburg entry was based on information included in two obituaries: ‘Kurt Offenburg’s Death’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May 1946, p. 4, and ‘Kurt Offenburg’, *The Journalist*, vol.38, no.13, June 1946, p. 4.
- 27 L. V. Kepert, ‘A Spiritual Odyssey of To-day’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 September 1945, p. 7. (The article is signed: ‘L.V.K.’) Kepert was a staff journalist whose reviews were described as ‘distinguished’; see Gavin Souter, *Company of Heralds: A Century and a Half of Australian Publishing by John Fairfax Limited and its Predecessors, 1831–1981*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1981, p. 328.
- 28 Kurt Offenburg, *World in Dust: A Personal Record*, Sydney: Gayle, 1945, pp. 179–85. The essay first appeared – under the title ‘Twenty-three Years’ – in *The BP Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1 Sept. 1934, pp. 46, 94–5.
- 29 A subsequent ABC broadcast, of December 1940, gave some context for this journey – ‘in the far-off days in 1932’ – down the Yangtze River. Offenburg had interviewed the Chinese nationalist politician, Wang Ching-wei (1885–1944) in Nanking and, ‘a few days later, on the Yangtze steamer between Nanking and Hankow, I read the 130–odd pages of Mr. Wang’s book’ (Wang had given Offenburg a copy of his book, *China and the Nations*); see Kurt Offenburg, ‘The Puppet Government of Nanking’, 2FC, 7.15 p.m., 4 Dec. 1940, NAA:SP369/2, Box 2.

- 30 The nun sailed from Shanghai on the French liner, *Georges Philippar*, which was returning to Marseilles from its maiden voyage to the Far East. Fire broke out when the liner was in the Gulf of Aden; it sank on 19 May 1932 with the loss of 54 lives. See Charles Hocking, *Dictionary of Disasters at Sea during the Age of Steam, including Sailing Ships and Ships of War lost in Action, 1824–1962*, vol.1, London: Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1969, p. 269. Offenburg did not mention the nun's name and I have not yet been able to trace it, but wish to acknowledge help from Christoph Schmider, Erzbischöflicher Archivdirektor, Freiburg.
- 31 Offenburg's population had been growing rapidly in this period: in 1870 it was 5,754 and by 1910 it was 16,848. A breakdown of the 1910 figure reveals that 12,486 were Catholic, 3,828 were Protestant, 288 were Jewish, 160 were Old Catholic, and 86 were not categorised; see Ernst Batzer, *Führer durch die Kreishauptstadt Offenburg*, Offenburg: Stadt Offenburg, [1912], p. 3.
- 32 By 1875 there were 486 Jewish families in Schmieheim, representing 45.2% of the total population, but by 1900 the number had declined to 258 families (29.3%); see Franz Hundsnerscher and Gerhard Taddey, *Die Jüdischen Gemeinden in Baden: Denkmale, Geschichte, Schicksale*, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1968, p. 253.
- 33 Wolf and Deborah are buried in the Jewish cemetery in Offenburg (as are Josef and Rosa), where the gravestone has their name as 'Dreyfuss' (and 'Dreifuss for Joseph and Rosa); see Samuel Dzialoszynski and Martin Ruch, *Der Jüdische Friedhof in Offenburg*, rev. ed., Offenburg: Kultur Agentur 'Am Oberrhein', 2007, pp. 94–5. Josef's death certificate gives 'Dreifuß' for both Josef and Wolf; see Offenburg, Standesamt, 230/1915.
- 34 Hockenheim's Jewish population had been declining (from 130 in 1875, to 112 in 1900, and 45 in 1925) due to greater opportunities in Mannheim, where Jews at that time had leading roles in all facets of the city's life; see Franz Hundsnerscher and Gerhard Taddey, pp. 133–4, 193.
- 35 The fate of the two youngest children came to light through contact with Egon's son, but that of Paul and Ilse remains all but unknown (although a few details on Paul can be gleaned from records held at the University Archives at Frankfurt am Main: his secondary schooling – at the Bärmann'sche Realschule in Bad Dürkheim – was completed in July 1918, and his subsequent studies – in the late 1920s – towards a business diploma at Frankfurt am Main were interrupted through illness and also a need to earn money). It seems that Paul died in Nice (sometime in the 1950s) and that Ilse had possibly got to the UK. In 1938 Egon fled to Strasbourg in France and later joined the Foreign Legion, serving in Morocco. By October 1940 he was back in France, seeking a visa for the USA, then went into hiding in the village of Camboulit, where the mayor – Elie Cavarroc (1890–1953) – provided him with false identity papers. In 1945 Egon returned to Strasbourg. Friedrich had got to New York, where he became Fred Drieves.
- 36 The inscription at the base of the monument (on the front side) read: 'Sir Francis Drake, *Verbreiter der Kartoffel in Europa im Jahre des Herrn 1586*'; see Donald Reddick, 'The Drake Potato Introduction Monument: How the Small City of Offenburg, Baden, Happens to Possess the Only Monument to the Introduction of the Potato', *Journal of Heredity*, vol. 20, no. 4, 1929, p. 173.

- 37 Andreas (or André) Friedrich (1798–1877), born in Rappoltsweiler (now Ribeauvillé, Haut-Rhin), was an Alsatian sculptor, draughtsman and lithographer; he studied in Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Paris and Rome, and settled in Strasbourg in 1826.
- 38 See Martin Ruch, *Offenburger Stadtführer: Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte*, Offenburg: Reiff Schwarzwaldverlag, 2007, pp. 55–6.
- 39 Kurt Offenburg, ‘Symphony of Travel’, *The BP Magazine*, 1 Sept. 1934, p. 97. Offenburg later reprinted this essay – now called ‘Farewell, Last Freedom’ – in *World in Dust*, pp. 186–90, but without the final paragraph which included the lines here quoted. The reprinted version ended abruptly with a final paragraph consisting of a single sentence – ‘Nothing is permanent but change’ – where Offenburg may have been quoting Ludwig Börne (1786–1837), whose original name was Löb Baruch. (For the epigraph to his travel book, *Harzreise*, Heinrich Heine used lines by Börne beginning with, ‘Nichts ist dauernd, als der Wechsel’.)
- 40 *Der Englische Boccaccio: Den erbaulichen und kecken Canterbury-Geschichten des seligen Herrn Chaucer*, nacherzählt von Kurt Offenburg, Dresden: Sibyllen-Verlag, 1924, pp. 264, 269.
- 41 Now (since 1952) Baden-Württemberg.
- 42 *World in Dust*, p. 191.
- 43 *ibid.*, pp. 15–16.
- 44 I have so far found 101 published articles, essays, stories, reviews and forewords written by Offenburg, the earliest from 1921.
- 45 A reminder ‘that the Rhine was not always or for everyone a river of division’ comes when one looks at the background of Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935), born in Alsace, whose great-grandmother, Brändel Meyer, was from the Black Forest in Baden; see Michael Burns, *Dreyfus: A Family Affair, 1789–1945*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1992, p. 6. I have not come across any reference to the ‘Dreyfus Affair’ in Offenburg’s work.
- 46 A city on the Prut River in western Ukraine. From 1772 until the end of the First World War it was under Austrian rule; in 1900 it had a population of 16,568 Jews (representing almost 50% of the total population). See ‘Kolomyia’, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol.10, Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971, p. 1171.
- 47 For a brief examination of the novel, see my paper, ‘I have compiled a List: Approaching the Life of a German-born Australian Writer’, *The National Estate: Cultural Heritage*, Canberra: Independent Scholars Association of Australia, 2010, pp. 193–211 (esp. 202–207). That Heinrich Mann saw positive things in Offenburg’s novel can be surmised from Offenburg’s response to Mann, where the first sentence reads: ‘Ich bin erschrocken vor Freude, als ich Ihren Brief las’ (‘I was startled with joy when I read your letter’); see Kurt Offenburg to Heinrich Mann, 17 July 1925, Archiv der Akademie der Künste Berlin, Heinrich Mann Archiv, S.2146.
- 48 This is Brennan’s translation; Offenburg had written, ‘Wenn ich Dir folge und nicht meinem Gesetz, werde ich ein gebrochener Mensch sein’.
- 49 The song-cycle ‘Dichterliebe’ (‘A Poet’s Love’) – words by Heine and music by Schumann – was performed complete in the Sydney Town Hall on Wednesday afternoon, 13 April 1938, as part of a farewell recital by the visiting bass, Alexander Kipnis (1891–1978), a Jewish singer who had – in 1933 – been dismissed from the

- Staatsoper in Berlin. Was Offenburg in the audience that afternoon? (I like to think that he was.)
- 50 Kurt Offenburg, 'News Review', 2FC, 9.05 p.m., 13 Dec. 1945, NAA: SP369/2, Box 10.
- 51 Efforts to find his (i.e. Kurt Dreifuss's) military record have led to dead-ends, as have searches for records such as those of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Much material has been lost. Offenburg's own writings almost never reveal clear detail; for example, it is only in the context of describing how he had first encountered the writings of Gerrit Engelke in the northern Spring of 1918 that one learns that Offenburg was then in a military hospital. (Engelke was to die later that year on the Western Front, days before he would have turned 28.) Sadly, Offenburg's Australian papers have also – it seems – been lost.
- 52 Offenburg's 1921 essay on intellectuals and the proletariat is discussed in John H. Zammito's study, *The Great Debate: 'Bolshevism' and the Literary Left in Germany, 1917–1930*, New York: Peter Lang, 1984, p. 69. For Offenburg's thoughts on workers' literature, see his *Arbeiterdichtung der Gegenwart*, Frankfurt am Main: Mittelland, 1925.
- 53 Kurt Offenburg, 'Notes on the News, 10 January, 1946, 2 FC, 1.15 p.m.', NAA: SP369/2, Box 10.
- 54 The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which was described by Peter Gay as 'democratic, liberal, but free of parties; its tone was reasonable, its coverage wide, its politics intelligent and wholly independent'; see his *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1968, p. 76.
- 55 For an account based on material held in the German Foreign Affairs Archive, see my article, 'In Search of "Herr O."', *Zeitschrift für Australienstudien*, no.23, 2009, pp. 42–56, 187.
- 56 I have located 143 ABC scripts: 6 from 1940 (August to September), 44 from 1941 (February to December), 47 from 1942 (January to September), 15 from 1945 (November to December), and 31 from 1946 (January to May); NAA: SP369/2, Boxes 2, 3, 6 and 10.
- 57 David Lloyd George (1863–1945) had been British Prime Minister between December 1916 and October 1922, and was described as 'the man who won the First World War' and 'carried the British Empire to a pinnacle of greatness'; see *Lloyd George: Twelve Essays*, ed. by A. J. P. Taylor, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971, p. v. Lloyd George met with Hitler on 4 and 5 September 1936, and subsequently described him as 'the George Washington of Germany'; see Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Lloyd George and Germany', *The History Journal*, vol. 39, no.3, Sept. 1996, p. 764. (Lloyd George's praise of Hitler was reported in Australian newspapers on the morning of 22 September 1936, the day of Offenburg's broadcast.)
- 58 Doreen Scott to the Hon. W. M. Hughes, 22 September 1936; NAA: SP286/6, Box 2.
- 59 M. F. Dixon, Federal News Editor, to Mrs. Doreen Scott, 6 October 1936; NAA: SP286/6, Box 2.
- 60 Boyer became a Commissioner at the ABC in December 1939 and Chairman in April 1945.

- 61 The Memorial Fund had been established under a Deed dated 30 September 1946.
 62 R. J. F. Boyer, 'The Kurt Offenburg Memorial Fund' [a sheet advertising the Kurt
 Offenburg Memorial Appeal, to be opened by Dr C. E. W. Bean on 16 May, 1947].
- 63 Emery Barcs (1905–90), journalist; Charles Bean (1879–1968), historian; Ian
 Clunies Ross (1899–1959), veterinary scientist who became head of the CSIRO;
 H. D. Black (1904–90), economist who became Chancellor of the University of
 Sydney; John Hope (1891–1971), Anglican clergyman; A. H. McDonald (1908–
 1979), historian; Walter Murdoch (1874–1970), Chancellor of the University of
 Western Australia and noted essayist; Florence Musico (1882–1964), lecturer
 and organiser; Vance Palmer (1885–1959), writer; C. Venn Pilcher (1879–1961),
 Anglican Coadjutor Bishop of Sydney.
- 64 Angus McLachlan (1908–96), journalist, who was news editor at the *Sydney Morning
 Herald* throughout the Second World War and later general manager of John Fairfax
 Ltd; B. H. Molesworth (1891–1971), the ABC's Federal Director of Talks; Julius
 Stone (1907–1985), the Challis Professor of Jurisprudence and International Law
 at the University of Sydney.
- 65 The State Library of Victoria's La Trobe card catalogue lists them still as follows:
 '[Minutes of meetings of the Executive committee of the Kurt Offenburg memorial
 fund]. 2v. [n.p., n.d.] Typescript.'
- 66 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 Dec. 1947, p. 16.
- 67 Paula Pentley to Colin McCallum, 12 December 1947, SLV Corporate Archives
 SEC Series: Kurt Offenburg Memorial Fund.
- 68 See my article, "'Dedicated to the Promotion of International Understanding": A
 Memorial for Kurt Offenburg at the State Library', *La Trobe Journal*, no.78, Spring
 2006, pp. 56–70. Paula Pentley, née Mandl (1896–1957) was born in Vienna; she
 arrived in Sydney – with her husband and son – in May 1939. After Paula's death,
 her husband undertook to continue her efforts in nurturing the Kurt Offenburg
 Memorial Collection; after his death (in 1966) the Library Trustees received – until
 1972 – an annual cheque for 15 guineas from the Pentleys to support the Offenburg
 Memorial Collection.
- 69 *World in Dust*, p. 191.

LOUIS MONASH OF MELBOURNE TO HIS BROTHER MAX MONASCH IN KROTOSCHIN, POSEN PROVINCE, 25 MAY 1861

Introduction by Ann M. Mitchell with Peter Fraenkel

Those who have been following my work on the extended Monash family in recent years may recall that I periodically bleat out loud, or in a footnote, about the neglect of non-English language correspondence, still mostly untranslated and unknown, in the Monash Papers MS 1884, Series 2 (Correspondence with particular individuals, 1860–1931), Boxes 113–14, at the National Library of Australia and in the complementary collection MS 6808, also deposited at the NLA by John Monash's biographer, the late Dr Geoffrey Serle.

In 2002 I drafted two reports based on approximately 300 such letters deriving from the two collections, written by members of the cousinhood and spanning the period between 1860–1900 with some later exceptions. Whilst I wrote mostly for my own guidance in 2002, I certainly did wish to draw the attention of linguistic experts to the material, not least because of its importance to the migration history of Australia. Copies of both drafts are accessible in the NLA Manuscripts Reading Room. Though seriously deficient, the reports remain all there is for the time being. Furthermore, because of vagaries in the Monash Papers as left by John Monash himself, there may well be even more German-language material still buried in his vast inwards series (NLA, MS 1884, Series 1 General Correspondence A (Letters Received, 1879–1931)).

I am convinced of the significance of this largely inaccessible material, most of which is in a script known as *alte deutsche schrift*, or Old German script, which pre-dates modern German. When writing to each other, family members often wrote about business matters in considerable detail. Serle was not indifferent, but the letters were relatively low in his own priorities at his time of writing. In hindsight, it is unfortunate that this distinguished specialist in Australian social history did not use his position to stimulate academic interest, perhaps by seeking cross-disciplinary honours or graduate students to undertake the preliminary work. This is a challenge that remains to be addressed.

Consciously or not, John Monash's father, Louis, misrepresented his business activities in Melbourne to his family, who appear to have believed from the outset that Louis was at least equal partner in the business of Martin and Monash when, in fact, the withdrawal of Martin's capital on his return to Frankfurt-am-Main about 1865 quickly made Louis Monash undone.

Indeed, it is quite possible that Louis's capable younger brother Max Monasch, who had arrived in Victoria with his same-age nephew, Albert Behrend, in January 1862, helped Louis to restore his own fortunes during the 1870s and 1880s. Regardless of what Louis chose to tell the folks back home, the combination of Max's return to Europe in 1880 and the untimely death of Louis Monash's wife, Bertha, in 1885 may well have sunk his prospects. He died in December 1894 a broken man and a failure.

Louis and his brothers Isidor (who fled to America in 1866) and Julius (to Australia in 1865) did their best to conceal disappointment, but their business acquaintances most certainly did not. They hastened to spread bad news back home, especially to Berlin. This fact reverberated within the Australian family for years and helps to explain why I tried hard to locate complementary records series in America and elsewhere – sadly, without much success.

But at least we do now know how unique the cited material in the two NLA collections is!

When Peter Fraenkel announced his intention to visit Canberra in 2009, I timed a research trip to the NLA where we arranged to meet on 23 March. Of course I was anxious to show him the letters I cannot read, knowing that he could. But what with one thing and another we did not get much further than the remarkable letter that follows.

Mr Fraenkel advises that Louis's German 'appears educated and correct, except for one grammatical error which... was probably a slip of the pen'. He further cautions that some words remain indecipherable. This is due to the difficulties he had when trying to translate script from text apparently written on poor quality paper into which the ink bled profusely.

That stated, we both think that this is a remarkable letter in its own right and is worth reading as is. A copy of Peter Fraenkel's typed transcription from the original German is available on request to the editor of this Journal.

Further reading

Peter Fraenkel, 'The Memoirs of B. L. Monasch of Krotoschin', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* XXIV, 1979, pp. 195–223.

Rafal Witkowski (ed.), *Baer Loebel Monasch 1801–1879: Memoirs* [with introduction and annotations of the original German text and translations in English (Fraenkel) and Polish (Witkowski)], Krotoszyn Historical Society, Poznan, 2004.

Ann M. Mitchell (ed.), 'The Memoir of Albert Behrend of Melbourne', *AJHSJ*, Vol. 19, 2008, Part 2, pp. 165–211.

Translation into English from the original German by Peter Fraenkel

[Source: *National Library of Australia, Monash Papers, MS 1884, Series 2, Box 113, folder 841. NB: uncertain words in italics; missing words thus*]

Melbourne, 25th May 1861.

My dear brother Max,

I heard recently from our brother-in-law Behrend that during the period I have not seen you, you have grown into a sensible and strong young man. Behrend also writes that it is intended to send you to Berlin to take up an apprenticeship. You know very well that I spent many years in Berlin and can foresee your probable career there. Basing myself on my experience here and in Berlin I now come to invite you not to lose four years as an apprentice in Berlin as I did. Come to me and in one year here you *will have got* further than in four over there. Already in your second year you will be a free man and in four years you can earn as much as in eight at Berlin.

If you are not a coward you will not allow yourself to be put off by exaggerated tales of the hazards of the journey. I assure you that even at the time of my voyage there was no more talk of danger. Since then ships have been improved and the dangerous stretches become better known so that one only rarely hears of shipwrecks. As regards Australia and especially Melbourne, do not think that you would come to a wilderness. Melbourne is larger than Breslau, more beautifully built than Berlin and as lively as Paris. Throughout Australia one knows nothing of dangerous wild animals. Nor does one know such winters as in Krotoschin. It is never so cold that water freezes or snow falls. Every man is free here and if he has talent he can occupy the highest offices. I have never heard anything here of antisemitism. We have Jews in the upper and the lower house, as mayors and occasionally also as ministers and judges. Here no one need become a soldier. However idleness is not valued. With industriousness and frugality one can earn a lot of money. Anyone who has acquired learning at school will obviously find this very useful.

I am adding to this letter a bill of exchange for £40, sufficient to pay for your journey to Hamburg, from there to London and then to here in a... [?] cabin. I also attach two letters of introduction to two business friends in Hamburg and London who will help you by word and deed if this should be needed. If you write to me before your departure I will get your letter when you arrive and I can come and fetch you from the ship. Of course you must give me the name of the ship. Once you arrive you can enter my business immediately... *observed for a year* [?] ... and if you stay in the business for a year. If after this period you don't like it, I would be pleased to finance your return journey. However if you enjoy the business and have *watched and learnt the ropes* in the first year then in the second year ... a wage of 6–20 Thaler in the month, in the third year 25–30 Thaler, in the fourth 35–40 and so forth, thus you can easily work out for yourself that with thrift you could soon acquire a small capital.

En route you must work at your English studiously and seek every opportunity to practice what little English you know. Only by practice can one acquire

the command of the language. The German is, generally, well respected by the English and they help him on whenever they can.

Of course you must ask the permission of the parents for your journey but do not give up after the first negative reply. In any case, I hope to embrace you at the end of the year and remain your faithful brother ...

L. Monash

My sincerest thanks to Rosa for the beautiful gift of her picture. I shall write her a long letter for the next mail. L.

THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BALLARAT SYNAGOGUE

John S. Levi

On the weekend of 1 to 3 April 2011, a number of events were held in Ballarat to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the beautiful synagogue. Rabbi Jonathan Keren Black conducted the Shabbat service, and Rabbi Dr John Levi gave the address.

Many readers will be familiar with the story of the Ballarat community, but the editors have inserted the following italicised preface, to 'set the scene'.

There was enormous excitement in Melbourne when Victoria separated from New South Wales in 1850, but the celebration paled with the discovery of gold in Victoria in the middle of 1851 – 10,000 men clawed the ground in Ballarat in frenzy, and Melbourne was emptied of its idlers and 'superior' class alike. Commercial life was frozen.

It is estimated that in the next ten years almost 600,000 people arrived in Victoria from interstate and overseas. In the four years from 1851 to early 1854, three million pounds weight of gold was discovered in Ballarat, worth £50 per pound.

By 1853 sufficient Jews could be encouraged from the goldfields into town, to hold a Kol Nidre service in the dining room of the Clarendon Hotel in Lydiard Street, owned by Henry Harris. The cantor was a digger wearing a red shirt and the high boots of a miner.

Two years later, in November 1855, a synagogue was constructed in Barkly Street to accommodate 200 people, and Henry Harris was to be the first president. They could also afford a minister, Rev David Isaacs from Geelong, who was paid the enormous sum of £220 per annum (but by 1863 Isaacs was to be a plaintiff in a law suit against the committee for money owing – by then the gold was harder to find!).

Just a year after the synagogue was built, the land on which it stood was reclaimed by the local council for use as Municipal Chambers. With the money paid as compensation the congregation purchased the site on the corner of Princes and Barkly Streets. But even that location brought problems, as two squatters claimed the land as their own, and had paid rates and taxes on it. The congregation had to pay the squatters out, and in fact did not obtain clear title to the land until 1874.

Meanwhile, Charles Dyte became the president, and he laid the foundation stone in January 1861. Just two months later the synagogue was finished, at the

then huge cost of £1,600. It was consecrated by Rev. Isaacs at a service on 17 March 1861, although it had not been completely furnished at that time.

Rabbi Levi's address

Our story, on this 150th anniversary *Shabbat*, actually began in Sydney in 1845. Its hero was Moses Cohen, the nine-year-old son of the Sydney jeweller Edward Daniel Cohen, and the boy clearly remembered the birth of the Great Australian Gold Rush.

Shepherd Macgregor gave me the nugget in front of the shop to carry it in and I helped to clean it with him and father, and when he was paid for the clean gold, he gave me a shilling for helping clean it and said 'you are the first Australian white boy to carry and help clean and spend the first shilling from the first gold in Australia, dug out of the ground at Summer Hill creek near Wellington in New South Wales'.

The gold field was promptly called by the Hebrew name *Ophir*. The news spread quickly and townships around the Australian colonies were emptied of people. In retaliation and in self-protection a Gold Committee was formed in Melbourne, and on 26 July 1851 the *Melbourne Morning Herald* announced: 'Our Gold Field – Eureka. We have gold – gold in abundance!'

Some 750,000 people poured into Australia and nothing would ever be the same again.

Let's turn to the twentieth century. Many of you will remember Paul Simon, who lived opposite this *shul*. For decades a visit to the Ballarat synagogue was always preceded by afternoon tea with Jessie and Paul Simon, and, if you were very good, he would show you his glass jars of alluvial gold that had been meticulously collected as he fossicked and panned in the creeks around Ballarat. Paul Simon's life was a template of Jewish history in the twentieth century.

Born in Poland and a student of Menachem Begin, he had escaped the Holocaust by a few days. He served in the Australian Army. He loved this city and this synagogue. They reflected his wife's family heritage and the birth of the State of Israel, both of which were a precious part of his teenage years. He always hoped that the grains of gold would be made into a menorah and become part of *Beit Hanasi*, the official residence of the president of the State of Israel. Red tape prevented that happening. *Beit Hanasi* was designed to be lived in by a family. It was not a public space, and so, by default, the Ballarat menorah and his collection of coins became the focus of the museum at Sovereign Hill.

Buildings are fragile. It is the human spirit that gives life to bricks and stones and mortar – and even gold. Many of you are the children and grandchildren of men and women who were faithful members of this place. The great-granddaughter of the young man, Jacob Bernstein, who planted the pine tree in front of the synagogue, is with us today. No one could have guessed how large it would grow.

This congregation produced Nathan Spielvogel, a masterful teacher and storyteller.

It gave birth to the pioneer academic and long-time editor of the *Australian Jewish Herald*. Newman Rosenthal wrote the history of this congregation. He defiantly called it *Formula For Survival: The Saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation* because he knew that time would not be on the side of Jewish communal survival, separated as Ballarat is from the big city.

We know that the first Jewish religious service on the goldfields was held in 1853. Nathan Spielvogel was the regular correspondent of the Hebrew-language newspaper called *Hamagid* and because of his scholarly initiative Jews around the world knew about Ballarat. Spielvogel wrote English prose and has left us a vivid picture of the first High Holydays on the gold fields:

It is Tuesday evening, 11 October 1853, Tishri 9 5614. Clad in the red shirt and high boots of the digger the cantor who learned his *chazonos* in a far away Lemberg, solemnly and tunefully chants *Oshmanu*. The thoughts of the worshipped drift back to the homes and kindred they have left behind on the other side of the world. With bowed heads they follow his lead repeating with the *chazzan* his confession, beating their breasts as they had been taught in their distant house of worship ... a remnant of Israel, albeit a very small one, proudly remembers Kol Nidrei night.

Remnant of Israel – *Shearit Yisrael* – is the name written on the front of this building.

At the end of 1854 the diggers of Ballarat refused to pay the government's license fee, which was demanded from each miner before scratching the surface of the soil, and not after they had struck gold.

A few hundred metres from where we now sit there is a hill called Eureka and there it was that the diggers gathered in defiance of the military and raised the Eureka flag – which can still be seen at the Ballarat Art Gallery! One of the witnesses to that event became a member of the board of this congregation. His name was Hyman Levinson. He was a young watchmaker who arrived in Ballarat a few days before the troopers rode up from Melbourne to the goldfields to enforce the licensing law. Levinson has left us a personal account of what happened.

When I arrived in Ballarat I brought my tent with me from Melbourne. It took me about a week to find a suitable place for it. I selected my spot on the slope of a high hill... On Thursday morning I prepared to start business as I was cleaning the small window at the front of my tent which was a necessary feature for my watch making business when about ten o'clock Charles Dyte (who would become a president of this congregation) came running along calling out 'Hyman put up your shutters.'

‘Why?’

‘The riot’s begun.’

Nothing was to be done. I had my stock of watches in my trouser pocket. I stood and awaited developments. Presently the force came from the camp—a few hundred troopers and a number of foot soldiers. The troopers formed up in two lines ready for action. They were on the higher ground. Lying down on the ground they leveled their rifles, as it seemed to me, right in my direction. As I stood at the door of my tent, a digger came. Without saying a word to me he went past the calico door of my tent door. He took out a revolver. I said ‘Hullo mate. What are you going to do?’ ‘I am going to shoot that expletive fellow!’ pointing to captain Wise, the commander of the military.

I objected. I said: ‘There will be a volley and we will both be shot’.

He showed no sign of desisting so I called out to the troopers.

It was nearly a fatal mistake. Once the fighting was over the angry and grief stricken miners came searching for the scapegoat who had betrayed their leader. As Levinson recalls:

I tried to explain but it was useless. They were all Germans. They all attacked me. I was struck again and again. My window was smashed and my tent pulled down. I ran and they pursued me. As I ran I saw my friend Samuels at the door of his tent. He happened to know German so he stopped my pursuers and gave me time. A mile or so away a Manchester friend’s shop offered me refuge. I ran inside and hid under a stretcher. There I hid for three days. Meanwhile all my belongings at my tent were stolen.

It should be noted that in the unequal fight at the Eureka Stockade one of those 24 who was shot and killed was Teddy Thonen, a young German Jewish miner. At the cemetery you will find his name on the monument to those who fell at Eureka.

Ballarat’s first synagogue was consecrated on 12 November 1855. The wooden ark of that old synagogue stands today in the communal hall. The East Ballarat Town Council intervened and told the congregation to move. Letters flew back and forth and finally on 25 January 1861, 150 years ago, the foundation stone of the building in which we now sit was laid by Charles Dyte, president of the congregation. They had marvellous builders. Two months later this synagogue was open for business. As the *Ballarat Times* wrote:

It is our pleasing duty to record the successful completion of an edifice in which our Hebrew brethren can assemble and worship according to the faith of their forefathers. The building is sufficiently tasteful without being ostentatious and the interior is remarkable for the simplicity perfectly in keeping with the objects for which it is erected.

The evening service and the chanting of the 150th Psalm terminated the ceremony which throughout was one of great impressiveness.

There is a special dimension about this service and this celebration. To steal the words of the *Ballarat Times*, it is 'One of great impressiveness'. It is the Australian dimension. During 150 years of peace no one has threatened this building. No one was tempted to burn it down or take it over. It is a monument to Australia. It is a proud monument to our sense of history and Jewish continuity. It is a sanctuary built around the Torah, a book of Jewish history that has shaped our society.

On this Shabbat we read from the Book of Leviticus about the treatment of disease. No one is blamed for the disease, but it is an acknowledgement that in the face of carelessness and neglect things do go wrong – personally and communally. Even synagogues will crumble and vanish if there is no one left to care for them. Synagogues need us. Synagogues need Jews and Jews need synagogues – we need a place in which Jews will get together in their unending search for God. And sometimes that is difficult.

A mother called up the stairs to her son.

'Get up! It is time to go to *shul*.'

The son said, 'Mum, I don't want to go to *shul*. The people there all make fun of me. They really don't like me. Nobody there ever listens to what I say. I'd rather stay at home in bed.'

The mother said, 'But son, you've got to go'.

The son said: 'Give me two good reasons.'

The mother replied, 'Well for one thing, you are fifty-two years old. And for another: You are the rabbi!'

You don't have to be a rabbi to care about *Shearith Yisrael* – a remnant of Israel. The Jews of Ballarat took their Judaism intensely. There were huge differences between the foreign-born Jews and the British-born Jews. There was the problem of decorum. At one time iron bolts were attached to the inner doors of the *shul* so that no one could leave while the Torah was chanted. Who actually owned the scrolls? The donors or the congregation? Who had the right to sit in the front of the *shul*? A charge of one shilling a week applied to the front row of the women's gallery, sixpence for the second row and threepence for the third. Fines were applied for those who refused to be called up. In 1870 floods caused disastrous damage and there were many calls upon the congregation for assistance. *Matzot* were distributed to the needy and grants to the bereaved. And children came to *cheder* and their names were recorded and their presence appreciated.

And in 1908, inevitably, the community split in two and the secession lasted five argumentative years. But a synagogue is not just a club. It is a *kehillah k'doshah*. A sacred gathering. A *kehillah* is a gathering – always purposeful. It is *kedoshah* – sacred, holy, separate – a place to lift our spirits, to renew our souls,

to express our belief that life makes sense.

In Ballarat in 1903 a whisper of the birth of a movement, which would lead to the creation of the state of Israel only 45 years later, stirred Nathan Spielvogel. His ballad 'The Wandering Jew' was published in the *Bulletin* magazine:

But I was born in this Southland sweet
In it to manhood grown
I love this land, as I love my life
I call this land mine own.
Yet here tonight my blood runs mad,
To go with these and roam
To wander off with these gaunt grim ghosts
That ever seek a home.

And so tonight, while the gum trees sigh
I take my staff and go:
I give myself to the Wanderlust
That is both friend and foe.
Hot lava leaps in my blood tonight,
My wandering sires go by;
I hear the call of the Wandering Jew
And I must go or die.

THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH LEFT AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Philip Mendes

There are two principal historical perspectives concerning Australian Jewry's engagement with indigenous concerns.

One perspective, which is often cited in the Jewish media, holds that Jews have been prominent in the struggle for indigenous rights. This perspective typically cites a number of examples of this support. They include:

1. The involvement of a small number of left-wing Jews such as Emil and Hannah Wilton, Hans Bandler, Rosine Guiterman, Irene McIlwraith and Len Fox in early indigenous political struggles of the 1950s and 1960s;
2. The involvement of Jewish student Jim Spigelman from Student Action for Aborigines plus six other Jewish students in the famous 1965 Freedom Ride that exposed prejudice against indigenous Australians in New South Wales country towns;
3. The prominence of Ron Castan and other Jewish legal figures such as Irving Wallach, Peter Tobin and Eddie Neumann in assisting indigenous legal services and campaigns from the 1970s onwards including the famous 1993 High Court Mabo judgement.¹

The second perspective, which is mainly articulated by Jewish academic and long-time advocate for indigenous rights, Professor Colin Tatz, contends that there is little or no tradition of significant Jewish support for indigenous concerns. Tatz argues that Jewish involvement in indigenous struggles has been extremely low compared to Jewish support for black rights in the USA and South Africa. He suggests that the examples of outstanding Jewish advocacy cited above are merely exceptions to the rule. Tatz found few historical examples of prominent Jewish voices of support in the media, politics or assorted indigenous advocacy groups. He claims that this Jewish inaction extended even to organised Jewish Left groups who passed resolutions of support for indigenous rights, but in practice failed to provide any serious funding or other measurable resources to the indigenous community.²

Tatz provides a number of explanations for the lack of Jewish engagement with indigenous affairs. His principal argument is that Jews were mainly city dwellers and had little direct contact with indigenous Australians who generally resided in the country. Another factor was that indigenous rights did not become a major source of social and political conflict in Australia compared to, say, black rights in the USA and South Africa. And Tatz also notes that there were few prominent

Jewish social scientists in Australia in the immediate post-World War Two decades who might have studied and exposed the racist denigration of indigenous people.³

Another important factor which Tatz hints at,⁴ but unfortunately doesn't pursue in detail, is the historical absence of social justice activism emanating from the progressive Australian Jewish congregations. In the USA, Reform Jewish movements such as the Union of American Hebrew Organisations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis were at the forefront of civil rights and anti-Vietnam War activism.⁵ There was no such Progressive Jewish activism in Australia, and it was not until the late 1990s that Progressive Jewish congregations began to actively support indigenous rights.⁶

Regardless of causes, Tatz seems to be basically correct in lamenting the lack of organised and sustained Jewish advocacy for indigenous Australians at least until the late 1980s. The definitive histories of Australian Jewry by authors such as Suzanne Rutland and Bill Rubinstein make little or no reference to engagement with indigenous issues.⁷ To be sure, there is some evidence of early mainstream Jewish support for indigenous rights that Tatz doesn't document. For example, the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies passed motions of support for the Aboriginal Advancement League and indigenous rights in 1965 and 1966, and later condemned discrimination against indigenous Australians in the mid 1970s.⁸

It has also been suggested anecdotally that as many as ten per cent of the hundreds of members of the Victorian-based Action for Aboriginal Rights from the early 1970s onwards were Jewish. Many or most of these Jews may have participated on universalistic rather than specifically Jewish grounds.⁹ It would appear that these examples of support do not in themselves rebut Tatz's core argument concerning the lack of institutional Jewish advocacy for indigenous concerns.

However, a question mark remains concerning the contribution of Australian Jewish Left groups to indigenous struggles. We do know that Australian Left groups per se were prominently involved in early pro-indigenous activism. For example, the Communist Party was supportive of the indigenous land rights struggle and critical of assimilationist policies from at least the early 1950s. The party was involved in a number of key campaigns including the 1965 Freedom Ride and the 1966 Wave Hill dispute concerning the Gurdindji stockmen.¹⁰

These examples suggest that Jewish Left groups may have been more likely than other non-Left Jewish groups to be involved in the indigenous struggle. Consequently the aim of this research is to examine what a number of Jewish Left groups – the Melbourne-based Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, the Jewish Radical Association, the Sydney Jewish Left and the still existing Australian Jewish Democratic Society – said and did about indigenous rights. We are also interested in exploring whether their support for indigenous concerns reflected mainly universalistic left-wing beliefs, or alternatively incorporated specific Jewish religious or secular teachings and values. I have used 'indigenous' as the overriding descriptive term in this paper, but have also cited

other terms of similar meaning that were used by various commentators at the time they wrote.

The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, 1942–70

The pre-eminent Australian Jewish Left organisation, the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism (JCCFAS), was formed in May 1942 by a group of activist (mainly established Eastern European) Jews concerned about increasing anti-Semitism, both local and international. The JCCFAS was always influenced by the Communist Party and its sympathisers, but in its early years enjoyed broad communal support. It campaigned in favour of the creation of the State of Israel, and against the immigration of former Nazis to Australia. By 1948 the JCCFAS had become the official public relations representative of the Victorian Jewish community.

During the Cold War the JCCFAS lost community support due to its perceived pro-Soviet bias. Its apparent denial of Soviet antisemitism appalled many Jews. Equally, the impact of McCarthyism narrowed the boundaries of acceptable Jewish political behaviour, with communal leaders concerned to avoid any popular identification of Jews with communism.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the JCCFAS enjoyed a minor revival due to its close association with the left-dominated Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party. JCCFAS President Sam Cohen was successful in securing ALP pre-selection for the Federal Senate, but subsequently offended many Jews by appearing to excuse the Soviet Union's anti-Jewish policies in a parliamentary debate. Owing to an ageing membership and declining support, the JCCFAS ceased to exist in 1970.¹¹

The JCCFAS was a consistent supporter of indigenous rights. JCCFAS Secretary Ernest Platz was involved in some of the discussions that lead to the formation of the left-wing Council for Aboriginal Rights in March 1951.¹² The JCCFAS joined the Council and sent a number of representatives including Ernest Platz, Jules Meltzer, Alexandra Anders and Mrs Graf to Council meetings.¹³ JCCFAS representatives attended a dinner in honour of the indigenous painter, Albert Namatjira, held during his visit to Melbourne in 1954.¹⁴

In 1957, the Council passed a motion re-affirming its 'position of support and assistance in any way possible for the Council of Aboriginal Rights'.¹⁵ Later, the JCCFAS sent a letter to the Minister for National Affairs protesting the alleged poisoning of water in Aboriginal areas.¹⁶ The JCCFAS also forwarded a letter of support to the 1961 Council for Aboriginal Rights conference, but do not seem to have sent a representative.¹⁷

The JCCFAS's engagement with indigenous rights seems to have declined in the body's later years. There was no further reference until 1965 when the JCCFAS congratulated Jewish student Jim Spigelman for his leading role in the Freedom Ride, and opined that 'the Jewish community as a whole should take

much more interest in the matter of discrimination against Aborigines'.¹⁸ A year later the JCCFAS invited Pastor Doug Nicholls from the Aborigine League to address a monthly luncheon.¹⁹ In 1967, the JCCFAS attacked the far right anti-semitic League of Rights for opposing the constitutional referendum in favour of indigenous citizenship rights.²⁰

In summary, the JCCFAS was a principled supporter of indigenous rights, and a financial affiliate of the Council for Aboriginal Rights. It appears to have been more active than most other Jewish organisations of that time in advocating for indigenous concerns, but does not seem to have developed a specifically Jewish (rather than left-wing universalistic) rationale for its association with the indigenous community.

Jewish Radical Association, 1971–73

The JCCFAS was succeeded in Melbourne by the Jewish Radical Association (JRA). The JRA had three key objectives: to support the existence of Israel and peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians; to oppose antisemitism and all forms of racism whether the offending regime be capitalist or communist; and to demand justice for Aborigines.²¹

The JRA aimed to promote greater awareness of indigenous concerns in the Jewish community, and hosted a public forum on 'Racism in Australia' in March 1972. The speaker, long-time Jewish indigenous affairs activist Lorna Lippmann, specifically criticised what she called the under-representation of Jews in the indigenous rights movement. She also referred at length to examples of indigenous disadvantage, and urged reforms to grant indigenous Australians employment, land rights, decent housing, education, and an end to legal injustice.²² On the election of the Labor Government in late 1972, the JRA promised to monitor the performance of Gordon Bryant as the new Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.²³

The JRA only had a short existence, but it does seem to have given significant priority to indigenous affairs.

Sydney Jewish Left, 1986–94

The Sydney Jewish Left/Tikkun Olam was established in November 1986 to promote Jewish involvement in progressive activities. The founding aims and objectives of the SJL included supporting peace and disarmament, promoting Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution via a two-state solution, endorsing social justice, opposing antisemitism and racism, and supporting land rights for indigenous Australians.²⁴

A number of SJL members had a history of engagement with indigenous Australians,²⁵ and the SJL gave a high priority to facilitating greater awareness of indigenous aspirations within the Jewish community. In November 1987, for example, the SJL hosted a public forum on the subject of Black Deaths in Custody and the Bicentennial. The SJL agreed at the forum to donate half the existing funds

of the organisation to the Committee to Defend Black Rights, and to organise a public protest meeting against the conditions faced by indigenous people in Australia and the concept of the bicentenary itself.²⁶

In addition, the SJL organised an advertisement calling for justice for indigenous Australians that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Australian Jewish Times*. The statement, which was signed by over 50 Jewish Australians, argued that Jewish traditions 'require us to take a stand against racism', and that 'all people have a common origin and are therefore equal'. Reference was made to teachings from two biblical sources, Deuteronomy 16:20 ('Justice shall you pursue') and Sanhedrin 4:5 ('One person may not say to a neighbour, my ancestors are greater than yours'). The statement concluded that the Jewish tradition requires us to 'recognise the prior ownership of Australia by Aboriginal people. We support justice and land rights for Black Australia in 1988'.²⁷

The advertisement was originally intended to be a joint project of the SJL and the Melbourne-based Australian Jewish Democratic Society (AJDS), but AJDS refused to endorse the proposed text. Instead, they alternatively suggested that the advertisement read:

We Australian Jews welcome the recognition by the Australian government of prior Aboriginal ownership of Australia. It is part of the best Jewish tradition to support justice for all peoples. Accordingly, we call for justice for Aborigines including land rights.²⁸

The SJL did not accept the proposed amendments. I was a member of the AJDS Committee at the time, and my memory from talking to SJL members was that they felt the AJDS were politically aligned with the Australian Labor Party, and hence unwilling to support wording which could be interpreted as implicitly critical of the policies of the Commonwealth Labor Government.

The advertisement led to SJL President Irving Wallach being interviewed by Andrew Olle on ABC Radio. It also provoked some controversy in the Sydney Jewish community after the *Australian Jewish Times* published a cartoon suggesting that indigenous Australians had no idea who or what Jews were. Irving Wallach replied by pointing out that many Jews had been actively involved in the indigenous struggle for justice. He cited the Jewish Freedom Riders from 1965, the involvement of Jewish lawyers in indigenous legal services, and the work of Justice Marcus Einfeld as head of the Australian Human Rights Commission. He suggested that indigenous Australians understood that Jews had similarly suffered from racism.²⁹

The SJL held a number of other forums in support of indigenous concerns. For example, indigenous activists Kevin Tory and Cathy Craigie addressed a forum in July 1989 protesting the NSW State Government's attack on indigenous land rights. Concern was also expressed at the meeting regarding increasing police violence against indigenous Australians, and the SJL agreed to donate \$100 to a trust fund

for the family of David Gundy, who had been killed by police. Forum moderator Lea Loeve criticised the Jewish community for being 'too cocooned', and urged other Jewish groups to expand their understanding of indigenous issues.³⁰

The SJL seems to have been unique among Australian Jewish Left groups in attempting to develop a specific link between traditional Jewish teachings and a concern for indigenous justice. They also made some attempt to distribute supportive resources to specific indigenous groups, albeit within the confines posed by their relatively small membership and support base.

The Australian Jewish Democratic Society, 1984–2011

The Australian Jewish Democratic Society (AJDS) was formed in November 1984 to present 'a progressive voice among Jews' and 'a Jewish voice among progressives'. Four key political objectives were identified by AJDS. The first was to support activities for peace, and nuclear and general disarmament. The second was to oppose racism and antisemitism, and promote tolerance and harmony between ethnic communities. The third was to support peace in the Middle East based on justice and national rights for both Israelis and Palestinians. The fourth was to support the legitimate aims of indigenous Australians including land rights.³¹

The founding AJDS constitution explained why the organisation was supporting indigenous rights: 'Aborigines, the original Australians, have suffered fearfully as a direct result of white European settlement of this continent. Even their right to their own land has been, and in large measure continues to be, over-looked or denied. We believe that Australian life is tarnished and shamed by almost 200 years of expropriation of Aboriginal land, and the exploitation, neglect and censure of Aboriginal people. We support government efforts to provide appropriate and adequate resources to enable Aborigines to live their lives in peace, health and dignity. We oppose the thinly-veiled racism which denies Aborigines land rights'.³²

AJDS has been supportive of indigenous rights throughout its history, and has utilised a number of advocacy strategies including public forums and statements, publishing regular articles in its magazine and newsletter, and providing resources to indigenous groups.

AJDS' first ever public forum in November 1984 featured three speakers on 'Racism in Australia Today' including Margaret Wirrpanda, Senior Vice President of the Aboriginal Advancement League and Secretary of the Aboriginal Land Council. A further forum in May 1986 on 'Aboriginal health problems' was addressed by Dr Bill Roberts, the Director of the Aboriginal Health Service.

Another forum on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in late 1989 featured Justice Hal Wootten, Eastern States Commissioner of the Royal Commission on Black Deaths in Custody, and Dr Eve Fesl, Director of the Monash University Koorie Research Centre. Both speakers suggested that Jews could understand more than others the impact of indigenous experiences of racism, and the need for effective legislation to prevent racial vilification.³³

An additional forum in December 1991 featured Wayne Atkinson and Margaret Gardiner speaking on 'Victorian Koories: past, present and future'. The forum included a presentation of the film *Lousy Little Sixpence*, which exposed the past removal of indigenous children to serve as servants to white families. And in July 1993 AJDS organised a theatre night to see the indigenous musical, *Bran Nue Dae*, in order to mark the United Nations Year of Indigenous People. AJDS also wrote to the Jewish Community Council of Victoria urging the Council to organise a forum highlighting indigenous experiences of racism.

The August 1993 AJDS Annual Dinner was addressed by Ron Castan, the Jewish barrister who had successfully attained the seminal Mabo land rights judgment in the High Court. Castan documented the structural racism directed against indigenous Australians, and urged Jews to support their struggle for equal rights.³⁴ AJDS subsequently called on its members to write to their Members of Parliament in support of the native title rights of indigenous Australians.³⁵

A later forum on Aboriginal Reconciliation, which was co-organised by AJDS and a number of other Jewish organisations, featured the Chairman of the Cape York Land Council, Noel Pearson, and the Director of the Monash University Orientation Scheme for Aborigines, Helen Curzon-Siggers. Pearson spoke on the 'Wik Judgement and the government response', and Curzon-Siggers discussed the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal Children.

Both speakers appealed to the Jewish community to publicly support indigenous rights. Pearson concluded his statement with the following:

No other group should better understand the tactics about which I have talked tonight. No other group knows how hard it is. No other group knows what its like to be hated by more people than have ever met your people. So I look forward to your support in the coming months.³⁶

The function chairperson, Lorna Lippman, urged Jews to sign a petition calling on the Federal Government to not extinguish native title on land subject to joint title. Over 200 people signed the petition on that night.³⁷

In addition, indigenous activist Gary Foley spoke emotionally from the floor about the connection between indigenous and Jewish Australians. Foley also raised for the first time the courageous action of Yorta Yorta elder William Cooper in leading a delegation to the German Consulate in Melbourne in 1938 to protest the *Kristallnacht* pogrom, the 'Night of the Broken Glass'.³⁸

Following this forum, AJDS successfully sponsored a motion at the Jewish Community Council of Victoria condemning the Native Title Amendment Bill 1997 as discriminating against indigenous native titleholders. The motion also requested the Executive Council of Australian Jewry to call on the Federal Government to accept and adhere to the directions of the Mabo and Wik High Court decisions. The motion submitted by AJDS delegate Harold Zwier and seconded by B'nai B'rith representative Tony Levy provoked considerable debate, and was

preceded by competing addresses from Ron Castan who opposed the government's ten-point Wik plan, and federal Liberal MP Sharman Stone, who defended it.³⁹

The editor of the *Australian Jewish News* subsequently praised the JCCV for supporting a motion so strongly critical of the Liberal government which most Jews had voted for in the recent election. He noted the irony that the motion had been proposed by the AJDS, which had so often been marginalised within the generally conservative Jewish community.⁴⁰

A further AJDS forum in March 1999 on the struggle against the Jabiluka uranium mine near Kakadu National Park featured prominent indigenous activist Jacqui Katona. The forum passed a motion criticising the federal government for the construction of the Jabiluka mine, and for failing to respect the rights and culture of indigenous Australians. Forum Chairman David Zyngier suggested that Jews had a particular obligation whilst celebrating the festival of freedom (*Pesach*) to assist other peoples who had been wronged.⁴¹ Following the forum, a number of AJDS members participated in a public protest against the construction of the Jabiluka mine.⁴²

The AJDS criticised the introduction by the Northern Territory Government of the Mandatory Sentencing of Juvenile Offenders Bill 1999 as an abuse of human rights. AJDS called for its immediate repeal given that it was applied disproportionately to indigenous Australians. In early 2000, an AJDS contingent participated in a rally against the mandatory sentencing of indigenous Australians.⁴³

The AJDS participated in a number of other indigenous events including the March for Reconciliation in December 2000, and the Sorry Day rally in June 2001.⁴⁴ The AJDS opposed the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in 2004, arguing that as 'a Jewish organisation our views are shaped both by the ethnic experience and the tragedy of the Holocaust'.⁴⁵ A joint AJDS and Leo Baeck Centre forum in February 2005 featured university lecturer and Yorta Yorta elder Wayne Atkinson speaking on 'Native Title and Land Rights'. Atkinson drew some analogies between the importance of specific land areas to indigenous people, and the Jewish connection with the land of Israel.⁴⁶ Following his talk, an AJDS member made a substantial donation to subsidise a conference held in October 2005 focused on indigenous rights in red gum forests in the Murray-Darling basin.⁴⁷

Other AJDS forums in 2006 and 2008 respectively featured consultant Stephen Rothfield speaking on his varied experiences of working with indigenous communities in Cape York and Shepparton,⁴⁸ and medical practitioner Dr Howard Goldenberg speaking on indigenous health. Goldenberg stated that his interest in indigenous affairs was related to his Jewish identity, and suggested some spiritual kinship between Jewish and indigenous Australians. Goldenberg praised a number of Jewish lawyers such as Ron Castan and Mark Leibler who had devoted time and effort *pro bono* to indigenous causes. As a result of this discussion, the AJDS decided to send a representative to Canberra to witness Prime Minister Rudd's

formal apology for the 'Stolen Generation' to indigenous Australians.⁴⁹

More recently, AJDS members have raised over \$12,000 to support a bursary for an indigenous student at the University of Melbourne. A further fundraiser is planned for August 2011, which will be addressed by former Labor Party Minister Gareth Evans.⁵⁰

Indigenous issues were also highlighted in the *Australian Jewish Democrat* (AJD), a magazine published two or three times a year by AJDS from 1989–94. The AJD published four powerful statements on the Jewish-indigenous experience. The first, by Jewish academic John Bradley, reflected on his professional and personal engagement with indigenous communities. Bradley argued that Jewish tradition required us to 'take a stand against injustices in our community', and to recognise prior ownership of Australia by indigenous people.⁵¹

A further contribution by young journalist Alexandra (Sasha) Shtargot presented an interview with prominent indigenous activist Gary Foley. Foley praised the support of many Jews for the indigenous struggle, and argued that Jewish opposition to racism was to be expected given the experience of Jews in the Holocaust. Foley admitted that he and other indigenous activists had drawn parallels between the indigenous and Palestinian experience, but denied that he was antisemitic. He recommended greater dialogue between indigenous and Jewish Australians leading to a common stand against racism.⁵²

Another article presented Ron Castan's speech to the 1993 AJDS dinner in which he reflected on the High Court judgment regarding the Mabo land rights legislation.⁵³ Finally, the Chairman of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Social Justice Committee, Peter Wertheim, presented the Jewish case for supporting indigenous rights. Wertheim argued that 'the oppression of Australia's Aborigines has, or ought to have, a special resonance for Australian Jewry' given the similarities between Jewish and indigenous experiences of racism. Wertheim argued that we have a 'duty to educate and sensitise our own community concerning Aboriginal history', and recommended that indigenous spokespersons be invited to address Jewish leaders about their history and culture and their contemporary political aspirations.⁵⁴

The AJDS newsletter, which has generally been published monthly or bi-monthly, has regularly supported indigenous aspirations. Some of the issues covered over the years include the details of the Wik native title decision, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission inquiry into the 'Stolen Generation', a celebration of NAIDOC week and the associated call for a treaty to recognise prior indigenous sovereignty, a discussion of court decisions on native title rights, an overview of the activities of the Koorie Heritage Trust and its links with the Jewish community, the campaign to regain the stolen wages of Queensland and NSW indigenous workers, support for indigenous political representation to replace ATSIC, an exposure of police violence against indigenous Australians, compensation for the stolen generations, a critique of the Howard

Government's Northern Territory Emergency Response, a reference to the pro-indigenous activism of AJDS member Jenne Perlstein, the Prime Minister's 'Stolen Generation' apology to indigenous Australians, the application of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and the story of indigenous leader William Cooper who condemned Nazi anti-Semitism in 1938.⁵⁵

In summary, the AJDS has displayed a consistent solidarity with and commitment to indigenous Australians. This pro-indigenous advocacy has had various ebbs and flows, but has nevertheless been sustained over a 27-year period. It reflects both the generally sympathetic philosophical perspective of the Society, and the passionate pro-indigenous activism of a number of its members.

In comparison to the Sydney Jewish Left, the AJDS's pro-indigenous advocacy seems to have been based mainly on universalistic, rather than specifically Jewish, motivations. To be sure, many AJDS members would argue that Jewish experiences of racism and particularly the Holocaust have influenced their empathy with indigenous experiences. But the AJDS has never overtly aligned Jewish cultural or secular teachings or values with its pro-indigenous political position. Rather, its advocacy seems primarily to reflect a broad humanitarian, rather than a particular Jewish rationale.

Discussion

It is not surprising to find that the four key Australian Jewish Left organisations examined were consistent advocates of indigenous rights. On key issues such as institutional racism, land rights, native title, deaths in custody, the 'Stolen Generation', and the Northern Territory Emergency Response, they passed supportive motions, held public forums, published sympathetic commentary in internal and external publications, and in some cases provided financial resources. On balance, they seem to have done more than most other Australian Jewish organisations, particularly taking into account their relatively small support base, and may have had some influence on the more recent active engagement of mainstream Jewish organisations with indigenous concerns.

Nevertheless, it would be an exaggeration to speak of a strong and organised Jewish Left presence in the indigenous rights movement either historically or today. Some progressive Jews have been prominent in pro-indigenous activism, but more so as universalistic individuals rather than as formal representatives of a progressive Jewish collective. To be sure, groups such as AJDS have identified indigenous concerns as a key moral challenge for Jews given the common historical experiences of racism and the ongoing disadvantage of many indigenous Australians today. But arguably more needs to be done to activate core progressive Jewish values in support of indigenous concerns.

Author's Note: I am grateful to AJDS members Robin Rothfield, Harold Zwier and Tom Wolkenberg and former SJL President Irving Wallach for their comments on an earlier draft.

Endnotes

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- 6 Werner Graff, Malcolm J. Turnbull and Eliot Baskin, *A time to keep: The story of Temple Beth Israel: 1930 to 2005* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2005), p. 217.
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- 9 Email from AJDS member Tom Wolkenberg to author, 4 December 2010.
 - 10 Mark Aarons, *The Family File* (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2010), pp. 258–62; Bain Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2003), pp. 265–9; Bob Boughton, ‘The Communist Party of Australia’s involvement in the struggle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People’s Rights, 1920–1970’ in Raymond Markey, ed., *Labour and Community: Historical Essays* (Wollongong: University of Wollongong Press, 2001), pp. 263–94; Jennifer Clark, *Aborigines & Activism* (Crawley: University of WA Press, 2008), pp. 55–61; Sue Taffe, *Black and White Together* (St Lucia: UQP, 2005), pp. 49, 55, 69–72; Sue Taffe, ‘Wharfies and Communists: the genesis of the Cairns Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League’ in Bobbie Oliver ed. *Labour History in the New Century* (Perth: Black Swan Press, 2009), pp. 155–66; Sue Taffe, ‘The Cairns Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League and the Community of the Left’, *Labour History*, 97 (2009), pp. 149–68.
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 - 12 See JCCFAS Executive Committee Minutes, 24 October 1950. On the history of the Council for Aboriginal Rights, see Attwood, op. cit., pp. 135–50; Clark, op. cit., pp. 70–1; Taffe, op. cit., pp. 22–6.
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 - 14 ibid., 2 May 1954. On Namatjira, see Attwood, op. cit., pp. 152–5.
 - 15 JCCFAS Minutes, 23 January 1957.
 - 16 ibid., 23 November 1960.
 - 17 ibid., 21 March 1961.
 - 18 *JCCFAS Annual Report* 1964–65, p. 8.
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THE IMPACT OF MELBOURNE'S YIDDISHISTS

Deborah Gurt

Carlton, the gritty inner city section of Melbourne, served as a first point of entry for many new immigrants to Australia, my father among them. It was also a centre of intellectual activity emblematic of the emerging Jewish culture in Australia in the 1930s and 1940s. Its cheap rents and proximity to public transport and the city centre made it a logical place for immigrants to cluster as they strove to secure their footing in Australia. The immigrants stuck together for support, companionship and common language, as the cultural gap yawned between new Polish and German immigrants and most established Australian Jews. The Kadimah centre, located in Carlton, was an important focal point of this community – founded as it was by European immigrants and oriented towards Yiddish secular culture. For a brief period Carlton was the epicentre of this burgeoning immigrant Jewish life in Australia. My father's childhood home was one of many stars in the constellation of vibrant Yiddish cultural life there.

'Who is going to start Jewish life anew?' wondered Pinchas Goldhar (1901–47) towards the end of his life. He mourned the loss of millions of lives, but also of Jewish culture, of *yiddishkeit*, which had nourished the vibrant communities of Eastern Europe.

I am not very old but it was in my days when Jewish life in Europe started its way uphill. I saw before my eyes our spiritual renaissance with a sudden rejuvenation of our social and national hopes and ambitions. And all this is now in ruins.¹

Goldhar saw among migrants to Australia like himself a failure to translate the fullness of their lives from one location to another. 'The hard bread of an immigrant in a strange, far-away country, many thousands of miles from the pulsating Jewish life severed from Jewish creativeness, had indeed a bitter taste.'² He felt a terrible pessimism, and feared that he was witnessing the demise of Jewishness, even as individual Jews survived.

Even before the destruction in Europe, some Australian Jewish community leaders shared a different kind of anxiety about the future in the 1920s and early 1930s. The pressures to assimilate fully into Australian society had shunted Jewish identification into ever shrinking areas of life, largely centred on the synagogue. Divisions between established Jews and newcomers were stark. Exogenous marriage was at its highest among the established community, and religious education and practice at a low ebb. While Rutland describes the period 1850–1920

as a 'golden age' the implication is that this was a period of social prominence and material success for Anglo-Australian Jews assimilating structurally into Australian society. Jewish representation in government was much higher than its proportion of the population. It seemed that the Jewish community aspired to attain 'English middle class values & respectability' and at this they were highly successful.³

The parameters of Jewish life in Melbourne then began to shift as a stream of immigrants began arriving from Europe. Over time the immigrants of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s remade Australian Jewry entirely: 'They brought with them a Jewish civilisation, a set of religious, social and communal values which had been unknown to this continent previously and which was to alter every aspect of the Jewish community's social, religious and communal life.'⁴

Immigrants from Eastern Europe brought with them Jewish secular culture, an orientation towards literary and artistic expression, and ideals of social activism which had flourished in pre-war Poland.

The story often told is that the Nazis wiped out European Jewish culture, and the modern state of Israel is the powerful phoenix reborn from its ashes. 'Yiddish has become emblematic of a way of life rejected and superseded by Zionism.'⁵ This discourse elides several interesting developments, which the Australian experience exemplifies: namely, the continuation of Yiddish culture in multiple forms, both secular and religious, even in conjunction with the embrace of Zionism. Furthermore, Australian Jewry was utterly transformed by its growth in numbers as well as by increasing group identification. This shift had wider implications for Australian society as a whole, as the seeds of multicultural Australia were nourished in the Jewish inner city neighbourhood of Carlton and the social conscience of this immigrant generation was brought to bear on issues particular to Australia such as Aboriginal rights.⁶ Multiculturalism became official government policy in the 1970s.

Goldhar, had he lived longer than his brief 46 years, might have witnessed another small-scale revival of Jewish life, this one in Australia, as immigrants from Europe helped to create a vibrant Australian Jewish community which embraced its particularity and built the necessary scaffolding to support continued Jewish life in multiple forms.

The build-up to war

With Hitler's rise to power in 1933 living conditions for Jews in Germany began a steady decline. The effects of his policies and rhetoric began to be felt even outside of Germany proper across Central and Eastern Europe. Increasing antisemitism, legal and economic restriction, and simply a growing menace could be felt. After the *Anschluss* in March 1938 and *Kristallnacht* in November of the same year there was little doubt that Jews had to take refuge where they could. This period of upheaval led to a worldwide refugee problem of increasing severity.

Australia was an attractive option with its distance from Europe, its vast

landscape, and its tradition of democratic rule. Thus the Australian government found itself inundated with applications for permission to immigrate, and under great pressure to relax its restrictive immigration policy.

Domestically, debate raged over the issue of whether to accept refugees. Most surprisingly however, segments of the Australian Jewish community echoed some of the more hostile sentiments in the debate. Some feared being overrun by 'backward' Polish Jews with whom they had very little in common, and who might pose an economic threat in already difficult circumstances.

The established Jewish community, pre-occupied with what Rabbi F. L. Cohen of Sydney termed its 'happy standing', feared too great and too sudden an influx of unassimilable Yiddish-speaking Jews.⁷ From the immigrant's perspective, this hostility was evident. Pinchas Goldhar describes the experience thus:

The life of the Jewish immigrant was one of sheer loneliness, helplessness, and disappointment ... Still more unpleasant was the coldness and even contempt that was displayed towards the immigrant by the old established sections of the Jewish community. There was an abyss of distrust and, quite often, of enmity between the two sections, the newly arrived immigrants and the older Jewish circles. The new arrival was compelled to take his first steps in an atmosphere of aloofness and reluctance.⁸

Due in part to these divisions, recent immigrants began to form their own organisations. The Kadimah had been an early example (established in 1911) of such initiative in Melbourne, in 1926 a group of Polish immigrants formed the Welcome Social Club *Jehudea*, and in 1934 the Polish Jewish Relief Fund. These organisations aimed to assist newcomers by helping them to secure housing, employment, English classes, and even providing childcare while parents worked.

Despite Goldhar's sentiments and the overall climate of hostility, it is not the case that the established community uniformly abandoned immigrants. Some prominent community members became involved in relief efforts for Polish Jewish immigrants, even as they may have avoided social contact with them.⁹ It was in everyone's interest to see immigrants become employed and integrated. Immigrants were encouraged to take up a diverse range of occupations, to avoid overcrowding in petty trade. Furthermore, agricultural pursuits were encouraged as an antidote to the perceived problem of urban clustering.

Territorialist groups, such as the *Freeland League*, based in London, began circulating proposals for possible Jewish colonies in underdeveloped areas, though ultimately these ideas were discarded because of the encompassing prejudice against group settlement of any kind. The most influential proposal of this type in Australia was to build an autonomous Jewish settlement in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Melech Ravitch had been an early proponent of this plan, which had I. N. Steinberg as its leader and forceful advocate. He was extremely

successful at publicising and promoting this scheme, winning support from many corners of Australian public life. The project met with some early successes in winning regional governmental approval, but ultimately was rejected by Labor Prime Minister John Curtin in 1943 whose decision reflected the desire for Jewish immigrants to disperse themselves in order to more easily assimilate.¹⁰

The debate over inter-war immigration also forced Australian Jews to confront and evaluate the content and meaning of their Jewish identity.

I do not want this place overrun with foreigners, no matter where they come from. I can't stand them, their outlook, or their methods of living. I live Australian, think Australian, and play Australian. My kids are Australian and won't have a bar of foreign kids. Maybe that seems intolerant; but I want to make it clear that I am an Aussie of the Jewish religion.¹¹

While this hostility represents an extreme view, it coincides with the more widely held value of complete structural assimilation. H. Rubinstein terms it a virtual 'cult of inconspicuousness' and she describes two motivations: first the fear of stirring up widespread antisemitism and secondly the desire to preserve ties of cooperation with the government and military authorities. Thus, according to Rubinstein, the conservatism evident in the position of the Australian Jewish leadership, its very establishment-oriented nature, enabled it to enjoy the trust and cooperation of the government. In particular this meant not exerting undue pressure on the government to allow in large groups of Jewish immigrants.¹²

Rutland and Blakeney, on the other hand, note a pattern of specifically anti-Jewish measures in the crafting of immigration policy, and see a degree of complicity in the Jewish community's identification with the establishment over their fellow Jews.

Established Australian Jews tended to see their Judaism in purely religious terms, and as representing no barrier to full integration in Australian society. Their efforts to assimilate immigrants were so intense that during this period each ship was met by officials of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society who provided these directives:

Above all, do not speak German in the streets and in the trams. Modulate your voices. Do not make yourself conspicuous anywhere by walking with a group of persons all of whom are loudly speaking in a foreign language ... Remember that the welfare of the old established Jewish community in Australia as well as of every migrant depends on your personal behaviour. Jews collectively are judged as individuals. You personally have a grave responsibility.¹³

This acute pressure to conform to perceived norms of conduct only deepened the rift between newcomer and the established community.

During the war years, Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and her allies were interned and classified as enemy aliens along with non-Jewish Nazi sympathisers. German Jewish internees in Britain were then transported to Australia aboard the infamous ship *Dunera* under harsh and abusive conditions. The Association for Jewish Refugees was formed to advocate for the needs of these immigrant internees. The AJR eventually won the consent of the government to change their status to 'immigrant alien', thus lifting onerous legal restrictions and acknowledging the contribution of those who assisted in the Australian war effort as well as recognising that German Jewish émigrés were no supporters of the German regime. This concession was achieved by the immigrants' own efforts through the AJR, and without the assistance of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, who deeply resented having been bypassed.¹⁴

Laying the foundations

The development of communal structures to meet the needs and interests of new immigrants proceeded and a range of social and cultural and religious organisations were born. The introduction of Liberal Judaism in Sydney and Melbourne as well as the gradual strengthening of Orthodoxy occurred with the arrival of communal leaders who were more in touch with developments abroad in Jewish thought and practice.¹⁵

Furthermore, there was a recognised need to improve Jewish educational resources, though opposition to separate schools persisted. In 1942 the first Jewish kindergarten was established in Sydney. In Melbourne, Melech Ravitch led a group of community members in organising a Yiddish School. Ravitch had been an emissary of the TSISHO (Central Yiddish Schools Organisation) schools of Poland, sent abroad to raise funds. He was a vigorous advocate of the institution and inspired local leaders to make it a reality.

In 1935 the Yiddish Sunday and Afternoon School in Melbourne was founded with the goal of teaching Yiddish language and literature after school hours. Following a decade of growth it became necessary to split off into two separate campuses: the I. L. Peretz School remained in Carlton and the Sholem Aleichem School opened in the neighbouring suburb of St. Kilda. After Ravitch's departure, Chaim Benzion Gurt, my grandfather, served briefly as its director, and more permanently as one of its teachers. Principal Josef Giligich hoped that Yiddish would 'serve as a link to bind the growing generation to the Jewish people.'¹⁶ In addition to teaching youth, the school also established adult courses in Yiddish literature, offering the community open functions in collaboration with Kadimah, such as lectures on child-rearing, Yiddish folklore, and great Yiddish writers. Music and theatre were an integral part of this educational model, and the choir of the Yiddish School was featured regularly in performances, some of which were broadcast across Australia.¹⁷

The Young Men's Hebrew Association in Sydney, B'nai B'rith (charter established 1944), the Australian Jewish Historical Society (est. 1938), and Kadimah in Sydney, are all examples of Jewish organisations that grew and thrived on the participation and leadership of recent immigrants.

The Jewish press expanded and diversified in this period as well, reflecting the concerns of the immigrant populations. In June 1939 the *Sydney Jewish News* began publishing in English with a Yiddish language supplement. It was welcomed as a progressive paper in contrast to the perceived conservatism of the established *Hebrew Standard*.¹⁸ It was an offshoot of the *Melbourne Jewish News* (est. 1930) and strove to provide a forum for refugees to discuss issues of concern.

In addition to these weeklies, the *Australian Jewish Forum* was established with the aim of providing a space for intellectual exchange, especially with regard to the Kimberley settlement proposal (the force behind this scheme, Dr I. N. Steinberg, was the editor of the *Forum* for its first two years). With the ultimate failure of the settlement proposal and the foundation of the State of Israel, this publication folded, its *raison d'être* defeated.

The Melbourne Kadimah had been founded in 1911 by newly arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia and served as a cultural centre for the Jews of Melbourne, with a library, meeting space, lectures and theatre. The proliferation of organisational support for Jewish culture of varied description was directly attributable to the influx of refugees from Eastern and Central Europe.

Within the Kadimah as throughout the Jewish community the emergence of new dynamics of power and identity were not without conflict. In describing the birth of the Kadimah, Dafner says 'right from the start ... the disparate member factions began wrangling over the languages and character of the new institution.'¹⁹

The factiousness continued through the early 1920s with some groups supporting the Balfour declaration and Zionist ideology, and others promoting the Russian Revolution. Détente was reached, it seems, as the Kadimah emerged from an uneasy partnership with the Zionist *Hatchiya* organisation. The reestablishment of the Kadimah in 1926 as an independent organisation, as well as its relocation to Carlton, marked the beginning of a 'new, dynamic, Yiddish dominated era,' according to Dafner.

In this period the Kadimah began publishing Yiddish-language periodicals as well as literature including the work of Pinchas Goldhar. It expanded its offerings to include lectures, concerts, debates, theatre and youth activities in addition to its growing library. The Kadimah as a multi-faceted organisation served as a vital centre of the changing community.

The expansion of institutions centred on the particularity of Jewish culture represented a shift in the way Australian Jews saw themselves. W. D. Rubinstein characterises this as the growth of a 'non-universalistic community'.²⁰ It represented an emerging self-awareness that formed the bedrock of Jewish life in the Antipodes. However, this diversification of Jewish organisations emerged out of

a struggle for control over the communal destiny. The established community and the newcomers often found themselves in conflict over issues of representation, goals and outlook.

The struggle for inclusive leadership of the community was a full-throated one with refugees determined to 'unseat the autocratic oligarchy which controlled' officially recognised communal institutions.²¹ This goal was ultimately achieved with the formation of the umbrella organisation the ECAJ in 1944 which brought together Eastern European immigrants with established Australian Jewish leaders, and whose first president was a European immigrant Paul Morawetz.

The intra-communal wrangling exposed the problems with the Anglo-Jewish ideology of assimilation. In the *Australian Jewish Forum*, George Berger characterised the negative impact of this strategy in an article in which he claimed that the 'lack of Jewish consciousness in the Australian Jewish community demonstrates the futility of seeking peace and toleration through concealment, appeasement, and cowardice.'²²

This gradual process of strengthening Jewish identity through increased numbers, confidence, variety of experience and contact with outside sources ultimately shaped the Jewish community both internally and in its relationship with other Australians.

Post-War immigration

The story of Jewish immigration to Australia continued well after the Second World War and demonstrated both continuity and a change in the government's approach to policies controlling inflow.

The war had made plain Australia's need for increased population, both for economic development and defence of its vast landscape. In terms of economic development the focus was on manpower rather than capital, and the policy of requiring that immigrants possess landing money was scaled back to reflect that artisan types rather than businessman were deemed more desirable.²³ In part this change was based on an unfavourable assessment of pre-war immigrants and their degree of assimilation.

The immediate post-war program of resettlement of displaced persons, under the auspices of the International Refugee Organisation allowed significant numbers of Europeans whose lives had been disrupted by war assisted passage to emigrate. However, many of the same prejudices which we saw operating in pre-war immigration policy-making continued to do so, and in fact, became increasingly systematic.

IRO Selection teams in Europe were making their decisions with three criteria in mind: applicants should have a healthy appearance, should be assimilable, and should help to meet specific labour needs in Australia. Apart from other regulations directly disallowing them, these three criteria alone virtually guaranteed exclusion of Jews, since most Jews who had survived the war had suffered severe privation

and were lucky to be alive at all let alone in good physical condition.

While newly appointed Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell was sympathetic to the humanitarian cause and was friendly with the leadership of the Jewish community, he was also under great pressure from other groups to limit Jewish immigration. His compromise position was to allow 2,000 close relatives of already present immigrants to receive permission to settle. This plan was also to include applicants from among the 18,000 stateless Jews who fled to Shanghai immediately before the outbreak of war in 1939, but who were being expelled by Chinese Nationalists.

The announcement of Calwell's agreement to allow 2,000 Jewish refugees was met with resounding opposition in Parliament, among returned service members, and in the press. These protests reflected concerns that Jewish refugees were receiving preferential treatment, when shipping was in severely short supply, and many returning servicemen were yet unable to secure passage. An acute housing shortage only made matters more difficult, fraying tempers.

The opposition, however, also reflected base anti-Jewish feeling; for instance, H. B. Gullett, Liberal Member for Henty, Victoria declaimed: 'We are not compelled to be a dumping ground for people whom Europe has not been able to absorb in 2000 years.'²⁴ Yet another factor stoking public hostility was the situation in Mandate Palestine, in which Jewish para-military groups were attacking British forces. This provided a convenient reason to resist Jewish immigration under the banner of keeping 'Jewish terrorists out of Australia'.²⁵ Proponents of this position also aimed to cast doubt on Australian Jews' loyalty as British subjects.

The extent of government complicity in discriminatory practices surrounding immigration is quite surprising. Rutland has presented extensive documentary evidence of bureaucratic guidelines designed to exclude Jews, as well as evidence of the desire to conceal this very policy of exclusion.²⁶ An unfortunate corollary of these same policies which kept Jewish refugees out, was to allow in many Nazi collaborators and war criminals to Australia.

In total, post-war Jewish refugee immigration numbered approximately 16,300 between 1946 and 1954 with an additional 8,000 or so coming in the years through 1960.²⁷ The total Jewish population of Australia in 1933 numbered approximately 23,553, while in 1954 that number was 48,436, and finally in 1961 the total of Australian Jewry numbered 59,343. This rate of increase corresponds to a proportion of the population in 1933 at a low mark of 0.36% to a high in 1961 of 0.56% of the total population of Australia.²⁸ This proportion has remained fairly steady to the present. For comparison's sake, Jews in the United Kingdom represent also 0.5% of the total population, while in the United States the percentage is approximately 2.2%.²⁹

‘Mir Zaynen Do’

Among the refugees who were allowed to settle in Australia were writers, artists, and musicians whose work allows us another window on to their experience and by which we can in some ways measure their influence. Like Goldhar, Herz Bergner (1907–70) and Yossel Birstein (1920–2003), the immigrant generation faced difficult adjustments in their new land. For children of immigrants, the strangeness of the new land seems less jarring, never having lived in the Old World. However a sense of alienation from mainstream Australian culture was not an uncommon experience, especially for children of Holocaust survivors.

The Australian documentary film *Angst*³⁰ presents the lives of three comedians who are children of survivors; of relevance to this discussion are Australian Sandy Gutman, and New Zealander Deb Filler. These performers give expression to their experience of otherness through their craft, highlighting the challenges that children of this generation encountered as they strove to feel at home in Australia, making fun of themselves and their sensitivities as well as others’ obliviousness to these. Deb Filler narrates several scenes from her childhood in which the painful difference of her experience is made plain. She tells of visiting the library as a child, and while her friends were reading *Cat in the Hat* she was reading the *Diary of Anne Frank*. She imagines her child-self asking the librarian: ‘Do you have anything with a good 1930s setting, anything more about girls trapped in attics?’³¹

Sandy Gutman, whose stage persona Austen Tayshus displays an aggressive, acerbic wit, talks about bridging the gap between his father’s world and his own. It is difficult to gauge the seriousness of this effort through the film, but he addresses it plainly:

Your world is lost unfortunately. It can only live through survivors, and the children of survivors who are interested enough and can utilise it and distil it and make it relevant to this generation and the following generation. That’s what I’m trying to do.³²

This claim, that the Yiddish world is lost, is one that recurs and one that I deny. The Jewish Diaspora has always been one of shifting centres and peripheries. And while the destruction which took place in Europe in the 1940s was enormous, it was not complete. Pieces of that world were recovered, reconfigured, and brought together in different parts of the world. In Australia in particular, some of those vestiges included the Yiddish language and Jewish secular culture, and they were planted in an entirely different soil, where they produced fruits of a new variety. The vitality of this cultivar is sometimes surprising.

Arnold Zable is today one of Australia’s most widely known authors of Jewish-Australian literature. Some of his works of fiction, though in English, try to capture the Yiddish-speaking world of Jewish immigrants to Australia. His novel, *Scraps of Heaven* is set in Carlton in the late 1950s, and peopled by immigrants from many lands. He describes the freedom experienced by children of immigrants to

wander the streets of Melbourne while parents were busy trying to make a living. *Cafe Scheherazade* tells the stories of a few of these immigrants from Yiddish-speaking lands in the voices of the cafe's proprietors and patrons over endless cups of coffee and plates of cake. Though fictional, the experiences described by the characters mirror very real wartime experiences and reveal the persisting scars created by those events. Zable's storytelling is narrated with tremendous warmth and a sense of gratitude for the refuge found in Australia. He incisively captures the strong human need to communicate – the absolute necessity of making oneself heard and understood. In *Cafe Scheherazade*, this idea is embedded in the work's title, as the eponymous Princess Scheherazade was compelled to tell stories in order to save her own life.

Zable also begins to address themes of the persistence of trauma among families of survivors. With Australia's large proportion of survivors from Europe, this comes as no surprise. In addition to the fiction we have mentioned, there is a large and growing body of memoir writing, which comes out of the community of survivors in Australia. This aging population has taken up pen to commit its memories to paper. Popular presses have published some of these, others are self-published. Many emerge from a community program specifically designed to give survivors the skills needed to write their life stories.³³ This body of literature, while rich and important in its own right, lies beyond the scope of the current project. Its importance here rests in the extent to which it demonstrates ongoing engagement with the Jewish past and present, as well as communal cohesion, and finally governmental support for and interest in the experiences of immigrants as part of an Australian heritage.

Finally, Zable represents another important link in our understanding of the lasting impact made on Australian society by Ashkenazi immigrants. Arnold Zable has made broad connections between the struggle of Jewish refugees to find home and acceptance in Australia and that of refugees from other nations. He has also been active on behalf of Australia's Aboriginal population, promoting recognition of and respect for their cultural heritage as an essential piece of Australian culture.

Weighing the Yiddish influence

W. D. Rubinstein has argued that the activist Jewish secular culture, which so many of the Eastern European Jews had imbibed in their youth and brought with them to the new land, was never genuinely influential in the formation of the post-war Australian Jewish community.

Post-war Australian Jewry arguably never had, and does not now have, any vision which is not, essentially, wholly Jewish, and either aimed at rebuilding the shattered remnants of European Jewry here, or at furthering Israel and Zionism, or a vision expressed in purely religious terms. Post-war Australian Jewry has never sought to change Australian society for the better through radical nostrums.³⁴

While I acknowledge his extensive experience and familiarity with the community, as an active leader for decades, and as a highly respected historian, I disagree with this assertion.

Rubinstein cogently argues that the transformation that took place after the influx of immigrants was thorough, and he also claims that there was little difference ideologically between the immigrants who became community leaders and those of the old Anglo-Australian tradition. His argument seeks to minimise the influence of leftist politics and universalistic political principles, such as social justice, minority civil rights, etc. Instead, he argues, the Jewish community in Australia became solely concerned with self-preservation, and with supporting the newly established State of Israel. I can only present the counter-examples, and the reader must judge their relative weight.

The presence and continuity of organisations such as Kadimah, Bund-SKIF and Sholem Aleichem College suggest a measure of continued relevance of Yiddish modernism and related universalist principles. These ideals were not only an integral part of the political consciousness of Jewish youth in Poland in the interwar period, but also have roots in the Prophetic tradition and the Jewish obligation of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world.

The Bundist principle of *doykeit*, or here-ness, expresses the desire to direct communal energies and attention towards building vibrant Jewish lives where they are (as opposed to in Israel, or any promised land). According to Zable:

The focus [of the Bund] has always been on creating a Jewish life wherever one is and also respecting other communities' right to create a life for themselves. In a sense, the Bund were multi-culturalist before the word was even dreamt of probably or invoked.³⁵

In this way the institutions and political engagement of the new immigrants contributed to the development of the Australian context, and not just that of the Jewish community, but the broader society as well. We can see early points of contact in the kind of cross-cultural exchange undertaken by Goldhar and his circle. Their literary and artistic explorations suggest an interest in meaningful social engagement. According to Maclean:

The Kadimah acted as the focal point for interaction between immigrant Jews, attempting to make sense of Australian culture, and Australian intellectuals and artists who were rebelling against the constraints of a conservative, Anglophile culture and were yearning for the insights offered by European modernity.³⁶

In terms of leadership as well, Melbourne historian Andrew Markus notes:

If we look at the history of Victoria and we look at the history of multiculturalism in Australia, what we find is that some of the individuals who were significant in that movement towards a more pluralistic, open, diverse society were people from the Jewish community.³⁷

Markus goes on to mention in particular Walter Lippmann, a Jewish communal leader who served as an advisor in the development of governmental policy regarding multiculturalism, and argued for the extension of opportunity to all groups in Australian society. Multiculturalism, as a political ideology which emerged from the realities of post-war immigration programs, makes room for cultural particularism, but within a context which acknowledges no hierarchy, no privileging of any single group.

The policies which are laid out in the 1989 *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* aim to promote 'respect for individual identity, to ensure social cohesion and to enhance social justice. It addresses not only issues of equity but also of economic efficiency.'³⁸

Thus, as government policy began to embrace the diversity of cultures within its borders, these points of contact multiplied and took on greater significance. As we have noted, Arnold Zable stands at a nexus between the Jewish and Australian worlds, as his writing and activism for immigrants' rights demonstrates both close ties to the culture of Yiddish Carlton, and catholic ideals of social justice. In an interview filmed for the Multicultural Research Library Video series, Zable talks about growing up in Carlton in the 1950s among immigrants from Eastern Europe, Italy and, Greece, as well as a core of working-class Anglo-Celtic residents of Carlton. He describes in particular a kind of resonance between the desire of immigrant children to make their way in Australia and a working-class Australian attitude of egalitarianism, the idea that everyone deserves 'a fair go'.

While some immigrants eventually migrated onward, those who remained continued to build on the institutional foundations they had set. The constellation of Yiddish cultural organisations in Melbourne during the period of the 1950s became embroiled in ideological wrangling over the role of leftist politics in Jewish communal life. This took place in the context of Cold War hysteria aimed at a perceived communist threat.

The Melbourne Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, an advocacy group formed in 1942, took an active role in publicising discrimination as well as protesting the arrival of Nazi war criminals on Australian soil through the IRO program. According to W. D. Rubinstein, the Council:

represented the chief secular political expression, within the Australian Jewish community, of a universalistic social and political philosophy, reaching out from the Jewish community to other (in its view) oppressed groups ...³⁹

In the late 1940s and early 1950s it was at the centre of a dispute which divided the community. The Council represented a broad spectrum of the Jewish community, but was viewed as heavily left-leaning. Judah Waten, its secretary, was an avowed communist. Maurice Ashkanasy, president of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, the official community umbrella organisation, was stringently

opposed to Waten's politics and refused to affiliate with the Council on these grounds, going so far as to resign from the Board when a resolution to exclude the Council failed in 1950.

The Kadimah became another flashpoint in this ideological dispute, and its Youth Organisation eventually disbanded over accusations of radicalism which was out of step with the larger community. Other organisations thrived; the Yiddish afternoon and Sunday schools eventually joined the overarching system of Jewish day schools, which have become highly successful and widely embraced by all segments of the community. The Sholem Aleichem Sunday School has been transformed into a day school and continues to teach Jewish secular culture. According to its website, it:

aims to foster a love of Jewish culture, history, traditions and festivities in a secular educational setting. At the heart of the College is the study of Yiddish language and culture, Hebrew, Jewish history, traditions, customs and literature, together with a rich and diverse general curriculum ...⁴⁰

The Bund-SKIF continues to operate in Melbourne and offers youth activities in a context that promotes Bundist principles. At its point of origin in Poland, SKIF and Tsukunft (both youth arms of the Bund) sought to reach out to children:

By blending scout activities, sports events, and politics, Tsukunft provided its members with tools for self-expression and prepared young Jews for positions of responsibility and leadership. Above all, it left them with a feeling of belonging at a time when traditional supports were crumbling and when day-to-day living was becoming hard to bear because of economic depression and growing antisemitism.⁴¹

SKIF in Melbourne embraces the same values of *chavershaft*, *doykeit* and *yiddishkeit* as the parent organisation, the Bund, even as their meaning has changed within the Australian context. Among SKIF's goals are 'developing an awareness of the struggles faced by all the peoples of the world and expressing solidarity with oppressed people ...'⁴² The Bund-SKIF of Melbourne continues to embrace the ideals of social justice, strong communities, and Jewish secular culture and though numerically small, subsequent generations of Jewish Australians continue to take part in their activities.

According to Alex Dafner, the Yiddish language continues to be a primary spoken language for approximately 1800 Australians, while thousands use it as a second language. Yiddish language radio broadcasts air several times a week on three different stations. In addition to the Yiddish Day School, which has approximately 200 students, the Yiddish language is taught in several state high schools as an elective. The Kadimah continues to be a community focal point at its new premises in Elsternwick, with its lending library, reading circle and theatre group still active. In addition, Joshua Goldhar, son of Yiddish writer Pinchas Goldhar,

tells me anecdotally that Judah Waten's novel *Alien Son* has been compulsory reading for Australian students in Year 12.

Conclusion

What I have presented here is a sketch of Australian Jewish life during a period of change as an influx of immigrants transformed its culture completely. We have noted the shift away from a British cultural hegemony and towards an outlook more heavily influenced by Eastern European refugees. Some of the Jewish institutions founded in Australia were directly transplanted from Europe, even as they developed their own particular Australian Jewish flavour. We witnessed the ongoing relationship with the Yiddish language and culture that was so central to Jewish life on the European continent before the war.

The durable contribution of this community to the larger Australian context can be seen in the way in which the struggle for immigration reform and acceptance of minority groups became central political questions of the post-war decades. Many of the influential voices in these debates were Jewish voices, writers, artists, activists, and community leaders.

Also emblematic of this shift is the desire of certain institutions within the Jewish community to see themselves in the context of broader concerns. Bernard Korbman, former executive director of the Holocaust Museum in Melbourne, expressed the desire that his museum remain a separate entity from the Jewish Museum of Australia, in order to allow the experience of the Holocaust to have a human message, and not only one for Jews. This speaks directly against the claim that the Australian Jewish community is solely inward-looking. Korbman went on to describe the community that started the Holocaust Museum:

Our community mirrors the Polish community in pre-war Europe. We have the same fights between the same groups as happened before 1939 ... This unique museum that can show you this transition and a resilience of a society and how it mirrors the society it came from beforehand.⁴³

Indeed, it is both the transition and resilience of this community that have together shaped its distinctive character.

Endnotes

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4. A Carlton resident, quoted in Pamela Maclean and Malcolm Turnbull, 'A Vibrant, Dynamic Centre: The Jews' in *Carlton: A History*, ed. Peter Yule (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), p. 60.
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9. Rutland, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
10. *ibid.*, p. 183.
11. *Sunday Truth*, 4 October 1938. Quoted in Rutland, *op. cit.*, p. 185 and H. L. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
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13. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1939, quoted in Rutland, *op. cit.*, p. 186, and H. L. Rubinstein *op. cit.*, p. 214.
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19. Alex Dafner, 'The Kadimah at 98: Mir Zaynen Do – We are here!' <http://home.iprimus.com.au/kadimah/k90eng.htm> (accessed 2009–09–29 13:37:58).
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21. From an editorial in the *Australian Jewish News*, quoted in Blakeney, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
22. *Australian Jewish Forum*, February 1941, pp. 20–21, quoted in Blakeney, p. 235.
23. Rutland, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
24. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, December 1946, as reported in the *Sydney Jews News*, 20 December 1946, quoted in Rutland, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
25. Rutland, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
26. Appendix II in Rutland's book provides extracts of instructions given to Australian Selection Teams in Europe for the purpose of choosing candidates for the IRO settlement program. Also see Rutland, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
27. These figures are based on Commonwealth Year Books, and cited by Rutland, *ibid.*, p. 405. See Appendix II for the complete table.
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A MELBOURNE FAMILY IN THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR

Rodney Benjamin

When I was a small boy during the 1930s, the Great War overlaid much of my life. Within my family there were photographs, memorabilia, old uniforms, and occasional references to life in the trenches. My father marched on Anzac Day through the streets of Melbourne to the Shrine of Remembrance, and he talked about the Returned Servicemen's League and working for the Legacy Club.¹ At 11.00 a.m. on 11 November the whole of Melbourne came to a standstill for two minutes to remember the moment on Armistice Day in 1918 when the guns finally stopped firing on the Western Front. Trams and trains stopped where they were, other traffic came to a halt, and men stopped in the street and took off their hats. Everyone, men, women and children, wore miniature paper red poppies as part of Remembrance Day – as 11 November was called. The flowers were symbols of the red poppies that grew in Flanders Fields despite the awful destruction of the land caused by man-made bombs and shells

My father, Oswald, and three of my uncles – Oswald's brother Stanley and my mother's brothers Harry and Felix Bloch – all went to the war. Of the four only my father and Harry Bloch survived. Stanley and Felix were both killed in France.

What had prompted the only four men of military age in my Jewish family to volunteer? The Bloch brothers enlisted when they were eighteen years old, but my father was 31 and my father's brother was 34. Neither my father nor his brother was married and both were in established commercial careers which they abandoned to enlist. From a very early age I was aware that half of my immediate family who had gone to the war had been killed. I had friends whose fathers had not been in the war. 'Why not?' I asked my mother, of one such father. 'He broke his leg,' my mother replied. I knew she had made up this answer because she did not have a satisfactory one to satisfy a small boy's inquisitiveness, so I did not ask further. To enlist or not remained a puzzle.

All overseas service in the Australian Imperial Force was voluntary. The incongruity of the name for an Australian army did not resonate. The minimum age for enlistment was 18 but parental consent was required for soldiers under 21 to volunteer for overseas service. Both Hilary Rubinstein (1991, pp. 400–1) and Suzanne Rutland (1998, p. 133) quote figures that demonstrate that Jewish volunteers for overseas service in the AIF were over-represented in proportion to the Jewish population as a whole. And of the soldiers killed, Jews comprised 15 per cent of those who served overseas by comparison with 14 per cent of all others

who served. The official figures for casualties in the Australian contingent of the 331,000 that served overseas in all the theatres of the war were 61,720 dead. All but 2,390 of the dead were killed in the Western Front of France and Belgium. The overall fatality rate was 18.6 per cent.

In my family 100 per cent of those who were of an age to volunteer did so, and their fatality rate was 50 per cent.

Of the war stories about my uncles who had been killed, the one that was most touching was about the younger of my mother's two brothers, Felix. My grandmother, my mother's mother, lived with our family after her husband died. As a little boy I had a close relationship with her and often went to her room in the early morning when we were the only members of the family awake. She had turned her bedroom into a shrine for her dead son Felix. Decorating one corner of her bedroom was his picture with his medals mounted on each side of the photograph. There was always a fresh flower on the table underneath the photograph. The photograph was of a fresh-faced youth, with a slight smile playing round his mouth, in army uniform and wearing a peaked cap that made him look older than his years. Felix had been killed during one of the last great battles of the war. The battle had started from Villers-Bretonneux and the Allies had captured Mont St Quentin which exposed the Hindenburg Line, the last line of German defences. It won accolades for the Australian troops and was a personal triumph for their commander, Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash. The advance against the German lines commenced on 8 August 1918. Felix, who had just turned 21, was killed on 17 August. He was buried the same day. The funeral service was conducted by the commander of the 6th Army Brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Cohen.

Felix had joined his school cadet corps and then trained as an electrical engineer. When he turned 18 he joined the army's citizen forces and was a member of the 34th Fortress Company, an artillery force. The Company manned the fort at Queenscliff, which guarded the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. He was promoted to the rank of bombardier but was bored by the inaction compared to the 'real war' in Europe. He was keen to join the AIF despite letters from his older brother, Harry, imploring him not to volunteer. Harry had survived two years of the war in France and had witnessed the slaughter. Felix needed parental consent to serve overseas. The boys' parents had signed the consent form for Harry to join up for overseas service but they resisted Felix's pleas, having already given this consent for their only other son. Long lists of casualties were reported each day in the Melbourne papers. By 1918 more than 50,000 Australian soldiers had been killed. The AIF needed reinforcements but service remained voluntary. The Australian electorate had twice rejected a referendum that would have allowed compulsory army enlistment for service overseas. The families of the soldiers who had been killed were not afraid to level accusations of cowardice against young men who were still in Australia. A white feather was the symbol of cowardice. Women handed out white feathers in public places, or sent them through the mail. Felix was

subjected to this form of public humiliation on a tram. He implored his parents for their permission to enrol and eventually they gave in. He embarked on a ship for the war in November 1917 and nine months later he was dead. His mother lived until she was 80 but she mourned for him every day and never forgave herself for having signed the document that was his death warrant.

At the private school that I attended my father's brother's name, S. O. Benjamin, was inscribed on the Honour Roll of the Fallen in the Great War in the Memorial Hall. More than 200 names were listed in alphabetical order. I was rather proud that his name was there and although I had not known either of my dead uncles, it always brought a lump to my throat when the school bugler played the Last Post, and then Reveille, during the services that were held each ANZAC and Armistice days.

During the service one of the senior boys read a poem written by a past student who had been the editor of the school magazine and vice-captain of the school. The poet had enlisted as soon as he left school and had been killed in battle. The imagery of the poem was so moving that I felt that I understood why all these men and boys had offered up their lives.

Had my father and uncles heard the bugles of England?

For England

The bugles of England were blowing o'er the sea,
As they had called a thousand years, calling now to me;
They woke me from my dreaming at the dawning of the day,
The bugles of England – and how could I stay?
The banners of England, unfurled across the sea,
Floating out upon the wind, were beckoning to me;
Storm-rent and battle-torn, smoke stained and grey,
The banners of England – and how could I stay?
O, England, I heard the cry of those that died for thee,
Sounding like an organ-voice across the winter sea;
They lived and died for England, and gladly went their way—
England, O England, how could I stay?

And then the whole school joined in the songs, 'Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves', 'Land of Hope and Glory, mother of the free' and the hymn 'Jerusalem – And did those feet in ancient times, walk upon England's mountains green?' A thousand boys felt their hearts swell with pride at being part of the great British Empire.

Militarism permeated the school. There was a junior and a senior cadet corps. There were cub and scout troops but they were for sissies. Real boys joined the cadets. As a nine-year-old I had enrolled in the junior school cadet corps. Our uniform was grey short school pants with a grey tunic that had epaulettes in the school colours and brass buttons. Our hats were large navy blue berets with a silver-

coloured school badge at the front. We were issued with rifles for drill, hefty .310 calibre weapons that had been used in the Boer War. We took them home from school on the tram, or walked home with the rifles slung over our shoulders, and this was unremarked by anyone. The senior school corps was much more serious. By then it was the time of World War Two and the senior cadets trained like real soldiers. At the annual camp live ammunition for rifles, sub-machine guns and machine guns were used by the boys at the firing range. But I digress.

In the 1930s privately-owned cars were a rarity. Only well-off families owned them. Most people used public transport. Children were not driven to school. They walked or rode push bikes or went by tram and train. Families like mine with a car used them only on special occasions. The most popular outing was the whole family going for a 'Sunday drive' into the country for a picnic in the bush. On the way my father would lead the family in a sing-song of the songs that he remembered from the war, 'Mademoiselle from Armentières', which my mother felt was a bit risqué for young children, 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary', 'Take me back to Dear Old Blighty', and 'Pack up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag' were more suitable, but 'Hello, Hello, Who's Your Lady Friend?' was treading a fine line. The family learned all the words and joined in with piping treble voices.

My father enjoyed the singing but the only stories about the war that he ever told were two self-deprecating ones. He was in the artillery and the guns and gun-carriages loaded with ammunition were horse-drawn. The gunners had to become expert horsemen as well as learning artillery skills. The regiment left for overseas soon after father's enlistment and training was undertaken in Egypt on the way to Europe. The training involved exercising men for horses and horses for men. Dad was a short man and he was allotted a very big horse measuring, he claimed, seventeen hands.² Out in the Egyptian desert the horse's saddle started to slip, so father reined in his horse and dismounted to tighten the girth of the saddle while the rest of the troop continued on. While he was attempting to tighten the girth, which is not an easy task if your mount is wily and unwilling, the horse looked up to see the rest of the company disappearing over a distant sand dune. It took off at a furious gallop. Dad managed to grab the horse's mane and get himself partly into the saddle as it continued to slip under the horse's belly. Neither horse nor man wanted to be left in the desert.

The appeal of the story was partly because my father was now a prominent businessman who always dressed immaculately in a three-piece suit and tie, and was very proper in his behaviour. Rather Victorian in his attitude to manners and how a household should be run, the picture that the story conjured of my father hanging on to a slipping saddle for dear life as the horse careered across the desert was so out of character with his present persona that it always amused the family. 'Go on Dad, tell us about the horse in the desert.'

And then there was the story of my father's promotion to sergeant. His army life had started in 1915 as a gunner in the artillery, the equivalent of a private in

the infantry. Late in 1916 his first promotion was to an acting bombardier, the equivalent of an acting corporal. This was the lowest promotion possible and in 1917 he became a temporary bombardier. The difference between temporary and acting was never clear to me. It was not until New Year's Day in 1918 that father made it to bombardier, and when he was posted to Brigade Headquarters he was given the equivalent rank of corporal and then to 'temporary sergeant'. The story that he told of his final promotion was of presenting a despatch to the commander of the Artillery Brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Cohen. Father's mother, my paternal grandmother Lady Benjamin, had been Fanny Cohen before her marriage so the colonel was my father's cousin. The colonel said: 'I see that you have made it to corporal and temporary sergeant. Congratulations.' To which my father replied: 'After three years of fighting in mud, slush and dead mates, don't you think I could make it to a full sergeant?' 'Oh, all right,' replied the colonel. This final promotion came through just six months before the end of the war.

Only one other war story emerged during my childhood. I had been very ill and the family doctor had ordered a holiday in a warm climate. So my parents took me to Mildura, the northernmost part of Victoria where the climate was usually more reliably warmer than in Melbourne. We went by train because war-time petrol rationing did not allow for long private car trips. During the train journey I joined my father in the passageway outside our compartment to find him deep in a laughing conversation with several men. They were, I found from their banter, several of my father's fellow soldiers from the war in France. 'Do you remember poor old Fred?' asked one. 'You mean the bloke who fell over a log during our advance and a burst of Jerry machine gun fire shot off half his bum?' 'Yeah, that was him. And after they had fixed him up in hospital in Blighty³ the first day he was back with us he crawled out of the trench for an advance, and they shot off the other half.' They all roared with laughter. I could see why they were laughing, but was shocked that they found a friend's injury so funny. What would life be like without any bum at all?

After my father's death I discovered his army uniform. It was not the rough woollen serge standard issue but one that had been tailored in London in a fine quality cloth. On the left breast of the uniform were his service ribbons, two wound stripe chevrons on one sleeve, and four chevrons on the other sleeve that indicated four years' service overseas. A small box contained his memorabilia from the war. Not much, I thought, for giving up the best four years of a life.

In the box was a diary. It was headed 'My Diary from the date of embarkation for the Great European War'. I thought that this title was a better description than the one now commonly used of 'World War One'. Apart from the struggle with the Ottoman Empire, and a few minor skirmishes in Africa and New Guinea, it was a great European war.

With other things in the box was a metal cigarette case with a jagged hole in the centre of it. Inside was a hand-written note: 'This case saved my life. I wore

it in my breast pocket over my heart. The hole was caused by a piece of shrapnel that would have pierced my heart.' I knew that my father never smoked. Did he carry it with him for four years as armour plate against a piece of shrapnel? It would not have stopped a bullet. There was an unsmoked pipe in the box. Why did he carry it?

I had hoped to find the explanation in the diary of why father had enlisted but there was none. I applied to the War Memorial in Canberra for his war record, hoping that it would help to explain why a man in his thirties had resigned from his job as senior executive of the largest brewery in Victoria to volunteer to fight for Britain in a European war. The war record arrived in a stiff cardboard cover that carried the title 'World War I – Personnel Records.' But there was nothing in it to explain why he had enlisted.

I also applied for my father's older brother's record. The brother's enlistment was even more difficult to understand. The brightest of all the nine boys in the family, ⁴ he had played in his private school's first teams in both cricket and football and after he left school had passed his actuarial exams, a rare and difficult qualification that at the time could only be obtained from Scotland. Employed by the major life assurance company in Australia, the AMP Society, why would he have enlisted at the age of 33 during the early days of the war? He described his occupation on his enlistment papers as 'an agent'. Why? He survived the murderous Gallipoli campaign only to be blown apart by a German shell in France.

As I grew older, the passionate patriotism that Australians felt for England, and their love of 'Home', as England was commonly called, had dimmed over the years. I found it more difficult to understand the wellsprings of patriotism, for a country that very few Australians had even seen, that had suffused the populace during the Great War. I read the literature about enlistment; of how the war had received such wide support; that a number of Australians had enlisted enticed by the 'six bob a day' pay being offered; that others had done so for the opportunity of seeing the world at the country's expense and the promise of a great adventure; and how yet others had seen it as their patriotic duty. Within the first two weeks of war being declared 17,000 men in New South Wales and Victoria had enlisted, but my father and my mother's brother had not been of this group.

What had happened in mid-1915 that would have propelled my father to the recruiting desk? One answer seemed to lie in the lists of Australian casualties at Gallipoli that filled the newspaper columns in May and June of that year. And another answer emerged, one that had previously been unthinkable: the combination of the naval and military losses in the Dardanelles, and the German and Austrian successes on both the Western and Eastern fronts in Europe, suggested the possibility that the 'Entente', the alliance between Britain, Russia, France and Italy, could lose the war. If this happened it would be the unimaginable end of the British Empire. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, an English passenger vessel that was attacked by a German submarine off the Irish coast, with the loss of 1,198

civilian lives including women and children, added to the fostered image that the enemy was merciless in its pursuit of victory.

In Victoria the Government launched a recruiting drive in response to charges that Victorians were slower to volunteer for the army than men from other states. The response was extraordinary. In the month of July 1915, 21,698 Victorians enlisted. This represented 60 per cent of all Australian enlistments. From June to September 1915 more than 31,000 Victorians had 'rallied to the flag'.

My father signed the 'Attestation Paper' for enlistment in the 'Australian Imperial Force for Service Abroad' on 20 September 1915. He declared himself to be a 'Natural Born British Subject' aged 31 years and 3 months. A qualified accountant, he had previously served nine months in the City of Melbourne Rifle Club and had reached the rank of corporal. He was passed medically fit and agreed that he was not suffering from a long list of illnesses that included 'scrofula, syphilis, or an unusually pendant testicle'. The medical officer certified him to be free of any traces of corporal punishment or tattoos.⁵ He was called up on 4



Stanley Benjamin, eighth son of Sir Benjamin Benjamin, born Melbourne 1880, served Gallipoli 1915. Killed in action, France, 23.11.1916.

October 1915 and was sent to the 16th Battery of the 6th Field Artillery Brigade with the rank of gunner. The Brigade was in training at North Essendon. His oath on enlistment was to serve 'our Sovereign Lord the King ... until the end of the War and a further period of four months thereafter. I will resist His Majesty's enemies ... and faithfully discharge my duty according to law.' The description on his army record was that he was 5 feet 6¼ inches tall, weighed 11 stone, had two vaccination marks and had declared his 'Religious Denomination' as Jewish.

After six weeks training, which did not include firing a single shot from an artillery weapon, he embarked on the troopship *Persic* on 22 November 1915. With them went the artillery guns, known as 18-pounders, and the ammunition wagons. Both were drawn by teams of four horses. The horses were on the ship too.

Harry Bloch was also on the *Persic*. He was in the same 6th Field Artillery brigade as Oswald but in the 18th

Battery. Harry also kept a diary from the date of his joining the army in October 1915. It makes only one reference to Oswald. On 7 October 1916 Harry wrote in his diary:

The day of atonement. Had a good breakfast of porridge one chop (leaving bacon). Went with Benjamin to Renninghelst about 10 miles away. Held in YMCA. Got there in 3 successive motor transports. Good attendance but poor service. Mr. Friedman [Rev. D. I. Freedman, Perth's minister, the chaplain] has no voice. Walked to Poperinghe & had a good dinner & then a picture show. Got back to Steenvoorde in 2 motor lorries and a farmer's cart. Evening on duty.

Excerpts from Oswald's diary were written in a different style.

1915.

22nd November. Reveille at 5.30 am, breakfast and then marched to Essendon station where we entrained for Port Melbourne. Marched to Town Pier amidst cheers from the populace. Embarked on the A 34 transport and finally left the pier about noon amidst frantic cheers and waving of handkerchiefs.

24th November. Up to the present meals have not been too inviting especially eating them in the crowded troop hold. So Leo Meagher, Austin, Heath and myself have completed arrangements with the cook to have the same meals as the officers for a certain sum each week. Of course this is not known to the rest of the men and we also have a special and secret spot where we eat.⁶

29th November. About noon I was told to report to the Orderly Office where my cousin Colonel Cohen who knew of my accounting qualifications informed me I was appointed Pay Clerk with the Adjutant Captain Stokes. We had to make up the totals of the various unit pay sheets and then pay the money to the unit commanders who then paid their men. The men only get one shilling a day on the voyage. My little lot was eight shillings.

3rd December. During 9 a.m. parade an alarm was given and we had to rush below for our life belts and then go to their allotted life boats or rafts. I shall have to float on the vegetable shed which is to be thrown overboard and shared with about 90 others.

4th December. Service for Jewish soldiers was read in Orders for today. I was anxious to see who would conduct the service, not knowing anyone on board with the qualifications. Lieutenant-Colonel Cohen turned out to be the acting rabbi, and he made the service very short and all in English. There are under a dozen of us on board.

18 December. About 12 a.m. we arrived at Suez. It is a hot, sandy and

forsaken looking place, with a few steamers at anchor in the harbour. We got paid another 10 shillings each today.

21st December. Up early. We had to parade in full marching order. I was detailed to be one of the guards. About 9 o'clock we drew up at the wharf and the guard were the first to land ... About 4 p.m. our Brigade entrained for Cairo ... We passed through the town of Suez. The houses are all of square design of three or four stories [sic] and the colour scheme is mostly green or red on white ... It was a full moon and the scenery looked very pretty with date palms and houses dotted here and there. We arrived at our destination at midnight and then marched to our camp at Heliopolis.

The Brigade was camped at Heliopolis, a town on the Suez Canal approximately half way along the Canal between the towns of Suez and Port Said, until 13 January 1916. During that time there were a number of opportunities for the troops to go on leave to Cairo. There my father caught up with friends and relatives from Melbourne who were also on leave. To his great delight one of those was his older brother, Stanley, who had survived Gallipoli. My father and his group of older Australian soldiers, all of whom would have had their own means, led a sophisticated life on their leaves in Cairo. They ate at the best hotels and restaurants in the city, Sheppard's, the St. James and Groppi's, and treated themselves to hot baths.

1916. 13th January. Reveille at 3 a.m. and having got up, fed horses, eaten breakfast and then saddled up, we started off in the dark for Tel-el-Kebir in which camp Stanley is quartered. It was very picturesque marching along the banks of the Nile during sunrise, then through Cairo to the railway station, where we entrained. Arrived at Tel-el-Kebir about 3.30 p.m. There is a big encampment here. All the artillery and infantry from Australia seem to be concentrated in this one spot. We had to lead our horses about a mile to water over dusty dry desert to a small canal. I am not looking forward to a repetition of this three times a day.

Tel-el-Kabir was some 70 miles east of Cairo between that city and Ismalia. The camp was part of the defences of Cairo for a possible attack by Turkish troops if they managed to breach the defences set up at the Canal itself. In February 1915 there had been an unsuccessful attempt by a Turkish force to invade Egypt.

30th January. I have broken my fountain pen so must now work with a pencil. [The pencils that he used were called 'indelible' and the entries retain their clarity 90 years later.] Nothing much has happened, only mounted battery and brigade drill out in the desert.

2nd February. Today was set apart for divisional competition in drill

and driving, etc. We had all arrived at the spot in the desert when the order came through from the General to return to camp and prepare for a night bivouac and dig ourselves into a position. We started about 6 p.m. and went out into the desert where our brigade had to dig gun pits and trenches. This is very laborious work that went on right through a bitterly cold night. In the morning the General came round and inspected and then we had to take out our guns and fill in the excavations.

27 February. We rode out on horses to the position where the gun pits were to be made. This is about 10 miles out from the Canal in the Sinai Desert, and all the water supply is brought out on camels in tanks of about 12 gallons each. We have our tents with us and the food is good, but one misses an adequate water supply for washing, our allowance being one bottle per day.

6th March. Today we started live shell firing and the experience was both novel and interesting to me. The 18th Battery had the honour of firing first, and then our turn and then the 17th. I was number 6 in our gun crew but later on I hope to have the layer's seat.⁷ Firing is also going on from other positions and at times the air seems full of flying shells.

7th March. Up at 5 a.m., then after breakfast we marched to the 13th Battery pits to do more firing. On our gun I was layer for most of the day and enjoyed the experience. While acting as number four in the afternoon I was loading the last shot of the day and was unlucky enough to get my fingers jammed in the breech and had to have them dressed by the doctor. I was thus the first casualty in our battery!

8th March. Up at 3.30 a.m. to go back to civilisation again. With all our kits, blankets, etc. on our backs we started out to reach the railway before dawn ... We dropped our blankets and continued our journey along an excellent road on foot for the Canal, a distance of 8 miles without a stop, and were given two hours off in Ismailia before finally going to Moasear camp where the 2nd Division were being concentrated before being shipped to Europe. It seems that the projected Turkish attack on the Canal has turned out a fiasco, but if it did eventuate they would have very little chance of success for it is very strongly defended and the Canal is alive with warships.

17th March. Yesterday evening we started from Moascar camp for embarkation to, we believe, Europe ... we finally arrived at Alexandria at about 10 a.m. and were immediately embarked ... three troopships sailed out of Alexandria just at evening. I must say I offered up a little prayer of thanks that I was leaving Egypt, a country I hated from the

first, and never liked any better, my only regret being that my brother Stanley was not coming along with me.

22nd March. About midnight we finished our journey across the Mediterranean and anchored at Marseilles. We had all been served out with life belts and these we had to have with us day and night and carry them wherever we went on account of the submarine danger. All the time the boat steered a zigzag course so as to prove a harder target for torpedoes. Every night I slept on deck, not caring for the atmosphere below where I only went for meals. There was a fine swimming bath on board and we were allowed to indulge in it once.

23rd March. During the morning we landed at Marseilles and met our other lot who came by the horse boat. We then entrained for the north in one very long train, only eight horses being in one truck with two men to look after them, the other men being in third class carriages. Writing of the journey, which lasted till Sunday 26th March, my impressions were that France appeared to be a garden. As we passed along the Rhone the scenery was beautiful, and the colouring of the green fields, old red tiled roofs in the villages and old stone cottages gave a treat to the eyes that had long been used to only deserts. The further north we went, we saw more manufacturing industries these were sandwiched with rural scenes, old towns and villages, pretty girls, old men and nice old ladies. What was most noticeable was the fewness of the men in their prime and youth, all I suppose being at the Front. All the way we got a great reception from the people, both at the stations we passed through and at the different towns.

27th to 29th March. We finally arrived at Le Havre on Sunday 26th March and went into camp on the heights above the town where the mud and the rain made it rather depressing at first. This was the extent of our sojourn at Le Havre all of which time was used in referring with stores, guns, etc. I was at the Ordinance Stores each day with the Major and it was very interesting work getting everything together and seeing the efforts of the English ordinance and the good system on which it was run. Such a thing showed that England was prepared to see the thing through and was looking after her men well in all ways. After a busy day in ordinance I found myself detailed as part of a party of 30 to go away at an hour's notice for the Front. We entrained about midnight and off we went for a journey of about 24 hours.

30th March. We disentrained at Berguette at 8.30 p.m. and after much waiting we were billeted at a house and were put in a large barn the floor of which was covered in straw where we passed a restful night.

31st March. Up at 6.30 and about noon we were taken on motor buses

through very pretty scenery for about 20 miles to Armentières where we joined an Imperial Battery. During the journey one of our buses fell into the canal and one of the 21st Battery was unfortunate enough to be drowned.

Armentières is just south of Ypres. The Ypres Salient was the focus of very heavy fighting throughout the war. The First Battle was in November 1914, and the second just five months later in April/May 1915. In the Third Battle, also known as Passchendaele, fought in 1917, British and Dominion troops suffered more than 448,000 casualties and the Germans 217,000. In 1916 Armentières was on the British front line. By July of that year the British forces in the area consisted of 47 infantry and three cavalry divisions, eight Dominion infantry divisions and two Indian cavalry divisions.

1st April. Today we were under fire for the first time, shells falling amongst us. Surprised at my own coolness but kept wondering where the next would fall.

8th April. This morning terminated our stay with 'A' Battery 80th Brigade (British Army). During the week we were very near shell fire, and although none found the Battery, we had to leave off having meals in our mess house which was receiving too much attention from Fritz. We found the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) fellows a fine lot who made us welcome and did everything they could do to make us comfortable. We were then marched to our wagon lines where we picked up the rest of our gunners and then went to the battery we were taking over from the RFA. We arrived after dark and settled down to serious work the next morning.

9th to 29th April. These (gun) pits are at a place called Vesée, not far from Armentières, are situated in an open field with the gun pits disguised as haystacks. The great thing here seems to be concealment from aircraft observation, and with this objective the order is as little movement as possible. As a consequence of this there is a minimum of work and fatigues; and there is always an aeroplane scout out to look for hostile craft and give warning by blowing three blasts on a whistle. We had some cold wet weather here and then the mud was awful, and as the cookhouse was some 500 yards from the pits, it was quite a work of art bringing up the tucker without falling down and losing the lot. We did not do a great deal of firing here as it was a quiet part of the front and we never had a shell from the Germans near our position. From here we used to go in parties to the baths at Erquinghem where besides a hot bath there was also a change of clean clothes. During the end of our stay here a party of about twelve men was detailed to build new pits at Bois Grenier about four miles away.

I was one of these and as the work was only done at night we would leave the wagon lines about 6 p.m. and work till 4.30 a.m. This lasted altogether about a fortnight and was very tiring as day sleep is not as refreshing as in the night.

29th April to 2nd July. Now for our stay at Bois Grenier. Our first thing was to finish building the pits and make them as comfortable as possible. I must say that when they were finished they were *très bon* for in ours, viz. 'B' gun, we painted the roof white, lined the walls with green canvas and had a concrete floor. Our billet was in a farm house about 200 yards from the pits, and there we could get beer and coffee at all hours which was very convenient. We also erected lots of screens so that the enemy could not see our gun flashes. This I think was a favourite hobby of the Majors. Very often when erecting or renovating these we were caught all around by fragments from bursts of anti-aircraft guns and some of us had narrow escapes. The fields all around us were beautiful in their spring fashions, being a mass of buttercups, daisies and other wild flowers, while the hedges were a blaze of blossom. We were evidently not spotted here by the Germans for while the batteries to the left and right of us were being shelled periodically, we received no such attention ourselves. The last month of our stay here I was attached to the D.A.C. (Divisional Ammunition Column) with three others from the battery, the D.A.C. sending four of their gunners in exchange to get experience. I had a good loaf there as there was not much to do, and in fact I was off duty for a time with boils on my arm, but I soon got rid of them. The D.A.C were near Steenwerke which seemed a very old town and was very interesting to look at and there I spent many pleasant hours. As our division of artillery was now under orders to move off to a different part of the front, I rejoined our battery at the wagon line.

In a letter to his parents dated 10 June, Harry Bloch related that he was sent with three other gunners to the DAC. He wrote that 'Oswald Benjamin is here also & is now by my side in the guard tent.'

Harry and Oswald knew each other in the then small Jewish community of Melbourne of some 5000 persons. Neither of them would have any notion that they would one day be brothers-in-law. Six years after this meeting Oswald would marry my mother, who was Harry's little sister, Marjorie. She was just sixteen years old at the time of Harry's letter.

July 8th. We got sudden orders to leave our position and go south towards the Somme. Journeyed by road to Saint Silvester Caffel where we stayed a few days.

July 13th. Marched from Argoevres to Belloy-sur-Somme. The scenery

was very pretty along the road as all the cornfields were ripe and the mass of red poppies and cornflowers made them a blaze of colour.

July 20th. After a week's stay at Belloy-sur-Somme which I liked, we were on the move again ... We now marched from there to Puchevillers where the whole division were assembled in a large permanent camp.

July 26th. I did not enjoy the stay here as I was troubled a lot with rheumatism and was off duty for some days. In the afternoon we moved on again and arrived at Albert the next day.

His army record shows an entry from the 5th Field Ambulance that he was taken to hospital with 'sciatica' on 26 July and discharged back to his unit the same day.

July 27th. In the evening we went to our gun positions in Sausage Gully, so called on account of the large number of sausage balloons we had up observing the enemy. We then started to build gun pits which took us a couple of days. We were the most advanced battery.

Sausage Gully was a large depression rather than a valley. It afforded a comparatively sheltered position for artillery and for troops to move to and from the firing line. The Australian 6th Field Artillery Brigade was about to be involved in the battle for a small village named Pozières on the Albert to Bapaume road. The village, which has been described as just a small agricultural hamlet, was held by the Germans and was regarded as the key to an Allied advance to the north. Its strength was that it lay on an open projecting plateau from which there was a field of fire of several hundred yards in all directions. During 1915 and 1916 the Germans had turned Pozières into a fortress. British troops had made vain attempts to take the position between 13 and 17 July. Australian troops of the 1st Division were to be thrown into the battle for Pozières and were ordered to attack on 23 July. German artillery fire was incessant, and in fierce hand to hand fighting the 1st Division lost 5,285 men in three days. Three VCs were awarded for individual acts of great bravery. The 1st Division was exhausted and was replaced by the 2nd Division. After ten days that Division had lost 6,848 men and had to be replaced by the 4th Division.

August 9th. The country all round is like a huge honeycomb with all the old English and German trenches and shell holes. The bombardments were terrific, and the noise of guns was going night and day without intermission.

It was good to know that our infantry were doing well and advancing, but how sad to see all the wounded being brought in. Some of the men suffering from shell shock were shivering as if all their nerves were gone and they were troubled by St Vitus' dance.⁸

While in this position our battery alone fired about 10,000 rounds, and with the hundreds of guns of all sizes congregated there, the outsider

can imagine what the bombardment was like. The wagon lines at first were in a nice position near a canal where one could bathe which was a rare treat. But on account of shells falling in or near the position the lines had to be moved four or five times. Several times at night we had to take the horses off the lines to a place of safety.

One afternoon a shell burst amongst the horses, killing two men, four horses and wounding one man. At the gun pits we had four men wounded. Taking ammunition to the pits was a very rough, dangerous and dirty trip. The gunners sitting on the wagons had a particularly rough ride going over shell holes and bad roads. Several times we narrowly escaped shell fire coming and going and a feeling of relief would escape when out of the danger zone.

In the evening of the 9th the battery came out of action and camped at the wagon lines for the night.

Except for a few lines of this last entry, the diary is very unemotional. In fact he had just taken part in what was one of the major battles of the Australian troops during the whole war. Official figures give the total number of shells fired by the Australian artillery between July 21 and 27, when Pozières was captured, at 64,841. Most were shrapnel shells designed to inflict casualties on enemy soldiers. In that six-day period the Australian Divisions lost 5,285 officers and men killed, of whom 30 were from the artillery brigades. The artillery bombardment from both sides was counted to be the heaviest that had occurred to that time including the battles on the Somme or at Verdun.

However, the battle in this sector of the Western Front was by no means over. The Australian forces were instructed on 27 July to proceed beyond the ruined village and capture the heights above Pozières. C. E. W. Bean, the official war historian of the AIF, wrote of the days of terrible fighting that followed, that 'the shell fire was infinitely worse than that subsequently experienced in the Third Battle of Ypres ... in a single tour of this battle, divisions were subject to greater stress than in the whole Gallipoli campaign.' The deaths of Australian troops in this second battle that lasted from 25 July to 7 August totalled 6,848. The infantry had born the brunt of the attack; of those losses 6,148 were infantry soldiers and 214 infantry officers. Thus the total number of Australian killed in 17 days of fighting numbered 11,433.

August 10th. Left Albert and marched to Val-de-Maison where we bivouacked.

August 11th. From Val-de-Maison to St. Ledger where we are to have a rest. Here all the Division was camped, and Meagher and self spent several pleasant nights at the 21st Battalion officer's mess with Captain Fogarty and Lieut. Colonel Forbes. [This was F. W. D. Forbes, CMG,

DSO, VD who commanded the 21st Battalion and later 20th. He was a bank manager from Melbourne.] I also met Dave Lilley and spent a couple of hours with him.

August 16th. Sudden orders to move off in an hour.

August 17th. Arrived back at Albert again.

The decision had been made to drive a wedge northwest behind the German lines from Pozières. This meant throwing the Australian forces, already exhausted and depleted by casualties, into battle again. The new offensive was known as the battle for Moquet Farm. The position taken up by the 6th Field Artillery Brigade, whose objective was to provide covering fire for the new advance, was open to shelling by German artillery and to strafing by German aircraft.

August 18th. Into action again at Mash Gully, to the left of Sausage Gully. Here things were not so strenuous as before as we were mainly only doing barrage fire. We were shelled several times and once when things got a bit hot we left the guns for an hour or so and went to a flank. On the second day Major Moore was wounded by a premature burst from another battery behind and was taken to hospital.

September 4th. Came out of action and back to Albert.

In these battles the Anzac Corps had suffered 23,000 deaths and another 5,000 wounded in the space of seven weeks. This left the Australian army in France seriously under-manned. There were 13,400 reinforcements in England being trained, but their level of training meant that they would only be available in small groups as their training was completed. There were another 6,000 on their way to England from Australia but they too would require training there before they saw battle. The numbers involved in this equation led to the attempts to introduce conscription in Australia.

September 10th. Into action at historic Ypres. What a ruin the place is, not a good wall or building left standing. The Cloth Hall and Cathedral are nearly just memories and it is awful to think of the destruction. Our gun pits are outside the wall which is about 40 feet thick and is said to have been built in the 17th century. Things pretty quiet in this part now, and not much doing.

September 26th. Left Ypres and marched to a rest camp at Steenvoorde about 15 miles away and not far from Goderwaersvelde where we were before.

September 28th. Rode on a bike to Renelgast, about 10 miles for New Year's service. Met Algie Sanders and spent a couple of hours with him at Poperinghe. Fred is also at Steenvoorde for a few days and we have quite enjoyed meeting each other. Also met Arthur Hyman on

New Year's day; he is now a major.

October 7th. Went to Atonement service at Renelgast, but this time by a series of motor lorry rides.

Harry Bloch's diary entry for 7 October reads:

Day of Atonement. Went with Benjamin for the service into Reninhelghelst about 10 miles away. Good attendance but poor service. Mr. Friedman has no voice. Walked to Poperinghe & had good dinner & then picture show.

October 13th. I was detailed to be one of a party to accompany our officers to the new gun positions at Ypres. In the afternoon returned to 20th Battery lines after a long days ride.

October 14th. Set out to find our new wagon lines of which we only had a map reference. After a lot of enquiries, ultimately succeeded. Found brother Stanley just across the road from us and we were well pleased to see each other. The lines are just outside Reninghelst.

Harry Bloch wrote to his parents in a letter dated 18 October:

Oswald Benjamin asks to be remembered to you. When I went to the Day of Atonement service with him I met his cousin Eric who is also in the artillery in our division. He is a brother of Bibs Benjamin with whom I used to play tennis ... He is very like her & is a very decent fellow.

Eric Benjamin subsequently changed his surname to Brendan. He was the grandson of Solomon Benjamin who was the brother of Moses Benjamin. Thus Eric's father and Oswald's father were first cousins.

October 28th. Disentrained at Saleux in a sea of mud which took five hours. Then about 10 p.m. we set out, and after passing through Amiens which is a fine town arrived at a village outside Davours where we rested a few hours.

October 29th. Moved on again towards the Somme, passing a number of German prisoners working on the roads, and then camped outside Albert.

October 30th. Started again and moved through Albert to our wagon lines near Fler. The traffic on the roads was wonderful and the mud terrible.

October 31st to December 31st. Our stay during this period can only be likened to living in a sea of eternal mud. You could not escape it no matter how hard you tried. I shared a humpy with Meagher and Stoney and we used to be very comfortable there of an evening when the fire

got going. I was at the wagon lines all this time and got promoted to the rank of Acting Bombardier. When Bombardier Johnson went on leave to England I took over his duties of Battery orderly which were pleasant enough. All the ammunition, rations, water, etc. had to be packed on horses to the pits as the roads would not allow wagons to be sent. Our lines there were often shelled by the enemy without ever getting any of us, but we must have lost 50% of our men and horses by sickness without any reinforcements coming in.

About 10th December I heard that Stanley had been killed on 23rd November at Montauban while drawing rations for his section. Of course this was a great shock to me but I soon got over it. Received plenty of parcels for Xmas and managed to enjoy them.

1917.

January 1st -2nd. Off duty with bronchitis and trying hard to get better as I was due for leave in a day or so.

January 3rd. Should have gone on leave instead of which I was sent to hospital. First of all went to Becordel and then to C.C.S. at Heilly where we stayed the night. Went by hospital train from there to Estretat where we arrived at about 2 a.m. We were taken to the No. 1 British General Hospital. This place is situated right on the sea and would be a beautiful spot in the summer time, but it is now rather cold. We are not allowed to stay in bed, but must get up for meals, etc., which we have about 50 yards down the street. All the ambulances here are driven by women who seem very expert at the game.

Oswald's Army Record is marked that he was taken to hospital on 2 January, 'sick'. He was admitted to 1st General Hospital with 'bronchitis' on the same day. He was discharged back to duty on 17 January. Australian troops suffered greatly from respiratory diseases from the climate, their living conditions, and by gas used by the Germans. It was mid-winter.

January 17th. I was marked to leave the hospital on 15th but owing to a railway smash on the line I did not go till today. Three car loads of us motored to Le Havre which took about an hour. We then entrained and moved off about 1 a.m.

February 4th. After being on draft for over a week we finally left the base. Arrived at Albert about 10 p.m. and stayed there the night.

February 5th. We were then taken by wagons to St. Gratien and were attached to 4th Section D.A.C.

February 13th. Much to our surprise and annoyance after lunch another party of men arrived to take over from us and we had to go back to La Vieville.

This was the last entry in the diary. There was a further reorganisation of the artillery in February 1917. To allow for greater mobility three artillery brigades, of which the 6th (my father's) was one, were detached for their previous Divisions and brought under the command of the artillery commander of the 1st ANZAC Corps.

My father's subsequent participation in the war is sketchily set out with impersonal official words in the 'Summary of War Service' in his Army records, which are shown in *italic*.

17.2.1917 Rejoined unit.

The battery was engaged in the Battle of Bullecourt when the 1st Anzac Corps was fighting its way towards the Hindenburg Line. This attack was mounted in early April 1917 and lasted until 17 May. By that time the A.I.F. had suffered 7,000 casualties.

One gunner from the 2nd Battery recounted his experience on 3 May in the following terms.

I was pulled from the layer's seat and a fresh man took over. I sat on the ground a deaf and shaking heap covered in oil as the guns had heated up and oil squirted out at every recoil. It is a severe job to fire for 3 hours at the rate we had been sending them over. I was like jelly and sat with my face pressed into my oily grimy hands, hearing and feeling nothing for over an hour. [Quoted by Horner, p. 145.]

A number of Australian guns were destroyed by German artillery fire and on one occasion several Australian gun positions were temporarily over run by German troops.

19.6.1917 Wounded in action. Remained on duty.

The nature of his wound is not recorded. It has been difficult to determine where the battery was engaged in battle on this date.

1.10.1917 Promoted to Temporary Bombardier to complete establishment

20.11.1917 To England on leave.

It would seem from his diary and his army record that he had been at the Front or moving from place to place near the Front since April 1916 without any leave at all. He missed his scheduled leave in January 1917 because of his admission to hospital. He then had to wait another eleven months.

7.12.1917 Returned from leave.

1.1.1918 Promoted to Bombardier to complete establishment.

22.1.1918 Posted to Brigade Headquarters.

16.3.1918 Promoted to Corporal and Temporary Sergeant to replace Sergeant Rosengarten who had been sent to Officers' Training Corps.

I remember my father and my mother talking about their visit to Villers-Bretonneux in France in 1938 to see the Australian National Memorial there, and

to lay wreaths at the graves of each of their brothers. My father had also talked of visiting several of the woods near the town which had been the scene of heavy fighting by Australian forces.

The town of Villers-Brettonneux is 16 kilometres east of Amiens. It was attacked on 4 April 1918 by 15 German divisions as part of their desperate attempt to break the Allied line and to finish the war by taking Paris. Their first attack on the town was repulsed, but the second, two weeks later, broke through the British lines and captured the town. Australian troops were brought in. They counter-attacked with great valour and determination and recaptured the town and the surrounding woods. The Australian troops suffered more than 1,500 casualties.

3.5.1918 *Promoted to Sergeant.*

It is not clear where Oswald was during this battle but the next entry in is Army record read:

8.5.1918 *Wounded in action. Gun shot wound in left thigh.*

His brigade was involved in the Battle of Morlancourt on this date (Bean p.74, note 26). Bean (p. 87) cites 'a creeping artillery barrage on the night of 7 May'. Monash referred to the four battles for Morlancourt as 'minor', but on 7 and 8 May it turned into a 'fiasco' when an AIF infantry company of four officers and 41 men became lost in the dark and had to surrender. (Serle, p. 317 and Bean p. 75.)

8.5.1918 *Admitted to Line of Communication hospital by 11th Australian Field Ambulance.*

10.5.1918 *Transferred to 12th (US) General Hospital at Rouen.*

21.5.1918 *By hospital ship Carisbrook Castle to England.*

22.5.1918 *Admitted to War Hospital at Stratford-upon-Avon.*

19.6.1918 *Discharged from hospital.*

4.10.1918 *Shipped back to France at Le Havre.*

11.10.1918 *Rejoined his Field Artillery Brigade.*

11.11. 1918 *Armistice ended the war.*

21.12.1918 *To Nice on the French Riviera on leave until 11.1.1919.*

8.3.1919 *Embarked for England.*

10.3.1919 *Disembarked in England at Folkestone and told to report to AIF headquarters in London.*

11.3.1919 *Detached from artillery brigade to the Australian Army Pay Corps.*

10.4 1919 *Boarded the troop ship Medic for return to Australia.*

31.5.1919 *Reached Melbourne.*

23.7.1919 *Discharged.*

His medical report on discharge gave his height as 5 feet 8 inches, that he had a 2½ inch scar from his wound on his left thigh, that he was in 'fair health', but that his wound had left him with 'no disability'.

The *Sands & McDougall Melbourne Directory* of 1920 listed my father as being a Licentiate of the Incorporated Institute of Accountants, and in practice

in the firm of accountants Benjamin & Smith on the second floor of Normanby Chambers at 430 Little Collins Street, Melbourne. The firm is not listed subsequently. The family legend was that Smith was an old army friend and that they started an accounting partnership together rather than my father going back to the Foster Brewing Company. But Smith committed suicide because of war neuroses. Shortly afterwards my father received an offer from a cousin, Edward Lumley, to open a branch of the Lumley firm in Melbourne. This was an insurance broking firm known at that time as Bennie S. Cohen & Sons. Lumley was an accredited Lloyd's broker. He was Bennie Cohen's son who had changed his name to Lumley after the war. Oswald was managing director of Bennie S. Cohen & Son in Victoria until his death in 1944.

The other survivor of the war in this story, my uncle Harry Bloch, also kept a diary from the date when he commenced service in the army, in 1915. He was in the same artillery regiment as Oswald but in a different artillery battery. His diary is much more matter-of-fact than Oswald's. There are no entries after 29 October 1916. The diary has recently been published privately by his daughters Carolyn Bloch and Beverley Threlfo.

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Endnotes

- 1 A club of ex-servicemen founded in 1925 to care for the families, particularly the children, of servicemen who had been killed in the war.
- 2 A 'hand' in this measurement was 4 inches. It was a measure from the ground to the top of the horse's shoulder. In this case 17 hands was some 5 feet 8 inches or 175 centimetres from the ground to the horse's saddle. My father was 5 feet 6 inches tall, so the horse would have towered over him.
- 3 Army slang for England.
- 4 Oswald and Stanley were the youngest of nine brothers. Their parents, Sir Benjamin and Lady [Fanny] Benjamin, had a family of sixteen children. There was a considerable gap in their ages. In 1915 the eldest son was 57 years old. My father used to laugh that he had nieces and nephews who were older than he was.
- 5 Deserters and others convicted of serious crimes in the British army were tattooed or flogged.
- 6 Oswald Benjamin, being 31 years of age, single, and having resigned his job as a senior executive in the Foster Brewing Company, would have had private means that would have enabled him to purchase luxuries not available to the average soldier.
- 7 The 'layer' aimed the gun and was responsible for giving instructions to fire.
- 8 A movement disorder that occurs with rheumatic fever. Jerky, uncontrollable, and purposeless movements that look like twitches.

100 YEARS AGO: VICTORIA 1911

Compiled by Lorraine Freeman

From *The Australian Jewish Herald* for 1911

The year begins with the consecration of a Tahara House at the New Melbourne General Cemetery, recently opened at Fawkner. Joseph Kronheimer had gifted the Tahara house for the use of the Melbourne and East Melbourne Hebrew Congregations. The new cemetery had itself been consecrated the year before, and was required as a result of the closure of the older Carlton cemetery for new burials – the sign of a growing community!

The first annual general meeting of the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha took place in March, with 220 members recorded. The president expressed the hope that there would be no conflict with opposing individuals or institutions.

Also in March, an advertisement was published in which both ladies and gentlemen were invited by Joel Fredman to join the choir at St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, there obviously being no *halachic* problem with a mixed choir.

In May, mention was made in an editorial of the 300th anniversary of the King James authorised version of the Bible, and admiration was stated for the beauty of the translation of the Hebrew scriptures and the Hebrew religious spirit. The article continued with the observation that since Cromwell's time, the King James Bible had influenced the English-speaking nations into becoming more tolerant, generous and sympathetic towards the Jewish people, in contrast to the attitude of other nations.

The Jews of Ballarat had a visit from Rabbi Dr Abrahams of Melbourne, who was there on a 'mission of peace' to resolve the schism within the community.

Notice was given that a troupe of Yiddish actors was coming to Melbourne, and Mr Weisberg had engaged the Temperance Hall for six months to present a series of Yiddish plays, once a week – it was stated that one of the actors, Mrs Katie Finkelstein, was known world-wide.

Rev Jacob Lenzer of East Melbourne initiated an appeal for the Jews of Jerusalem, whose misery was indescribable, with hundreds of men, women and children wandering the streets in search of a scrap of bread – the old-age home had closed, and the inmates were dying of starvation.

In June, each of the Victorian congregations held Coronation services to honour the new king, George V, and the paper had long and detailed reports of each service. In July the death was announced of Rabbi Dr Hermann Adler, the

Chief Rabbi, at the age of 72. He was the son of the previous Chief Rabbi, Dr Nathan Marcus Adler.

In Ballarat, Master Hyman Lenzer, aged nine, won first prize for violin solo in a national competition. In October a public banquet was held in Melbourne Town Hall to farewell Rabbi Dr Abrahams before his departure for England, attended by the Lord Mayor and 150 other gentlemen, at which the rabbi was presented with an illuminated address.

In November a deputation on behalf of the Jews of Australia waited on the Minister for Home Affairs, to explain that the requirement to vote on Saturdays was discriminatory to Jews and created a conflict between civic and religious obligations. It was subsequently resolved by parliament that electors with conscientious objections should be allowed to vote on some other day.

BOOK REVIEWS

A HOME AWAY FROM HOME: THE HISTORY OF EMMY MONASH AGED CARE

By Helen Felder

Melbourne Vic.: Emmy Monash Aged Care Inc., 2nd ed., 2010

Support for the Jewish frail aged has always been central to welfare services among Jewish communities throughout the world. Along with burial societies, loan funds and emergency relief, homes for the aged and related ancillary services have always been given high priority for philanthropic support.

I recall visiting, some years ago, the Bialystoker Home for the Aged in New York. This was an example of the pioneering welfare activities of what are well known as *landsmanschaften* groups. Townsfolk who had emigrated from a particular town or city in Eastern Europe formed benefit societies carrying the name of their former town or city. These societies were established to assist relatives and friends in need and to provide for the social, religious and cultural aspirations of their newly arrived immigrant kinsfolk. *Landsmanschaften* also played a key role in Jewish communities in Melbourne, especially after World War II.

The publication of the second edition of Helen Felder's *A Home Away from Home: The History of Emmy Monash Aged Care* alerts us to a similar phenomenon that occurred in Melbourne in the early 1940s with the formation of a self-help group which called itself 'Mutual Help'. It was established by a small group of German Jewish refugees in Melbourne.

In the words of the author: 'It was during 1941 that Mrs Arnold [the first president, Margarete Arnold] and several friends met with a view to help one another overcome some of the difficulties associated with being refugees in a new and strange country'. This group of women, however, would not have described themselves as a *landsmanschaft*, even though they modelled their organisation on Eastern European refugee groups whose members had arrived in earlier decades.

They had arrived here before and soon after the outbreak of World War II. Well educated and cultured, they were seeking to create an old age home with a more familiar and comfortable environment than that offered by the long established Montefiore Home for the Aged on St Kilda Road which was founded by the Melbourne Jewish Philanthropic Society in 1870.

The author outlines how a group of women set out with very modest aims to provide 'practical help, assisting and comforting those amongst them who were sick and who needed help when there was no one else to turn to. They cooked

meals in homes, distributed hot soup to elderly people in poor health, organised accommodation and sometimes clothing’.

Drawing extensively on minute books, correspondence, newspaper articles and interviews, Helen Felder provides a meticulous and loving account of the personalities and events which culminated in 1948 with the opening of the Emmy Monash Home for the Aged in Caulfield, an inner eastern suburb of Melbourne with a large Jewish population. The story pays tribute to all those who played a role in support of their aims, especially the many generous donors, who helped to acquire additional land around the original mansion house on which to erect a residential care hostel and self-contained units for independent living.

In 2007 the name was changed to Emmy Monash Aged Care to better reflect the diverse nature of the original building, which has developed today into a multi-faceted complex overlooking busy Dandenong Road.

Helen Felder’s publication includes a six-page chronology of events, and numerous photographs of individuals, committee groups, staff and residents. It also reproduces early architectural and building plans and 15 pages containing names of Board members and foundation members of the ‘Mutual Help’ group. The book has preserved for later generations the story of an organisation that has played a vital role in serving the aged in the Jewish community over the past 70 years.

Lady Cowen, in the foreword to the book, writes: ‘One cannot but be impressed by the dedication and commitment of the pioneer generation and those who followed – in notable cases their children, their long periods of service’. Helen Felder, who served on the Board between 1992 and 1997, is to be commended for her research and keen attention to detail by acknowledging all those who have created this vital institution.

Lionel Sharpe

DON’T EVER LET THEM GET YOU!

By George Dreyfus

North Fitzroy, Vic.: Black Pepper, 2010. vii + 177pp., plates

The title of the latest book by George Dreyfus captures perfectly the essence of the text, which is about surviving – by whatever means – the many obstacles that fate has thrown in his path. There is honesty in his sardonic humour, which does more to reveal than disguise the pain of tragic events, disappointments and betrayals in his successful and widely acclaimed career. In this book, which is George’s third autobiography, he could easily have chosen to dwell on the distressing aspects of those cheerless experiences, which began with escaping Hitler’s Germany as a Jewish refugee. We are treated instead to an informative and often brilliantly witty account of George’s survival, setbacks and successes in his almost paradoxical quest to make a paying profession from composing music for others while pursuing

deeper, more serious and personally meaningful creative goals.

The book comprises three sections of relatively equal length, the first of which is authored by George himself. Those who are familiar with George and his works will enjoy the immediacy of the prose and feel the air of personal connection that is evoked between author and reader. However, anyone who cannot read music, or who has no prior knowledge of this composer, will not be able to appreciate the full extent of the meaning behind the musical examples, and of the irony and sentiments pervading the narrative. A case in point is the music that George composed in 1974 for the Australian television series *Rush*. Widely known as the 'Theme from Rush', this piece brought him instant renown – even becoming a Top 10 popular hit with frequent airplay; his other artistically significant compositions were afforded performance opportunities far less readily. The immediately recognisable opening bar of *Rush* recurs throughout the first section of the book and is always strategically placed to make a humorous, biting or touching point, this running joke being potentially lost on readers 'not in the know'.

Other moments of musical humour are more accessible, such as his melodic digs at conductor Clive Douglas and author James Murdoch, both of whom were, at best, unhelpful during George's career. Some material in the section is recycled from his previous books, but George makes no secret of this and even regards recycling as an aid to creativity. Indeed, he takes the time to explain how he has reused musical ideas in his compositions; for example, his 1983 melody for the television series *A Descant for Gossips* re-emerged in 1990 as a theme and variations piece he named *Larino, Safe Haven*, the title of which was inspired by his childhood experiences in Melbourne. He wryly observes:

Some of the Larino children certainly dispute the second part of my title, the phrase 'safe haven' ... I could think of a more pleasant way of surviving childhood...

Nevertheless, he was obviously grateful for the refuge he found in this country, as testified by his numerous compositions with an Australian connection, such as *Nullabor Hideout* (1965), *Old Melbourne* (1973), *An Australian Folk Mass* (1979), and many more. The titles are taken from the third section of the book, which comprises a complete, updated catalogue of works by and about this prodigious composer. The catalogue alone would make *Don't Ever Let Them Get You!* a 'must have' for music libraries with Australian content, and a valuable addition to the collections of scholars and others interested in composers and composition in Australia.

Further insights about George Dreyfus are revealed in the book's second section, which contains a series of three essays, each written by a guest author chosen for their knowledge of certain events and facets of George's career. The authors also possess literary credentials, having published books in their own right. The first of the three, Jennifer Isaacs, presents a light-hearted personal

account of an hilarious, even bizarre, episode in Australian musical history. As the Aboriginal Arts Officer of the Australia Council for the Arts, Jennifer was given the responsibility, in 1969, of organising a concert that would 'bring together persons from different worlds'. She describes the concert itself as 'mind blowing'. It was held in a remote area of Australia's Northern Territory and had Aboriginal didgeridoo musicians and song men, alternating with the Adelaide Wind Quintet, in ten-minute performance segments. Her essay, aptly titled 'Jenny, Make It Happen', recounts the often comical twists and turns of her negotiations to make the concert 'happen'. It highlights the cultural divide between indigenous Australian artists accustomed to their own particular music traditions and outdoor lifestyle on the one hand, and orchestral musicians more familiar with the rituals of European classical music performance and reliant on indoor comforts on the other. The relevance of the essay to George Dreyfus is brought home in the last few pages: the concert was the catalyst for his composition, by appointment, of the landmark *Sextet for Didgeridoo and Wind Instruments* (1971).

The essay by Rosemary Richards, titled 'A Resounding Success', is also based on personal recollection, in its case of the events leading to the composition and première performance of the cantata *The Box Hill Gloria* (1985). Dreyfus expands Rosemary's reminiscences with additional material. On behalf of the Box Hill Music Council, Rosemary commissioned him to create the music for the *Gloria* (with the libretto by her then husband David Adams). The project, her brainchild, took its toll on her marriage, health and family. It seemed a good idea at the time because it was meant to be 'Box Hill's musical contribution to Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations' and was intended to engage, in a voluntary capacity, the performance of Box Hill's community music groups. The final line-up comprised brass band, concert band, string orchestra, mixed voices, children's choir, pipe band and a pop singer, although the decisions that determined this assemblage are not actually explained. The performance of the *Gloria*, with George as conductor, took place at the Box Hill Town Hall in September 1985, the cast of musicians and singers outnumbering an audience of approximately 200 people! The concert drew acclaim from many quarters, one local newspaper describing it 'a resounding success' – hence the title of the essay.

John Whiteoak's 'Brass Banding Meets George Dreyfus' is the final and most scholarly contribution to the book, and written in a style that would be appealing and accessible to a general readership. John raises a number of thought-provoking questions at the outset, such as why George would be 'drawn into the sphere of Australian brass band music after fifty years of life dominated by longing and striving for the high art milieu that was taken from him as a child'. The questions about George are candid and probing but, when addressing them, John reveals the affection and respect that he holds for the composer. Subheadings convey the content and direction of the discourse, which is also effectively interwoven with information about the history of brass banding in Australia and covers specialist

aspects such as the use of reed and brass instruments as opposed to all-brass in bands, and the complexities of arranging music for the banding genre. In an essay of many insights, one that is particularly notable is the skilful way in which John explodes some of the myths surrounding so-called nationalist music in Australia. While he targets pieces deliberately manufactured to have mass appeal and to symbolise an Australian folk identity, John also appreciates that to survive professionally as a composer in this country, as George has managed to do, it is often necessary to create the 'Australian' works that the public and the people commissioning them want and expect. This was especially true of George's brass band pieces, which were commissions and had to fit 'his clients' exact requirements'. Nevertheless, his latest CD compilation *The Brass Band Music of George Dreyfus* (2006), displays his 'affinity' for the all-brass music genre, with 'expressive, strongly rhythmical and melodic' pieces carrying 'something of George's legendary personal dynamism and uniqueness'.

A common thread in the three guest essays is the underlying affirmation of these personal qualities in the accounts of George's musical endeavours and social interactions. The qualities are also apparent in his own narratives. There are moments in the book where George entertains the reader with the vibrant spontaneity of an inspired performance: arguments, puns, anecdotes and motifs have an electric vitality. There is also substance aplenty in many of the episodes recounted.

Ultimately, *Don't Ever Let Them Get You!* can be considered an important historical document for anyone who wants to learn more about this extraordinary composer, performer, author and ongoing contributor to Australian culture.

Bronia Kornhauser

IF YOU WERE IN OUR PLACE – THE RESCUERS OF THE VAN ENGEL FAMILY IN THE NETHERLANDS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By Helen Light

Melbourne Vic.: privately published, 2011, 101 pp.

Melbourne's Jewish community has generated scores of books written and published by survivors of the Holocaust. They lived to tell their heart-breaking stories. By contrast, this beautifully produced book belongs to the second generation of survivors. As Dr Light explains:

I am a child of a survivor of the Holocaust. I am fearful. I too have nightmares. I am resentful that I lost my beloved mother too early and that my children never knew their grandmother. So it has become my story too.

Unlike the family of Anne Frank the van Engel family was not betrayed but remained hidden through frightening years of persecution, house raids and

starvation including the terrible 'hunger winter' prior to liberation. We learn that there were 80,000 members of the Dutch National Socialist Party who collaborated with the Nazis and helped the police hunt their Jewish neighbours. During her five years of exile in London the Queen of the Netherlands only mentioned the suffering of her Jewish subjects three times. The van Engel family survived because they were hidden by pious Christians of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church who saw their heroism as a religious duty. Dr Light writes: 'We, who did not experience these harshest of times, cannot judge and we cannot say what we would do, faced with this supreme test.'

The narrative includes poignant and deeply disturbing stories. In May 1942 it was decreed that Jews in Holland were to wear a yellow star and in October 1942 the Nazis arrived in the family apartment and took their grandmother Rosa Cohn away. White-haired and senile, she was shipped eastwards to Sobibor where she was murdered on 16 April 1943. In that same month, in Amsterdam, the van Engel family went into hiding. Adi, the mother of the author, was nineteen years of age and came to live with Mies and Wim Zuidema and their young children for two long secretive years. Her parents and her sister Ilse were hidden by the family van den Brink. Their parents Julie and Benno van Engel were hidden by Gerry and Evert Kerseboom in a little attic room overlooking a Jewish cemetery.

It is human nature to remember the villains. It is far better to pay tribute to the heroes who were eventually *recognised* by Israel's Yad Vashem as the righteous among the nations. Their deeds endangered their own lives and the lives of their children.

In 1979 Wim modestly wrote:

Our first thought was, how is it possible that we should receive such an honour? Yes, we helped many Jewish people but they came on our way and the only thing we could do was to help. If you were in our place and you should have met people who were in troubles [*sic*], you would have done the same.

When the war ended, the Van Engel family set sail for Australia, where their lives have immeasurably enriched their chosen country and the Jewish community.

This is a forensic, thoughtful and lavishly illustrated contribution to our communal history even though it is a memoir intended for family alone. Dr Helen Light, whose creative drive shaped the Jewish Museum in Melbourne, explains that she has presented 'a multi-vocal and, hopefully, multi-dimensional story. I am aware that there are many inconsistencies in dates, in names, in actual events, and I have included them all.' In this sense her story is biblical because this is exactly the way the authors of our most sacred literature wrote.

John S. Levi

REPORT TO MEMBERS

This last year saw the AJHS – Vic. Inc. out and about, including meetings ‘in the field’ interstate, locally and in country Victoria.

On 7 October 2010 Associate Professor Philip Mendes outlined the history of the Jewish Committee to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism (JCCFAS) from 1942, and described how the Council rose to a position of influence in the Melbourne Jewish Community and equally how the Council disintegrated in 1952–53. If you would like to listen to this meeting podcast, visit <http://www.ajhs.info/Victoria/>

In November, the Victoria and New South Wales branches of the Australian Jewish Historical Society were invited by the Broken Hill Historical Society and a planning committee of Broken Hill descendants to assist them in organising two days of events to mark the centenary of the laying of the foundation stone for the Broken Hill Synagogue. Events included a synagogue service, a program of historical talks and personal accounts of the Jews of Broken Hill and their contribution to the town, a tour of the Jewish section of the cemetery, a civic reception by the mayor and launch of *Jews of the Outback: The Centenary of the Broken Hill Synagogue 1910–2010*, edited by Suzanne Rutland, Leon Mann and Margaret Price. Over 200 people registered from around Australia to attend the event that was held on 28 and 29 November. On 5 December 2010 our President Howard Freeman led a tour through the Melbourne General Cemetery. The group of enthralled participants were treated to fascinating insights into the lives of those who were part of Melbourne’s early Jewish community.

For our 61st Annual General Meeting we were fortunate to have The Honourable Justice Alan Goldberg AO QC who, after a lifetime in the law and having recently retired from the bench, captivated us with his talk entitled ‘Musings from beyond the Bench’.

On 2 and 3 April 2011 members of the Jewish community and interested friends were invited to Ballarat for the 150th anniversary of the beautiful synagogue, the oldest in continuous use on the Australian mainland. A full weekend of activities, which included separate services conducted by Orthodox and Progressive congregations, saw the synagogue filled to capacity. On the Saturday, Rabbi Dr John Levi spoke about the fascinating and often turbulent history of the Ballarat congregation. A Kiddush in the hall followed the service, and then a walk through the old Jewish cemetery guided by members of the Ballarat Genealogical Society.

In other news, a digital database for those searching Jewish marriage records (up to the year 1961) from East Melbourne and St Kilda Hebrew Congregations has now been completed. Work is soon to begin on Melbourne and Ballarat Hebrew Congregation marriage records. Our sincere thanks go to Ephraim Finch from the

Melbourne Chevra Kadisha for making available all Jewish death records from Victoria. These can be found online at JOWBR www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery and on the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha website, <http://www.mck.org.au/mckSearch/FindGrave.aspx>. Bet Olam records will be included in the following few months.

We are very excited that by year's end our AJHS book collection at the Makor Library will move to its new premises next door, and will be included in the new Lamm Jewish Library of Australia.

The AJHS – Vic. gratefully acknowledges donations from Mrs Marjorie Luno, Dr Ann Mitchell, Justice Howard Nathan and Mrs Ros Raitman.

Liz James
Honorary Secretary, AJHS Vic Inc

MEMBERS JOINED AJHS VICTORIA INC

since November 2010

Marcel and Eva DAYAN

Albert ISAACS

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CONTRIBUTORS

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Peter Fraenkel is directly descended from Baer Loebel Monasch and his wife Mathilde Wiener, through their daughter Rosa who married the printer Hermann Goldschmidt. Goldschmidt acquired the famous Monasch printing house in Krotoschin through his marriage settlement. In addition to his long-standing interest in his family heritage, Peter's published oeuvre includes an autobiography, *No Fixed Abode: A Jewish Odyssey to Africa* (Tauris, 2005); and in 2007, an online blog devoted to the murder in Japan of a remote uncle in 1874, 'Ludwig Haber - The Consul and The Samurai'.

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