

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



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*Opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not reflect the
official position of the Society*

EDITORIAL

The year 1956 was a key year in world Jewish history, with two major events occurring, both of which impacted on Australian Jewry. In 1956 Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, with the resulting war between Egypt, Israel, France and Britain, known as the Sinai Campaign. The Australian reactions to this conflict, and the part played by Prime Minister Robert Menzies, have been examined by Dr Chanan Reich in his book *Australia and Israel: An Ambiguous Relationship* and W.J. Hudson in *Blind Loyalty: Australia and the Suez Crisis, 1956*.¹ As a result of these events and the increasing tensions between Egypt and the Western powers, including the United States, Nasser targeted Egypt's Jewish population, arresting many and then forcing them to leave in what has been called 'The Second Exodus'. Dr Racheline Barda has discussed the impact of the Egyptian Jewish expulsion and the arrival of expellees in our community in her book *Egyptian Jewish Emigrés in Australia*.²

In addition, the Hungarian Uprising against Soviet domination also occurred in 1956, resulting in Hungarian Jews escaping (and many non-Jews) to Austria and then seeking a new home, as not all of them wished to migrate to Israel. A few thousand of these escapees found sanctuary in Australia, a story that has not been examined until now in terms of the specificity of the Jewish migration experience. This gap has now been filled by Judy Bahar, herself one of those who left at this time as a child. She researched this topic for her Master's dissertation in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney. Her findings have been published in her article, 'Hungarian Jews Down Under', in this edition of the *Journal*.

A flow on from the Hungarian Uprising occurred with the water polo match between Hungary and the Soviet Union at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, when one of the players, Erwin Zador, was severely injured by a Soviet player at the end of the match. This became known as the 'blood in the pool episode' and came to symbolise the Hungarian struggle against the Soviets.³ The participation of Australian Jewry, with fencer James Wolfensohn (who went on to a

leading career in finance and banking) and the impact on Australian Jewry, has yet to be researched. Such research would add to our knowledge of Jews and sport in Australia.

In addition to Judy Bahar's study of Hungarian Jewry, two articles deal with biography: Rabbi Apple has written the history of Rev. Zalel Mandelbaum, who served in three Australian congregations in Broken Hill, Perth and Ballarat, where he was the minister until his death. Ken Arkwright has written about other key members of the Monasch family, including his father, Rudolf Aufrichtig-Arkwright, who settled with his son, Ken, in Perth, and his second cousin, Walter Monasch, who escaped to the United States and served in the American army during World War II. Ken Arkwright's article adds a personal aspect to the extensive research being carried out by Dr Ann Mitchell, the first part of whose research was published in the November 2015 *Journal*; the second part will be published in this year's November issue.

One area of Australian Jewish history, which has been neglected, is the impact of the Great Depression of the 1930s on the community. Dr Rodney Gouttman has sought to fill this gap with his study of the impact of the depression on Adelaide's small Jewish community. This carefully researched article also discusses the impact of the rise of Nazism in South Australia, including antisemitic statements in the general press that were rebuffed by Rabbi Louis Rubin-Zacks, then minister of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, and the reactions to the arrival in Adelaide of the small number of Jewish refugees from Germany and other European countries before the war.

A highly controversial issue in the history of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, is that of its Falk Library. Helen Bersten has researched the history of the Library and in particular has studied in detail the 'hijack' in 1971 of some of the valuable books by a group of religious Jews, led by Joe Bobker, to prevent the library being transferred to the University of Sydney; they were opposed to the Library being housed in a non-Jewish location. Forty-five years later, the Falk Library is still located at the Great, and still faces the same problems of neglect, a lack of a full catalogue in regard to its non-English language material, and minimal usage. Steve Schach, an Emeritus Professor of computer science now living in Sydney, has brought this story up-to-date by demonstrating how many of the Hebrew Talmudic and religious books are now available on-line, adding to the challenges of maintaining the library in its present form.

We have a number of book reviews, two of which also deal with biographies: one of the convict, James Laurence, written by Rob Wills and reviewed by Rabbi Dr John Levi, and the other written by Alexandra Joel about her great grandmother, Rosetta, reviewed by

Joe Kensell. Russell Stern has reviewed a book dealing with venereal disease in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and Jeffrey Cohen has reviewed three books: a new book on the British Chief Rabbinate by Meir Persoff, discussing the Australian connections, two new books dealing with Holocaust Museums, one written by Dr Avril Alba, in terms of the Sydney Jewish Museum as well as Yad Vashem in Israel and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the other by Drs Steve Cooke and Donna Lee-Frieze about the Melbourne Holocaust Museum.

It gives me great pleasure to present to you Russell Stern's annual report for 2015. Russell has been very active in promoting the Society. This is the third year of the essay competition in Australian Jewish history, sponsored in New South Wales by the Millie Philips JCA Fund and in the rest of Australia by our Morris Forbes and Hannah Himmelferb Endowment Fund. The competition is open to Jewish school students across Australia, and last year received strong support from Carmel College in Perth, which submitted 35 entries. Three entries from Carmel were prize winners as well as one from Moriah College. The national nature of this competition will hopefully help to foster an interest in Australian Jewish history in the younger generation.

This is my twenty-fifth year of editing the *AJHS Journal*, working with different Melbourne colleagues: Professor W.D. Rubinstein, Dr Malcolm Turnbull, Dr Rodney Goultman, and now for many years with Howard Freedman, assisted for much of this time by Dr Hilary Rubinstein and recently by Serge Liberman. I believe that the *Journal* has a key role in ensuring that our history is researched and maintained for the future, and this is the reason I have dedicated myself to the production of the Sydney edition over the years since 1991. However, I could not do this on my own. Once again, I would like to thank wholeheartedly my *Journal* sub-committee without whose assistance this issue could not have been produced. I would like to thank Helen Bersten for all her ongoing assistance both in the sub-editing and in supplying information and references. Philip Moses' assistance has again proved invaluable, helping with photographs and ensuring that the president's report, new members and other information reached me in time.

Suzanne D. Rutland

ENDNOTES

1. See Chanan Reich, *Australia and Israel: An Ambiguous Relationship* (Carlton South, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2002) and W.J. Hudson, *Blind Loyalty: Australia and the Suez Crisis, 1956* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1989).

2. Racheline Barda *Egyptian Jewish Emigrés in Australia* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011).
3. See Kirsty Reid, 'Blood in the water: Hungary's 1956 water polo gold', *BBC World Service*, 20 August 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-14575260>. Accessed 27 April 2016.

**‘HE MINISTERED EXCELLENTLY’:
THE AUSTRALIAN CAREER OF
REV. ZALEL MANDELBAUM**

*Rabbi Raymond Apple*¹

Mandelbaum House at Sydney University perpetuates the memory of Rev. Zalel Mandelbaum and his wife Freda, parents of the benefactor, Rachel Lipton. Rev. Mandelbaum’s full name was Rabbi Bezalel Mandelbaum. He was known by the nickname Zalel and in Australia followed the (then) British custom of styling oneself Reverend. The surname Mandelbaum means ‘almond tree’, but from historical studies of the town of Turov it appears that the name was really Mendelbaum, deriving from an ancestor called Mendel. Perhaps it was one of the “nice” names paid for by a bribe to the authorities, and was subsequently Germanised to Mandelbaum.

Born in Turov, about 400 km from Minsk, on 6 February 1865, Bezalel was the second child of the Turever Rabbi, Barukh Mandelbaum (1834-1905) and his wife Leah, née Teitelbaum. Jews had been in Turov from the early 1600s and in the late nineteenth century constituted half of the population of the town. Rabbi Barukh (and therefore Zalel) had an impressive lineage. He claimed descent from Rashi – and before him from David, King of Israel – and was connected with the Maharal of Prague. The author of the rabbinic work *Noda BaShe’arim* (“Known in the Gates”), Rabbi Barukh moved his family to Palestine when Zalel was an infant. Their emigration from Russia, entailing arduous travel, was in order to escape antisemitic persecution as well as for ideological reasons; like the Talmudic sages, the Turever Rabbi would have regarded walking four cubits on the holy soil as the high point of his life (*Talmud Ketubot*, 111a).

Zalel’s education in Jerusalem was traditionally Talmudic, undoubtedly guided by his father. He gained a range of practical skills as a *shohet* (animal slaughterer) and *mohel* (circumciser). He probably also had some ability as a *hazzan* (cantor). He could well have been an expert *sofer* (scribe) as well.



*The Mandelbaum Family.
Zalel is on the right, next to his mother.*

Amongst Zalel's siblings the most famous brother was Simḥa, born about 1870, who went back to Russia and married Esther Liebe Epstein (a daughter of the Rabbi of Kobrin, who was also interim Rebbe of Slonim). Simḥa was a scholar whilst his wife was a businesswoman, and they had eleven children. They stayed in Russia for a number of years but finally succeeded in making Aliyah in 1921. The four-storey mansion they built in Jerusalem to accommodate their children, children-in-law and family, was known as Bet Mandelbaum - Mandelbaum House. In later times its location at the seam of Israel and Jordan became known as Mandelbaum Gate. When the foundations of the house were being dug, coins from the Bar Kokhba period were discovered, indicating the historicity of the

site. Simḥa did not live long enough to witness the exciting things that later years brought to his house, since he died on 3 May 1930.

At the time of armed struggle in Eretz Yisra'el, Mandelbaum House became a Haganah headquarters. Arms were hidden there under the grandmother's bed and when the premises were checked for illegal arms, the authorities were told that the grandmother was ill and no-one could disturb her in her bedroom. The building itself was eventually blown up but was later rebuilt and today houses a Breslover *yeshivah*. There is a Mandelbaum Park nearby. The name of Mandelbaum House was of course known to Zalel's daughter Rachel, who, decades later, at the other end of the world, left instructions that this was to be the name of the college she endowed at the University of Sydney.

Apart from Simḥa, Zalel's other siblings were Menahem, Yitzḥak David, Hendel Steinbuch, Naomi Ginzberg and two more. At least one settled in the United States. There were other Mandelbaums in Australia, but it is not known whether they had any connection with the Rabbi of Turov.

In Palestine, Zalel married Chaya (her maiden name was something like Kancel). They had one daughter, Tsipporah (Celia), born on 27 March 1892. The marriage did not last. Zalel and Chaya divorced and for some years their daughter stayed with her mother in Palestine.

Zalel's second wife was Frieda. The daughter of Shmuel Joffe, she was born in 1875. They married in Palestine in the mid-1890s and in due course two daughters were born in Port Said – Rachel in 1897 and Rosa, around 1900.

The family's move to Port Said in the 1890s may have been because Zalel was unsettled after his divorce or due to economic depression in Palestine, or both. I have so far been unable to ascertain much about his life in Port Said. Though he was an Ashkenazi it appears that he was involved in the Sephardi community. It is likely that he had some kind of business, possibly as an innkeeper, and served the community as a *shoḥet*. Port Said had quite a small Jewish population and was liable to antisemitic outbreaks, so the Mandelbaum family would not have wished to remain there for long. As ships to and from Australia brought Jewish visitors to the port, Zalel made the acquaintance of some of them and gave them hospitality. From them he would certainly have heard that Australia was a good place for Jews. He is likely to have kept in touch with his father, who lived until 1905. As Palestine was not far away, Rachel was possibly taken back to Jerusalem to the Evelina de Rothschild School and began to learn English.

Zalel did as many migrants did; he left Port Said on his own and promised to send for his family once he got settled. He embarked for

Australia on the *SS Stuttgart*, arriving at Fremantle on 24 August 1904, aged 39. Thereafter, he remained in Australia. He must have found some form of subsistence in Fremantle or Perth in the initial period, but then contact was established with the new Jewish congregation in Broken Hill, New South Wales, which appointed him as minister with free accommodation. At that stage Broken Hill had the second largest population in NSW – 30,000 people – and was an important centre. The Jewish community was as dynamic as the town and Zalel must have regarded himself as fortunate to have received this appointment.²

He travelled to Broken Hill by sea and rail and sent for his family. Frieda, with Rachel and Rosa, reached Australia on 5 April 1905. Travelling on the *SS Seidlitz* from Port Said they said they were German, which may have been Frieda's original nationality. Frieda now became Freda; Rosa became Rose. The congregation liked Zalel but did not pay him well, so Freda took in mending and sewing.

We presume that Zalel had already picked up some English at Port Said, and he had to learn the language seriously when he came to Australia. He certainly spoke quite good English as a middle-aged man in Broken Hill. His Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) sermons were published verbatim in the *Barrier Miner*, and were described as 'appropriate'. For example, in 1912, he began his sermon asking why it stated that on Yom Kippur one has to celebrate the festival 'from even to even', focusing on one's worship of God. He stressed:

From eve to eve it bids us cease in our wonted occupation, dispense with our physical requirements, forego our personal comforts for fully 24 hours. All our powers and energies shall be concentrated, on that one great task before us – our reconciliation with God. No other instance of such austerity is to be found in the Mosaic dispensations!³

The *Hebrew Standard* also reported on his contributions, noting in 1910:

The Rev Z. Mandelbaum conducted the services in his usual satisfactory manner. His 'Kol Nidrei' service was particularly fine and was pleasingly commented on. On both days the reverend gentleman addressed his congregation upon the significance of the days which were being solemnly observed.⁴

He was the general factotum of the congregation and spent ten years there from 1905-1914. His house was the headquarters of the community. The centenary history of Broken Hill Jewry praises his

efforts and says he was largely responsible for building the synagogue in 1910; previously the services had been held in a Masonic hall. During the ceremony for the laying of the Foundation Stone of the new synagogue in December 1910, the chairman, A. Rosenberg commented:

When he (A. Rosenberg) pointed out that for some years past a mere handful of Jewish residents had provided the ways and means for the maintenance of their respected pastor, Mr. Mandelbaum - a gentleman who, in addition to being a good Hebrew scholar, had given entire satisfaction - he felt certain that it would be admitted that they had done very well indeed.⁵

In addition, to running the services, he also believed strongly in the importance of 'religious instruction of the young' and in 1912 expressed his pleasure at the increasing knowledge of the Jewish children who were learning at the Sabbath School, where his two daughters taught as well as himself.⁶

In addition to his work within the Jewish community, he was also active within the general community. The *Barrier Miner* regularly reported on his attendance at meetings of the Benevolent Society.⁷ Zalel was naturalised aged 47 in January 1913, stating that he was a Russian subject; the magistrate who recorded his details calls him 'Minister of the Gospel'.

Zalel left Broken Hill in September 1914, to be succeeded by Rev. Samuel Nathan Salas from Palestine. Salas was recommended by Chief Rabbi Joseph Herman Hertz and arrived in Broken Hill on 7 December 1915, in time for Chanukah. Salas was subsequently assistant minister in Auckland and then minister in Christchurch, where he remained for many years. His brother, Rev. Marks Salas, also came to New Zealand and was assistant minister and *sho^het* in Auckland.

Broken Hill, and Australia in general, plunged Mandelbaum into a strange new life. There is a photo of him in his youth, wearing Eastern garb and presumably living in a *halakhic* cocoon. In Australia, by way of contrast, he was in a frontier society and encountered Jews of less than total orthodoxy, as well as non-Jews. A photo of him in old age shows a completely different man, an anglicized pastor in canonicals and a clerical collar. The change was due to the need to make a living but presumably had its ideological dimension. He must have constantly reflected on his life's metamorphoses, but his papers, which might have contained a clue to his thinking, are not extant or at least not available.

After leaving Broken Hill, Zalel moved back to Perth, where he

was *shohet* and acting minister in the absence overseas of Rev. David Isaac Freedman, who was serving as a chaplain during World War I.⁸ Zalel stayed in Perth for eleven years, during which time Rachel and Rose relocated to Sydney, where Rachel entered Sydney University and Rose became a musician. One Perth historian (Philip Masel) says Zalel 'ministered excellently'; another (David Mossenson) notes that the minute books record complaints about Zalel and even say that pork was found in the butcher shop.

At some stage Celia came to Australia, being registered as a Turkish subject. On 21 June 1916, aged 24, she married Harry Greenberg (born in Safed on 20 March, 1896) at the Perth Hebrew Congregation, with Zalel officiating: on the documents he called himself Assistant Rabbi. Zalel gave Hebrew lessons to his grandson Leslie in the family living room after school, and on Friday evenings the family gathered in the Mandelbaums' house for dinner. Harry and Celia shortened their surname to Green and later moved to Sydney to be nearer their family. Celia died in Sydney in February 1962, and was buried at Rookwood Cemetery.



*Rachel Lipton
(nee Mandelbaum)
1896 - 1978
Founder of Mandelbaum House*

Rachel gained a BA degree in 1918 aged 22 from the University of Sydney, and became a high school teacher of Latin and English. In 1934, she gained an MA. She married Ernest S. Jerdan in 1920 and then (in the 1950s) a German Jew, Harry Lipton, originally a printer. Living in Macleay Street, Potts Point, the Liptons were members of the Great Synagogue. They ran a hotel and then a city tobacconist's shop, and moved into property ownership and development. Rachel endowed a music scholarship in Rose's name, established Mandelbaum House in Sydney and left a legacy to the Hebrew University. She died on 8 March 1978. Harry died some years later. Rose never married but became a well-known music teacher. For a while she was secretary of the Ballarat branch of the National Council

of Jewish Women as well as a local musical identity. She died in Sydney on 27 August 1943.

Zalel retired to Sydney about 1926 but soon afterwards applied for a vacant ministerial position in Ballarat. Dating back to goldrush days, Ballarat was a historic congregation known for its orthodoxy: indeed there had been a time when the town had two orthodox synagogues.

At the request of the board of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, checked Zalel's credentials and capacities, and authorized him as *shohet* for the congregation. Zalel stayed in Ballarat for fourteen years, respected by the gentiles and held in affection by the Jews, though it must have been a rather lonely life for Zalel and Freda with their family so far away. Early in the 1930s my own father settled in Ballarat and ran a business, attending Zalel's synagogue for services and (I think) being invited home by the Mandelbaums for company, meals and Yiddish conversation. Zalel was liked and esteemed, known to be genial and tolerant of his congregants' foibles whilst inwardly disappointed at their low standards of observance. At this stage Ballarat was past its peak and paid quite a low salary but gave free housing and tried hard to make the ministerial house comfortable and pleasant. Pictures of Rev. and Mrs. Mandelbaum depict them as a nice elderly couple; Zalel himself, as was the habit of the time, wore a clerical collar. Newman Rosenthal notes in his history of the Ballarat congregation that the Mandelbaum family gave 'every satisfaction' and 'earned the goodwill and appreciation' of the community.⁹

In the late 1930s, Zalel was unwell and wanted to retire, but there were no applicants for the position, possibly because the salary was too low. Zalel therefore stayed in office until he died on 17 August 1941, aged 77. After a memorial service in the synagogue, he was buried at Ballarat Cemetery by Rabbis Jacob Danglow and Harry Freedman of Melbourne, and both the Jewish and Ballarat papers published appreciative obituaries.

Zalel's wife Freda died at Woollahra, Sydney, aged 78 on 12 March 1953, and was buried at Rookwood by Rabbi Israel Porush. Freda presumably took Zalel's books and papers to Sydney with her when she moved there, but their current location is not known. Some of the family records and possessions are said to be in the Rachel Lipton collection in the Rare Books section of Sydney University Library, but the material has apparently been mislaid and no-one is therefore able to fill in the gaps in the family story.

These gaps include some aspects of Rachel Lipton's thinking, personality and career. Though I was appointed a trustee in her will,

1st September, 1941.

COUNCIL BULLETIN

In Memoriam.

It is with deep regret and with a sense of real loss to our Organisation that we have learned of the passing of the Reverend Z. Mandelbaum, Minister of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, Victoria.

No greater friend and admirer of our work has Council ever had than in the person of our revered friend and honoured supporter. His life was one of unexampled loyalty for the race from which he sprung. His faithful adherence to all the precepts of our sacred religion and his benign influence over the members of his congregation, created a stronghold of Judaism in the City in which he lived for many years. Though he reached the allotted span of life, he leaves a gap in which cannot be filled. His passing is a very great loss to Australian Jewry, especially at this most critical period in its history.

He fearlessly strove to carry out the traditions and precepts of our ancient faith. The high esteem in which he was held by the non-Jewish Community of Victoria has been manifest by the praises bestowed upon his strong personality, his integrity, and lofty ideals. These have marked him a true son of Israel, worthy of his race.

He was loved, admired and respected by all who knew him. We take courage to carry on our self-imposed heavy tasks with the knowledge that our dear friend toiled unceasingly in the cause of Jewry. We must continue where he left off so that Israel may survive throughout the ages.

We voice our profound sympathy with his bereaved wife and daughters, with the N.C.J.W. of Ballarat to whom he was an inspiration, and with the members of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation.



Rev. Zalel Mandelbaum's Obituary from a National Council of Jewish Women's Publication

I did not know her very well. Like any historian I have all sorts of questions, but there is no-one who is still alive who could suggest the answers. In a booklet marking the tenth anniversary of Mandelbaum House, Professor Alan Crown, who had a close connection with Rachel and was probably the first person to learn what she was planning, hinted at parts of the story when he commented:

In many ways she was a contradictory personality...She had a very interesting life, crossing traditional boundaries in many ways and consequently I think she felt she hadn't done the right thing by her parents. Additionally, as a young girl moving from Broken Hill to Sydney, she looked for a suitable place for a young Jewish girl to stay. So the College would fulfil that need in the community.¹⁰

Without Zalel's library and papers, we will probably never be able to assess him as a scholar, teacher and preacher. He might have left sermon texts or outlines, but this cannot be verified. It is unlikely that he left any notes on Biblical or Talmudic subjects, but this is a

supposition given that no definitive information is available. The Mandelbaum family in Eretz Yisra'el lost contact with Zalel after he went to Australia, though he probably kept in touch with his parents until they died but not with his siblings and their children. The family thought he had a large orthodox community in Australia and wrote Talmudic studies – a highly unlikely possibility at that time. His great-nephew Dr Simha Mandelbaum came to Sydney with his wife for the opening of the College in 1996 and was intrigued at the thought that the name Mandelbaum House had been given a new lease of life so far away from Jerusalem.

Oral history would have been a great help in attempting a personal and professional portrait of Zalel, but it is probably too late to look for anyone who knew him personally. However, there have been a number of books written dealing with the different congregations Rev. Mandelbaum served, which if properly utilized would at least place his career in context,¹¹ though in the meantime we have more questions than answers.

Zalel served three Australian congregations, Broken Hill, Perth and Ballarat. Since Ballarat is the place where he spent longest and represents the final maturing of his work and outlook, we can look at it first, regardless of chronological sequence. In the late nineteenth century Ballarat was Australia's first and foremost orthodox *shtetl*. By Zalel's time, however, it was really a place of memory and in decline. The 1930s when he was there was the period of the depression. Were economic pressures worse there? Did economic necessity make a decreasing *kehillah* of small traders less and less Sabbath-observant? How many kept *kosher* apart from Zalel? How cohesive was the congregation? What were its relations with the general population? What influence did Nathan Spielvogel, the Ballarat historian, have on the population of the town? Was there any real antisemitism? What were the relationships with other parts of Australian Jewry? Are there any points of comparison with Newcastle, the only relatively similar community?

Zalel's ten years in Broken Hill cannot really be compared to his time in Ballarat. Broken Hill's decline came later. Zalel's incumbency was at the high point of the community but there are still questions we need to ask about who the Broken Hill Jews were and how the non-Jews regarded them.¹²

Perth was a larger and more stable community than either Ballarat or Broken Hill and the only congregation where Zalel was one of a ministerial team. This invites questions as to his professional relationships and whether the relatively elastic orthodoxy of Rabbi Freedman had any impact on Zalel. Again we need to ask how the Jews got on with the general community, though this was

Freedman's area of involvement more than Zalel's. Internal Jewish issues also need to be looked at in the light of Zalel's personality, such as Zionism, Yiddish and Hebrew. If only we had the means to answer such questions as these we would have a better picture of Zalel.

Since his time Australia – and the world – has changed radically. In the new era it is worth recalling that the name 'Mandelbaum' means almond tree, and as a Biblical Hebrew verb *sh-k-d*, an almond, indicates to watch over. Thanks to Zalel and Freda's daughter, the family name survives. Mandelbaum House has enabled the almonds of Judaism to flourish once more, and allowed Judaism in Australia a new opportunity to watch over its people and surroundings.

ENDNOTES

1. This paper was presented to the AJHS annual general meeting, Sydney, 29 November 2015. It was originally published in *Oz Torah*, <http://www.oztorah.com/2015/11/he-ministered-excellently-the-australian-career-of-rev-zalel-mandelbaum/>
2. For more detail on the history of the Jews in Broken Hill, see Suzanne D. Rutland, Leon Mann, and Margaret Price (eds), *Jews of the Outback: The Centenary of the Broken Hill Synagogue 1910–2010* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2010).
3. 'Jewish Holy Days, Day of Atonement Service, *Barrier Miner*, 25 September 1912, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/45216526?searchTerm=Mandelbaum&searchLimits=1-australian=y|||sortBy=dateAsc|||state=New+South+Wales|||title=53|||category=Article>. Accessed 12 April 2012.
4. *Hebrew Standard*, 18 November 1910.
5. *Barrier Miner*, 1 December 2010, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/45216526?searchTerm=Mandelbaum&searchLimits=1-australian=y|||sortBy=dateAsc|||state=New+South+Wales|||title=53|||category=Article>. Accessed 12 April 2012.
6. 'Hebrew Congregation: The Feast of the Tabernacles – Distribution of Sabbath School Prizes', *Barrier Miner*, 4 October 1912, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/45216526?searchTerm=Mandelbaum&searchLimits=1-australian=y|||sortBy=dateAsc|||state=New+South+Wales|||title=53|||category=Article>. Accessed 12 April 2016.
7. For example, see 'Benevolent Society: Fourtnightly meeting', *Barrier Miner*, 22 November 1912, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/45216526?searchTerm=Mandelbaum&searchLimits=1-australian=y|||sortBy=dateAsc|||state=New+South+Wales|||title=53|||category=Article>. Accessed 12 April 2016.
8. For a detailed history see David Mossenson, *The Perth Hebrew Congregation 1892-2002* (Perth Hebrew Congregation, 2003).
9. Newman Hirsch Rosenthal, *Formula for Survival: the Saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1979).
10. Alan Crown, Mandelbaum House 10th Anniversary Brochure.

11. See Rutland, Mann, and Price (eds), *Jews of the Outback*; Mossenson, *The Perth Hebrew Congregation*; and Rosenthal, *Formula for Survival*.
12. Kate Mannix is completing her Master of Arts thesis on the Jews of Broken Hill, including a study of Jewish and non-Jewish relations in the town. She has kindly traced some of Mandelbaum's Broken Hill addresses and sermons that were published in the *Barrier Miner*, as well as information from the *Hebrew Standard of Australasia* and sent them on for this article.

WALTER MONASCH AND THE EXTENDED MONASCH FAMILY HISTORY

Ken Arkwright

Publius Cornelius Tacitus (56 CE-117CE) wrote in his *Annales I*, that history should be written ‘*sine ira et studio*’ [without anger and fondness]. Australia and in particular Jewish Australia is justifiably proud of the achievements of its Citizen General Sir John Monash (1865-1931) but the thought expressed by the contemporary of Tacitus, namely Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BCE-65CE) ‘*Audiatur et altera pars*’ [listen to the other side of the story] may be timely advice.

This article deals with my father’s story, Rudolf Aufrichtig-Arkwright and his second cousin, Walter Monasch (1922-2011). He was part of the extended story of the Monash family. Whilst there has been a lot of focus by historians on the background of Sir John Monash, there has been little research on his extended family. This article seeks to fill the gap and to add further personal detail to Ann Mitchell’s articles, published in previous issues of this *Journal*.¹



My Grandmother Emma Aufrichtig (nee Schimmelburg 1861-1938), father Rudolf Aufrichtig (1893 Breslau Germany-1978 Perth WA), and grandfather Isidor Aufrichtig (1856-1934). This photo was taken in 1915.

In the 1920s, my father's first cousin, Irma Futter (1897-1974), married Hans Monasch (1882-1967). Our family was proud of the Monasch connection, although we could not claim any merit for the Monasch family's contribution to Jewish history. Hans Monasch's second cousin, Sir John Monash, the Australian war hero, was not the object of our admiration. We knew very little about Sir John, as Australia was far away. The military leaders, who got the overriding attention by our family in the First World War, were Foch, Haig, Pershing, Ludendorff and Hindenburg. It was the German branch of the Monasch family that influenced Jewish thought, which tickled our fancy.

To the best of my knowledge, the earliest recorded Monasch was Abraham Monasch (1710-1759). Abraham's grandson, Loebel Herz Monasch (1777-1831) was born and died in Krotoschin, an old Jewish community that had its beginning in 1423. This city was, from 1793 until 1918, part of the Prussian Province of Posen. In 1849 Krotoschin had a population of 7,800 inhabitants, of which 30%, 2,327 were Jewish. Jewish learning flourished in this community and many influential rabbis were born in Krotoschin. In 1827, the old Krotoschin synagogue was destroyed by a fire and a new great synagogue was built in 1846, which was equipped with a large pipe organ in 1894.

Loebel Herz Monasch had two sons and a daughter. The oldest son, Baer Loebel Monasch (1801-1879), established a Hebrew printing business of note that produced, amongst other works, the Hebrew Bible with translations in German and Yiddish, rabbinic publications and Hebrew prayer books.² Sir John Monash was the grandson of Baer Loebel Monasch and Hans Monasch was the grandson of Baer Loebel's brother, Markus Loebel Monasch (1814-1883). Baer Loebel Monasch's daughter, Marie Monasch (1826-1900, Sir John Monash's aunt) married Professor Dr Hirsch (Heinrich) Graetz (1817-1891), who was Professor of History at the University of Breslau and Lecturer in Jewish History at the Rabbinic Seminary in Breslau (Fraenkelsche Stiftung). Graetz published an eleven volume systematic history of the Jewish people, as well as many other scientific investigations into Jewish history entitled: *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* [*The history of the Jews from the oldest times unto the present*].³ He was a Conservative Jew with national Jewish tendencies, which resulted in his being attacked by the Orthodox Jewish Establishment 'as lacking respect for the sacrosanctity of Jewish tradition'.⁴ Heinrich Graetz introduced Raphael Jacob Fürstenthal (1781-1855), a poet and masterful translator of Hebrew texts, to his father-in-law Baer Loebel Monasch. Fürstenthal translated the entire traditional prayer literature into German and Monasch, as editor and printer, produced

the *Minchah Chadasha*, a *machsor* [holiday Prayer book], in five volumes for all the Jewish Festivals.

It is hard to appreciate the significance of this undertaking in our time. At that period of time, to write and speak about Jewish sacred matters in the vernacular was one of the major issues between Orthodoxy and Reform. In the eyes of Orthodoxy, a prayer-book with a German translation was against all Jewish traditional values. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) was attacked for translating the Bible into German; Rabbi Abraham Geiger was vilified for not using the *Lashon Kodesh* [the holy language] for his sermons and now Monasch, by printing prayer books with a German translation, was throwing further fuel into this fiery debate.

The verdict of history was made by the general Jewish public and not by the rabbinate. In the synagogues of today, sermons are given in the vernacular and in the Diaspora most prayer books and Hebrew Bibles are printed with translations. The Monasch prayer book *Minchah Chadasha* had its twelfth edition in 1876, which shows that its popularity was almost immediate.

Baer Loebel Monasch, his sister Rosa Monasch (her married name was Melzer) and his brother Markus Loebel Monasch, had twenty children between them. The details of this large family were covered by Mitchell in the previous issue of this *Journal*.⁵ The loss of the Province Posen by Prussia to Poland in 1918, made most of the Krotoschin Jews immigrate to Germany. The large German Progressive Congregations reformed the prayer book and the Geiger, Sachs, Joel and other prayer book editions superseded the Monasch - Machsor. As a consequence, the Monasch family sought their fortune in other cities of the world such as Munich, Minneapolis, New York, Berlin, Stettin, Breslau, Melbourne and Badenweiler.

Margarete Lichtheim née Monasch (15 January 1881) the sister of Hans Monasch and her son Walter Lichtheim were deported from Stettin to Lodz (25 October 1941) and from there to Chelmno (15 May 1942) where both perished. Margarete's younger son Ludwig Lichtheim escaped the Holocaust on 1 December 1938 with a Children's Transport to England and from there he became one of the *Dunera* Boys settling in Victoria where he died in 1978, having changed his name to 'Louis S. Layton'. Like her brother Hans Monasch, Margarete was a second cousin of Sir John Monash. Margarete's husband Georg Lichtheim (1865-1939) who until his dismissal in 1933 was the Director of Hamburger Wasserwerk, Am Bauersberg, died in Hamburg in 1939.

Hans Monasch, his wife Irma and their children Walter and Eva lived in Stettin (Germany) until 1936, when life under Hitler became unbearable. In this small Jewish Community 2,037 Jews were left in

1937 of the 3100 Jews in 1933. They moved on to live in the Rhineland until 1938, as legend had it, that Germans in the Rhineland were less supportive for Hitler than those in the rest of Germany. The family finally migrated in 1938 to Chicago USA. Should you wish to learn more about the details of the Holocaust experience of this part of the Monasch Family, you can find a very detailed interview with Walter Monasch on the Internet.⁶

May I just quote a few sentences from this interview that may help the reader to understand why many Jews failed to leave Germany in good time: 'I remember sitting in a dinner discussion with my parents and some friends who said: "This will go away. This can't last. I mean this is a passing something. Our Germany can't do this - can't be this crazy. This is inconceivable."'

The son of Marie Monasch and the historian Professor Dr Hirsch (Heinrich) Graetz was Dr. Leo Graetz who was Professor of Physics at Munich University. Leo Graetz (1856-1941) was murdered by the Nazis in the Concentration Camp of Dachau.

Sir John Monash became idolised by the Jews of Australia but he was somewhat neglected by his German family. He made a number of significant contributions to the Allies success during the final months of the First World War and his personal story represents some significant changes in approach. Firstly, he was given command based on ability and not on seniority as was customary in the other Armies of the time. Secondly, he did not stifle the enthusiasm of his troops by persisting with the old parade ground army tradition. Thirdly, he broke the concept that the colonial troops were inferior soldiers, best used as cannon fodder as happened in the doomed battles on Gallipoli. Most importantly, he attacked the German front in a surprise attack at its weakest point. After a four-year stalemate on the Western Front, the first retreat achieved by the Allied forces under Monash's command contributed to the collapse of the morale in the German Army, which was of greater significance than the small amount of ground conquered.

However, Monash's military strategy was not the only factor in the Allied victory. The real turning point in the war, however, came about by 300,000 US troops landing each month from April 1918 in Europe and the single-mindedness in leadership that developed between Petain, Haig, Foch and Pershing. In contrast General Erich Friedrich Ludendorff (1865-1937) was preoccupied with the political unrest that had developed in Germany.

Walter Monasch lived in Chicago after he graduated from high school. Money was scarce for German Jewish migrants and so he started working in a millinery shop in downtown Chicago, making ladies' hats. He also did volunteer work at Hull House in Chicago, an

institution designed to keep the children of Italian, Jewish, Polish and Puerto Rican immigrants out of trouble.

In 1943, he joined the US army and ended up in the CCI (Counter Intelligence Corps). He took army courses to understand the organisation of the Nazi Party, the Italian Fascist Party and the German and the Italian army. He left the USA on a 'Liberty Ship'⁷ and ended up in Liverpool. From there he moved to Europe. He had to learn interrogation techniques in preparation for collecting military and political information. He was well suited for it, as he spoke English and German fluently. After the war, he commented: 'Nobody wanted to talk to us. Nobody ever served in a concentration camp. It was always somebody else. They didn't know that I knew where Mauthausen or where Auschwitz was.'

Walter was assigned to the Texas National Guard 36th Infantry Division. He says he visited the Concentration Camp of Hurlach, a sub-camp of Dachau in March 1944.⁸ In Austria, Walter met Leni Riefenstahl, Hitler's favorite movie director, sunning herself on the deck of a resort hotel. Riefenstahl had made movies about the Nazi Party days in Nürnberg and the famous film of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. She said to Monasch: 'I know nothing; I was in Switzerland during the war. I was just making movies.' Riefenstahl was arrested in 1945. She left Germany, eventually ending up in Africa making movies about African wildlife.⁹

Walter's mother Irma Monasch was able to get in touch with him at his United States Army Quarters in Germany. She had learned that two of her sisters Elli Ritter and Hanna Fröhlich had been seen at a camp in Mauthausen, shortly before the end of the war. His aunt Ellie had lived in Breslau and Hanna had lived in Ratibor. In his interview, Walter related:

I hopped into my Jeep and went down there. I much later found out that two sisters of my father's ended up in Lodz in a transport from Hamburg where they had been living. When I did some work a few years ago in Lodz, I was walking around the central area. I ran into a park, in the middle of which was a large granite boulder with a plaque on it, which says that in this area, several thousand Jews from Hamburg had been shipped in and had then died in that neighborhood— including my two aunts.

Walter Monasch also took the top Nazi Hermann Göring into custody. This is Walter's abbreviated account of this event:

Al Berry was another head of our detachment – we were down in southern Bavaria and somebody comes into the office and says,

'We just had a telephone call from Hermann Göring. This was a day or two after the end of the war. He wants to surrender.' 'Okay', I hop into my Jeep and Allen Berry is with me. We drive down and we pull up to where we were told he was and there he is—full uniform—the whole shtick. We get out of our Jeep. We walk up and Al Berry says, '*Sie sind verhaftet*' [You are under arrest]. Göring straightens himself out – fat as he was – and says, 'I'm not going to surrender to a Captain, I want somebody of my own rank.' Al Berry pulls out his .45 pistol and says, 'Is this rank enough?' and we picked him up and brought him in. If you see that in Hogan's Heroes, nobody would believe it – it's totally unlikely – but it happened just like that. Full dress uniform, red Marshall stripes, the whole business, with his Marshall baton. Fat as can be. Although he had been dieting—he was not quite as fat as he started out—because he'd also been a little bit off his medicine. I am using the term 'medicine' very carefully – his drugs – he was a dope fiend. He had run out of them and that wasn't very good for him physically. He was pretty shaky.

Walter then stayed in Nellingen in Southern Germany. Field Marshall Erwin Johannes Eugen Rommel (1891-1944) lived for some time in nearby Herrlingen. Herrlingen (3,200 inhabitants) was also a Jewish *Zwangs-Altersheim* [Forced old age home] with 151 Deportees, in preparation for their deportation, and a Jewish Education Home, also used after 1933 for the deportation of young Jewish people, 100 of whom were deported. The first thing he and his American army colleague did when they got into town was to look up Rommel's house. He had just been made to commit suicide by the Nazis following his implication in the plot against Hitler. Rommel's son Manfred, at that time eighteen or nineteen years old, was there. Many years later, in 1974, he was elected Lord Mayor (*Oberbürgermeister*) of Stuttgart. Walter considered Manfred: 'A very solid, very good guy'.

There were some similarities between Sir John Monash and Erwin Rommel. Both were generals: Monash in World War I and Rommel in World War II.¹⁰ Both broke with the established pattern of warfare, using a surprise attack and Blitzkrieg as their modus operandi. Both tried to maintain human morality. Rommel refused orders to kill Jewish soldiers.¹¹ Walter Monasch said in his interview:

I come from a tradition that was very—the German Jewish tradition—that was very German, very Teutonic if you will—discipline, strict behavior patterns and so on. Much more so than you would find in the general Jewish community and certainly different from the broad range of American communities. You

walk into a German school room, it's different from walking into an American school room—very different. But, if you've learned to understand that—and work within it and work with it—neither is necessarily right, or wrong. They're just different. All too often, we see things as being right and wrong. If it's our way, it's right and if it's their way, it's wrong.

Walter Monasch was a professional city planner working especially in Chicago and Oregon. He served as National President of the American Institute of Planners (AIP) and he became a Life Member of the American Planning Association. He supported many Jewish causes together with his beloved wife Brenda Gates-Monasch. Among the causes they supported was the 'Shalom Bayit Society' [Society for the Peace in the Home], a society to help Jewish women from being mistreated by violent husbands within the family home.

I met Walter Monasch in Breslau just before he immigrated to the United States. He visited our family in general, but in particular he came to Breslau to say good-bye to his favorite aunt, Ellie Ritter (7 August 1888 to October 1944). Ellie was also my father's first cousin. Walter was looking for Ellie when he returned to Germany as an American soldier, as he mentioned in detail in his interview.

Ellie Ritter was befriended by Dr Siegmund Hadda (1882-1977), a surgeon at the 450-bed Jewish Hospital in Breslau. When she was to be deported to a concentration camp, she deliberately fell and broke her hip. Dr Hadda operated and certified Ellie to be unfit for transportation to the camp. Ellie and Dr. Hadda repeated this procedure until she finally got deported from Breslau to Theresienstadt with Transport IX/4 (her Transport Number was 904) on the 2 April 1943. Her determination to survive delayed her transportation from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz for extermination until the 23 October 1944 (her Transport Number on this transport was 1005). Our aunt Ellie Ritter (Walter Monasch's aunt and my second cousin) was only 56 years old and she missed Liberation by merely a few months. Late in November 1944 the Nazis converted the Auschwitz Crematorium I into an air-raid-shelter and they dismantled the Crematoria II, III and IV in preparation for surrendering Auschwitz to the Russian Army.

My father's other cousin, (Walter's mother, Irma Monasch née Schimmelburg 1897-1974) and members of her family visited us in Perth Western Australia. At the same time, Irma also made contact with members of her husband's Australian Monash family.



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(1) Walter Julius Monasch 1922-2011 with his mother Irma Monasch nee Schimmelburg. Irma Monasch is the wife of Hans Monasch, who is the Second Cousin of Sir John Monasch.

(2) Eva Therese Monasch 1925-2014 the daughter of Irma Monasch and sister of Walter Julius Monasch.

The Monasch family and I shared some of the same ancestors. Our common ancestors lived in Oschersleben, a small town in Germany, as *Schutzjuden* [Protected Jews] since 1648. They were horse merchants and they were allowed to build a house in the centre of the town that still stands today. They were given full citizen rights from the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III on the 11 March 1812. This was conditional on their serving in the Prussian army in case of war and that they would keep their business records in the German language (Not Judeo-German).

Leiser Schimmelburg (1791-1838), who was my great-great-grandfather and also Walter Monasch's, served in the Prussian Cavalry in the Wars of Liberation from Napoleon, 1813-1814. Leiser was awarded a recommendation for bravery by General Count Friedrich Heinrich Ernst von Wrangel (1784-1877) and he was allowed to keep a captured French Cavalry Pistol as booty. This pistol was in our possession and I played with it as a boy until Hitler prohibited Jews from owning firearms in the 1930s. Wrangel was born in Stettin, the same town as Walter Monasch. Our shared great grandfather, Jacob Schimmelburg (1823-1907) also served as a volunteer with distinction in the Prussian Cavalry in the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-1871, that established the 'German Empire'.

My father Rudolf Aufrichtig-Arkwright (1893 Breslau – 1978 Perth WA) served in World War I for four years in the German Army on the Eastern and Western Front. He was wounded three times and decorated with the Iron Cross. Approximately 96,000 German Jews served in the German Army in World War I and more than 80% of them served in front line service. They were cared for by 30 army rabbis and an



Jacob Schimmelburg (24 September 1823-15 June 1907). He is the great-grandfather in common to Kenneth James Arkwright (1929 to date), Walter Julius Monasch (1922-2011) and Eva Therese Monasch (1925-2014).

estimated 9500 were killed in action. My father and his first cousin Hans Monasch were in the trenches opposite their second cousin Sir John Monash. The present German Army (*Deutsche Bundeswehr*) together with the *Centrum Judaicum* in Berlin published a 630-page volume in 2013 on the German Jewish involvement in World War I.

This book established another Jewish World War I connection between Germany and Australia. Rabbi Jacob Sanger (1843 Bingen/Rhein-1938 Breslau) was one of the 30 World War I German Army Rabbis. Jacob's son Rabbi Dr Hermann Sanger (1909-1980) fled from Nazi Germany arriving in Melbourne in 1936, where he became senior rabbi of Temple Beth Israel. He played a central role in the development of Progressive Judaism in Australia.

Jacob Sanger is buried in the old Jewish cemetery in Breslau (now Lotnicza Street, Wroclaw). His grave was vandalised and the gravestone has been removed. Not far from his grave are the graves of Heinrich Graetz and Marie Graetz, nee Monasch. A little further are the graves of my great-grand-parents Emanuel and Caecilie Aufrichtig.

It was Albert Einstein who wrote in 1934 in his book *Mein Weltbild* [*My view of the world*]: 'God has a wicked sense of humour'.



Rabbi Jacob Sanger (24 June 1878-25 June 1938) (Feldrabbiner [Army Chaplain], German Army 1914), father of Rabbi Dr Hermann Max Sanger (03 July 1909-24 January 1980), spiritual leader of Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne, Australia

A little further on in the same cemetery is the grave of Siegfried Haber (1841-1920) the father of Fritz Haber (1868-1934) the Nobel Prize Winner (1918) for Chemistry. Fritz invented the poison-gas used in World War I and the Haber-Bosch process to synthesise ammonia from its constituent element. This process helped Germany to survive World War I long enough for Sir John Monash to come into play. Haber's wife, Clara Immerwahr (1870-1915) a pacifist, shot herself because she found the use of poison gas on people unacceptable. Clara's father Philipp Immerwahr (1839-1908) is also buried near Marie Monasch/Graetz. Both Fritz and Clara had converted to Christianity, but that did not stop Chaim Azriel Weizmann (1874-1952, the first President of Israel) from offering Fritz Haber the Directorship of the Sieff Research Institute (now Weizmann Institute) in Rechovoth. Haber accepted, but he did not get to the Institute as he died suddenly of a heart attack/stroke.

Not far from the Monasch and our family graves are the graves of Siegfried Stein (1844-1897) and Auguste Stein (1849-1936) the father and mother of Edith Stein (1891-1942). Edith Stein is now better known to the world at large as Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. She was gassed in Auschwitz. The gassing of a Catholic Saint of Jewish descent indicates that the Holocaust was not about religion but about ethnicity.

The above may not entirely conform to the present mood of hero-worship of the World War I and II Australian Jewish war history, but

it is an attempt to respect the wisdom of the ancient historians as pointed out in the beginning of this article, to write history 'without anger and fondness' and 'to listen to the other side'.

ENDNOTES

1. Ann M. Mitchell, 'Monasches and the Holocaust: Family migration history and threatened lives', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol. XXII, Part 1 (November 2014), pp.102-118 and 'Monasches and the Holocaust: Family Stories Part I', *AJHSJ*, Vol. XXII, Part 3 (November 2015), pp.395-449.
2. For more details, see Geoffrey Serle, 'The Focus of his Family', *John Monash: A Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002).
3. Most of the volumes were published by the Institut zur Förderung der Israelische Literatur, (Leipzig: 1853 to 1870).
4. 'Die Konstruktion der jüdischen Geschichte', [The Construction of Jewish History'], *Zeitschrift für die religiösen Interessen des Judenthums*, 1846.
5. Mitchell, 'Monasches and the Holocaust'.
6. Interview with Walter Monasch, 10 February 2008, by Rowan R (2008), Joren D (2009), Rory H (2010), Emma (2010). Andrea C (2010), with Howard Levin, <http://www.tellingstories.org/liberators/wmonasch/index.html>. All subsequent quotations come from this interview.
7. 'Shipping out was interesting because most people ended up on Liberty Ships which were these things they were building out here in Richmond. They were big tug boats stuffed with bunks', Walter Monasch TV Interview.
8. This date is more likely to have been 1945 since the Hurlach Concentration Camp was liberated on 27 April 1945 and no US soldiers were in Germany/Austria prior to D-Day, 6 June 1944 when the Allies landed in Normandy.[Ed.]
9. The historical record indicates that it is unlikely that Riefenstahl was in neutral Switzerland during the war. After the war she was in Germany. She 'escaped' into an attic flat in Munich and resurfaced a year later from her self-imposed exile. A denazification tribunal imposed a professional ban upon her, but in the 1960s she resumed a film/documentary career.
10. Rommel was a Field Marshal, a superior rank to General. Monash should have been made a Field Marshal, but did not have the support of Billy Hughes, Australia's Prime Minister.[Ed.]
11. One fact that can be cited, in respect to Rommel's attitude to Jews, is that the number of Jews who were living in the areas occupied by his *Afrika Korps* between 1941 and 1943, did not alter significantly. However, both Algeria and Morocco were under Vichy rule and only Tunisia was occupied by the Germans. Concentration camps were established there with the intention of carrying out the Final Solution, but was only under direct rule for six months before Rommel was defeated. See http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/25/algeria_marocco.asp, accessed 28 May 2016, [Ed.]

THE ADELAIDE HEBREW CONGREGATION AND ITS COMMUNITY 1929-1945

Rodney Gouttman

It would be surprising if any commentator on the historical presence of Jews in Australia would contradict the claim that its Jewish communities had long been firmly in lockstep with the national culture. Australian Jews have indeed shared their nation's cultural highs and lows. However, few records have been left by the Australian Jewish generations of the Great Depression of 1929-33 or of both World Wars of the twentieth century concerning the impact of these periods on their own Jewish communities. Perhaps this stemmed from the egalitarian assumption that the Jewish experience in these matters would be no different from that of their fellow non-Jewish Australians. Maybe it was considered politically and socially unwise to dwell on their own situation when the whole nation was suffering. Or simply, no-one believed that the subject was worthy of the attention. Whatever the reason, little material evidence was left for later Jewish scholars.

Stephen Alomes has described the Great Depression in Australia as 'particularly brutal'.¹ However, respected Jewish scholars mention it only in passing. W.D. Rubinstein states that Jews as a group were likely to have weathered this national economic crisis better than other groupings.² This assertion is based on his compilations of the death duties of a few wealthy Jews in Sydney and Melbourne. Nonetheless, such a view does not indicate how the 'average' Jew or Jewish communities fared. Nor are we informed to which similar groups 'Jews', as a group, are being compared.

Suzanne D. Rutland only mentions two instances. The first is how the Great Depression caused the demise of a Jewish immigrant settlement at Berwick in Victoria. This project, funded by cheap government loans, was finally undermined when agricultural prices tumbled badly.³ The second comment refers to the demise of the Zionist-oriented *Australia Jewish Chronicle*.⁴ Similarly, Australian Jewish fiction hardly relates to the subject, an exception being Alan Collins' *A Promised Land?*, a strongly autobiographical work.⁵

This dearth of information was replicated in the case of South Australian Jewry. Indeed, there is no data at all about how the Great Depression affected the lives of its members, families, and communal organisation. At best this can only be inferred from the experience of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation (AHC). This congregation was, arguably the epicentre of the Adelaide Jewish community, not just religiously, but socially, culturally, even in terms of a political voice. Far from all South Australian Jews were formally associated with the congregation for reasons of geographic distance from Adelaide, cost of belonging, apostasy, assimilation, and religious dissonance. However, most South Australian Jews lived within the environs of Adelaide. It was not only a tiny Jewry, but a faltering one as shown by successive national censuses - 1921, 1933, and 1947 - falling from 743 to 528 then down to 454.⁶

At its height, the Great Depression was a time when more people left Australia than migrated to it. In 1931 there was a record net loss of 12,000. South Australia's contribution to these figures was 979 newcomers and 1,549 departures.⁷ It is difficult to determine whether South Australian Jews were a part of this egress.

The Great Depression was associated with monumental unemployment, spawned severe austerity, social and familial dysfunction, homelessness, poverty and destitution. Better prospects in South Australia, as in other states, depended on the availability of government loans to fund public works, but its private sector lacked this cash injection.⁸ Not until 1935/6 did employment in South Australia significantly improve and even so, high levels of poverty and distress persisted.⁹ Without any available evidence, it is impossible to say how South Australian Jews and their community suffered in these matters, but it would be farfetched to believe they were cocooned from these pressures.

The AHC was certainly not immune. This was because its buoyancy depended on three revenue streams - private donation, rental income from its two shops in nearby Rundle Street, and the annual lease of synagogue seats. There is no data regarding private donations, but the suggestion is that they had plateaued or even fallen. As for the shop rental income, it too fell with the dive in small business.¹⁰ To retain their tenants, the congregation was forced to pay their water bills and municipal rates.¹¹ This outlay was compounded by a South Australian government impost on rentals of 4/6 in the pound.¹² Despite help from the AHC, one tenant went bankrupt, while the other shop was left vacant for several months.¹³

Whether it was due to the shrinking Jewish population, erosion in members' finances, or just apathy towards membership, the number of annual seat rentals declined during the depression years. However,

this trend had already been apparent before the Great Depression began with members refusing to pay for their seats. This was not merely a financial issue in the 1920s, because the cheaper pews also did not attract subscribers.¹⁴ It was feared that even a very slight increase in the rates to cover the shortfall would prove counterproductive. Assistant Minister, the Rev. Eddy Belfer, often had the door shut in his face when he arrived to collect a member's arrears.¹⁵ There was an accusation, probably not accurate, that he was not insistent enough. In the end, these bad debts were written off.

One specific fall-out of a depressed treasury was the departure of the AHC's rabbi, the Rev. David Hirsch, who had held the post since 12 September 1924. The rabbi refused to take a pay cut of £100 a year, resigned, and left Adelaide in December 1930. His departure saved the congregation £700 a year.¹⁶ It was decided that there would be no replacement until the congregation's coffers were restored to some degree of health. In the interim, Rev. Belfer, with a reduced salary of £100 per annum, agreed to add Hirsch's responsibilities to his own.¹⁷ The synagogue was peeved when these austerity measures were reported by a local newspaper because it felt the congregation had behaved no differently from those interstate when faced with similar circumstances.

As the AHC's membership fell, obtaining a regular Sabbath *minyán* became even more difficult and participation in the Sabbath School dropped. In 1930, the enrolment in the latter was a mere 32 pupils, six less than in the previous year. That said, this number was 90% of all the available Jewish children of school age in Adelaide. Poor attendance was blamed on parental apathy and, to counter this, the teaching staff drove students to class in their own vehicles.

To add to its woes, February 1933 saw the death of the synagogue's longtime president, Moss Judah Solomon aged 89. He had been a former mayor of Adelaide, auctioneer in Darwin, and an active Adelaide businessman. From 1869 he had held several positions on the synagogue board, the last 23 years as its president.¹⁸

Other groups in the Jewish community were also bleeding. We know the social Judean Club and the welfare oriented Adelaide Hebrew Philanthropic Society were on the point of closing.¹⁹ For 75 years, the Philanthropic Society's mission had been to keep destitute Jewish men off the streets and out of jail. The Great Depression had obviously provided it with far more clients than it could cope with. One member of the AHC called for the congregation to grant this body £25, but this was opposed on two grounds – it was argued that the congregation's money should be kept for religious purposes and that it would set an unacceptable precedent. It was suggested instead that the burden should be shouldered by the Jewish Women's

Benevolent Society, which it was alleged, had 'hoarded' over £2,000. Not surprisingly this accusation was instantly denied by this women's group, which claimed that it had in fact helped out in several cases when the need was brought to its attention.²⁰

When the financial shackles of the Great Depression slowly loosened, in October 1935, there was a renewal of the Rundle Street shop rentals at better rates.²¹ As for the seat leases, the feeling was that members were now in a better position to pay. Unfortunately, membership remained in the doldrums and bad debts continued to be written off.

On the other hand, the financial scene had improved enough to fill the post of rabbi. Nonetheless, this still required a slight increase in seat rates and yet another cut in Rev. Belfer's salary. Members were asked if they would increase their synagogue contribution, but only 20 responded, mostly favorably. One member wanted a rabbi of experience to challenge the antisemitism extant in South Australia. Another, however, whether in denial or from naiveté, argued that this could not be coming from Nazi sympathisers as there were none in South Australia.²²

After lengthy correspondence with the Jewish War Memorial in London, the AHC chose Rev. Louis Rubin-Zacks B.A. (Hons) M.A. (Distinction) as its First Minister/Headmaster of the Sabbath School, at a salary of £600 per annum, not the £500 originally offered. He was interviewed for the position in London by the congregation's representative on the Jewish Board of Deputies among others. Rabbi Levy in Sydney and Rabbi Brodie in Melbourne also tendered their advice.²³

En route to Adelaide Rubin-Zacks sailed via Fremantle to Melbourne, meeting members of those Jewish communities. Adelaide was then often by-passed by passenger ships, which robbed its Jewish community of new blood. He was inducted at the AHC on 5 July 1936 by Rabbi Brodie in the presence of many of Adelaide's religious and lay leaders. A reception was provided with the City's Lord Mayor in attendance. The new rabbi also quickly took charge of the recently introduced Hebrew language class at the University of Adelaide. However, he courted controversy by replacing the synagogue's choir leader with his wife, if only because he could not abide a non-Jew in that post.²⁴ The hope was expressed that with Rev. Rubin-Zacks in place, there would be an improvement in membership, attendances at religious services and greater participation at the Sabbath School, which was collapsing at 'an alarming rate'.²⁵ An AHC survey of the state's Jewish population showed that a majority were not subscribing members.²⁶

All Jewish organisations in Adelaide appear to have been represented at AHC general or special meetings. In 1935, the roll call

had 13 attending, including three miniscule Zionist bodies: the South Australian Zionist Council, the South Australian Zionist Association, and the Women's Zionist Society.²⁷ No doubt the interlocking boardroom syndrome was alive and well.

Generally the Adelaide Jewish community tended to be publicly quiescent in political matters. Nonetheless, the AHC vigorously opposed a push in the State Parliament to mandate Bible reading in state schools. It feared the New Testament would monopolise such readings. When the measure was not introduced, the Jewish community would have heaved a great sigh of relief.

The congregation also wanted to join with fellow South Australians in all the main attractions being staged to celebrate the state's centenary in 1936. To emphasise its partnership, it requested that all local Jewish bodies with national affiliation, such as the National Council of Jewish Women, hold their annual conferences in Adelaide that year.²⁸ Hirsch Munz, a tutor with the Workers' Education Association at Adelaide University, was granted £10 towards his publication, *Jews in South Australia, 1836-1936 - A Historical Outline*.²⁹

Also, the AHC wanted the establishment of a national body, to be called the 'Federation of Australian Synagogues' to represent Australian Jewry politically, and help in matters of Jewish education. It proposed a foundation convention in Adelaide of interstate delegates towards this end during November in 1936. This plan, however, was suspended when it was learned that the Victorian Advisory Board in Melbourne was considering a similar idea.³⁰

THE RISE OF THE NAZI STATE

Unhappily, just as the Great Depression was reaching its peak in Australia, Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist henchmen took power in Germany on 30 January 1933. Its extreme antisemitism sent shivers of apprehension down the spine of a number of Australians, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Among them was the Most Reverend Dr Robert Spence, Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide, who dispatched a note in 1934 to Rev. Belfer sympathising with Germany Jewry and condemning its persecution by the Nazi state.³¹ The AHC also wrote to the German government - one assumes via its consulate in Sydney - decrying the harassment of its Jews. It is not known whether this letter ever reached its target. Surely, had the AHC received a reply it would have been recorded.

The congregation attempted to organise a public protest at the Adelaide Town Hall to which civic and religious leaders in Adelaide were to be invited. Nonetheless, just as preparations were on the

point of completion, the gathering was cancelled. The only reason given was that it was on advice from 'influential quarters'.³² The source of the opposition was not disclosed, but this counsel presumably involved a threat to the Jewish community. After all, similar gatherings were held successfully in Sydney and Melbourne without overt negative reaction.

In March 1935, Gustav Isaacs, the longtime president of the Adelaide Philanthropic Society, predicted with uncanny prescience the trajectory of the escalating anti-Jewish hatred in Nazi Germany:

Your board notes with intense sorrow that the German debacle is still in progress. Fresh terrors having for their object the complete annihilation of our brethren in Germany are continually being afflicted. May it please the Almighty to send a speedy deliverance to this unfortunate half million of our Brethren.³³

By 1937 he lamented that the atrocities practised against Jews in Germany had metastasised throughout Europe, even to Great Britain:

The position of our people throughout the world is increasingly alarming. The German terror goes on – it is now in its fifth year – becoming even more bitter, more remorseless. The seeds of hatred and animosity have spread to other European countries, and recently Great Britain found it imperative to pass legislation for the purpose of keeping in check this vile weed of anti-Semitism which unfortunately is on its shores. We earnestly pray that the Almighty may put a new heart and new spirit in the Rulers of the world in order to deal kindly with our people.³⁴

By early in 1939, he had become utterly frustrated with Australian Jews who chose to disregard what was happening to their religious brethren in Europe:

It is unthinkable that any body of Jews should forgather anywhere and not discuss the horrible plight of our coreligionists today in Europe. It is equally unthinkable that Jews living in free countries in a state of complacent prosperity should not be touched by this calamity – touched to the point of helping, of doing their "utmost best" to assuage the agony, to relieve the distress of these men, women, and children...³⁵

Yet, a crucial omission was any reference to the antisemitism being spread in his own backyard of South Australia. Maybe he did not wish to upset the local social applecart given the objection to the

earlier-mentioned holding of the public protest meeting in the Town Hall. Conceivably, he was willing to tolerate the local Judeophobia, seeing it a mere zephyr in comparison with the violent winds of anti-Jewish hatred being experienced in Europe.

Doctrinal antisemitism was being actively propagated in South Australia by the Lutheran Church Press, which also circulated the racist speeches of Adolf Hitler. The German Clubs of Adelaide and Tanunda in the Barossa Valley also served as bastions of Germanism in the state.³⁶ In addition, individuals of the racist Right were quite adroit in badmouthing Jews with evil conspiracy theories.³⁷

Authors Gary Grumpl and Richard Kleinig highlight the point that South Australia's mainstream press coverage of Nazi Germany displayed ignorance, ambiguity and naiveté.³⁸ *The News* in Adelaide was not the lone voice in the fourth estate, which had warmly welcomed Hitler's ascent to power in Germany. In the reportage, rabid antisemitism of German authorities was perceived as a law and order issue and not the expression of a horrific race theory.³⁹ Indeed, no social feathers were ruffled when a permanent German Consulate was established in Adelaide on 21 August 1937. At the end of that year, Australia's Intelligence Service gave South Australia a clean bill of health over the presence of Nazi sympathisers in the state. This assessment was abruptly overturned when Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies, a former admirer of the Nazi regime, declared war against Germany following in the footsteps of Great Britain on 3 September 1939.⁴⁰

David Burns has told of many visitors to Germany, including scholars, being utterly seduced by the regime's propaganda machine.⁴¹ One obviously so affected was Sir Stanton Hicks, an eminent Professor of Psychology at the University of Adelaide. A report of his impressions of his stay in Germany appeared in *The Advertiser* of 20 March 1937. They were presented to the Round Table Christian Sociological Society at the University's Parkin College:

Sir Stanton said that he was not a Nazi but was somewhat sympathetic towards Nazi ideology. Germany was not a country of barbarians. People were compelled to vote but that applied in Australia. Compulsion to vote, however, did not mean they were compelled to vote for a certain party. It should be realised that Hitler had to take the course he did and circumstances brought the Nazi Party into power.

Sir Stanton said that he found the country clearly divided into German and Jew. The Jewish trouble arose from the fact that Jewish employers employed only Jews, and this was true also at Universities, and other institutions solely controlled by Jews.

The army was closed to the Jews and they were driven into the legal and medical professions until the majority in such professions were Jews. The Nazi movement was almost puritanical, and he felt he had never seen a more healthy, vigorous nation. There was no poverty, no starvation. Germany was a completely regimented country.⁴²

At no stage did he claim that he was misrepresented; nor did these views seem to upset Adelaide society. However, they did offend Rev. Rubin-Zacks of the AHC who responded with a powerful letter to the editor, which expressed anger, sarcasm and frustration with the Professor's observations. Whether Rubin-Zacks' reaction was his alone, or the voice of others in the Jewish community, is difficult to say. His letter is worth quoting in full:

In your issue of March 20 is a report of an address on Germany by Sir Stanton Hicks to the Round Table of the Christian Sociological Society. If Professor Hicks had taken up permanent residence in Germany, perhaps by now he would be in a concentration camp, that delightful creation of Nazi genius, where men who dare to speak and think for themselves are cast into a living hell on earth. Did the Professor, in his enthusiasm, overlook these beauty spots when in Germany? Another delightful fact about Germany is that many of its citizens may be taken in "protective custody" and sentenced to indefinite incarceration for no reason whatsoever. We might add to this the brilliant espionage system, which interferes with the private lives of men and women. Likewise the press, bound hand and foot by the Nazi leaders, trains the population to become dumb tools of a military totalitarian state. Think of the joys that Professor Hicks is missing whilst he must remain a citizen of such an unenlightened state of South Australia, which cannot boast of these amenities!

My particular interest in the address of Professor Hicks concerns his remarks on the position of Jews in Germany. Does the Professor honestly believe that the Jews who formed less than 1 per cent of the population, could have such a hold on the economic and cultural position of the great German people: to justify against them atrocities, unparalleled in the history of civilisation? In the rise of Nazism to power a scapegoat had to be found for the real and alleged troubles of Germany, and such a scapegoat was found in the Jews, a most loyal and law-abiding section of the community, who for centuries had lived and died for the Fatherland, and who had given of their best in

building up the glorious traditions of pre-war Germany. Now, as a reward for their labors, they are being hounded out of the only country that they could call their homeland, and the names of Jews who fought and died for the Fatherland in the Great War, have been erased from the national monuments!

I challenge Professor Hicks to produce any evidence that the Jews control the universities in Germany: and that the majority in the legal and medical professions were Jews. As free citizens Jews were entitled to enter the professions as they desired. If their numbers in the medical and legal profession were greater than their proportion in the general population, that surely must be a compliment to the talents and abilities of Jews. Nazi methods have been to “shoot first and argue afterwards”. After inflicting untold misery and harm on these innocent and defenseless citizens, the Nazi leaders have attempted to justify themselves in doubtful manner. How far they have been believed is shown by the continuous protests that have resounded throughout the world at the despicable and horrible treatment of the Jews and other minorities by the Nazis. Facts, and not fancies, count. For the future it would be better that Professor Hicks confine himself to facts and not indulge in highly colored statements, nor add difficulties to the position of a people whose cup of bitterness is already filled to overflowing.⁴³

Rubin Zacks’ words do not appear to have aroused any public controversy. An editorial in *The Advertiser* did describe Nazi propagandism as an ‘art form’, which had enslaved the minds of its own people.⁴⁴ However, it was completely silent over the Nazi state’s promotion of antisemitism, let alone of this calumny in its own hemisphere of South Australia.

When World War Two was declared, alleged Nazi sympathisers in South Australia were quickly rounded up and some interned as ‘enemy aliens’. Overnight these persons had become a security risk.⁴⁵ A few Jews of German background were also caught in this dragnet. Ironically, while this was occurring Australia’s intelligence service was spying on Australian Jewish communities, including South Australia’s, for any local sympathy towards Communism or Revisionist Zionism.⁴⁶

FOREIGNERS ARE COMING!

The story of Australia’s reluctance to accept pre-war the mass immigration of Jews seeking sanctuary from Hitler’s clutches has already been well told.⁴⁷ This stance had the support of some

prominent Anglo-Australian Jews anxious that a flood of European Jews might incite local antisemitism and thus undermine their social standing. However, as a result of pressure on Canberra from its Allies, Great Britain and the United States of America, to help them reduce the burgeoning refugee crisis in Europe, the government agreed to accept 15,000 of them, 5,000 per year for three years. However, the Second World War interceded and only approximately 8,000 refugees arrived 'Down Under', about 5,000 of whom were Jews. Most reached Australia in 1939 with some as late as 1940. They joined as estimated 2,306 émigrés from Europe who had already migrated to Australia on their own initiative or by sponsored migration between 1933 and 1939.⁴⁸

It is difficult to assess how many European Jews fleeing Hitler arrived in South Australia but by all accounts the number was quite small. They were certainly not of a size to correct South Australian Jewry's demographic slide. Three weeks after the outbreak of war the Adelaide section of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society had 31 refugee clients on its books. In order as they appeared:⁴⁹

Name Occupation	Arrived in Australia	Birth Country
Helmut Graf Carpenter	1939	Germany
Ernst Roth Window Dresser	1939	Austria
Paul Gruenfeld Electrician	1939	Austria
F. Baer Grain Merchant	1939	Germany
C. Kuntz Window Dresser	1939	Germany
Otto Roth Master Tailor	1939	Austria
Samuel Landau Representative	1939	Poland
A. Rosendahl Veterinary Surgeon	1939	Germany
George Strong Farmer	1939	Germany
Fred Danby Farmer	1939	Poland
Ernest Simon Salesman	1939	Czechoslovakia
Siegried Zilz Galvaniser	1939	Austria
Alfred Zilz Unknown	1939	Austria
Frank Shelley Farmer	1939	Germany
Harry Peters Farmer	1939	Germany

Name Occupation	Arrived in Australia	Birth Country
James Warner Farmer	1939	Germany
Eric Bejamin Gardener	1939	Germany
Alfred Lowy Electrical Examiner	1939	Austria
Leopold Franz Hirsch Manufacturer	1939	Austria
Karl Popper Architect	1939	Austria
Zikmund Greschmay Veterinary Surgeon	1939	Czechoslovakia
Manfred Osers Grain Merchant	1939	Germany
Herman Kaufman Doctor	1939	Germany
Emil Rosenberg Dental Mechanic	1938	Germany
Siegfried Rosenberg Traveller	1937	Germany
Eric Leslie Field Lecturer/Pharmaceutical Chemist (Uni.A)	1938	Austria
G.A. Gilbert Agricultural Scientist	1939	Czechoslovakia
Alfred Rosenthal Professor Law and Accounts	1937	Germany
Sefried Grieschieh Not Known	1939	Germany
Hans Zwillenberg Flour Miller	1938	Germany
Ernst Floun Tutor (Uni.A)	1938	Austria

All were males suggesting that they were unmarried. Unquestionably, not all the Jewish European migrants to Adelaide were or needed to be clients of the Welfare Society. However, with the outbreak of war, of those listed all had indicated a willingness to enlist in the Australian military forces. To do so, they were required to be Australian citizens, and for that, the current Naturalisation Act of 1920 required five continuous years of residence in the country. Later in 1942/3, in the wake of fears that Australia might be invaded by the Japanese, those classified as 'stateless', 'alien', and 'enemy aliens' were permitted to join the Labour Battalions of the Citizen Military Force (CMF). As members of the CMF some also participated in the New Guinea campaign. Of those registered above, at least ten enlisted when permitted. They were Otto Roth,⁵⁰ Fred Danby,⁵¹ Ernest Simon,⁵² Frank Shelley,⁵³ Helmet Graf,⁵⁴ George Strong,⁵⁵ Harry Peters,⁵⁶ James Warner,⁵⁷ Eric Fields⁵⁸ and Alfred Rosenthal.⁵⁹ Alfred Lowy was interned in Orange as an 'enemy alien' but quickly released

on appeal though he did not enlist.⁶⁰ On the evidence, only a few of those enlisting did so in Adelaide, suggesting that their stay in South Australia was quite short. German-born Albert Kaiser, who arrived in Adelaide in 1939 classified as 'stateless' and then joined the Citizen Militia, was awarded citizenship in 1944 after the requisite five years. This acquisition, however, did not apply automatically to his wife Thea, who was required to apply separately under the Act.⁶¹

Mark Hains claimed that when he became President of the AHC in 1939, he learned that the 'Welfare Committee' had not met for over a year. Whether this Committee was the same as the local Jewish Welfare Society is uncertain. He said he took upon himself to see that every ship, which arrived at Port Adelaide's Outer Harbour with refugees onboard, was met by the Committee. How many came via this conduit was not revealed, though Hains described them as 'arriving in their hundreds'.⁶² Clearly, this was an exaggeration but to the tiny and ill-prepared Adelaide Jewish community it might have appeared thus. Hains maintained the Committee worked assiduously to settle German and Austrian refugees, but corroborating evidence for his claim is missing. However, some 23 European Jewish refugees who had reached Adelaide either before or just after the outbreak of the Second World War joined the AHC⁶³ and enrolments in the Sabbath School mid-1940s had reached a high of 16.

The secretary of the Committee was the Rev. Rubin-Zacks, but this could only have been for a very short period as he left South Australia late in 1939. Around mid-1939, he had received a cable from the Perth Hebrew Congregation (PHC) advising him of its rabbi's acute ill health, and enquiring whether, should Rev. David Isaac Freedman pass away, he would be able to come and conduct the funeral service. When this occurred, the AHC gave Rubin-Zacks permission to fly to Perth for this purpose. With the funeral over, he again obtained the approval of the AHC to stay and lead the forthcoming Sabbath services at the PHC. On his return to Adelaide the rabbi immediately resigned from the AHC despite having being contracted to serve for another two years. The rabbi dismissed this obligation saying the contract was a mere 'scrap of paper'.⁶⁴

It was then revealed that Rubin-Zacks had actually resigned under the previous presidency of Eugene A. Matison, but news of this had been kept secret. In fact, it had never actually been rescinded. He had often clashed with his successive presidents, and was generally disenchanted with the Jewish life in Adelaide. On the other hand, Rubin-Zacks had not been able to lift synagogue membership, religious attendance, or participation in the Sabbath School. The rabbi left Adelaide on 30 November 1939 to become Freedman's successor at the PHC.⁶⁵

WAR

From the outbreak of war, Germany was not only Australia's enemy but also the evil nemesis of Jews in general. However, when the bells of war rang out, the AHC had yet to resolve all its issues from the Great War of 1914-18. In 1926 it had decided to construct a memorial hall within its premises to honour those South Australian Jews who had served in that war. It was to double as a social space for the wider Jewish community. No synagogue funds were to be used, but rather an independent company of Jewish investors was to be formed to raise the necessary funds.⁶⁶ These investors did not necessarily need to be members of the congregation. Not until 1938, however, was the project formally revisited, and funds sequestered by the South Australian Jewish Soldiers' Memorial Hall Company Ltd were finally transferred to the AHC to bring the enterprise to fruition. The enterprise was within the context of modernising the fronts of the two synagogue-owned shops in Rundle Street. The hall was to sit above the shops with a separate entrance from Synagogue Place.⁶⁷

The development was fortuitous, because the hall came to be a central place for the AHC's contribution to the civilian war effort on the home front. In fact, all the synagogue's secular rooms were made available, particularly to the Australian Red Cross Society to conduct classes in first-aid and nursing. The Society established one of its Sewing Circles on the premises to manufacture and collect soldier comforts for Australian troops serving overseas. Two groups very involved in all these activities were the Jewish Women's Guild and The National Council of Jewish Women.⁶⁸ This association lasted throughout the war years, and the Australian Red Cross Society recognised both groups for their contributions in 1945. In 1942, the rooms of the AHC were also designated for the Civilian Relief Department. If Adelaide were to come under air attack from the Japanese, they would be used to disburse clothing and provide emergency sleeping accommodation for victims.⁶⁹

A year after the war had begun, Rabbi Alfred Fabian was chosen to replace Rubin-Zacks as the AHC's First Minister/Headmaster of the Sabbath School, initially for nine months, with three months' notice if either party decided to terminate the contract. He had previously officiated at services on the High Holidays and had remained for six weeks to lead Shabbat prayers. This appointment, however, did not have the customary imprimatur of the London Beth Din, which was presided over by the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire. It had refused to recognise Rabbi Fabian's European *smicha* (rabbinical ordination), and his commitment to Orthodox Judaism was questioned because of his previous association with the Liberal

Synagogue in Sydney.⁷⁰ This does not seem to have concerned the AHC, which subsequently extended his tenure.⁷¹

While the attention of Australians was initially concentrated on the Allies' fight against Germany and its Axis friends in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, the fate of European Jewry became an additional profound Jewish concern. Early in 1941, Mark Hains pointedly commented that: 'no-one had suffered more than their co-religionists in those countries invaded by enemies of Great Britain'. He also chastised those of his fellow Jews whom he considered had yet to fully commit to the Allied cause. Though many had 'gone forth willing to fight for King and Country', he claimed others were not meeting their 'financial' obligations, which, one assumes, meant support of public patriotic appeals.⁷²

When Great Britain declared war, London attempted to shore up its home front security by interning many persons with German background in case of potential subversion. They were branded 'enemy aliens'. Caught up in the swoop were innocent Jews, most of whom had only recently found sanctuary in Albion from the antisemitic outrages of Adolf Hitler. On 15 June 1940, the British High Commissioner in Canberra pressed the Australian Government of Robert Gordon Menzies to help Great Britain reduce her burden of these internees. A similar plea was made to Canada and South Africa.⁷³ Australia agreed to accept 6,000 between the ages of 16 to 60. However, due to a shortage of shipping and deadly German U-boat activity only around 2,500 men arrived, mainly Jews, on the voyage of the notorious HMT *Dunera*,⁷⁴ which reached Darling Harbour in Sydney on 6 September 1940. From there they were sent to prison camps in Hay in New South Wales and Tatura in Victoria. A few were soon dispatched from Tatura to Loveday, near Barmera on the Murray River in South Australia.

Diane Menghetti has determined that there were 120 Jews at Loveday⁷⁵ where their relations with the Italians and Nazi sympathisers interred there were understandably fraught.⁷⁶ At the time, the AHC record claims the number of Jews in the camp as about 400, which seems exaggerated in the light of the Menghetti study. Rabbi Fabian visited them on two occasions: the first along with members of the AHC's Executive taking 'a *Sefer Torah*, Prayer Books, *Tallisim*, and *Tefillin*'. This was later followed up by the rabbi's visit to conduct a *Hanukah* service. The *Sefer Torah* was returned after the Jewish internees were released to join units of the CMF's Labour Corps.⁷⁷

Apart from their volunteering for the Australian Red Cross Society, the available data fails to disclose whether local Jewish

women played other roles in the home front war effort such as the Women's Land Army, munitions production, or caring for the ill and wounded returning soldiers at convalescent facilities. This is quite apart from caring for their own loved-ones struck down physically, emotionally, and mentally. Two Jewish women enlisted as nurses: Captain Betty Cohn, a masseuse with the 4th Australian General Hospital,⁷⁸ and Lieutenant Naomi Boas (Naomi Bracegirdle, a nursing sister with the Royal Australian Air Force Medical Services).⁷⁹

Rabbi Fabian convened a meeting of major Jewish groups in December 1941 with the hope of forming The South Australian Jewish War Effort Fund. It appears that at the time he was not successful, although the gathering did agree to financial support for the Adelaide Lord Mayor's Appeal to replace HMAS *Sydney* sunk by the German raider, HSK *Kormoran*, off the coast of Western Australia on 19 November 1941.⁸⁰ The aforementioned War Effort Fund was eventually established during 1943 to provide South Australian Jews in the armed forces with special comforts and parcels.

Australia's war became far more complex when Japan decimated the American Pacific Fleet moored at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941. Not only did this attack draw the United States of America into the Second World War, but a day later, Australia's Labor Prime Minister, John Curtin, also declared war on Japan. The possibility of Australia's being invaded by 'Asian hordes from the north', a fear that had long underpinned her 'White Australia Policy', was now being contemplated seriously in Canberra.⁸¹ This anxiety was not allayed by Japan's air assault on Darwin and its environs on 2 February 1942.⁸² Mark Hains informed the AHC that:

Another year of war had passed in which the British Empire, being confronted by new and unexpected developments has fought so gallantly. A new enemy has arisen close to our shores and has already made attacks on parts of our territory and on Australia itself. Australian soldiers had been everywhere in the thick of the fighting and have lived up to the traditions of their fathers. Among them we know many of our fellow Jews and also numerous members of this community who have played their part in the heroic struggle against aggressive nations...⁸³

Fears of invasion were further heightened when soon after, on 31 May 1942, midget Japanese submarines attacked Sydney Harbour, sinking the requisitioned ferry HMAS *Kuttambul* with 21 lives lost. One of these who died was Stoker John Samuels, a twenty-year old lad from Adelaide's Jewish community.⁸⁴ When his body was found,

it was buried on 5 June 1942, with full military honours in the Jewish section of Adelaide's West Terrace Cemetery. Rabbi Fabian officiated.⁸⁵

The surrender of Singapore to the Japanese on 15 February 1942, reinforced the realisation that the British Navy would not be able to help defend Australia. Canberra now turned to the United States of America as her strategic partner. It suited Washington's military interests in the South Pacific war against Japan.⁸⁶ As a consequence of this new alliance, American service personnel flowed into Australia. In response, the Adelaide Jewish community organised a 'hospitality committee' to welcome Jewish American and Australian soldiers camped in or just passing through the city. It arranged socials for them most Sunday afternoons in the Memorial Hall.⁸⁷ Troops from both nations also attended religious services on the Sabbath and High Holidays at the AHC, where special prayers were offered for the success of the Allies and for the plight of European Jewry. Patriotically, religious services ended with a rendition of the National Anthem. Rabbi Fabian also counseled American Jewish soldiers and gave public lectures in the army camps on the Scriptures.⁸⁸ Unfortunately, we have no knowledge of the reaction of the recipients.

Mark Hains had foreshadowed earlier in 1943 that the fourth year of the war would deliver the Allies better results. His belief in eventual Allied success was engendered by Russian successes on Europe's eastern front, 'the tenacity of British forces in Africa', and 'the dauntless courage of our own boys on the Australian and other fronts'. Further, he predicted that the Japanese juggernaut would not only be halted in the Asia/Pacific region but soon be reversed. He expressed profound sympathy for those families whose loved ones had been lost in action, or had been taken as prisoners of war. That being said, no specific communal body was organised to help the suffering Jewish families whose members had returned traumatised by war. Together with Stoker John Ashton, the community lost Flight Sergeant Asher Harlem of the Royal Australian Air Force who disappeared over the skies of Europe on a mission from Great Britain.⁸⁹ Other casualties included Sergeant Bernard Gordon Griff⁹⁰ and Major Dr Sydney Kranz, who were taken prisoner by the Japanese.⁹¹

In March 1941 Gustav Isaacs had opined: 'Today not six hundred thousand as in 1933, but five million are suffering untold misery under the heel of the greatest Tyrant of all time'.⁹² Two years later he would pass away at the very moment his horrific prediction was being proved correct.⁹³ At his death, Isaacs was the oldest subscribing member of the AHC, and had filled different roles on its executive. In

addition, for the last 40 years of his life he was the honorary president of the Adelaide Hebrew Philanthropic Society.⁹⁴

Mark Hains' response to the emerging news of the genocide of European Jewry was:

During the year the troubled plight of our Jewish brethren and sisters in Nazi Germany has assumed unheard agony. Millions of innocent men, women, and children have been exterminated, other millions of our co-religionists are suffering unspeakable horror in the wake of the barbarous oppressor. We Jews in the free countries of the world have not only to express our sympathies with these unhappy victims. We have to pledge ourselves to the salvation of our brethren and have to struggle for their redemption with everything that is in our power so that as many as possible shall escape destruction.⁹⁵

Despite the concentration on the war effort both militarily and on the home front, the Adelaide Jewish community continued to fête visitors who came to raise funds for overseas Jewish causes. One such visitor was Dr Michael Traub collecting for the Palestine Fund. He was reported to Military Intelligence for suspicious behavior by two soldiers who were with him on the same train travelling from Perth to Adelaide.⁹⁶ The Adelaide Jewish community honoured him with a dinner in the Memorial Hall. As mentioned earlier, all Australian Jewish communities were under surveillance from without and within for Communist or Revisionist Zionist tendencies.

One Jewish pre-war refugee from Germany was mistakenly interrogated by Intelligence officials because he had the same name as the emissary from the Palestine Fund. Others were questioned about the behavior of some of their fellow Jews. The spotlight even fell on Rabbi Fabian and his wife Ilse, along with groups such as the miniscule South Australian branch of the Australia/Palestine Committee. The move to establish a local branch of the Jewish Council To Combat Anti-Semitism and Fascism was scotched by the AHC for two reasons. First, it was felt that drawing attention to antisemitism might prove counterproductive, and second, because of the belief that some members of the Council were also members of the Australian Communist Party.⁹⁷

Having previously cancelled its own plans for the establishment of a national political body to represent Australian Jewry, in August 1944 the AHC dispatched three delegates – Drs Kaufman, Eugene A. Matison and Leon Opits – to a meeting in Melbourne arranged by the Victorian Advisory Board, with a view to creating such an entity. At the same time, the AHC acknowledged that it no longer represented

the broad opinion of South Australian Jewry.⁹⁸ Driving this awareness was the realisation that the historic leadership by Anglo-Orthodox Jewry had eroded. This was underlined by the budding activism of recently arrived European Jews with a different experience of communal organisation.⁹⁹

At the beginning of 1945 AHC's then president, Dr Matison, spoke of the great strides made by the Allies towards ultimate victory over both Germany and Japan. It was a situation in which he claimed 'our men in South Australia had played a great part'.¹⁰⁰ At least 45 members of the South Australian Jewish community, including two female nurses, enlisted in the Australian military forces in the Second World War.¹⁰¹ On the basis of the national census of 1947, this represented about 10% of the whole of this Jewry and around 18% of its male component.¹⁰² That said, AHC records still failed to disclose the impact of absent service personnel on the organisational life of its Jewish community. Matison was to add that:

The Jewish people in Europe, as we state with profound grief, are in the process of merciless destruction. All the help that can be given from here to assist them in their escape and provide for their rehabilitation must be pledged by our community now.¹⁰³

With the Second World War over in 1945, and the stark realities of the Holocaust finally fully revealed, this plea was one that would challenge all Australian Jewish communities, although, in fact, only a few Jewish Holocaust survivors settled in Adelaide, so that the community was not numerically reinforced as occurred in Melbourne and Sydney in the immediate postwar era.

ENDNOTES

1. Stephen Alomes, *A Nation At Last - The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1988), p.85-93.
2. William D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia -A Thematic History, Vol.2, '1945 to the Present'* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1991), p.134.
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THE FALK LIBRARY TUG-OF-WAR

Helen Bersten

Ten years prior to a most unusual event at the Great Synagogue, David Falk, son of the late Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk, read a paper before the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS). It was entitled 'A Lifetime of Book Collecting: Recollections of the late Rabbi L.A. Falk' and was later published in the Society's *Journal* as edited and annotated by David L. Falk.¹ Rabbi Falk had not quite finished his recollections when he died in May 1957. He had hoped to produce a book with his notes as well as a series of essays on special treasures in the collection for the opening of the library when it was housed in the Great Synagogue that same year. He even made the plaque which was to be placed in the library.²

David described his father as 'an unrepentant bibliophile' whose collection housed 'large folios ... and battalions of octavos and duodecimos'.³ Rabbi Falk's collecting of Hebraica and Judaica began in England in 1921 after his service as Chaplain to the Jewish Legion in World War I.



Rabbi Falk as Chaplain to the Jewish Legion.



Rabbi Falk in later years

His collection held sixteenth century censored books as well as a twelve-volume Talmud printed in 1644. In Australia, Rabbi Falk continued his bibliographic pursuits and acquired some rare manuscripts. He was encouraged in his collection of Australian Judaica by Percy Marks, the first president of the AJHS. The rabbi also purchased Hebraica and Judaica from the library of Professor Dr Thatcher, 'a celebrated Orientalist'⁴ as well as part of Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen's library. The Hollander daughters in King's Cross gave their family's book collection to Rabbi Falk after the death of their brother Abraham. Rabbi Falk commented that his own library also housed an 'extensive collection of Wagneriana and Schopenhaueriana'.⁵

In 1954 the Great Synagogue purchased Rabbi Falk's library of about 4000 items for £3000 and later the libraries of Rabbi Cohen and Rev. Einfeld were incorporated into the collection. David Benjamin, a president of the AJHS who died in October 1961, bequeathed his book collection to the new library, bringing the collection to over 6000 items. In his obituary of Rabbi Falk, published in the *AJHS Journal*, Benjamin had written:

Rabbi Falk's main work was in collecting Australian Judaica. No one has amassed the material he did. No known collection compares with his. In it there is a wealth which is so far untapped - pamphlets, newspapers, orders of service, documents and photographs. His work...is all the more remarkable when it is realised that, after all, it was subsidiary to his main aim, the collection of a library of books. In years to come we who show concern with the history of Australian Jewry will be unable to complete a project without reference to his collection...⁶

The library of the Australian Jewish Historical Society was itself formed in 1959 from duplicate copies of books in the Falk Library and many of the Falk Library pamphlets were transferred to the AJHS library during the 1960s. The Reverend Katz library in the North Shore Synagogue in Lindfield has also benefitted from receiving volumes from the collection over the years.

In an ironic coincidence, the Rabbi L.A. Falk Memorial Library had been opened in 1957 by Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn, Chancellor of the University of Sydney. Yet it was the proposal to transfer the Library to that very institution which sparked the dramatic events of November 1971 when a group of protestors 'relieved' the collection of 400 books, which were then hidden in the *shule's* southern tower to prevent their removal by the Great Synagogue Board.

Despite encouraging reports from 1958 to 1964,⁷ not ten years after its opening, the Great Synagogue was struggling to maintain the library financially. A meeting was held in December 1964 between the Library Committee and John Metcalf, director of the School of Librarianship at the University of NSW, and in September 1965, after considering his advice that the library should be kept together but would be better as an annexe to a larger institution such as a state or national library or a possible Jewish Theological College in Sydney, a decision was taken to transfer the collection to a suitable institution as the costs of maintaining it were beyond the finances of the Synagogue.⁸ This decision was not taken lightly, but the requirements of air conditioning, professional library staff and repairs would have required an annual contribution of \$500. Already \$20,000 had been spent on maintaining the library over the years since its acquisition.

While AJHS historian Dr George Bergman was overseas from mid-1965 until early 1966, former synagogue president A.D. Robb corresponded with him about expanding the role of the library within the Synagogue.⁹ Among other matters, Bergman recommended that the library be publicised to the whole community. In 1966, after a deputation from synagogue members pressed for a Committee of Enquiry, the Board agreed to defer re-location until all avenues had been explored.¹⁰ Several fund-raising proposals were suggested, including a levy on synagogue seat holders. NAJEX's *Detail* magazine appealed to ex-servicemen to donate 'in honour of their late Padre'.¹¹

In November 1966 Robb sent an 'expression of opinion' to the Library Committee in response to a request from them. He argued for the retention of the library at the Great Synagogue but with the opportunity of advice and assistance from the Public Library of NSW. In May 1967 Dr Bergman wrote a letter to Gerald Falk, chairman of the Library Committee, supporting the argument that the library should be retained at the Great and made available to the general Jewish public. From November 1967 to April 1968, Dr Bergman sent reports detailing his work in the library, sorting through the collection, and making recommendations to the Library Committee to approach the Board of Deputies to make the library one which the whole Jewish community could support. He suggested names of people who could help with non-English language books. At that time most of the books were in good condition, but some were missing – on loan to other institutions or borrowed by teachers and clergy. Unfortunately the synagogue secretary was not cooperative and there was no change in the decision taken about the future of the

library by the Synagogue Board. Without an endowment of some kind, the burden of care devolved onto the Great Synagogue each time they were forced into maintaining the library themselves.

At the request of the Great Synagogue's Library Committee to 'explore the possibility of keeping the Falk Library collection in Jewish hands', The Board of Deputies was finally approached. They recommended that a Commission of Enquiry be established specifically to consider the 'feasibility of establishing a Jewish communal library, the nucleus of which would be the Rabbi Falk Library.'¹² An advertisement was placed in the *Australian Jewish Times* in 1971 advertising the Commission and seeking submissions.¹³ On the same page there was a lengthy letter from Dr Bergman, and one from Mark Pritchard declaring that the library was used regularly by the Adult Jewish Study Circle of which he was chairman. The chairman of the Commission, Judge Aaron Levine, wrote to Dr Bergman in April 1971 asking him to attend the Commission when it had received its submissions. The members of the Commission were Gerald Falk, Erwin Kaldor, Rabbi Matias Kantor and Louis Klein.

In the May-June issue of the *Great Synagogue Journal* an interview with the president was published where 'A congregant' asked why the Commission had been set up. The president in his answer covered all the points of the debate, emphasising that a search for a Jewish institution which could house the Falk Library was the purpose. The interviewer concluded his remarks with: 'at the present time we have too few "bookworms" reading the books and too many bookworms eating them!'¹⁴

The *Sydney Jewish News (SJV)* followed the progress of the tug-of-war in its weekly pages. In June 1971 its reporter 'T.P.' wrote a special article entitled 'Library - what now?' where he informed readers that 'Before the end of this month, the Board of Deputies' Commission studying the future of the Rabbi Falk Library is expected to complete and possibly, present its report.' He also indicated that the Great Synagogue was not bound to implement the commission's recommendations, which was indeed the case. The library was in a poor state and the *shule* was unable to provide funds or personnel to restore it. T.P. finished by stating that this 'argument has been going on for decades'.¹⁵

The Commission received submissions from 26 institutions and 16 personal interviews were conducted. Visits were made to the Public Library and Sydney University Library. It presented its ten-foolscap page report on 30 July 1971. The Commission concluded that 'overwhelming predominance of opinion favours the Library remaining in Jewish hands, secured, maintained and controlled by

members of the Jewish Community in a place where all may have reasonable access.’¹⁶ It reported that their enquiries had established that ‘there is not at present any place within the Jewish community of New South Wales where the Library could be housed in proper circumstances other than at the Great Synagogue.’¹⁷

The report noted that the Falk library held around 9000 books, mostly adequately and properly catalogued. Air conditioning was adequate and the books were in reasonably good condition although the library periodicals had not been kept up to date since 1964 and some damaged books needed repair. Lax security had also resulted in the loss of some valuable books. The Commissioners commented that if the situation were to continue, the library was in real danger of eventual serious deterioration and of ending up as ‘a damaged museum piece’ instead of ‘a living repository of Jewish learning and culture as its donor wished it to be’.¹⁸ Keeping the library in its present position would preclude the possibility of further expansion of the collection after about five years. For future housing of the collection suggestions were: the Sydney Talmudical College, the South Head Synagogue in NSW and the Jewish Cultural Centre and National Library as well as Mount Scopus College in Melbourne. The Commission ascertained that Fisher Library at the University of Sydney and the Public Library of NSW would each be prepared to have the Falk Library on loan for at least five years after which it could be returned to the Jewish community if a suitable library were found able to house, protect and preserve it for posterity. The Commission noted that Mount Scopus Memorial College ‘could and would properly support the Library’.¹⁹ Those supporting the transfer to Sydney University always argued that the Falk Library was not appropriate for a secondary college.

The Commission felt the Library should be retained at The Great Synagogue for five years and should be managed by a special committee to explore finance from the whole community as well as finding a librarian on a voluntary basis. A program to promote the library should be undertaken. If the Library were to be transferred outside the Jewish community, after a fair trial of management by the suggested special committee, the Commission preferred it should go to the Public Library on ‘permanent loan’ until ‘future generations may be able to reclaim it’.²⁰

A long article was published in the *Australian Jewish Times* in April quoting prominent communal personality, Louise Rosenberg, who was secretary of the Adult Jewish Study Circle and the Australian Jewish Historical Society and a member of the Great Synagogue Journal Committee. She argued for retention of the Library at the Great Synagogue.²¹

Passions ran high at the Annual General Meeting of the Great Synagogue held on 6 September when Marcus Einfeld and Morris Forbes spoke out against the Board's insistence on removing the Library.²² On 7 October a group of twenty Great Synagogue members, including Gerald Falk, requested that the Board rescind its decision to transfer the Library to the University of Sydney.²³ It was reported that Great Synagogue President Dr Hyam Owen was quoted as saying. 'I cannot accept the Commission's recommendations and in fact such were not asked for.'²⁴



*Joe Bobker as he appeared in the Sydney Jewish News, 17
December 1971*

Joe Bobker was a 24 year-old leader of B'nei Akiva who had recently returned to Australia from an Israeli Yeshiva and was a member of the Mizrachi Synagogue, as well as attending the Yeshiva College Synagogue.²⁵ He had never heard of the Falk Library until he read a small article in November 1971 in what he remembers to have been a non-Jewish daily paper²⁶ about the Great Synagogue's plan to move the library to Sydney University. He discussed the issue with his rabbi who expressed his belief that the transfer of *seforim* from a synagogue to a non-Jewish institution was against *halacha*. Joe decided to do something about it.

He realised that he had to draw the community's attention to what he felt was a grave wrong. The next Sunday he paid a visit to the Great Synagogue to 'scout' out the premises and find out when the Sunday Hebrew classes finished. He was shocked to discover that there was no security and one could come in and out without being noticed. He hatched his plan. He decided to time his 'hijacking' during his own engagement party on the following Sunday, to have

the perfect alibi. He did not tell his fiancée what he was up to until later. He recruited several of his friends from Bnei Akiva and his *shul*, whom he refused to identify, and, around noon, slipped away from his engagement party. The group drove to the city with everyone carrying two or three cardboard boxes. Books were hurriedly packed into the boxes and passed from hand to hand up a ladder and hidden in an attic under one of the large domes in the synagogue towers. The whole operation took less than an hour. Joe returned to his engagement party and none were the wiser about what had just transpired.

When the Synagogue discovered books were missing from the Library, the covert operation attracted a lot of attention in Jewish newspapers. *The Sydney Jewish News* reported that in the letter of demand the group called itself 'Ad Hoc Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Books, Jewish Museum Items and Jewish Identity', but any link to an organisation calling itself JIM (Jewish Identity Movement) was denied by that organisation.²⁷ The general press took up the story as well.

Bobker refused to return the books until the Synagogue hierarchy promised that the library would stay in the Jewish community, but the Synagogue Board, who were unaware the books were still inside the synagogue, refused to make that promise.

On 2 December the *Australian Jewish Times* printed a long and passionate letter by Dr Alan Crown of the Semitic Studies Department at Sydney University, making a distinction between a collection and a library and explaining that to turn Rabbi Falk's collection into a library would entail employing expert librarians who could catalogue the Hebrew and Yiddish Judaica, would need proper supervision of readers and a large amount of money to maintain the library. He believed the library should not leave New South Wales but should go to the Fisher Library where the correct professional expertise was available and where there already was a Judaica collection which complemented the Falk collection as well as a Yiddish collection.²⁸ The well-known writer Nancy Keesing, using her married name of Hertzberg, wrote a letter to the editor of the *AJT* arguing most eloquently for the library to be rescued from its 'battlefield' a major institution and referred to Solomon Schechter's writing on the Genizah of Cairo and the British Museum Hebrew Collection.²⁹

In its issue of 10 December the *SJN* reproduced a letter from four Jewish educational leaders requesting the Synagogue Board rescind its decision.³⁰ It also revealed that Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky, previously a rabbi of the Great Synagogue and at that time at St Kilda Synagogue, who was also president of the Board of Governors at Mount Scopus, had written a long, strongly-worded letter to the

editor decrying the transferring of the library to a non-Jewish institution and including a copy of the Scopus submission.³¹ In the same issue a large article appeared under the headline “Hijacker” reveals his identity’.³² Joe Bobker’s statement to the secretary of the Board of Deputies was reproduced. He signed it as the spokesman for the ‘Ad Hoc Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Books’ and explained that seven people – ‘three graduates, three students and one businessman’ took part in the raid, packing the books carefully into cardboard boxes before hiding them to prevent them going out of Jewish hands.

Another letter dated 13 December and signed by Jewish staff members of Moriah College was still left unanswered by 21 January, according to the newspaper.³³

On 17 December the *SJN* published a statement by Dr Owen revealing that the Board was standing firm in its decision to transfer the Library to Sydney University.³⁴

A meeting between the Great Synagogue Board and the rabbis of Sydney led to the establishment in late December of a Provisional Communal Library Committee (PCLC) which was set up under the chairmanship of Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, senior rabbi of the Synagogue, with Harry Kellerman as his deputy and Louise Rosenberg as secretary. It had a committee of nine with one ex-officio member. Its purpose was to work out a viable solution for the preservation and management of the Library wholly under Jewish auspices within the Jewish community. Rabbi Porush presented a five-year plan with the ‘library being consolidated and developed at its present location to the best advantage of the Community.’³⁵ The raising of funds for repair and restoration were discussed as well as the idea of converting the secular books to a lending library for students under strict supervision.

By December 24, the *SJN* was reporting that the library would remain at the Great Synagogue ‘at least until the end of February’. The books were returned about a month later in January 1972, although at the time, Bobker was uncertain that the group’s actions would change the synagogue’s decision to remove the library from its premises. The group who negotiated the books’ return, using Greer Cashman, editor of the *Sydney Jewish News* as their ‘go-between’, was said by *The Australian* newspaper to be made up of 24 people.³⁶ Bobker and his group felt very strongly that Jewish values were being neglected and that a stand must be taken to awaken the community to this moral decline. Bobker later described the episode as ‘the first example of domestic terrorism in Australian Jewish circles’.³⁷

A delegation appointed by the Board of Deputies made a further case to stop the transfer of the books to Sydney University’s Fisher

Library.³⁸ At its meeting in January 1972 the PCLC resolved to ascertain from Harrison Bryan of Fisher Library what costs might be necessary for a budget and what conditions would obtain in the event of affiliation or cooperation with the University Library while the Falk Library remained in the Great Synagogue building. The Great Synagogue president Dr Owen was present at the meeting of 8 February 1972 and said the Falk family had been consulted about the decision to transfer the Library. Dr Owen said he would consider any better solutions. Shalom College and Moriah were mentioned.

At the end of the month the PCLC meeting suggested appointing Trustees representing the whole Jewish community to consider the plans of those organisations that had offered to house the Library. Kellerman ascertained that Sydney University's Fisher Library was prepared to house, maintain and preserve the library 'on permanent loan' with an advisory committee for Jewish input, but it would not consider affiliation if the Library were not at the University. However, Rabbi Porush suspected that if the Library were to leave the Great Synagogue it would never be returned. At the March meeting the issue was raised of a special building to house the Library together with the Beth Din, Kashruth Commission and even B'nai B'rith as an attachment to Hillel College. A submission was prepared to send to the Great Synagogue's Board to make recommendations concerning the Trustee selection, a new building, emphasis on the communal role of the Library and an appeal for funds as a communal responsibility. It was emphasised that the PCLC did not wish to see the Library handed over to an outside institution but hoped to further explore some affiliation with the University. By August 1972 at the Great Synagogue's Annual General Meeting, the issue was still being debated with some speakers being applauded for supporting the removal of the Library.³⁹

With the election of a new Synagogue president and the arrival of Rabbi Apple in 1973 there was a determined resurgence of effort to revive interest in the Library, but little was done in the subsequent years.

In May 1979 the Education Committee of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies published a report following a study of Jewish libraries in Sydney by Fredi Engelberg. She made recommendations for the future development, publicity and use of the thirty-four libraries which were studied. The report for the Falk Library noted the following:

The future of the library is a controversial issue that the survey will not enter into. Some rare books, including 117 titles printed on the Continent before 1800. No books with imprints

later than 1960. The library has not been maintained, added to or updated.⁴⁰

One of the recommendations, which echoed Rabbi Porush's suggestions from the 1971 meetings of the Provisional Communal Library Committee, was to establish a Communal Resource Centre using an established collection as the nucleus. The Zionist Council or B'nai B'rith was suggested to house this information centre.⁴¹ Engelberg also suggested workshops to catalogue and classify the Judaica and translate the Yiddish and Hebrew books of the Falk Library.

In 1982, the A.M. Rosenblum Museum was established and housed in the original Falk Library room, while the Library was moved to the opposite side of the mezzanine. This was a less prominent position and the Library needed more publicity to attract users.

Susan Bures, Synagogue Administrator from the 1990s, explained:

When I started work at the *shule* in the late 1990s I discovered that it no longer appeared to have a library committee nor any structure for the delivering of the Rabbi Falk Memorial Lecture. I put to Raymond Apple that we should re-form a library committee and plan Falk lectures.⁴²

She further wrote:

One of the first things I did was to have the library assessed and valued by an expert. I established a possibility for people to have some of these rare books mended in their name or the name of a loved one. We utilised the work of a book conservator. We had some half dozen books repaired including the oldest books remaining. The oldest work (16th century as I recall) a small *T'nach* in a few volumes, was repaired, also Fox's Book of Martyrs and a few others. Some if not all were finished with presentation cases.⁴³

The *Australian Jewish Times* reported on the fortieth anniversary of the library's dedication in August 1997 when both Nina Glasser, Rabbi Falk's daughter, and Debbie Sleight, his granddaughter, made speeches.⁴⁴ There was a display of rare and illustrated books. The library had five volunteers working to catalogue and preserve items. An exhibition entitled 'Heritage of Jewish Law' was held in the library that year. The president, Harry Lewis, reported that 664 people had visited the library during 1997 and the library held

13,061 items of which 7,790 were books and 5, 271 journals with 139 separate titles.⁴⁵

In 1998 Sir Asher Joel donated books with a focus on Australian Jewish and military history.

A Google search resulted in this information dated 2008:

The Rabbi Falk Memorial Library, Great Synagogue, Sydney, received \$4000 for a preservation needs assessment of the books and serials in the Rabbi Falk Memorial Library. The collection contains several works held nowhere else in Australasia, including over 200 old and rare books, some dating from the early 16th century.⁴⁶

A further search produced this from 2010:

The Rabbi L. A. Falk Memorial Library, opened in 1957, holds more than 6,500 books based on a collection amassed by Rabbi LA Falk who served the congregation of The Great Synagogue from 1923-1956. The books, in Hebrew, English and a variety of European languages, are principally of antiquarian interest although there has been a move recently to build up the Judaica section in English with the regular purchase of new books and publications.

Recently the library has also acquired some CD-Rom research tools. A liturgical music section is in the process of development. Within the collection is a group of around 200 old and rare books, both leather and vellum bound, some dating from the early 16th century. They include some notable early printed Bibles, 1667 editions of works by John Calvin, a very rare treatise on the Kabbalah from 1517 and Renaissance-era editions of Josephus in various European languages.⁴⁷

An exhibition at the AM Rosenblum Jewish Museum was held between December 2010 and February 2011 entitled 'The Beauty of Books – masterpieces from the Falk Library. Sixty-seven items were exhibited.

The actions of Bobker and others may have resulted in the Great Synagogue retaining the Falk Library for another 45 years, but the Synagogue is still unable to increase the numbers of library users or to catalogue many of the non-English books although an online catalogue of the English books is available. The University would have had the scholars for both purposes as well as the experts to preserve and maintain such a rare collection.

ENDNOTES

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12. *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the Rabbi Falk Memorial Library*, 30 July 1971, p.1. AJHS Archives AB 191.
13. This advertisement was also sent to the Jewish press in Victoria. See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the Rabbi Falk Memorial Library*, 30 July 1971, p.1 AJHS Archives AB 191.
14. *The Great Synagogue Journal*, May-June, 1971 pp. 11-12
15. *Sydney Jewish News (SJN)*, June 1971, p.3. In a later article (Nov. 5, 1971) it is referred to as a 'six-years-old controversy".
16. *Report*, p.3.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p.5.
19. *Ibid.*, p.6.
20. *Ibid.*, p.8.
21. *Australian Jewish Times (AJT)*, 29 April 1971, p.4.
22. *Great Synagogue Journal*, December 1971, pp.5-6. Maurice Forbes had written a long article in the July-August *Journal*.
23. *SJN*, 5 November 1971, p.2.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Joe Bobker was born in 1947 in a DP camp at Ulm, Germany, the son of Polish Holocaust survivors who arrived in Sydney on 21 May 1949, aboard the *Luciano Marnaro* liner. He came from a very religious family, and his sister, Hannah (later Meyers) worked for many years for the NSW Board of Jewish Education. He attended *cheder* at the Yeshiva on Flood St, Bondi Beach, in the mornings and evenings, Randwick Boys High School by day, graduated with a doctorate in Architecture from The University of New South Wales before going to Israel to further his Talmudic studies at Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Bobker became a successful real estate developer in Los Angeles, philanthropist, publisher and editor of *The Los Angeles*

- Jewish Times*, public speaker on the Holocaust, and a prolific author who has just completed an 18-volume series on the *Historiography of Orthodox Jews and the Holocaust*. He currently lives in Long Island, NY, with his wife, four married sons and numerous grandchildren.
26. Telephone interview with Joe Bobker, 5 April 2016.
 27. *SJN*, 26 November 1971. The Jewish Identity Movement (JIM) was the subject of a number of articles in the *SJN* in September 1971.
 28. *Australian Jewish Times*, 2 December 1971, p.2.
 29. Copy of typescript in AJHS Archive AB 191.
 30. *SJN*, 10 December 1971, p.17.
 31. *Ibid*, 10 December 1971, p.5.
 32. *Ibid*, 10 December, 1971, pp.13,17.
 33. *Ibid*, 21 January 1972, p.5.
 34. *Ibid*, 17 December 1971, p.16.
 35. Provisional Communal Library Committee, *Minutes*, 22 December 1971 (in AJHS Archive AB 191).
 36. This article was in file AB 191 in the AJHS Archives without a date or page number.
 37. Telephone interview with Joe Bobker, 5 April 2016.
 38. *SJN*, 24 December 1971.
 39. *Great Synagogue Journal* (December 1972), p.4.
 40. New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, Education Commission, 'Report of a Survey of Jewish Library Resources', (Sydney: 1979), p.8.
 41. *Ibid.*, p.43.
 42. Email communication from Susan Bures, 12 April 2106. The Falk Memorial Lecture was given annually in his honour in the 1960s. See Louise Rosenberg, 'The Rabbi Falk Memorial Library'.
 43. *Ibid*.
 44. *AJT*, 15 August 1997.
 45. *The Great Synagogue Journal*, vol. 54, no.6 (August 1998), p. 9.
 46. <http://www.nla.gov.au/media-releases/nsw-awarded-21-grants-to-help-save-states-heritage> accessed March 2016.
 47. <http://www.greatsynagogue.org.au/VisitorInformation/OurLibrary.aspx> accessed March 2016.

THE LIBRARY OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE, SYDNEY: IMPLICATIONS OF AN E-BIBLIOGRAPHIC AND E-HISTORIOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

Steve Schach

INTRODUCTION

The core of the library of the Great Synagogue in Sydney consists of some 4,000 books purchased for the nominal sum of £3,000 from Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk in 1954.¹ Rabbi Falk was minister of the congregation from 1923 until his death in 1957. At that time, the library was named the Rabbi L. A. Falk Memorial Library; for brevity, in this paper it is referred to as the 'Falk Library'. Subsequently, more than 2,000 additional books have been donated to the library. However, no complete catalogue has ever been produced, although partial attempts have been made. The problem is particularly acute in regard to the 1,112 books in languages other than English. The vast majority of these works are written in Hebrew, but some are in Yiddish, and a few in German or Latin.

The York Street Synagogue, the first purpose-built synagogue in Australia,² was the site of the first Jewish library in Sydney.³ Started in 1846, that library consisted of 757 books, only 11 of which were in Hebrew. A hundred and eight years later, Rabbi Falk donated his book collection to the Great Synagogue, but the board of the synagogue was unwilling to take advantage of Rabbi Falk's generosity and the decision was taken to buy the books from him, albeit for a token amount.⁴

Maintaining the book collection imposed a financial burden on the Great Synagogue. For example, in 1966, members were informed that keeping the Falk Library would necessitate an increase of 20 per cent in seat rentals.⁵ In 1971, the board resolved to donate the collection to the library of the University of Sydney. However, Jewish university students objected to the decision, because they felt that 'religious books should not pass into non-Jewish hands'.⁶ They hid

the more valuable books, which they later returned undamaged; the Falk Library continued as before.

During his tenure as Senior Minister of the Great Synagogue from 1972 to 2003, Rabbi Raymond Apple strongly promoted the Falk Library. The synagogue board made it known that the library was 'available for the enhancement of learning in Australia'.⁷ Nevertheless, there has been scant congregational support for the Falk Library.⁸

During 2014, as a first step in constructing a catalogue for the non-English books, the librarian at the Great Synagogue photographed the title pages of the 1,112 books; a typical title page of a Hebrew religious book⁹ is shown in Figure 1. She then e-mailed the photograph of each title page (in the form of a JPEG digital image) to the author of this paper so that he could determine the standard bibliographic information: book title, author, publisher, and date and place of publication. Online auction records and Web sites of dealers in antiquarian books and of companies like eBay and Amazon.com were then used to estimate the value of the items.

These activities were part of an e-bibliographic and e-historiographic case study. An important aspect of the case study was the gathering of detailed historical information on every book and its author. In some cases, however, the publisher proved to be as interesting as the book or the author. The resignation of the Great Synagogue librarian in April 2015 brought the case study to a halt. By that time, bibliographic and historiographic information had been extracted for 624 books.

The case study had two objectives. First, to determine whether it was possible to obtain all necessary bibliographic information without ever entering a physical library, let alone seeing the actual books. Second, to determine whether the required historical information could be determined solely via the Internet. Papers on the e-bibliographic and e-historiographic aspects of the case study will be submitted to the relevant specialist journals. This article is a description and analysis of aspects of the Falk Library that emerged during the case study.

JEWISH RELIGIOUS BOOKS AND THE INTERNET

One of the many interesting books in the Falk Library is *Tzeidah laDerekh* (Provisions for the Road) by Rabbi Menahem ben Aharon ibn Zerah.¹⁰ He was born around 1310 in Navarre (northern Spain), probably in Estella. On 5 and 6 March 1328 there was a massacre in Estella, and his parents and four younger brothers were killed. Rabbi Menahem himself was severely wounded, but a knight, a friend of



Title page of *Tzeidah laDerekh* (*Provisions for the Road*)
by Rabbi Menahem ben Aharon ibn Zerah, published in Ferrara in
1554 by Avraham Usque.

Downloaded from <http://HebrewBooks.org/23994>.

his father, saved his life. Rabbi Menahem then moved to Alcalá where he studied and then taught *Talmud*. Civil war broke out in 1368, and he lost all his property. He moved to Toledo, where he came under the protection of Don Samuel Abravanel. Rabbi Menahem died in Toledo in July 1385.

Rabbi Menahem wrote *Tzeidah laDerekh* in honour of Abravanel. The book is a highly unusual document in that it is aimed at rich Jews who associate with nobility and interact with the non-Jewish world, and therefore may tend to be less observant. *Tzeidah laDerekh* is a compendium of the laws that Rabbi Menahem considered the most important, particularly those that the upper classes might be inclined to disregard. *Tzeidah laDerekh* was first printed in Ferrara in 1554 by Abraham Usque;¹¹ Figure 1 shows the title page. The work has been republished at least six times; the copy in the Falk Library was published in 1859 in Lemberg (Lvov) by S. Back.

All the above historical information regarding Rabbi Menahem ben Aharon ibn Zerah and *Tzeidah laDerekh* is available on the Internet. For example, Wikipedia has an article on Rabbi Menahem.¹² PDF facsimiles of both the 1859 Lemberg edition of the book¹³ and the original Ferrara edition of 1554¹⁴ are available online. One can either read these books online or download the PDF versions at no charge. In addition, if someone wants to purchase a personal printed copy and have it delivered to his or her home, the online service PublishYourSefer.com will do it. The 608-page Ferrara edition costs only USD 16.99 for soft cover and USD 26.99 for hard cover; postage to Australia is extra.

In fact, the Web site HebrewBooks.org currently offers PDF facsimiles of over 55,000 Hebrew religious books for download at no charge, with more *sefarim* (religious books) added all the time. There are many other free sources of PDF facsimiles of Jewish religious books on the Internet, including State libraries and university libraries in Germany. The Nazis did not burn all the Jewish books they confiscated; they stored several thousand. After the war, those books were given to libraries, and PDF facsimiles are now available for download at no cost.

Regarding Yiddish books, the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts (founded in 1980) has recovered over 1,000,000 volumes, comprising over 70,000 titles; the first 11,000 have been digitised and are available online, for free download, from the Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library. As a result, facsimiles of Yiddish religious books currently in the Great Synagogue library are also now downloadable.

SOME FINDINGS OF THE CASE STUDY

In addition to achieving the two objectives of the case study, other findings emerged that shed light on aspects of the Falk Library.

E-bibliography was achieved; there was no need to examine a physical book

The electronic image of the title page, essentially a virtual descriptor of the book, was all that was required to obtain complete bibliographic information on all 624 books.

PDF facsimiles of almost all of the *sefarim* in the Falk Library are available on the Internet

Having determined the bibliographic information from the title page, it was then easy to determine if a PDF facsimile was available for download on the Internet at no charge. For more than 90 per cent of the current *sefarim*, it was found that the work could be downloaded from one of the many sites that hold PDF facsimiles of Jewish religious books.

As stated in the previous section, the number of *sefarim* on the Internet continually increases. Accordingly, it is not unlikely that all the *sefarim* in the library will be available in the not too distant future. The Jewish religious book component of the Falk Library is close to the point of technological obsolescence.

Moreover, the specific edition of a *sefer* is frequently available online

Various editions of the *Humash* (for example, published by Soncino or ArtScroll) all contain the identical text of the *Torah*, but the commentaries are different. In the same way, the commentaries printed in distinct editions of *sefarim* can vary widely. In more than 80 percent of the instances when a facsimile of a *sefer* is available for download, the specific edition in the Falk Library is available. Again, as in the previous subsection, this percentage is likely to increase in the future, with the same consequence.

All the historical information needed was available on the Internet

A wealth of Jewish historical e-information is readily accessible on the Internet. During the course of the case study, there was no need to visit a physical library; everything needed regarding the books, their authors, and their publishers was available online. The reliability of that historical information, like all online (and hardcopy) sources, had to be carefully evaluated. As is often the case

in historical research, the quality of the documentation varied greatly, particularly the e-information supplied at online auction sites regarding the *sefarim* on sale there.

Online *sefarim* can be easier to read

A common convention in Jewish religious books is for the text itself (for example, the *Torah*, the *Talmud*, or the *Shulhan Arukh*) to be printed in the usual Hebrew characters, but the commentaries printed around and under the text are set in ‘Rashi script’, a semi-cursive Hebrew typeface.¹⁵ Many books are printed entirely in Rashi script to indicate that the whole work is a commentary. Hand-typeset Hebrew letters can be hard enough to discern, but some researchers find hand-typeset Rashi script almost impossible to read, because the letters are so small. See, for example, Figure 2, which shows a page picked at random from the 1750 Florence edition (the copy in the Falk Library) of *Orhot Hayim* (The Paths of Life) by Rabbi Aharon ben Yaakov haKohen of Lunel, written before 1327.¹⁶ Computer software makes it simple to magnify a page evenly, so reading Rashi script in the course of research can be much easier when performed online; there is no need to employ cumbersome and distorting magnification equipment.

The Falk Library needs an online catalogue

If a historian in Sydney wants to consult a particular *sefer*, a possible first step would be to try to locate it online. If no PDF facsimile were available for download, he or she would probably use the Internet to find a library in Sydney that has a physical copy of the book. For example, suppose the historian wants to consult the edition of the Bible printed in Hebrew, but without vowels, published in Amsterdam in 1701 by Gerardus Borstius, Franciscus Halma, and Guilielmus Van de Water.¹⁷ There is a copy in the State Library of New South Wales¹⁸ that the historian could consult; all he or she would have to do is walk over to the corner of Macquarie Street and Shakespeare Place in downtown Sydney. Yes, there is also a copy in the Falk Library — but how would the historian know that? After all, there is no complete catalogue, let alone an online catalogue.

Online libraries provide wider opportunities for research

The Falk Library has volume 1 (of 16) of *Dikdukei Soferim* (Fine Points of the *Talmud*) by Rabbi Raphael Natan Noteh Rabinowitz (1835–1888), an important study of textual variants of the *Talmud* found in early manuscripts and printings.¹⁹ While travelling to Russia to search for yet more Talmudic manuscripts, Rabbi Rabinowitz developed pneumonia in Kiev and died at the age of 53. As Yitz Landes has pointed out, nowadays ‘[f]rom the comfort of an iPad, one can

access many more manuscripts than Rabinowitz could ever have dreamed of seeing'.²⁰ The sixteenth volume of his magnum opus, on Tractate *Hullin*, was published posthumously in 1897. The sole volume in the library, on Tractate *Berakhot*, is available for free download.²¹

The cost of setting up an online catalogue is prohibitive

When an American university purchases a book, many publishers supply a free computer record that is used as the basis of an entry in the university's online library catalogue. Even though not much additional information has to be typed in, the labour cost of each new entry is nevertheless in excess of USD 20. With a Jewish religious library in Australia, the catalogue entries would have to be created and then keyed in by hand, including the title of each book in both English and Hebrew characters. The labour cost per book would be at least \$100, probably more. And then there is the cost of the hardware and the software, including the purchase of cataloguing software that can handle book titles in both English and Hebrew characters.

In other words, the Great Synagogue finds itself faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, unless there is an online catalogue, the library will probably not be used in the future. On the other hand, the cost of creating and maintaining an online catalogue may well prove to be beyond the financial means of the synagogue.

For USD 689.95, one can buy a vast Jewish religious library on one small USB drive

Team members of the Responsa Project at Bar Ilan University in Israel have entered all the standard *sefarim* with numerous different commentaries into the Global Jewish Database, together with more than 100,000 *responsa* (decisions and rulings of rabbis in response to questions addressed to them) and over 12,000 journal articles.²² Currently there are over 500,000 hypertext links between the various items, plus search options and cross-references. There are more than 182,000,000 Hebrew words stored on a small portable USB drive. It goes without saying that far more Jewish religious information is available on that USB drive than in the entire Falk Library. More to the point, the USB drive effectively supersedes the standard *sefarim* in the library.

It needs to be stated that the Falk Library does have a number of highly specialised Jewish religious books in Hebrew that are not included in the Global Jewish Database, for example, textbooks on the *Talmud* for children. However, the lack of a catalogue (and, more specifically, an online catalogue) again makes it unlikely that anyone would consult them.

Most Jewish religious books are no longer worth much money

Fifty years ago, it was not unusual in Jewish households for the children to collect stamps and coins, and for their parents to collect *sefarim*. Nowadays, children no longer collect stamps or coins, and those items are essentially valueless, other than exceptionally rare examples.

The same applies to *sefarim*. Take, for example, Rabbi Menahem ben Aharon ibn Zerah's *Tzeidah laDerekh*. Copies of the first edition (Ferrara, 1554)²³ in good condition sell for well over \$2,000 but, as stated in the Introduction, one can buy one's own freshly printed facsimile of that edition or a number of other editions for less than \$30. And second-hand copies of *Tzeidah laDerekh* can be acquired on eBay or Amazon.com for \$5 or less. Like stamps and coins, the monetary worth of *sefarim*, other than rare collectors' items, has plummeted to almost nothing. For example, there are a number of auction sites on the Internet that specialise in Judaica. When previously-owned Jewish religious books have come up for auction in the past few years, the prices have generally been remarkably low; the same applies to sales by antiquarian book dealers who specialise in *sefarim*.

This has implications for the *sefarim* in the Falk Library. Should the synagogue decide that those books have been superseded by online PDF facsimiles and the Global Jewish Database, it will prove hard to sell most of them for more than a pittance. In fact, it may not even be possible to give them away, and the *sefarim* will have to be buried in a *genizah*.

Many Jewish religious scholars have good intentions

The Falk Library contains a number of books labelled 'Volume 1'. Sadly, however, in many instances the proposed series of books never progressed beyond that first volume. An extreme case is the attempt by Rabbi David ben Yehudah Leib Golomb (1861–1935) to publish a new edition of the *Arukh* (Arrangement), a dictionary of post-Biblical literature originally compiled by Rabbi Natan ben Yehiel of Rome (ca. 1035–ca. 1102). The *Arukh* was one of the first Hebrew books ever printed; the first known edition is dated 1477.

In 1914, in wartime Warsaw, Rabbi Golomb managed to publish one volume of his new edition, covering less than half of the first letter of the alphabet.²⁴ At the end of the volume he wrote that he was suspending publication 'until better days than these'. Unhappily, other than two samples in a Hebrew magazine in 1927, Rabbi Golomb never managed to publish anything more of his edition of the *Arukh*.²⁵

A related finding is that the Falk Library is marred by the fact

that many multivolume sets in the collection are incomplete. For example, there are six orders of the *Mishnah*. Unfortunately, many of the sets of the *Mishnah* in the library have only two or three volumes, and most of the sets of the *Talmud* also have volumes missing. In addition, in a number of instances, reference books published in multivolume format are also short of one or more volumes. Because of the lack of documentation, it is impossible to tell whether the missing books were ever part of the Falk Library. This poses a problem for two reasons. First, scholars are reluctant to use a library that has only partial sets of some reference books. Second, as already pointed out, the value of *sefarim* has dropped precipitously, so that the value of a partial set of books from a multivolume set is even lower.

The Internet can reveal unexpected historical information

One of the books in the Falk Library is *Sheva Hokhmot* (Seven Wisdoms), a collection of sayings on geography and science in the *Talmud*, by Yehiel Tzvi Hirschensohn, first published in Lemberg (Lvov) in 1883.²⁶ A PDF facsimile of the 1912 edition of the book, the copy in the Falk Library, can be downloaded free of charge from HebrewBooks.org.²⁷ At that Web site, the author's name is given as Yehiel Tzvi Lichtenstein, even though the family name of the author on the title page unambiguously reads 'Hirschensohn' in Hebrew letters. In order to resolve this apparent error, additional historical research had to be undertaken.

It is stated in his online obituary²⁸ that Yehiel Tzvi Hirschensohn was born in Jassy in Romania in 1831 and baptised himself in 1855, changing his name to Lichtenstein. Notwithstanding the fact that Hirschensohn/Lichtenstein spent the rest of his life trying to convert Jews to Christianity, R. Mazin & Co., a Jewish publisher at 141 Whitechapel Road, London, reprinted *Sheva Hokhmot* in 1912.²⁹ Even more surprising, the physical copy of the book from which the PDF facsimile of the 1912 edition was created, is in the Chabad-Lubavitch Library in New York.³⁰

There were Jewish women publishers in the nineteenth century

The Vilna *Talmud* is generally considered to be the standard edition. It was published between 1880 and 1886 by 'The Widow and Brothers Romm'; *Masekhet Eruvin*³¹ is an example. On the death of her husband, David Romm, in 1862, his widow Devorah took over the company and ran it until she died in 1903.³² But Devorah Romm was not the only Jewish woman who published *sefarim*. Yaakov Hershenhorn was a partner in the Lublin publishing house of Schneidmesser and Hershenhorn. After the death of her husband,

the firm produced books published by 'Moshe Schneidmesser and Nehamah, widow of Yaakov Hershenhorn'; their edition of *HeArukh*³³ is an example in the Falk Library.

There may well have been more women publishers of *sefarim*; this could be an interesting area for future historical research.

The Falk Library needs to be temperature-controlled and humidity-controlled

After the case study was terminated, a visit was paid to the physical library. It was discovered that neither the temperature nor the humidity is controlled in the room that houses the library, despite the fact that Sydney has a humid subtropical climate (Köppen–Geiger climate classification: Cfa).³⁴ The more valuable items are protected within sheets of archiving plastic, but sooner rather than later the other books will disintegrate.

CONCLUDING REMARK

Louise Rosenberg ended her history of the Rabbi L. A. Falk Memorial Library, published in 2008, with the following sentence: 'Despite all the effort over recent years, use of the library has not increased and it is, essentially, a white elephant, albeit one of great charm and literary importance'.³⁵ In the light of the online availability of almost all the *sefarim* in the library, as well as the existence of the Global Jewish Database, the 'literary importance' of that component of the Falk Library should perhaps be questioned. Moreover, the lack of an online catalogue will in all probability ensure that her statement 'use of the library has not increased' will frequently be heard in the future. Finally, the accuracy of Rosenberg's description of the Falk Library as 'a white elephant' is unlikely to be challenged.

ENDNOTES

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4. Ibid., p. 203.
5. Ibid., p. 204.
6. Ibid., p. 205.
7. Ibid., p. 206.
8. Ibid.

9. Menahem ben Aharon ibn Zerah, *Tzeidah laDerekh* (Ferrara: Avraham Usque, 1554), title page.
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19. Raphael Natan Noteh Rabinowitz, *Dikdukei Soferim, Helek Aleph, Berakhot, Zeraim* (Munich: Heinrich Rösl, 1868).
20. Yitz Landes, 'Updates to the Lieberman Databases', <http://TheTalmudBlog.wordpress.com/2012/08/08/updates-to-the-lieberman-databases>, accessed 12 August 2015.
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22. 'Judaic Responsa — Global Jewish Database', at <http://www.biu.ac.il/JH/Responsa>, accessed 12 August 2015.
23. Menahem ben Aharon ibn Zerah, *Tzeidah laDerekh* (Ferrara: Avraham Usque, 1554).
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32. 'Romm Family', at http://www.YIVOencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Romm_Family, accessed 12 August 2015.
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HUNGARIAN JEWS DOWN UNDER: A HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN JEWISH IMMIGRANTS WHO ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA IN 1956-7 AND SETTLED IN SYDNEY

Judy Bahar

INTRODUCTION

Jewish immigrants have been part, albeit a small part, of the history of Australia since the earliest days of white presence. However, it was only from the late 1930s and early 1940s that the first significant wave of Hungarian Jews found their way here looking for a refuge from the antisemitic regime of Hungary. The next wave came between the end of World War II and 1950, mainly people displaced by the war and/or people fleeing from the post-war communist regime of Hungary. The third wave of Hungarian migrants, again mainly refugees, came as a consequence of the Hungarian Revolution of October 1956. They are often referred to as the '56ers'.

There have been many studies about Jewish migrants to Australia and a number about Hungarian migrants to Australia among which some deal with the migrants who came as a result of the unsuccessful Hungarian Revolution of October 1956. However, there is no study dealing with the Hungarian Jewish migrants who arrived in the wake of the Hungarian Revolution. In addition, no specific organisation emerged which represented this particular subsection of the Hungarian people in Sydney either within the Jewish community or within the larger Hungarian migrant population. This article aims to fill this gap in the social history of Jewish migrants to Australia by looking at their reasons for leaving Hungary, the challenges of the journey, integration into Australian society and the type of aid (such as material, welfare, advisory, occupational, legal, educational and social) offered to one Jewish Hungarian group to ease the hardships of their migration and integration. Comparisons are made between the Jewish and non-Jewish '56er migrants in Australia. In addition, this research enables the participants' stories to be kept for the historical record.

The definition of 'Hungarian' in the twentieth century depends on the year in question, as Hungary's borders shifted several times during this time. As a consequence there are two broad categories of Hungarians: people with Hungarian citizenship living within or outside the borders of Hungary, as the borders were defined at the time of reference; and people of Hungarian descent, non-citizens of Hungary, usually living outside the borders of Hungary, but who consider themselves Hungarian and maintain Hungarian language, culture and customs. This study concerns itself only with the first category. The definition of 'Jewish' is also problematic. This study concerns itself with people who officially self-identified as Jewish. Thus, it excludes many Hungarian Jews who did not want their religion or ethnicity to be known in their new country, due to deeply harboured fear of possible persecution, based on past experience.

The primary data for this study are based on oral history gathered by interviews. It was important that the information came from primary sources, that is, from people who could tell their personal stories. Children who were accompanied by an adult from Hungary to Australia were not interviewed, as they were not directly involved in the migration process and could not provide first-hand testimonies. Therefore, because the suitable subjects needed to have been at least 17 years old by the end of 1957, they were all at least in their seventies. The youngest interviewee was, in fact, only sixteen when he fled Hungary with slightly older friends, so he had first-hand experience of escaping Hungary as well as asking for and getting assistance in Vienna. He was later joined there by his parents with whom he came to Australia. The oldest interviewee was 41 at the time she left Hungary. Although given the option of anonymity, none of the interviewees chose to have their identities suppressed.

A total of eighteen people were interviewed, ten women and eight men. Their ages on arrival to Australia ranged from 17 to 42. Therefore at the time of the interview the oldest interviewee was 96 years old. Fifteen were refugees, two were migrants arriving with a single suitcase each, and one was a refugee when he arrived in Austria, but later met up with his refugee parents there. They were given asylum in Switzerland and came to Australia as migrants a year later. Five had tried to leave Hungary previously but the Iron Curtain descended before they could leave. Two came by aeroplane, the others by ship. On arrival nine were single, eight were married and one was widowed. Two of the interviewees were a married couple, so they shared the migration experience and were interviewed together; two others only married in Australia. Twelve left Hungary with some member(s) of the family. Two brothers, who left Hungary separately but met up in Austria and came to Australia together, were interviewed separately. Of the six who left

without a family member, four had met up with family by the time they arrived in Australia. Seven had parents brought out subsequently from Hungary, four of them within a year of arrival.

Reading through these oral testimonies it is clear that, due to the passage of time and the fallibility of human memory, the information is not very reliable. There are contradictions between the testimonies of interviewees who experienced some of the events together;¹ there are even contradictions between different parts of the same interview. Therefore, it might be said that these oral histories are unreliable. However, historians C.R. Browning, professor at the University of North Carolina, and Y. Bauer, professor emeritus at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, argue that the 'the repeated recollections of specific events and persons add immeasurably to our understanding' of historical events, so they must be evaluated as historical documents.² Nevertheless, both of these historians point out that like other historical documents, 'oral histories must be verified, viewed in context and weighed against other evidence'.³ For this study, wherever possible, oral recollections have been combined with written evidence from primary and secondary sources.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The migration of Hungarian Jews to Australia was influenced by the events in Europe as well as by the Australian government's changing migration policy. Most of the early Hungarian migrants between 1833 and 1848 were Jewish. In fact, the first Hungarian to arrive to Australia was Isaac Friedman, a Jew.⁴ These pioneers were very few in number until the 1930s, and they generally joined the established Jewish communities spread around Australia. There were no obstacles for the early Hungarian migrants because it was mainly a question of affording the high cost of the passage to Australia. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, widely referred to as the 'White Australia Policy' and in force until 1973, was again of no importance, as the Jews of Hungary were classified as 'white', although European migrants were classified as 'alien' until 1945. However, as official policy and day-to-day reality were not always the same, even at the time of the '56ers, it might have been advantageous to have the stereotypical Caucasian look. This is how one of the people interviewed explained why he was granted a visa so quickly:

SK1 – [I]n historical perspective, 1956-1957... the Australian government was very glad to get white, educated European migrants. That was the time of White Australia. . . Me, blue eyed and blond, was particularly welcome.

In the pre-war years of the 1930s Hungarian Jews were faced with the same quota problems as other east European Jews looking to Australia as a safe haven from the discrimination and persecution in their countries. During 1937-1940 approximately 800 Hungarians arrived in Australia (the 'First Wave'). They were the people who realised early that Hungary would not be able to withstand the Nazi propaganda. Kunz calls them 'anticipatory refugees'⁵ as they left with passports and possessions. They were almost exclusively Jewish, or, if Christian, they were deemed Jewish according to the Nazi definition of a Jew as having at least one Jewish grandparent. The war years (1939-1945) stopped all Hungarian Jewish migration to Australia, even though Hungary did not enter the war until 1941.

The 'Second Wave' of Hungarian Jewish migrants arrived in the five years following the end of World War II. After the war new restrictions were placed on Jewish migration. In 1947 the Labor Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, agreed to accept 4,000 European displaced persons, but he secretly instructed the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) that no Jews were to be included.⁶ This policy included the Hungarian Jews as well. Then, in December 1949, Calwell introduced the 'Iron Curtain Embargo',⁷ refusing entry to all refugees and would-be migrants who were residents of, nationals of, or born in a communist country. This policy included Jews from Hungary and was continued by Harold Holt, Liberal Minister for Immigration, and was lifted only in 1954 by which time most Jewish displaced persons had left Europe.⁸

By the time of the unsuccessful Hungarian Revolution against communist rule there was no evidence of official discrimination against Jewish migration. Between 1956 and 1958 Harold Holt agreed to accept 14,000 Hungarian refugees⁹ (more correctly termed 'escapees')¹⁰ (the 'Third Wave'). This number also included some Hungarians who were able to get Hungarian exit visas during and immediately following the Revolution. The first arrivals landed on 3 December 1956.¹¹ By the end of 1957, that is, within a year of the Hungarian Revolution, 20 percent of the 5,000 new arrivals were Jewish.¹² As a result of chain migration, the majority of Hungarian Jewish migrants settled in Sydney.

Australia accepted more Hungarian escapees per capita than any other country bar Canada. This was partly due to economic factors (there was a labour shortage in Australia).

SK1 – I would say that of the 200,000 people who left Hungary in 1957, a good percentage, about 30% of them at least were Jewish, and very large percentage of them were young people, and very large percentage of them were university graduates or

undergraduates, just the ideal for Australian immigration policy at that time.

It was also partly ideological (taking a stand against communism during those Cold War years), partly political (to improve its international status after its slightly tarnished image due to its unqualified support of Britain and France during the Suez Crisis), and finally humanitarian (the most vocally stated reason).¹³

ESCAPE FROM HUNGARY

Reasons for Leaving Hungary

The spontaneous uprising against the Soviet-ruled communist regime of Hungary was the first open revolt against the Soviet control of Eastern Europe. It started on 23 October and was suppressed by 10 November 1956. It resulted in the death of 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops. The number of Jews among the Hungarian dead is not known. It also resulted in 200,000 Hungarians, about two percent of Hungary's population, fleeing as refugees.¹⁴

As revealed by the interviews in this study, there was a variety of reasons for the decision of many Hungarian Jews to leave Hungary; these included first opportunity to leave, antisemitism, dislike of the communist system, economic considerations, official discrimination against children of intellectuals and of 'capitalists', physical safety, going along with friends who were leaving and wanderlust.

After 1948 the possibility of emigration from Hungary was minimal. The 'Iron Curtain', a barbed wire fence erected next to a strip of land mines in 1949, ran along the western border of Hungary, separating Austria and Hungary. Its purpose was to prevent people from escaping to the West. Legal emigration became a trickle, and attempts to leave the country illegally usually ended in death. Thus, the Revolution offered the first opportunity to leave, as stressed by the interviewees in this study:

SK - [W]e felt that it was good to get out of the country... Actually my parents wanted to leave in 1948, just before the communist take-over became absolute. We were two weeks late, otherwise we would have gone to Israel. I don't know whether we would have stayed in Israel, but at that time my parents wanted to go to Israel. Well, we didn't make it, because by the time we were ready to go the borders were sealed.

AB – That was the first opportunity to get out... [We were] thinking of leaving Hungary long before, when we got married... there was a possibility that we go, and the Iron Curtain came down, and then nobody could leave.

AK – Late 1956, early 1957, an opportunity presented to leave the country illegally as a refugee, and I took this opportunity.

ER2 – I wasn't ready to come, to leave... Hungary, before the Revolution because I had a very high position in the *Ministerium*. I never want to leave Hungary before. But this was the opportunity, and was the circumstances what was in Hungary. I decided better to go.

Their decisions to leave were based on a number of interwoven factors, with antisemitism being significant.

The Act XVII of 1867 gave the Jews of Hungary the political right to be treated as equal members of the community, with religion being the only factor that distinguished them from other Hungarian citizens.¹⁵ Although this was intended to end their social separateness, the Jews of Hungary were never allowed to fully integrate. Their 'golden age' terminated with World War I partly due to the backlash to the short lived post-war communist terror led by Bela Kun who was of Jewish ancestry. Acceptance of Jews as equal Hungarians steadily declined, culminating, with Hungarian collaboration, in the Nazi murder of half the Hungarian Jewish population in the period from April to November 1944. The once orthodox Jewish community became largely secular and many lost contact with anything Jewish.

The Jewish survivors of Hungary were left with three options after the post-war establishment of the communist regime: emigrate, join the Communist Party or withdraw from any political activity. With the descent of the Iron Curtain in 1948 the first option was closed. A significant number of survivors were grateful to the Soviets for liberating them and chose the second option, believing it offered protection against antisemitism. Four of the top government officials, including the dictator Prime Minister Matyas Rakosi, had Jewish origins. However, although open antisemitism was not tolerated, over the years Jews were gradually removed from positions of responsibility in the government. Under communist rule, from 1948 to 1988, Zionism was outlawed and Jewish observance was curtailed.

During the Revolution some of the latent antisemitism re-surfaced, and spontaneous pogrom-like incidents occurred in several towns and villages.¹⁶ While this did not happen in Budapest, the fear

of the possibility was ever-present, especially with the lynching of several Jewish communists. As Hidas points out: 'It was hard to tell that an AVO man was hanged because he was a secret policeman or because he was a Jew.'¹⁷ Although relatively few Jews were involved in the actual fighting during the Revolution, they were present at both ends of the gun barrel, either defending the status quo or fighting for independence. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency of Vienna reported that 300 Jewish students of Budapest fought against the communist domination.¹⁸ Concerns about antisemitism and fear of persecution were significant factors for those Hungarian escapees who migrated to Australia.

GS – When the Russians came back, at the uprising, the Hungarian Uprising, lot of antisemite, antisemitic things occurred.

GH – [I left] because of the antisemitism I experienced there.

SH – I left because I was Jewish... I left because our lives during the Holocaust no need to be illustrated, and after the 1945 end of the war times they started it just about the same way.

SK2 – [The Hungarians] were very antisemitic.

In addition, by the 1950s many Jews had become disillusioned with communism. When Hungary was 'liberated' from its Nazi ally by the Soviet Red Army in 1945 there was a significant number of people grateful to the Soviet Union, especially among the Jewish survivors. However, the ensuing communist regime did not deliver the promised equality. All opposition was brutally suppressed, freedom of speech was curtailed, private enterprise was outlawed and perpetual shortages of food and commodities prevailed. This disillusionment with communism as a motivating factor in their decision to escape was voiced by some of those interviewed for this study:

ES – The reason was the Revolution and the occupation; all the years we had to live [under] the Russian rule.

PB – Predominantly because of the communist regime, the difficulty it caused our family, and we wanted to get out of that oppressive regime.

ER1 – My mother wanted to leave, because first the Nazis, then the communists.

Another important consideration that emerged in the study was the economic hardship experienced under communism:

ER1 – We were very poor. [My mother] was a widow; she found it very hard to support the daughter, because in the communist regime the income very low; and it was very hard.

JH – [Politically and economically] things looked better outside of Hungary than inside of Hungary... Three weeks after I started the university my mother died, so being on my own I lived off the Hungarian University Relief something... And also I had some family jewels which I sold, and I lived off that.

However, these problems were less significant than antisemitism and the fear of persecution.

During the communist period every person in Hungary was classified as belonging to one of three cadres depending on their or their parents' occupation before the war: capitalists and intellectuals, proletarians, or peasants. The first cadre was deemed an enemy of the people. In an interview for 'Belongings', Ivan Devai recalls: 'The Communists didn't like people who were well-off before the war. Even though we had lost everything we were still thought of as enemies of the working class and they made our lives difficult.'¹⁹ In an attempt to right the wrong, as seen from the communist point of view, strict quotas existed against the admission of the children of this group to places of higher education. However, in pre-war Hungary (as elsewhere) Jews were predominantly involved in middle class and professional occupations. Since most of the Jewish youth were the children of this cadre, many had to wait years to gain a university place, and this discrimination was another motivating factor for leaving:

JH – And through my experiences prior to joining the university, which happened during the secondary schooling where I was not admitted at first because my father [who was dead by then] was a person who worked for the Hungarian-English Bank, so was classified as an 'others' [that is, not a 'proletarian' or a 'peasant'], so I had to do some studies privately.

SH – I left because my parents were considered capitalists... and I was lucky to go to university. But I couldn't go where I lived in the same place. I had to go to another town.

Given the traditional Jewish stress on the importance of learning, which was transferred to secular education as well, it is understandable that this was another reason for Hungarian Jewish youth to escape when an opportunity presented itself.

Others left not because of ideological or economic reasons, but because they were swept along by the mass hysteria of leaving:

PR – One night, during the revolution, a close friend's parents came over to say good-bye because they decided that they are crossing over the border next day. That night I said: 'I'll come with you.'

ER2 – my friend has a connection to Australia, and I told... I want to come with them.

JH – And when the '56 uprising happened, half of the university I attended just got up and left. . . three of us, my second cousin, and also a friend, decided to leave Hungary.

Like in any war zone or places of sectarian violence, innocent civilians can become 'collateral damage'. The bystanders during the fighting had reason to fear for their own safety and seek to escape the prevailing danger, as revealed by these quotes:

KM – My husband tell he want to go far, far, the farest place we can go. He don't want to stay any more. When we see the people was hang up in the street, and all these trouble, and the Russians.

SK1– There was the revolution situation, it was an unstable situation, and we felt that it was good to get out of the country... my parents felt that under the circumstances, particularly because it was known that the Russians took an awful lot of students away, because the Revolution started at the universities, so they said it was safer for us to leave.

An additional factor, not mentioned in the interviews, was the mortal threat to high profile communists and members of the secret police (AVO) who were hunted by revenge seekers during the first few days of the Revolution. These people denied their political past when they applied in Austria for refugee visas to other countries. If their past was subsequently uncovered and reported to the authorities they could find themselves deported. One such case in Australia concerned an alleged ex-AVO interrogator, Tibor Vajda. Magda Bardy, who

alleged that Vajda had interrogated and tortured her, reported him to the Australian authorities. An article published in *the Australian* in 1993²⁰ claimed that when Vajda arrived here in 1957 he made no mention of his job as an AVO officer or that he had been convicted of maltreating prisoners and preparing false statements. The ABC investigated this case further in 1997, but the program was not aired, which led to a parliamentary inquiry.²¹ In the end no action was taken against Vajda. As mentioned before, a significant number of communists at all levels were Jewish.

Whilst both Jews and non-Jews were influenced by fears of safety, there was a significantly higher proportion of Jews among the escapees (compared to the proportion of Jews in the Hungarian population), because of the various factors discussed above, relating to antisemitism, fear of persecution and discrimination especially in terms of higher educational opportunities. As the interviewee comments reveal, many of the escapees had not thought through what the future might hold after crossing the border, and some later regretted their rash decision. Of these a sizable proportion, estimated by various sources as anything between 3,000 and 18,200, returned to Hungary after a relatively short time abroad.²² However, very few of these returnees were Jews. Most Jewish escapees sought a new life elsewhere, including the edge of the diaspora.

ESCAPE STORIES

The people who were leaving their homes, hoping to cross into Austria, did not want to give any signs of their intent. Most walked out of their homes with nothing, as if it was any ordinary day. These are how some of the interviewees left their Hungarian homes for the last time:

JH – Just walked out as if I was walking next door. I had my winter coat on, because it was November... I had not even had a change of underwear or shirt. Absolutely nothing. Because we did not want to create the impression that we were going west.

Daughter of **KM** – When we left Hungary it had to appear that we are going shopping. . . it had to appear to the neighbours that we'll be back in half an hour. So even clothing, washing was out on the balcony; food (in those days we didn't have refrigeration) was out on the balcony.

ES – [The only things we took from home were] a backpack and my two children. . . My [younger] daughter was in the backpack, because she was only one and a half years and she

couldn't walk. And my husband was carrying [the older daughter], and I was carrying the backpack.

Crossing the border in winter was not easy, as generally it was not along the roads but across rutted, snow-covered fields.

IK – It was so cold. Frozen... The fields was worked [full of ruts]. When we had to walk about fifteen kilometres in the night [the children] fell in. Because we couldn't see from the snow. The snow in it. Fresh snow. And sometimes this fall down and sometimes this fall down. It was terrible... [I had] to carry the little one. She was very heavy. First she cried... [The guide] said: 'If you don't stop her crying I leave you here. Because I can't go to jail for her.' So we gave her another sleeping pill... We couldn't carry her because she was very heavy... So we throw everything out of the rucksack and open it the two side. He put [the child] on the back, and that was a bit easier.

There was the danger of being caught, being shot or stepping on a landmine. Many people were indeed caught, returned to one of the towns away from the border and warned of more serious consequences if they were caught again.

PR – unfortunately [my parents] were caught in the border, but there were so many people got caught at the border that when they took them to the local prison in Szombathely they let them go, and they were warned that if they try again there will be consequences. But they immediately tried again, and they were successful.

There were no reports of deaths by landmines but **IK** heard shots.

IK – When we crossed the border they were shooting. We heard the noise.

The border guards often turned a blind eye to the efforts of the border-crossers, and in a number of cases collaborated with the guides, sharing the money paid to the guides. There was a general sympathy and goodwill from the population of the local border towns and villages towards the people attempting to leave Hungary.

IK – First they caught us. They wanted to take us back to Budapest. One policeman come with us, and when the train stopped at Győr, the policeman said: 'Come down from here!'

and he take us to the hotel. And he... even gave us a little note. And he said these people will help you across the border.

SK – we were captured... Then they took us to the Gyor police station... and there was a nice police sergeant who said: ‘When I am looking to my left I don’t see what’s going on behind my right.’ We took it as hint... and the same night we were in Austria.

While most placed their safety into the hands of the people of the border villages who knew the terrain, some decided to cross without the help of strangers. PR recalls his escape:

PR – We then somehow made our way to Szombathely, which is a border town on the western front. One of the six guys I was with professed to know how to cross the border, but of course we found out that he had no idea... And he said he’d lead us... And there we waited for dusk, and at dusk we attempted to go west through some forests, if I remember correctly. Very ugly roads and very difficult mud banks and so on; and we successfully crossed the border. The way we knew we were successful was because we ended up in a bus shelter and we saw an Austrian newspaper. Of course the borderline is not straight. So we just kept going. It was a U shaped borderline and we went back to Hungary. The Austrian border villages were lit up by very bright lighting to catch our attention, and they were behind us. So we must have been going the wrong way. We turned back, and eventually we got to this lit up little town.

Some people left without the dangers associated with the border crossing but by obtaining passports illegally, as SH did.

SH – My parents had legal passports... I couldn’t get a passport because I was a medical student, and they didn’t want to let medical students to leave the country. So my mum bought a passport. And the guy, we heard when we were in Vienna, that the guy who got me the passport was shot after a few weeks when we left.

These stories confirm that despite these dangers people were prepared to take the risk. They felt that they would rather expose themselves to the perilous journey than stay in Hungary.

Though everyone’s escape story was different, all the interviewees, like the vast majority of escapees, ended up in Austria.²³

Within a mere four months, a deluge of 200,000 escapees arrived there. The post-Revolution Hungarian escapees were the youngest wave of Hungarian refugees and 'the group least aware of future plans and goals when compared to previous waves'.²⁴ They had not planned their escape due to the suddenness of the revolution and many were going to decide whether they wanted temporary or permanent asylum depending on the outcome of political changes in Hungary.

Austria dealt with this overwhelming influx in a heroic manner barely a year after the end of a decade-long Allied occupation. With scant help from other countries, it provided for all refugees, regardless of their religious or political background. With the help of the Red Cross, other charity organisations and sometimes the various consulates, the government gave them accommodation, food vouchers, passes for public transport and clothing. This kind of help was mentioned by several of the interviewees.

GH – Well, we saw some lights, and we came to a little village. Actually there were some Hungarian-speaking people there who lived in Austria, and they had some table set up... gave us something to eat... Then we were just taken inside the village, and we were put up overnight in a barn. Next day we were taken to Klosterneuburg just outside Vienna. It was an old monastery which the Russian army had their barracks in, and they just vacated it before we got there. The Russians left Austria earlier in that year... [It was] full of Hungarian refugees. Well I was only there for two days... We went into Vienna proper and applied for some accommodation in a student home... The Austrian government also set up a system where they gave you tickets, meal tickets to different restaurants.

PB – We got food vouchers to a restaurant chain called Werk.... Clothing was available.

JH – The Vienna University had organised amongst their students to take all their no-longer-required clothing to one of the gymnasiums of the University there to take whatever we required to take... We were all given different cards. One for breakfasts, one for lunches. Different coloured tickets to buy breakfasts, lunches and dinners. And certain places where the ticket nominated that we could go... they gave us passes to travel on buses and trams without actually having to pay.

GH – Yes, we did get some clothes at the American consulate in Vienna.

It is to the credit of the Austrian government that it kept its border open to the escapees and exerted a heroic effort to support them at a considerable cost to its own citizens.

The Jewish escapees received additional assistance from local and American Jewish welfare organisations. In Vienna the *Kultusgemeinde* (Jewish Community) took responsibility for registering the refugees who identified themselves as Jewish. However, the Canadian Jewish Immigration and Aid Society (JIAS) estimated that up to fifty percent of Hungarian Jews did not register as Jews.²⁵ As Hidas explained:

Fear of antisemitism, fear of persecution, the traditional identification with Hungarians, the traditional separation of nationality from religious affiliation in Hungary, and anti-religious propaganda and education in communist Hungary for close to ten years made many Hungarian Jews refuse to reveal their religion or cultural background.²⁶

Of those who registered, the ones who wished to migrate to Israel were then referred to the Jewish Agency, while the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) assisted those who wanted to migrate to other countries, helping with the reception of migrants, immigration counselling, family reunions, preparation of various immigration petitions and documents, and representation and intervention with consular authorities. The American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC – widely referred to as ‘the Joint’) provided financial aid.²⁷ The United States Escapee Program (USEP) provided clothing for the refugees.²⁸

AJDC coaches picked up Jewish escapees on the border and took them to Vienna where the first arrivals were initially accommodated in hotels; later all were transferred to the camps for Jewish refugees at Bad Kreutzen and Korneuburg and later also to Salzburg.²⁹

PB – We boarded a bus, and decided to go to Vienna... on the bus there was a Jewish organisation, and they took us to a hotel in Vienna, and we stayed in that hotel for quite a few days.

JH – we went to the Jewish Welfare. I don’t remember exactly how it was called then; and they helped us to get a hotel room in a reasonably seedy side of Vienna.

GH – I was given the entry visa to Australia finally. Then they sent me to Salzburg where we were in a camp, just outside Salzburg.

In several other camps minor or serious friction developed between Jewish and non-Jewish Hungarians. Rumours about Jews getting preferential treatment and jumping immigration queues resulted in a riot in a processing centre in Vienna. In one case there was an anti-Jewish riot at the Siezenheim processing centre where more than a thousand people protested due to rumours that Jews were getting preference in obtaining entry into the United States. It was reported that the authorities tried to prevent any information on the riot from getting out. On other occasions Jews were randomly reported to the US representatives as communists thereby blocking their applications. The police had to be called to various camps to protect Jews from the other refugees.³⁰ Several of the interviewees highlighted their experience of Hungarian antisemitism in Austria:

JH – [in Vienna] One night we stayed in a school's gymnasium, and wasn't very pleasant being a Jewish boy, three Jewish boys among two hundred non-Jewish Hungarians.

GH – In Vienna I was in a student home when I left Klosterneuburg. . . I was there for about three weeks. And then they found out I was Jewish so they kicked me out.

IK – When we got Sitzenheim [Siezenheim] near Salzburg. We arrive the afternoon late from Vienna from Bad Kreuzen. They put us into a *lager*, which was also a... people who had no home. And they saw us, and they said (switching to Hungarian: 'Stinking Jews. Getting privileges again'. There was a Jewish barrack, and they came from there to assist us.)... So they came and help us to move out to the Jewish barrack... These people was probably the Arrow Cross, who couldn't move from there. And they were so angry, for the Jews, because the Jews came and go. And they started. And it was shocking. It's frightening, you know... And another one, (in Bremenhaven) one the man, our neighbour, he said (switching to Hungarian): 'Again a Jew. What now, you are not Jews, are you?' My husband says: 'Yes, we are.' 'A Jew! Hasn't it been enough? We'll throw them into the sea like the previous one.'

Thus, leaving Hungary behind did not ensure that Hungarian antisemitism was left behind.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING AUSTRALIA

For almost a decade preceding the Hungarian Revolution religious practice was discouraged and Zionism was illegal. Consequently, although the Jewish Agency of Israel urged the Hungarian Jewish refugees to go to Israel ('Return to your true Fatherland. Cease being dispersed among the nations'),³¹ 'when the opportunity presented itself to leave Hungary, they did not choose Israel as their destination but rather countries that promised more economic opportunities and absence of war and conflict',³² including Australia.

Traditionally, family plays a most important role in Jewish life. Fourteen of the people interviewed already had family or friends in Australia and cited that as the reason or one of the reasons for choosing Australia:

IK – My sister-in-law with her daughter and her husband already here, was here six years before. So we wanted reunited to have a family. It was no other question. We wanted to come to Australia.

AB – My sister arrived here in 1950... we came here, because my sister she got widow here, she was here alone. We had a few cousins here already, and uncle from my mother's side of the family.

SK2 – I tried to leave to go to Israel... my brother wrote me from Israel, that he loves me very much, but if there is an opportunity to Australia, where my cousin lives, then better go there. Because in Israel is very hard the life.

EL – America was too big for me. And... [friends] went to Australia and they were very happy in Australia. My friend already here. And I thought maybe it is a good idea.

As with many survivors in the post-war period, they also wanted to move to Australia as the farthest place from Europe. Knowing Europe's bloodstained history, and with the memories of World War II fresh in their minds, to many of the escapees it seemed that Europe could not offer the promise of the long-term peace that they craved. Australia seemed a safe distance from possible future strife, as some of the interviewees explained:

SK1 – Our first choice was America, but when we left Hungary the atmosphere was such that we felt, rightly or wrongly, that

World War III was just about to happen. I mean, Hungary asked for United Nation's intervention, Russian troops were in Hungary, it looked like there was going to be a conflagration.

PB – We went to Switzerland, lived there for half a year. . . And one day there was a newspaper article that Australia accepts assisted migrants from Switzerland for five pounds. We thought about Europe, the Cold War, what could our fate be in Switzerland if something happened. The Swiss will be OK, the Hungarian migrants there was a question mark. It was too close to comfort to the communist bloc, all the tension in Europe, so we decided to accept that offer, and we came to Australia.

In addition, for some Holocaust survivors Europe represented evil that was to be avoided at all cost. The further away, the better it was.³³
This is the feeling that comes through from this statement of PR:

PR – we were informed that we can't stay in Austria too long... and we had to choose somewhere to go... And I said to the lady: 'Could you bring me a map. I want to see a map because I have no idea where I want to go.' And she did. And I saw this big piece of land in the right hand corner, and I said: 'I'd like to go there.' And she said: 'That's Australia. What do you know about Australia?' I said: 'I can read it, and I know nothing about it.' 'Why do you want to go there?' I said: 'That's the furthest point I can see from here.' Of course I didn't realise that New Zealand was a little further. But that probably was the best decision I ever made in my life.

As well, America, Canada and Australia seemed to be the countries with the promise of the best financial opportunities. However, in some aspects Australia seemed to offer better prospects than the United States, clinching the decision of the two brothers in the study:

SK1 - We were set up to go to America because we both wanted to continue with our studies. My brother was in his final year and I was in my first year. I think I got a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation to Princeton, and Andrew for Yale... We were all happy to go there until we discovered that their so-called 'scholarships' were for one year, and for tuition alone, and that's it. But there was somebody out there from the Australian Immigration Department and he was telling us that there was such a thing as the Commonwealth Scholarship

Scheme, which at that time meant that if you passed your exams tuition was free. So I said: 'Beauty'. So we decided to come to Australia.

All other factors being equal, Australia appealed to many because of its clement climate. That consideration clinched ER2's opting for Australia.

ER2 – Well, we could pick the whole world. We were welcome everywhere. My mother wouldn't minded to go to Israel. But I didn't want to go to Israel. I was in a Jewish children's home after the war straight away, and I just didn't like that to share everything... my best friend went to Canada. But I hated the thought of the cold, so I said something that's really far from Hungary and warm. So our choice was Australia.

Surveying the mixture of factors given as reasons, it is not surprising that so many of the Hungarian Jews chose to settle in Australia in spite of, or rather because of, it being such a long distance from what until then they considered 'home'.

VOYAGE TO AUSTRALIA

After the first few groups of migrants, who arrived to Australia by aeroplane, most took the long journey by ship. From 25 March 1957 all migrants registered as Jewish were banned from flying to Australia³⁴ because the flights flew over Arab countries hostile to Israel, and Jewish air passengers were deemed to be a security risk.

Due to the Suez Crisis, the Suez Canal was closed to shipping until April 1957, causing the ships from European ports carrying the refugees bound for Australia to travel around Africa, thereby extending the time and the cost of the journey. At some of the ports the Jewish passengers were met by representatives of the local Jewish communities, who provided their co-religionist refugees with hospitality for the day. JH voiced his appreciation:

JH – the Suez Canal was still non-operational, so we had to come around Africa. And we stopped over in Dacca [Dakar], in Senegal and also in Capetown. In Capetown the Jewish Welfare appeared in mass, and took every Jewish family off the boat for a meal or for a trip... It was a very nice gesture.

When the Canal was reopened, landing on Egyptian soil was denied to the Jewish passengers. In addition, ironically, no Hungarian passengers on the ship, *Toscana*, which berthed in Singapore, were

allowed to disembark there because they came from a communist country.³⁵

Accommodation on the ships varied from large gender-segregated dormitories to family cabins. The passengers were spared any necessary spending while on board. On most of the ships the refugees could avail themselves of the free English language classes provided by the Australian government:

SK1 – There was also a representative from the Immigration Department who was giving us lectures and movies every night to sort of see what Australia looks like.

However, not everyone appreciated these lessons on Australia:

KM's daughter – But they gave us rubbish lessons, though. They were nonsense lessons... They told us how to behave. If we are invited to an Australian person's home... And the kangaroos were jumping across the road.

KM – And the Waltzing Matilda,...Waltzing Matilda, this they teaching us.

Daughter – They gave us something, but whatever it was, it was not worth it.

Though generally all the passengers got along well, there were reports of harassment of the Jewish passengers by their non-Jewish compatriots. This is how two of the interviewees remember it:

KM – The boat had a mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish refugees. And how many time we heard: 'Bloody Jew' and all this.

JH – [On the *Flaminia*] We had quite a few Jewish guys, and one in particular who we looked up to because he bashed up a few guys who started picking on the Jews. We felt fairly comfortable because we weren't in the majority but we weren't only a few of us. A lot of Jewish guys were on the boat.

Kathleen Pulciani, the International Committee for European Migration officer on the migrant ship *Fairsea*, reported that there was tension between the Jewish and non-Jewish migrants on board.³⁶ The ships *Castel Felice* and *Aurelia*, both of which arrived before the *Fairsea*, carried a large proportion of Jewish people. A memo to the

secretary of the Department of Immigration, Hayes, reported that all of the estimated 600 Jewish passengers on the *Aurelia* were registered as Roman Catholics.³⁷ The reasons for this are unclear, but it is known that many of the Jews preferred to register as Christians due to their fear of antisemitism.

In spite of some unpleasant experiences, the majority of the interviewees spoke of the long sea voyage with nostalgia. Despite the seasickness experienced by a number of them, the voyage offered a welcome few weeks of tranquillity between the stressful statelessness since their escape and the hardships of establishing a new home after arrival. The children, in particular, were given greater freedom than they experienced at other times, and enjoyed their time aboard. This paralleled the experiences of the earlier Holocaust survivors travelling by boat to Australia, as described by Diane Armstrong in *The Voyage of their Life*.³⁸

Generally the first port of call in Australia was Fremantle. There the Perth Jewish community welcomed the Jewish passengers of at least one of the migrant ships, as told by SK1:

SK1 – when we arrived in Fremantle some weeks later, the local Jewish community turned out and welcomed us very warmly. It was a very interesting set-up. The Perth Jewish community was very small. They had a hall. Out of the 1,500 Hungarians who were on that boat I would say two thirds of them were Jewish so there was a large Jewish contingent on that boat, and the little community welcomed us with open arms; and after having had pasta and Italian food of very mediocre nature for a few weeks it was fantastic to have fresh food. For the reception.

From Fremantle the migrants were either transported to the east coast by plane or train, or continued by ship either to Melbourne or Sydney.

ER – [The ship] stopped at Fremantle, and we had to get off the boat because it was not seaworthy, or something. And we went by train to Bonegilla. Long train ride. Two or three days.

JH – *Flaminia* arrived in Fremantle, but the ship had engine trouble, so the rest of the trip was by train across the Nullarbor from Perth to Bonegilla migrant camp.

PB – Red Cross ladies [met us at the airport]. That was Wagga Wagga... And then from Wagga Wagga they took us by bus to

Bonegilla migrant camp... we had a room, we had food... We stayed at Bonegilla I think only two nights.

After disembarkation the Hungarian escapees began the arduous task of reorientation and reestablishment in a foreign land where they arrived with little or no possessions, money or language; and in some cases without knowing anybody or having sought-after vocational skills. For the Jewish escapees there was a variety of forms of assistance in addition to that provided by the intergovernmental agencies, the United Nations and the Australian government. This included the financial assistance from the American Jewish welfare societies, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society and the informal networks of family and friends, as discussed below.

INTEGRATION IN AUSTRALIA

Australian Government Assistance to all '56ers

For political, economic and humanitarian reasons the Australian government was sympathetic to the idea of allowing a large number of Hungarian escapees into Australia. Within days of the crushing of the revolution, Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced that Australia would accept 3000 refugees, with preference given to those with relatives already in Australia.³⁹ A month later this figure was changed to 5000 and in another month to 10,000.⁴⁰ By the end of 1958 the total number of Hungarian refugees and other Hungarians with landing permits neared 15,000. During this same time £13,000 were allocated to help Hungarian refugees in Austria, to be administered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and by the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM).⁴¹ This figure was augmented by substantial contributions from Australian volunteer organisations.

The cost of the government assisted passage to Australia was shared by the Australian government (21 percent), the United States Escape Programme (31 percent) and the ICEM, the last of which sometimes receiving contribution from countries of second asylum which temporarily accepted Hungarian migrants to ease the burden on Austria.⁴² As one interviewee replied to the question 'Do you know who paid for your passage?':

SK1 – I think it was partly the United Nations, partly the Australian government... It was intergovernmental.

The bureaucracy needed to handle the large number of refugees was already in place, due to Australia's previous experience in handling

the post-war displaced persons as well as from its later programs of mass migration from the Netherlands, Italy and Germany. The first five shiploads of refugees who had no relatives in Australia were initially accommodated and processed for employment in the Scheyville Migrant Centre on the edge of Sydney, with subsequent arrivals being sent to the Bonegilla Migrant Centre in Victoria, the largest migrant reception and training centre in Australia. It was an ex-army camp at the Victoria-New South Wales border where the differently gauged railway lines of Victoria and New South Wales met, so there was no need to change trains as the migrants left Bonegilla for either of these states. Assisted non-British migrants were given accommodation, food, English lessons and orientation regarding the Australian way of life. After about six weeks they were required to work in areas of labour shortage as a compensation for their free passage. At times, however, work was difficult to find and some stayed for months if not years in Bonegilla.⁴³

Even in Bonegilla the Jewish '56ers were not rid of Hungarian antisemitism. While a report by field officers of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society stressed that 'official treatment of Jews at Bonegilla is fair and without discrimination',⁴⁴ it also noted that several antisemitic incidents had taken place among the Hungarian migrants at the camp. After these were reported to Colonel Quinn, the camp commander, he arranged to have all Jewish migrants housed in the same block, with a block of Danish migrants separating them from the other Hungarian migrants.⁴⁵

The Australian government provided evening English classes in government schools in most districts where migrants could attend twice weekly without cost. Migrants who found the venues or the times inconvenient could learn English via correspondence courses. Hein noted that 'The skills and expertise of many refugees were quickly recognised, and a scramble began to recruit those whose technical skills were needed.'⁴⁶

However, the integration of most of the Jewish escapees followed a different pattern. Only a very small proportion of them availed themselves of the government migrant centres. This was due to the assistance offered either by family members and/or friends or through Jewish Welfare. Thus, the experience of the Jewish escapees once they arrived in Australia was very different from their non-Jewish compatriots.

Assistance from family, friends, student organisations

All the interviewees who had family or friends in Australia received help from their families or friends on arrival, and then in varying degrees for a while later. The assistance was sometimes direct,

sometimes through networking. This began with accommodation, either staying at the home of family or friend, or having their initial accommodation paid for.

PB – We wanted to get out of Bonegilla, and the only condition was that someone had to vouch for us that they will look after us. So we rang one of the friends in Sydney: ‘Please send a telegram that you will look after us. We don’t expect you to do it, but that’s the way we can get out’; and they did... And we took the train to Sydney, and our friends were waiting for us at Central Railway... The family was distributed between friends.

ER – And [Mr M] took the day off, and found us a very nice place... [He was m]y uncle’s friend from labour camp... as soon as we arrived to the factory, gave us twenty pounds which was a huge, huge amount, to have some money. And he told us: ‘When you have your first thousand pounds in the bank then you can pay me back’... Well, when it happened he just laughed it off. He didn’t want it back but he just said that. And also, when we travelled in his car and he said: ‘You will have a car of your own soon’, we thought: ‘He is talking nonsense.’ And we did have a car two years later.

The help from family and friends might have also included paying for some clothing and other necessities, but the biggest help was in finding employment. All the people interviewed were eager to get a job at the earliest opportunity. These were the times before government funded unemployment benefits, and the ethos was not to take advantage of others’ generosity. If I were to generalise from these interviews to the attitudes of the Jewish ‘56ers, they were no ‘job snobs’, so they accepted any job until a better one could be procured. The jobs were sometimes found from the newspaper advertisements, but often it was via family, friends or friends of friends. EL found one from the newspaper:

EL – (Friend sent visa to Vienna for EL and daughter. She met them on arrival to Sydney and took them to her home for the first night.) The first day I was by her. The next day... she gave me a newspaper: “Here are the positions, have a look if you can find something.” And in two days I had a job. A new factory was opening for menswear, and I got a job in two days... In this place there were other Hungarians who came with us on the ship.

Like many other refugees, the Jewish '56ers often worked at several jobs simultaneously to speed up the getting established process. PR's story is not atypical:

PR – [My friends] lent us some money to pay for the first week... the next week I got a job... The job I got through one of the friends... fibreglass boat making company. And they were looking for Hungarian refugees. And one of my friends knew about it and got the telephone number of Mr Pongracz. And he said come next day. And next day I went and I stayed there for a month. I couldn't work any longer there because the fibreglass particles, which we had to lay to make boats, went under my skin... So after a month I had to leave. But by that time I made so many connections that I had so many jobs lined up that I didn't know which one to take... I took a job with Mr Kritzler in the Goldstar Bakery in Rose Bay... [I got to know him] just word by mouth, you know. News travels fast. And I worked there at night, and I heard about Mr Handler, who was a butcher, and he needed a driver during the day, so I had two jobs. During the night I was working at the bakery, I finished at 6 in the morning; and at 7 I started at Mr Handler's factory in Bondi Beach... then I had two jobs, practically full time, but I was eager to do a bit more, and Saturday and Sunday I started to sell ice cream on Bondi Beach... One of the major breaks in my life was when Mr Soos, a baker, offered me a job when he found out that I am working in two jobs he said: "You come to me, you work the two jobs in my bakery, and I pay you more than you earn in the two jobs separately." I accepted it.

Some had a series of jobs before they could work in the field for which they were qualified or in which they had skills and experience. Others landed jobs straight away in desired occupations. GH, who found his first job through family contact, belongs to this latter lucky category:

GH – My cousin... was a senior principal research scientist at CSIRO, and he was familiar with a lot of industry because of his research in metallurgy. He got me a job at Watson Victor, which was a scientific instrument importer. I got a job there... I was just one month short of finishing the course in Hungary, when I left. Instrument maker. I stayed in that job for the rest of my [working] life.

Regardless of how they found jobs, all the people interviewed were earning money within weeks, and often within days, of arrival. The

two brothers in the study were full time university students but worked part time, and were fortunate to receive student loans as well.

SK1 - the Sydney University students at the time had a collection, and they have collected and raised some money for Hungarian refugees. And lo and behold, there was a Hungarian Jewish refugee student among them, actually two, my brother and myself... Somehow I discovered that there were some funds available as a loan for Hungarian refugee students, and they fell over backwards when they discovered that there was a genuine Hungarian refugee student among them. As I said, the whole atmosphere in Sydney was very friendly and pro-active, because of the Hungarian revolution against those nasty communists. It was very much Menzies era. I discovered that. I made an application for the loan, it was duly granted, and I duly repaid it after I graduated. It was a fairly substantial grant.

The Jewish economic profile in Australia, as indeed all around the world, is different from that of the non-Jews. Due to historical and cultural factors there are only a negligible number of farmers and relatively few blue-collar workers. Although the jobs initially held by these 'New Australians' were generally blue-collar jobs, within a few years of their arrival, and certainly by the next generation, they had a much higher representation than the general population in the academic, professional and managerial fields.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE JEWISH '56ERS

The Australian Jewish Welfare Society

The Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS) was the key organisation that helped to settle the Jewish '56ers, providing assistance on arrival and for many years afterwards.

The first '56er refugees to arrive to Australia landed at Sydney airport on 3 December 1956. They were welcomed by Athol Townley, Minister of Immigration. Sydney (Syd) Einfeld, president of the AJWS, Walter Brand, secretary of the AJWS and Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, chief minister of Sydney's Great Synagogue, were also present among the dignitaries.⁴⁷ Later that month the Australian Department of Immigration appointed Einfeld to the position of consultant to the Australian Mission in Vienna regarding the Hungarian Jewish refugees. He travelled to Europe via New York where he met with the leaders of the American Jewish welfare

organisations (AJDC and HIAS) and requested financial assistance for the resettlement of the Hungarian Jewish refugees in Australia. In Vienna he worked in close cooperation with the AJDC, the HIAS and the Australian officials stationed there, as well as personally meeting some of the Jewish refugees on the Austro-Hungarian border. Later, he was instrumental in selecting suitable migrants for Australia from among the Jewish refugees, and processing their visas.⁴⁸

There were 771 Hungarian Jewish escapees who arrived in Australia by 30 April 1957. In the same period there were an additional 570 Hungarian Jewish migrants with landing permits.⁴⁹ Despite Einfeld's urging of the migrants to consider settling in centres with smaller Jewish communities,⁵⁰ of the over 1750 Hungarian Jews who arrived by July 1957, 1050 settled in Sydney, and 650 in Melbourne. Close to 800 more arrived before the end of 1958.⁵¹ By the end of August 1957, 2,380 Jewish Hungarians had arrived.⁵²

The AJWS took it upon itself to deal with the resettlement process of the Hungarian Jewish migrants after their arrival.⁵³ It provided guarantees to the Department of Immigration for the Jewish migrants, under the Society's Hungarian Escapee Programme, in regards to both accommodation and employment. The Society published lists of the Jewish '56ers, who registered in Austria, indicating those who reported to have relatives in Australia. It established an emergency relief fund for Jewish refugees. It set up depots for donated clothes.

The Society maintained three migrant hostels in Sydney, the largest of which was the Komlos Memorial Hostel in Greenwich, run by Hungarian Holocaust survivor, Edward Geyer, and his Slovakian survivor wife, Gabrielle, from 1955 until its closure in 1965. There full board was provided with kosher meals, and religious services were held on Holydays. In the hostels the children were given regular instruction in Jewish history and in Hebrew by arrangement with the NSW Jewish Board of Education. As the influx of escapees continued and the need for accommodation became greater than these hostels could provide, the Society paid for accommodation in private homes. In some cases the arrivals were sent to Bonegilla for a short time where the observant Jews were supplied with kosher food, or to smaller government hostels near Sydney, where they received daily visits from at least one rabbi.⁵⁴

The Society worked tirelessly to find employment for the people under their care who could not find jobs for themselves or were not assisted by family or friends. At times this proved difficult as many had no English and were unskilled. Nevertheless during this period

more than thirty positions a week were found for them, partly as a result of an appeal for job offers to all employers of the community. The AJWS guaranteed loans from the Jewish Aid Society and Mutual Enterprises for migrant families. It also supported the Professional Assistance Society in enabling migrant doctors to enrol in special courses at the University of Sydney in order to be able to practise in Australia. The AJWS organised luncheons for the senior newcomers. The Society's day care nursery accepted the children of migrants *gratis*.

In order to facilitate these activities, the Society established a special Hungarian Committee, which functioned for about five years. The mission of this committee was to help the Jewish '56ers in every possible way. In its annual report for the year ending at the end of April 1957 there is an entry that reads: the Hungarian Committee 'has functioned exceedingly well, giving advice and interpreting the needs of Hungarian escapees.'⁵⁵

The cost to the AJWS for the assistance provided to the Jewish refugee influx was beyond its means. Einfeld was disappointed by the limited response of the Australian Jewish community to the appeals for financial donations. The Society was able to continue its work only by receiving additional funds from overseas Jewish organisations, chiefly from the AJDC and HIAS. The HIAS continued its assistance in all matters relating to the transportation for Jewish migrants to Australia. The Society acted as an agent for HIAS, including the collection of fare moneys when so arranged. The AJDC, in conjunction with the Jewish Colonization Association,⁵⁶ gave financial support towards the integration of Jewish migrants into Australia.⁵⁷

With all this help available, it is curious that none of the eighteen people interviewed availed themselves of it on arrival. Perhaps the help from family and friends was enough until they became self-sufficient, or was it pride, or perhaps they were unaware of the Society's work. With time some did make use of what was on offer, as emerged from the stories of ER, IK and PB:

ER – when my mother got married here in '58 to another Hungarian, we got I think 400 pounds or something, a loan from the Jewish Welfare to pay for the key money... that money was eventually paid back... [I]n 1960 I married... We bought a unit in Bondi Beach... Then also the Jewish Welfare helped us for the deposit or something. They gave something.

IK – We got 400 pounds for to buy the house, not the house first, the unit, which we had to pay back in two year's time...

From the Jewish Welfare.

PB – The only assistance, if I can call it that, was for my grandmother, who... also came with my parents... well, the only assistance she got that she worked in the Jewish Welfare sheltered workshop... She got some pay for it. It also meant she didn't sit at home all day alone, she met some similar age, similar background Jewish ladies.

The sheltered workshop referred to by PB was established in Sydney by the AJWS in 1955. The Society provided the location and paid for administrative expenses, while the companies that provided the work paid directly the people who were employed in the workshop. Three years later a sheltered workshop was established in Melbourne as well.⁵⁸

In 1956 the official government policy was still that migrants should assimilate into Australia's Anglo-Celtic culture.⁵⁹ Notwithstanding, migrants tend to socialise, at least in the early stage, with people of their own ethnic background in order to lessen their sense of displacement and isolation. The Australian Jewish community welcomed the newcomers through its synagogues and other formal or informal social organisations.

In the 20 September 1957 issue of the *Australian Jewish News* Rabbi Dr Alexander Grozinger, himself a Holocaust survivor migrant from Hungary, made a passionate plea to the Jewish community to show kindness and understanding to all the Hungarian Jewish migrants, including those who intermarried or were the children of mixed marriage or who declared themselves Christians:

We have to show kindness to these people so that they will feel that Jewishness does not mean suffering only, that there exists a Jewish brotherhood among us Jewish people which extends a helping hand to brethren when... they face hardships... that belonging to our faith gives some kind of security... We have to help them back to Judaism through kindness and brotherly love. We have to make them understand that in this country... they can exercise their faith without any discrimination.⁶⁰

He called on the community to help with finding them homes, livelihood and some help in educating their children. And he stressed that:

There are many single boys and girls, who escaped with or without families. These young people have to find their company among our young people.⁶¹

All the people interviewed reported that their first friends in Australia were other Hungarian Jews, such as relatives, friends of relatives, friends who had come before them or people whom they befriended on the ship. In most cases they made few good friends from among the other Jewish Australians, fewer from among the non-Jewish Australians, and even fewer from among the non-Jewish Hungarians:

AB – [The neighbours] were nice... they came over: can't we have morning tea and all that? You know, Australian style.

PB – There was one neighbour in Summer Hill... I can't say we became friends, but there was a social interaction. They invited us, and we invited them... We were very lucky that through friends there was a group of Hungarian Jewish kids. Mainly living in the Eastern Suburbs. Some of them came in the late '40s, early '50s, and quite a few of them came in '57. So we formed a group and got together.

PR – I joined Maccabi, and I played squash in Maccabi, and a little bit, a very little bit of tennis... many of my good friends came with me, and some of them we still play squash today... It was mainly Jewish... And mainly Hungarian, because it was very restrictive by the language... In Maccabi we were quite active. And then of course Hakoah Club came around, and... we frequented the club quite a lot, where the social scene was very good.

The younger the migrants were on arrival, the more likely it was that their friendship circle went beyond the fellow Hungarian Jews. The young people learnt English faster, and had more opportunities to mix with a greater variety of people through school, university, sporting clubs or social dances.

SK1 – When I was at university I made quite a lot of friends. First year most of my friends were non-Jewish. I had a Russian friend, a couple of Chinese friends. Second year I managed to meet some Jewish people, so got to know a few Jewish people, Jewish organisations. Most of the boys and girls whom I met were ex-Habonim... They started a group called Tziona, which was ex-Habonim boys and girls at the university... I met people. The emotional support and friendships were very important. Through these people I met my future wife, and we maintained contact with them. The core group of my friends are still from this era.

ER – the Maccabean Hall, they had dances from time to time. I used to go there sometimes... But I didn't join a synagogue, or anything like that... [My friends were] mostly the Hungarians we came with... Not just Jewish.

However, some, like PB, were reluctant to be part of organised socialisation due to unfavourable past experience:

PB – You asked about Jewish organisations. The only involvement I had, there were dances organised by various Jewish organisations, and I attended those... I had a concern with joining any group after I was forced to join the Pioneers in Hungary, so I resisted that.

As mentioned before, many of the Jewish '56ers did not identify themselves as Jewish on arrival mainly due to fear of discrimination drawn from their past experiences. However, after a while they realised that in Australia it was safe to be Jewish and did not hide their Jewishness any more. ES's story is an example:

ES – Well, Judy was little, so she didn't go to school. Suzy, who was six years older, I took her to the school to enrol her... And [the headmistress] said: 'What's her religion?' That was the first question. And I said: 'She is Church of England.' Because 'of course' everyone was from Budapest Church of England... And then one day Suzy came home and said: 'Mummy, I had the feeling that we are not Church of England.' And all her friends are Jewish. 'I have the feeling that we are Jewish.' And I said: 'You have that feeling? It's a very good feeling. We are Jewish.' 'Why do I go to Church of England? But I never went to Church of England.' 'Well, what sort of scripture did you go?' 'Where most of the children went.' Well that was all right. But Judy came home from kindergarten singing 'Jesus is coming again', or whatever. I said: 'Well, we have to tell Judy, that from now on Jesus is not coming again, and you are Jewish.' I don't want to have a religious war between my two children, they have to know that they are both Jewish... Socially we always mixed with Jewish... that's what Suzy said: 'How come you want me to be Church of England, and all your friends are Jewish?' And then I explained to her that I don't want her to be Church of England, and we are Jewish, and we only said that we are Church of England because we didn't want you to go through what we went through. And now both the children are happy Jewish girls.

By the time of the arrival of the '56ers there were established Jewish enclaves in Sydney, the largest being in the Eastern Suburbs followed by a North Shore community. 'Gravitational migration' pulled most of the Jewish '56ers into these same areas where they conducted most of their socialisation. The Hakoah Club, which started in 1939 as a Jewish soccer club in the Eastern Suburbs, was vigorously supported by the Jewish '56ers, Hungarians being very keen soccer enthusiasts. Over the years the Club had gradually transformed itself as a sporting and social centre. When the new building of the Hakoah Club opened in Bondi in 1975 it became the Jewish '56ers' focal point of socialising.

Thus, while arriving in a new country as refugees, without the language, the trauma of making a new home in Australia was lessened by the support networks created by family, friends and the local Jewish community. Within a very short period of time most found employment and accommodation and they began to integrate. However, their experiences on the whole were very different from those of the non-Jews who arrived at the same time. This was the result of a variety of factors, as discussed in the next section.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH '56ERS IN AUSTRALIA

There were significant differences between the two groups regarding the main reasons for leaving Hungary. Lovas found that in his sample of 104 mixed Jewish and non-Jewish interviewees, who came to Australia at various times, 60% of the Jews compared to 40% of the non-Jews gave fear of persecution as the reason for migration, while only 40% of his Jewish interviewees gave the desire for better living as the reason for migrating to Australia, compared with 60% of the non-Jewish ones.⁶²

As discussed earlier, the Australian Government provided aid to all Hungarian '56ers, regardless of their religion but the AJWS and the Jewish community at large provided extra support to the Jewish '56ers. The various Christian denominational groups also initiated activities to assist their co-religious Hungarian escapees. Hein discusses in detail the contribution of each Christian group.⁶³ About seventy percent of Hungary's Christians are Roman Catholic; this percentage was reflected among the non-Jewish '56ers who came to Australia. To show their solidarity with their co-religionists, the Roman Catholics and the Catholic Church organized a number of different functions for them. The Society of St Vincent de Paul provided clothing and personal effects initially to those in Bonegilla and later to other centres as well. In 1958 the Catholic Hungarian

community opened a hostel and a cultural and counseling centre in Melbourne. The Presbyterian community also instituted relief measures, emphasising that a quarter of Hungary's population was Presbyterian. However, 'continuing interest in the resettlement of refugees appeared less than satisfactory.'⁶⁴ Methodists, Congregationalists, Lutherans and the Bible Society offered mainly spiritual support, while Baptist aid was more of a material kind in the form of accommodation, food, clothing and sponsorship.⁶⁵ The Salvation Army's efforts were concentrated on sending money to the refugees in Austria. Overall, the efforts of these various Christian groups to assist the non-Jewish escapees were more limited and piecemeal than those of the Jewish organisations to help the Jewish arrivals. This reflected the fact that the local Jewish community had already established the key institutions for the integration of the pre-war Jewish refugees and the post-war Holocaust survivors, as well as receiving assistance from overseas Jewish welfare organisations.

According to the census figures, in 1981 there were 27,987 people in Australia who were born in Hungary. Of these 9.1% declared themselves to be 'Hebrew', which is an underestimation, as many others would have ticked the box for 'no religion' or would have chosen not to answer the optional question regarding religion. 69.6% declared themselves Christian, an overwhelming majority of whom were Catholic. The geographic distribution of the members of these two groups was significantly different. 64% of the Hungarian Jews chose NSW as their home as opposed to the 41% of the Christian Hungarians; while 32% of each group settled in Victoria. In other words, while 96 percent of the Hungarian Jews settled in these two states, leaving hardly any for the other states, only 73% of the Christian Hungarians did so, leaving over a quarter of them distributed in the other states. Another way of interpreting these numbers is that of the Hungarians in NSW 13% were Jewish and 64% Christians, while in Victoria the percentages were 9% and 70% respectively.⁶⁶ According to the 2006 census,⁶⁷ 7.4% of Hungarian-born Australians are Jewish, plus a proportion of those who stated 'no religion' or did not state a religion. There are no census figures of the Australian-born Jews of Hungarian background. The Hungarian Jews and the non-Jewish Hungarians settled in different parts of the two major Australian metropolises. In Sydney the majority of the Hungarian Jews live in the relatively densely-Jewish areas of the Eastern Suburbs and the Upper North Shore while the non-Jewish ones are concentrated in Sydney's west. There was, and still is, very little social contact between the two groups.

While the majority of non-Jewish escapees did not leave Hungary until they saw that the revolution was doomed to failure, the Jewish

refugees 'decided to seek refuge abroad as soon as the disturbances began, since they rightly felt that as Jews they had plenty to fear from both sides of the revolt and expected that the Jewish minority would serve as scapegoat, regardless of the outcome of the struggle.'⁶⁸ As a result they viewed their new country of domicile differently. The majority of the non-Jewish Hungarians considered themselves political refugees from communism, ready to return 'home' when the political situation changed, however long it might take;⁶⁹ however, by the time communism collapsed, in 1989, they were too settled to uproot themselves, and there was a significant generational change with children or grandchildren born in Australia. Jewish Hungarians considered themselves as voluntary migrants intending to make Australia their permanent home. On the whole, they had no desire to return to Hungary. As the non-Jewish Hungarians were mainly anti-communist political migrants, they tended to have right-winged political sentiments, whereas the Hungarian Jews represented a broader political spectrum.

The ethnic Hungarians, especially those who were born outside the borders of Hungary and were subjected to strong pressure to forsake their language and their ethnic identity, were determined to maintain their cultural heritage in Australia. They sent their children to Hungarian 'Saturday schools', Hungarian scout movements, Hungarian folk activities. The Hungarian Jews, although often speaking Hungarian at home, were generally not as adamant for their children to maintain the language. They tended to keep away from the Hungarian organisations and their activities because of the antisemitism experienced at the hand of the non-Jewish Hungarians in Hungary, in Austria and on the ships to Australia, and because they identified these organisations in either real or perceived terms with antisemitism. Instead, they joined the Australian or the Jewish equivalents of these organisations or activities. These fears were not without justification. There were reports of the Arrow Cross being supported within some of the Hungarian Clubs, and of other antisemitic activities among Hungarians in Australia.

With time many Christian denominations developed services to cater specially for their Hungarian followers. This was not the case for Jewish '56ers who joined the polyglot Australian Jewish congregations if they were religiously inclined, with only very few joining the ultraorthodox Adath Yisroel congregation which was dominated by Hungarian Holocaust survivors. Hungarian historian, Kunz, noted: 'Interestingly, the Hungarians of Jewish faith do not have their own services, although a Hungarian speaking rabbi is available for services such as marriages, funerals and other special

services which are required by the Hungarian Jewish Community in Victoria.’⁷⁰ Similarly the non-Jewish Hungarians had their own Hungarian clubs, professional associations, old age homes and burial places, while their Jewish counterparts joined the mixed national Jewish establishments. However, with time, the Hakoah Club was deemed by some to be a Hungarian Jewish club because of the large proportion of Hungarian Jews who frequented it.

The non-Jewish Hungarians feel dual loyalty towards Australia and Hungary as well as loyalty to the ethnic Hungarians outside the borders of Hungary. This manifests itself in being actively involved in moral and material support for their brothers who could not enjoy the freedom and economic opportunities available for them. In the 1970s the Sydney-based ‘Action Transylvanica’ and the Canberra-based ‘Aid for the Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin’ were established to raise money for these causes. In the 1990s their work was continued by the Sydney-based ‘Hungarian Minority Fund of Australia’. In contrast Hungarian Jews’ dual loyalty lies with Australia and Israel, with strong support for the betterment of Israel’s economic welfare and generally, though by no means uncritically, also supporting her political position.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the significant differences between the experiences of the Jewish and non-Jewish Hungarians who came to Australia during the year following the unsuccessful anti-communist Hungarian Revolution of 1956. While both groups risked their lives escaping from communist Hungary at the first opportunity when a chink appeared in the Iron Curtain, the Jewish escapees had more than communism to flee from. They were survivors of the Holocaust, and feared the antisemitism of the non-Jewish Hungarians, which, though repressed under communism, was ever-present. They felt it in Hungary, they felt it in the refugee camps of Austria, they felt it on the ships travelling to Australia and they felt it in the migrant centres in Australia. Once settled in Australia the two groups settled in different parts of the same cities and have had virtually no interaction with each other.

Helping other Jews has always been a fundamental part of Jewish culture. This was manifested in the concerted effort of the Jewish organisations, local and international, in their material, counselling and social assistance that they extended to the Jewish ‘56ers both in transit in Austria and once they arrived in Australia. The main assistance in Australia, apart from family and friends, came from the Australian Jewish Welfare Society. The strong networking within

the Jewish community led to the successful integration of these Hungarian Jewish New Australians. Their numbers in the academic, professional and managerial fields are far greater than their percentage of the Australian population.

The personal stories of the interviewees, which are woven throughout this work, highlight the challenges that are part of refugee migration, particularly Jewish migration. These include the decision to leave, which in the case of the escapees was an unpremeditated sudden decision; the heartache of leaving family, friends and home behind; the difficulties of life in refugee camps, which in the case of some of the Jewish '56ers included coping with antisemitism; choosing a future home country and undergoing a stressful selection process;⁷¹ starting a new life in a new country without the language; and having to work harder than the other people of the new country in order to re-establish an acceptable standard of living. The interviewees overcame all these hardships, and became successful members of the Australian and of the Jewish community, mainly due to their own hard effort but at least partly due to the various forms of assistance from family, friends, the Austrian and Australian governments, and the formal as well as the informal Jewish welfare organisations. However, it must be pointed out that in spite of the success stories of the interviewees, not all Jewish '56ers reached the standard of living or the social standing they hoped for.

ENDNOTES

1. The brothers in the interview gave different accounts about the scholarships they received:
SK - I got a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation to Princeton, and (AK) for Yale.
AK - I managed to get a scholarship to MIT, and he got scholarships to other medical universities. Also the dates of their arrival to Australia did not match: J - When did you arrive in Sydney? SK - I think we arrived a day before Australia Day, 20 or 21 January. J - So you arrived 21 February. AK - 1 February.
2. Michael Berenbaum, 'Master historians take use of oral history to new level', www.jewishjournal.com/cover_story/article/master_historians_take_use_of_oral_history_to_new_level_20101103. Accessed 17 February 2012.
3. Ibid.
4. 'Isaac Friedman... arrived in Sydney in April 1833. Friedman became a merchant... By 1851 he was... in Maitland where he became a naturalised British subject... Friedman was a religious man intensely committed to Jewish causes. He initiated the building of a synagogue in Hobart which with the passing of time became the oldest synagogue in Australia'. See E. Kunz, *The Hungarians in Australia*, ed.

- M Cigler, Australian Ethnic Heritage series (Blackburn, Victoria: AE Press, 1985), pp.9-10.
5. Ibid.
 6. S. D. Rutland, 'Subtle exclusions: Postwar Jewish emigration to Australia and the impact of the IRO scheme', *The Journal of the Holocaust Education* 10, no. No 1 (Summer 2001).
 7. Suzanne D Rutland, 'Post-war Jewish migration: the transformation of a community', NSW Board of Deputies, <http://www.ajs.org.au/Post-War-Jewish-Migration/default.aspx>. Accessed 7 April 2013.
 8. J. Jupp, *The Australian people: an encycloedia of the nation, its people and their origin* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).
 9. P. Hatami, "A less white Australia?": A paper for the Australian lawyers and social justice conference 2004," <http://law.anu.edu.au/sc/ParastanHatami.pdf>. Accessed 15 July 2011; and P. Pemberton, *Harold Holt*, ed. National Archives of Australia, Guide to Archives of Australian Prime Ministers (Canberra: 2003).
 10. Kunz, *The Hungarians in Australia*.
 11. After the Summer Olympic Games in Melbourne, which ended on 9 December 1956, 46 Hungarian Olympians remained in Australia. See F. Bren, 'Searching for Julia', *Memento: News from the National Archives* (spring-summer 2005).
 12. S. D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Collins, 1988), p.243.
 13. Roger W. Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956', unpublished PhD thesis, Monash University, (2004). p.84.
 14. See Michael J. Jordan, '1956 crises decimated two communities', in Paul Lendvai, *One Day That Shook the Communist World: The 1956 Hungarian Uprising and Its Legacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2008), <http://jta.org/news/article/2006/10/25/14599/Fortwocommunities>. accessed 5 July 2010.) Jordan points out that virtually at the same time that approximately 200,000 Hungarians fled to Austria during and in the aftermath of the Revolution, about ten percent of whom were Jewish, a similar number of Jewish people were forced to leave Egypt as a result of the Suez Crisis.
 15. Arpad Welker, 'Between Emancipation and Antisemitism: Jewish Presence in Parliamentary Politics in Hungary 1867-1884', web.ceu.hu/jewishstudies/pdf/02_welker
 16. Peter I. Hidas, 'Canada and the Hungarian Jewish Refugees 1956-1957', <http://www3.sympatico.ca/thidas/Hungarian-history/Exodus.html>.
 17. Ibid.
 18. Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, p.202.
 19. 'Ivan Devai', Immigration Heritage Centre, <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/belongings/devai/>. Accessed 7 January 2011.
 20. *The Australian*, 13 August 1993.
 21. Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology & the Arts Legislation Committee, Answers to estimates questions on notice, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts,

- Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Additional Estimates Hearings 10 and 11 February 2003, Outcome 1, Output 1.1, 1.2, Questions: 53-62, Topic: 'Victims'/Seasons of Revenge', *Hansard* Pages: ECITA, pp.63-66.
22. Andreas Gémes, 'Deconstruction of a Myth? Austria and the Hungarian Refugees of 1956-57', in *Time, Memory, and Cultural Change*, ed. S. Dempsey and D. Nichols (Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conferences, 2009).
 23. There was also a trickle of border crossing from Hungary to Yugoslavia, which, though still communist, by 1956 had broken away from the Soviet controlled communist bloc.
 24. Susan M. Papp, 'Flight and Settlement: the '56ers', *Polyphony, The Bulletin of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Double Issue, Hungarians in Ontario*, 2 no. 2-3 (1979-80).
 25. Hidas, 'Canada and the Hungarian Jewish Refugees 1956-1957', p.6.
 26. *Ibid.*
 27. At the same time these same Jewish agencies had to deal with approximately the same number of Jews who were expelled from Egypt (see Racheline Barda, *Egyptian-Jewish Emigrés in Australia* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2011), as well as with a large number of Jews who were expelled from North Africa.
 28. Hidas, 'Canada and the Hungarian Jewish Refugees 1956-1957', p.5.
 29. *Ibid.*, p.5.
 30. *Ibid.*, p.7.
 31. 'Call to Hungarian Jews', *The Sydney Jewish News*, 7 December 1956.
 32. Hidas, 'Canada and the Hungarian Jewish Refugees 1956-1957', p.11.
 33. According to Rutland the greatest benefit Australia promised was that they would not need to fear that 'someone would knock on the door in the middle of the night with a pair of handcuffs', Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, p. 257.
 34. Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956', p.199.
 35. As experienced by the author, the daughter of SK2.
 36. Suzanne D. Rutland, 'Highlights in the Evolution of Sydney Jewry', in Suzanne D; Rutland and Sophie Caplan, 'Hungarian refugees and the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies', in *With One Voice: A History of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies* (Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1998), p.89.
 37. Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956', p.195.
 38. Diane Armstrong, *The voyage of their life: The story of the SS Derna and its passengers* (Pymble, NSW: Flamingo, 2002).
 39. Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956', p.73.
 40. *Ibid.*, p.75.
 41. *Ibid.*, p.74.
 42. *Ibid.*, footnote p.74.
 43. 'Australia's migration history', <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings-home/about-belongings/australias-migration-history/>. Accessed 8 July 2010.

44. 'Reports on Hungarian Migrants: Anti-semitism in Bonegilla', *Australian Jewish News*, 31 May 1957.
45. Ibid.
46. Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, p.79.
47. Ibid. p.192.
48. Rutland, 'Highlights in the Evolution of Sydney Jewry', p.89.
49. 'Annual report for the year ending 30th April, 1957', (Australian Jewish Welfare Society [New South Wales Branch], 1957).
50. 'Plea for migrants to settle in smaller centres', *Australian Jewish News*, 21 June 1957.
51. Rutland, 'Highlights in the Evolution of Sydney Jewry', p.89.
52. Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, p.194. The exact figures are difficult to ascertain as different sources provide different figure.
53. At the same time Australia accepted 131 Egyptian escapees, 71 Jews of Sephardic origin from the East, 200 migrants from Israel and 100 Jews from other countries. The Society offered assistance to all except for the Jews arriving from Israel, because they were considered 'yordim' (literally 'going down'), a highly critical term referring to those people who left Israel, as opposed to the desired 'aliyah' (literally 'going up') for those who migrated to Israel. At the time the Zionist movement was raising funds to support those who were going on *aliyah* and did not want funds go to *yordim*.
54. Rutland, 'Highlights in the Evolution of Sydney Jewry', p.90.
55. 'Annual report for the year ending 30 April 1957,' Australian Jewish Welfare Society, New South Wales Branch.
56. A British philanthropic association to assist Jews in depressed economic circumstances or countries of persecution to emigrate and settle elsewhere in productive employment.
57. There was an unsubstantiated allegation by the Jewish press about some non-Jewish '56ers posing as Jews in order to receive the benefits bestowed by the Australian Jewish community, See Hein, 'Humanitarian Responses in Australia to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, p.195.
58. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, p.354.
59. 'Australia's migration history', <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/belongings/about-belongings/australias-migration-history/>.
60. Rabbi A Grozinger, 'Hungarian arrivals and their integration into the Jewish community', *The Sydney Jewish News*, 20 September 1957.
61. Ibid.
62. S. Lovas, 'Hungarian Jews in Australia', in *Conference of sociological studies of Jews in Australia* (Monash University, Melbourne, 24 August 1969), p.7.
63. Hein, 'Between Emancipation and Antisemitism: Jewish Presence in Parliamentary Politics in Hungary 1867-1884', pp.160-175.
64. Ibid., pp.160-175.
65. Incidentally, the Federal Minister for Immigration at the time was the Baptist Athol Townley.
66. *1981 census data on persons born in Hungary*, Department of

- Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1984).
67. 'Community information summary: Hungarian born', in *Australian Bureau of Statistics* ed. Multicultural Affairs Branch and the Programme Statistics and Monitoring Section of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1984).
 68. Hungarian refugees: Jews among intake expected', *Australian Jewish News*, 28 December 1956.
 69. Kunz, *The Hungarians in Australia*.
 70. A. Ambrosy, *A survey of the Hungarian community in Victoria* (Melbourne: Dezsery, 1990).
 71. Australia rejected IK's slightly crippled brother.

BOOK REVIEWS

ALIAS-BLIND LARRY, THE MOSTLY TRUE MEMOIR OF JAMES LAURENCE, THE SINGING CONVICT

By Rob Wills

North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015, 366pp.

‘An author who can write in his book’s first pages of acknowledgements that ‘Rabbi John Levi’s books were invaluable’ has my enthusiastic and grateful vote! Fortunately, *Alias Blind Larry, the Mostly True Memoir of James Laurence, the Singing Convict* is a book of meticulous scholarship. It is both a Jewish story and an Australian story. It has *chutzpah*. It has humour. I loved the book.

In his autobiographical notes the retired Australian diplomat Rob Wills boasts that he was a graduate of the Woollahra Opportunity School and Sydney University’s course that included Old Icelandic and spending six months in Reykjavik. He tells us that he is now ‘happily in the possession of some living Scandinavian languages’.¹ Following a career in the Department of Foreign Affairs he now regularly broadcasts on Brisbane’s classical music radio station. He ‘sings, acts and gets angry about politics at home and abroad’.²

Rob Wills first published his encounter with James Laurence in our own *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, Vol.22 Part 2 (June 2015). This, in turn, was the result of his edition of the comic opera *The Castle of Andalusia*, a favourite of our ‘singing convict’. The 24-page article about our anti-hero has expanded into a book of 366 pages. The author has done this by presenting the reader with his forensic research into the many characters who appear during the life of “Blind Larry”-James Laurence, also known as George Frederick Laurent also known as John Lawrence and Monsieur Laurent.

There can be no doubt that Laurence was an unscrupulous rogue. He was born around 1793 in the shadow of London’s Great Synagogue in the East End and was buried in a pauper’s grave in the Jewish section of Melbourne’s General Cemetery in 1863. He abandoned his infant daughter and her mother. He stole from his relatives and friends. He served time in some of Australia’s most

infamous prison settlements. In Calcutta, as he faced the hangman's noose he boasted 'I informed Mr Thompson that I was a Hebrew and that if I was to suffer I should die one (h)as I was taught from my infency (sic), and I trusted to the Almighty for forgiveness' (p.102).

Apart from the usual grim dossiers of colonial convict life that record a life of crime and punishment there are two additional remarkable documents that allow us to enter the world of this particular Jewish convict.

The first was created at the prison settlement at Norfolk Island. The second comes to us from the House of Lords. In 1840 the visionary penal reformer Captain Alexander Maconochie was appointed superintendent of Norfolk Island, a much feared place of secondary punishment. Maconochie believed that reward was a more powerful instrument than punishment in the treatment of convicts and introduced a system of marks to encourage responsible behaviour and reform. For Laurence, who claimed to have received 600 lashes during his time in the convict settlement of Newcastle, this enlightened regime gave him the chance to produce and to strut the stage in *The Castle of Andalusia*. In 1842, he was permitted to write his autobiography as part of a system of inner spiritual rehabilitation. It was a good idea but sadly at least, in his case, it simply did not work. Laurence wrote an astonishing 80-page saga, which betrays no sense of guilt or shame. It does however demonstrate that he possessed an impressive memory and a sadly warped view of life.

Laurence served his time on Norfolk Island and was returned to Sydney and then, surprisingly, managed to raise the funds to buy a ticket for a journey 'home' to Great Britain. On the 26 April 1847 Laurence appeared as a witness before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, which was investigating the system of convict transportation. It was a dramatic appearance. Rob Wills, who identifies Laurence as the witness otherwise discretely known as 'A.B.', describes the event as Blind Larry's ultimate theatrical performance:

When I read the Minutes of his evidence my suspicions, my hopes, were confirmed that the "pathetically anonymous" A.B. was none other than James Laurence. Anonymous no Longer. A poor Jew from London's East End, multiply convicted, damaged in body, and doubtless with an accent that clarioned his origins, his courage in appearing-unrepresented, unassisted – before the assembled Lords in intimidating surroundings is impressive.'...We are fortunate to have Laurence himself tell us (of course not always reliably) just how

his story had continued. Then quiet please (apart from the drum roll, the fanfare) as the house lights go down and the spotlight focuses on the curtain, waiting for our great performer, the actor James Laurence-appearing here as A.B. (yet another alias) – to take centre stage before an audience of the great and good of Great Britain, who are aquiver (as are we) with anticipation. (p.230)

I confess I think of Laurence every time I walk down Macquarie Street and pass by the Hyde Park Barracks. Laurence was imprisoned there in 1819 and we read that he received 70 lashes for the crime of singing after 8 o'clock at night. He was then described as 170 cms tall, thin, black hair, sallow and pock pitted, dark hazel eyes, large Roman nose, blind in the left eye and after years of penal servitude suffering from chronic asthma and a 'contracted' left arm. He had survived imprisonment in Sydney, Hobart Town, Newcastle, Moreton Bay, Cockatoo Island and Calcutta. His co-religionists on Norfolk Island refused to have anything to do with him. They wrote to the Sydney Synagogue that he had been 'so irregular in his religious (observance), litigious and otherwise objectionable' (p.197).

Laurence had lived a long and lonely life. Even though he had returned to England his family turned their back on him and they, obviously, gave him enough money for a return journey to Australia. Now, in his late seventies, he inevitably reverted to a life of petty crime. He was old and sick and in Melbourne in February 1863 received a sentence of eighteen months imprisonment for stealing a watch. He died a prisoner of the Crown.

Laurence was frequently described as 'the Jew'. Sadly, we Jews of the twenty first century may have become accustomed to a barrage of boycott, antisemitism, anti-Zionism and prejudice. To the non-Jewish author of 'Alias-Blind Larry' the phenomenon of traditional European antisemitism obviously came as a shock. As he comments 'In writing this book I have had to dig through centuries of Anti-Jewish garbage – it is disturbing, depressing and it disgusts me' (p. 288).

This book is rich in detail. It is a significant contribution to the study of Australian Jewish history and well worth reading.

John Levi

ENDNOTES

1. Autobiographical notes the author sent out with the book as part of a general letter introducing the book.
2. Ibid.

ROSETTA, A SCANDALOUS TRUE STORY

*By Alexandra Joel
Random House, 2016*

As an amateur historian and archivist I have read and examined many biographies and studied many family trees. However this is the first biography I have also enjoyed reading as a book!

The author, daughter of Sir Asher Joel, has written some 323 pages in an in-depth biography of her maternal great grandmother, Rosetta, based on her father's research and complemented by her own interviews. She has also sought out some of the various residences and grand homes of the patrons of Rosetta's second husband, William Norman. Rosetta Esther Sarah Solomon was born in Carlton, Victoria on 16 August 1880. She died in Sydney 28 July 1958 and was buried at Rookwood. She married her first husband Louis Raphael in Melbourne on 31 May, 1899.

The biography tells of Rosetta leaving her husband and five year old daughter, Frances Catherine (later known as Billie), in 1905 to run away with a half-Chinese man, William Norman who was a fortune-teller and a grand schemer known as 'Zeno the Magnificent', whom she married 1906 in Sydney. Yet later in life the two of them were welcomed in the homes and lives of not only the rich and famous, but also a number of European royals who were related to Queen Victoria.

With the skills she presumably learnt as a journalist and magazine editor, Alexandra Joel does an excellent job in weaving the biography between poetic licence and actual quotes from various documents her father discovered, as well as the various newspaper articles she has researched using the computer and internet.

Most Australians, whether Jewish or not, who have had the pleasure of having travelled to 'Mother England' and the continent, will know of a number of those whose names and residences are mentioned throughout. However, I doubt that few modern readers will know of or about the fore-runner in the early 1900s of Sydney and Melbourne's Luna Park, Wonderland City, which was situated at Tamarama Beach and which is brilliantly described in the book by Alexandra.

William Norman died in Sydney on 29 August 1938 and was buried at Botany Cemetery. On 31 July 1947 Rosetta married her third husband Thomas (known as Tom) Reginald Rufus Tait who was 33 years younger than her.

A full bibliography is provided plus a list of those people who

voluntarily contributed assistance to Alexandra Joel in her search for further information on her great-grandmother, Rosetta.

A thoroughly enjoyable read that I recommend to all.

Joe Kensell

**THE SECRETS OF THE ANZACS: THE UNTOLD
STORY OF VENEREAL DISEASE IN THE
AUSTRALIAN ARMY, 1914-1919**

By Raden Dunbar

Scribe Publications, Brunswick, Vic, 2014. 274 pp.

The subject of this book is a stark reminder of the follies of young men, brought together in a foreign environment, with time to spend and money in their pockets, seeking enjoyment in the company of exotic, frequently glamorous women, but failing to give heed to the warnings of the hidden dangers lurking in Egypt in December 1914. Published in 2014 this book uncovers the scourge that venereal disease caused in the ranks of Australian soldiers who had volunteered for service in World War 1. Almost 60,000 soldiers in the Australian army were treated by army doctors in Egypt, Europe and Australia for venereal diseases, a number similar to the number of diggers who were killed during the war. Many of the 60,000 were treated more than once.

In Egypt the commanders ordered strict punishments and the young victims were sent back to Australia in disgrace. The pay of victims was stopped, and they were treated with toxic drugs in army VD hospitals in Cairo, Langwarrin (near Melbourne) and in England. The book focuses on those who were sent home, and on the situation at Langwarrin where reforms were introduced following changes in the leadership of the facility and the appointment of a more considerate commander. It also shows that many of the men who had been returned managed to re-enlist, some following a change of name, and performed valiantly. One was awarded a Victoria Cross under an assumed name.

Included in the Bibliography is a listing of the names of the 275 VD cases who were transported from Suez to Melbourne on the transport A18 *Wiltshire* in August – September 1915. The listing occupies four pages and includes the name of each soldier and their National Archives' references.

One of the names is that of Edward Lakovsky. Edward stated on

his enlistment that his religion was "S.A.". However, he was Jewish, as was his brother David who enlisted as Jewish, but was not returned to Australia in ignominy. Thus, the subject of this book is of relevance to Australian Jewish history. There were Jewish soldiers in the Australian army who were customers of brothels in Cairo and Alexandria and who became infected.

The *Wiltshire* was not the first such shipment back to Australia. This occurred earlier on 3 February 1915 when HMAT *Kyarra* A55 departed from Suez with 341 men on board, including invalids and those unfit for service and 132 VD patients. This was less than two months after the arrival of the first convoy in Egypt. As Raden Dunbar notes, the men on the *Kyarra* and the *Wiltshire* were unusual, as most of the Australian troops who passed through Egypt from December 1914 to mid-1916, the years in which Egypt was the base for operations in the Dardanelles, did not become infected with venereal diseases. However, about 10,000 were treated in army hospitals, and 1,344 were sent to Langwarrin.

The book describes the preventative measures that could be taken, but they were not commonly used. It describes the drugs and toxic substances that were available, but many doses and much time was required and there were unpleasant side effects. Up to April 1915 there were beds available, but following April 25, military hospitals in Egypt needed every available bed for the Gallipoli wounded.

Dunbar describes the attitude of the generals commanding the AIF and the steps they took to try to curb sexual misconduct. He also notes the effect of articles written by Charles Bean and published in Australia, which caused consternation to those at home as to the suggested conduct of their husbands or sons. Bean's antagonism to John Monash may have arisen from Monash taking exception to the criticism as being aimed at him and his men, and so he sent a complaint to Senator Pearce, the Minister for Defence, objecting to the stain on the good name of his Diggers. As Dunbar notes, the misconduct and venereal disease continued in Egypt well into 1916 when the AIF moved to England and France. Notwithstanding continued drunkenness, crime, frequent absences without leave, and a high rate of VD becoming a permanent part of AIF life after February 1915, following Monash's complaint, Bean did not report again on these problems.

The book also describes the measures that were taken in Egypt, England and France to try to reduce the scourge, including the opening of a specialist Australian Dermatological Hospital located firstly at Abbassia, and then following the move of the AIF to England, at Bulford. As well, Dunbar discusses the circumstances of a number of men who adopted subterfuges to re-enlist, in some cases

to hide the shame that they faced as a result of dishonourable discharges, of being medically unfit as a result of their own conduct.

In summary, *The Secrets of the Anzacs* is an interesting read, and is equally relevant for its Jewish as it is for its gentile members of the AIF.

Russell Stern

HATS IN THE RING: CHOOSING BRITAIN'S CHIEF RABBIS FROM ADLER TO SACKS

By Meir Persoff

Academic Studies Press, Boston, 2013. 337 pp.

Meir Persoff was a journalist with Britain's *Jewish Chronicle* for some 40 years. He is a keen observer of Anglo-Jewry. He was also a confidant of both Chief Rabbi Jakobovits and his wife Amelie. This book should be read in concert with Derek Taylor's *British Chief Rabbis 1664-2006*,¹ as well as Persoff's previous book *Faith against Reason: Religious Reform and the British Chief Rabbinate 1840-1990*.² Also of interest for this review is Rabbi Ben Elton's PhD thesis from University of London on 'Britain's Chief Rabbis and the Religious Character of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1970', published in 2014'.³ Rabbi Elton recently assumed the position of Senior Rabbi at Sydney's Great Synagogue. Persoff's book was written just as Rabbi Mirvis was succeeding Lord (Jonathan) Sacks as Chief Rabbi. It runs parallel with the second half of Taylor's book and starts with the election of Nathan Adler.

Before Adler's election there was no formal position of Chief Rabbi in Britain as such. Rather the role fell to whoever was the incumbent senior rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place, London who was 'popularly described as 'Chief Rabbi or in gentile circles, as 'The High Priest of the Jews of England'.⁴

The position has a fascinating descriptor as 'Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth'. In reality, in the contemporary era, this is more wishful thinking than anything else. The authority of the present incumbent does not even extend to all those congregations which officially identify as orthodox. His formal authority might extend to approximately twenty-five percent of Anglo-Jewry in the contemporary period. Many who affiliate with an Orthodox synagogue do not identify on the basis of belief as Jews.

For most reading this book, at best they will have dim memories of the time in the 1960s when succession was in turmoil, partially

enabled by the London *Jewish Chronicle* and its editor William Frankel. It became known as the 'Jacobs Affair' and revolved around the beliefs and writing of Rabbi Louis Jacobs who was seen as the obvious successor to Israel Brodie as Chief Rabbi. Louis Jacobs was subsequently described as the 'best Chief Rabbi Britain never had' and, many years later in a poll run in 2005 by the *Jewish Chronicle* of over 2000 readers, was identified as the 'greatest British Jew' in the community's 350-year history in England. After Brodie retired Yaakov Herzog [whose father had been Chief Rabbi of Palestine and whose brother would go on to become President of Israel] was offered the position, only to decline it because of poor health. It was eventually offered to Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits who held the position from 1967 to 1991. In a publication by Louis Jacobs' synagogue,⁵ there is an interesting perspective of the politics and the manoeuvring by Jakobovits for the position. He was at the time Rabbi of the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York and had previously served as Chief Rabbi of Ireland. Jakobovits is supposed to have said, while in Dublin, that 'Ireland is 90% Catholic, 10% Protestant and I'm Chief Rabbi of the rest!'

The book provides a fascinating description of the various machinations primarily by the lay leadership, of what Chaim Bermant called 'The Cousinhood'.⁶ This applied until Jonathan Sacks' appointment when he was identified as Sir Stanley Kalms' preferred candidate.

What is perhaps of interest to readers of this *Journal* is the so-called 'Australian connection'. This should be viewed in two dimensions. First is the question of the relationship between the Chief Rabbinate and the Australian Jewish community. Beginning in 1962, when Rabbi Israel Brodie visited Australia in what was termed a 'pastoral tour' there was a respect for the title of Chief Rabbi, although the formal authority only extended to one or two synagogues; and yet it is possible to view foundation stones of a number of synagogues with reference to a Chief Rabbi participating in an event, even if that synagogue was not under his authority. There was a stronger link between the various *Batei Din* [primarily in Sydney and Melbourne], which had been established under the Court of the Chief Rabbi [the formal name of the London *Beit Din*]. That relationship dates back to the early days of Sydney Town such as the arrival of Philip Joseph Cohen who was authorised by the Chief Rabbi to perform marriages in the colony of New South Wales. This was followed by Rabbi Aaron Levy of London who visited the colony to execute a religious divorce [*Get*].

The other dimension, which is mentioned in most cases in passing in this book, is of rabbis resident in Australia where suggestions were made that they were potential candidates for the position. As

early as 1912, Rabbi Abrahams of Melbourne was interviewed for the position subsequently offered to Rabbi Joseph Hertz of New York. Rabbi Elton⁷ has suggested that the position was not offered to Rabbi Abrahams as his brother, while a recognised Hebraic scholar, was associated with the fledgling Liberal movement in London. Israel Brodie had graduated from Jews' College, London, in 1922 and assumed the position as Senior Minister at St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation in 1923. He returned to London in 1937 and was appointed Chief Rabbi in 1948 after having served as Senior Jewish Chaplain to the British Army. Two other Australian rabbis' names are mentioned as possible candidates in that election: Rabbis Israel Porush (Sydney) and Harry Freedman (Melbourne).

When Rabbi Brodie retired in 1965 – itself a first, as all those who preceded him had died in office – two Australians were mentioned, at least in the press. They were Israel Porush of the Great Synagogue, Sydney and Shalom Coleman of South Head Synagogue, Sydney. Immanuel Jakobovits assumed the position after the withdrawal of Rabbi Herzog. While the Anglo-Jewish Press mentioned a number of names when Rabbi (Lord) Jakobovits announced his retirement, the only serious candidate was Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. When Lord Sacks announced his retirement, the position was advertised in the Jewish Press around the world and either those who thought themselves as possible candidates applied, or others who felt particular individuals met the selection criteria, were expected to submit their nomination.

Hidden in the footnotes (p. 299) is an issue that faces the rabbinate in general and the Chief Rabbinate in particular. It is a note about Ann Harris who discussed the question of the role of the spouse in the interview process. [She was the wife of the then Chief Rabbi of South Africa who was also rumoured to have been a candidate for the UK position in 1965; she is also mother of another who was thought a potential candidate to succeed Lord Sacks.] It clearly extends to how the rabbinate will develop in the near future. Is the spouse an adjunct to the position (often at no pay) or can they have an independent life including having a profession, which might preclude any involvement in congregational life?

Roughly 20% of the book is taken up with notes and bibliography so those interested in pursuing any further study have a good point from which to begin.

Jeffrey Cohen

ENDNOTES

1. Derek Taylor, *British Chief Rabbis 1664-2006* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007).

2. Meir Persoff, *Faith against Reason: Religious Reform and the British Chief Rabbinate 1840-1990* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008).
3. Benjamin J. Elton, *Britain's Chief Rabbis and the Religious Character of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1970* (Manchester University Press, Reprint Ed, 2014).
4. Alfred Ruben, *A History of Jewish Costume* (Crown Publishing, 1973), p 173, contained an illustration of Nathan Marcus Adler and the comment: 'A new style of Ashkenazi dress was introduced into England from Hanover by Nathan Marcus Adler when he was appointed Chief Rabbi in 1845 (plate 253). His son, who succeeded him, is said to have worn bishop's gaiters...'
5. *The Making of a Chief Rabbi* Quest 2 (London: Cornmarket Press, 1967).
6. Chaim Bermant, *The Cousinhood* (New York: Macmillan, 1972).
7. Benjamin J. Elton, *Britain's Chief Rabbis*.

THE INTERIOR OF OUR MEMORIES: A HISTORY OF MELBOURNE'S JEWISH HOLOCAUST CENTRE

*By Steven Cooke and Donna Lee-Frieze
Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne, 2015*

THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM: SACRED SECULAR PLACE

*By Avril Alba Palgrave
Macmillan, London, 2015*

Apart from Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem established by law in 1953, Holocaust Museums were unheard of before 1980. In the late 1940s, there were plans to build such a Holocaust Memorial Museum in New York, but these did not eventuate until the opening of the Jewish Heritage Museum in 1997.¹ It was an event in Skokie, Illinois in 1977 and 1978, when the American Nazi Party indicated that they wished to march through the township that created the realisation of the need for such museums. It was a provocative act, as many Holocaust survivors lived in the township. This event was portrayed in the 1981 television movie *Skokie* starring Danny Kaye. Emerging from this experience, a small shop front museum was created in Skokie, effectively designed and built by the survivors. Prior to that, some survivors had been travelling to schools primarily to tell their stories, but with the establishment of the museum it was the first time that a central address existed where people could visit and not only hear the stories

of the 'living witnesses' but, through museum technology, they could learn and visualise some of the events of the Shoah.

From that small shop front until today there has emerged a range of Holocaust [and Genocide] centres and museums. They can be found not only in Australia, North America, and Europe but also in Japan (actually two), Shanghai, South Africa and South America. While much can be attributed to the dispersion of survivors to the four corners of the earth, the interest in Holocaust memory is wider than just within the Jewish community. Interestingly in the United States, the major museum, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, was established by legislation under President Jimmy Carter in 1979. As well, over half the research centres on the Holocaust are located in Catholic academic institutions and Holocaust education is mandated in a number of states. The International association, known as the Association of Holocaust Organisations, has around 150 members.

The latest manifestation of Holocaust awareness/education is the introduction of International Holocaust Observance Day by the United Nations following an international conference on the topic of Holocaust Remembrance held in Stockholm in 2000. The date chosen for the international commemoration of the Holocaust was 27 January, marking the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945, when the Russian Army entered the largest concentration and death camp in Poland. This day has various levels of observance in many countries, including Australia.

Just as there was an emergence of both museums and academic centres on the Holocaust, so we have entered a new phase where a literature is emerging on the histories of these museums in particular. The first in Australia was Judith Berman's book *Holocaust Remembrance in Australian Jewish Communities* in 2001.² This was followed some years later by Stan Marks' study, *Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre, Melbourne, 1984-1994*.³ Now we have two more books to add to this literature

The first book by Steve Cooke and Donna Lee-Frieze purports to tell the story of Melbourne's Jewish Holocaust Centre. Internationally, this was one of the first such centres to be established. The book makes for an interesting read but disappoints in a number of ways. There is only fleeting analysis of why it did not become a partner with the Jewish Museum of Australia but developed as a separate museum. I found no reference to the tension, especially between some of the personalities involved in both institutions. Melbourne is a city of strong personalities and I believe it was no different in this story. Rather there is a strange understatement, as if this was the absolute reason explaining why the two museums were established separately by referring to the concept of

a Jewish Museum as advocated by Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits that 'given Jakobovits' forthright and well known thoughts on the role of the Holocaust in Jewish identity, the Chief Rabbi would have undoubtedly been more supportive of a Jewish museum, rather than a Holocaust museum' (p. 48). There is a lot more to the story, which either the authors were not told or chose not to retell.

A challenge for all Holocaust Centres and their history is how the guides are described. Some have tried to describe them as living historians, but so often they do not have the historian's perspective as they describe that time 'when chaos ruled the world'. They can tell their story but studies have shown that each person's perception of the same event can be different. Like in courts of law, it is perhaps best to describe them as 'living witnesses' for they can recount what they saw and experienced and believe, even though their accounts are not always accurate – like the survivor who insists on telling female visitors that the women in her group were given Bromide to reduce sexual drives, even though there seems no evidence that this was the case.

One of both the strengths and weaknesses of the museum is that the Melbourne Jewish community is relatively homogeneous, or it is with respect to survivors of the Shoah. They tend to be Lithuanian and Polish, perhaps reflecting the ethnic nature of Melbourne Jewry, unlike Sydney where more Central European Jews, especially Hungarians, settled. One guide who is of Hungarian origin used to be referred to at the Melbourne Centre as 'our token *Hungarisher!*' Statistically Australia absorbed the largest group of survivors as a percentage of its total Jewish population. What would have been interesting in the text would have been a background of the guides, say at three points: when it opened in 1984, the year 2000 and when the book was written. The museum does good work with different generations, and there is a whole chapter on their intergenerational group (and there has been good work both telling the stories of children of survivors as well as clinical work with survivors in particular and victims of trauma in general). The reader is left with the question of how will this story be told in the future or as Stephen Smith, now Director of the Visual History Foundation articulated it, 'how will we tell the story in 2050?' when there will be no survivors.

The book contains 50 pages of endnotes and an additional 54-page bibliography (admittedly in slightly larger type). These resources alone will be useful for any researcher in the future despite the gaps referred to earlier. Perhaps it will be at least another generation before the rest of the story is told.

Turning to Avril Alba's book on Holocaust Museums as sacred space, she has written an important piece of research. She looks at

the underpinnings and philosophical, dare I say theological, bases of the Holocaust museum not only as a place which recounts the horrors of the years between 1933 and 1945 but also how it has taken on the role of a memorial, albeit a secular one.

Alba does not really explain what she means by 'sacred'. Most of us assume, when we hear the word, that it has a religious overtone. In Hebrew, the three-letter root *k-d-sh* as in *kadosh*, literally means 'to be set aside'. I would argue that the concept does not have to be religious, but it is not necessarily secular either, although the book's title refers to 'secular sacred space'. It looks at three Holocaust institutions: Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington DC and the Sydney Jewish Museum. The last institution is where she worked until recently as the Education Officer. Some readers will be satisfied with this limited sample while others would question why British exhibitions devoted to the Holocaust [the Shalom Centre in Nottingham and the Imperial War Museum], those in North America [including New York, Houston and the Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles] and the more recent ones which have opened in Europe, were not included. Perhaps it is because the three chosen are each over 20 years old and have settled beyond the first flush following their opening.

This book is based on her research for her doctoral thesis and consists of four chapters. The first chapter deals with the concepts of memorials and theodicy.⁴ Her discussion on how Jews and Judaism have traditionally created memorials and memory is seminal to our understanding the hows and whys of such structures. Her theological studies come to the fore as she deals with the question of theodicy. I was unsure at the end of this chapter what the term meant to her but she does set the scene for the rest of the book 'forging a "built theodicy" that affords a sacred and redemptive meaning to the Holocaust memory on display' (p. 39).

The section of most interest to readers of this *Journal* is Chapter 4, which deals with the story of the Sydney Jewish Museum (SJM). It does set the scene on many levels, but it also fails to discuss certain issues such as the aborted joint venture involving B'nai B'rith prior to its opening. The reader is left with the impression that a white knight in the form of John Saunders established the museum and she fails to tell the story of the trauma and dissention within Sydney Jewry, which also led to two different Holocaust museums operating in Sydney for about five years, one sponsored by Saunders and the other by Aron Kleinlehrer. Also there is no mention of the formative work of Kylie Winkworth who served as the initial curator for the SJM. In reading the book I was left with the impression that Michael

Bures, the project's architect, just had the idea of using a Star of David for the centrepiece of the exhibition space 'before the permanent Holocaust exhibition was conceived' (p.145).

Chapter 4 is detailed and articulates many of the issues for the museum in trying to both tell the story of the Holocaust and also be a memorial. There is an interesting discussion about the Sanctum of Remembrance and its journey through the building. This is not dissimilar to the walls of remembrance/*yahrzeit* boards found in synagogues. Alba makes the point that the building in which the museum is located is called the NSW Jewish War Memorial and in the foyer prior to entering the museum there is a wall recalling Australian Jews who fought (including those who died) in World Wars I and II.

All the issues I have with this book are minor but annoying. Early on Alba makes a sweeping statement that most Holocaust museums are government funded. This is rarely the case, except for Yad Vashem (and even there the recent refurbishing of the exhibits was heavily subsidised by the Material Claims Conference Against Germany and individual donations). The truth is that many of these museums have been given the land by government but they are expected to raise most, if not all, the funds for both building and operating them from the community. This is the case with the USHMM, and the SJM has had to self-fund all its operations. As well, in checking quotes, I found that, at least once, only part of the quote was on the page cited in the reference and also there had been a transcription error in at least one quote.

Despite these minor quibbles, this is a very worthwhile book which does increase our understanding of the role of Holocaust Museums, not only as a place which tells the story of when 'madness ruled the world', but also gives us an understanding of how these facilities have become sacred secular memorials.

Jeffrey Cohen

ENDNOTES

1. Rochelle G. Saidel, *Never Too Late to Remember: The Politics Behind New York's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publisher, 1996).
2. Judith E. Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance in Australian Jewish Communities, 1945-2000* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2001).
3. Stan Marks and the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre (Melbourne, Vic.), *10 years: Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre, Melbourne, 1984-1994* (Melbourne: Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre, Melbourne, 1994).
4. Theodicy is the branch of theology which defends God's goodness and justice in the face of the existence of evil.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2015

I have pleasure in presenting my report for 2015 as President on behalf of the Committee of the Society. This Report has been circulated by email to all members of the Society for whom we have a current email address.

- I concluded the President's Report for 2014 by noting some of the issues that faced the Society:
- The decline in the numbers of the members of the Society
- The need to attract younger members of the community to the Society and to become a member of the Committee
- The lack of a Vice-President
- The timing of the meetings of the Committee, namely on Tuesday mornings at 10.30 a.m.
- The timing and the day on which meetings of the Society were held
- The need to improve our public relations and our publicity.

Only one of these issues have been solved, namely that of achieving some succession planning through the position of Vice-President having been filled by the appointment of Rabbi Dr Jeffrey Cohen. Jeffrey has become very active in suggesting improvements that we need to make in our delivery of services to our members and the community.

The decline in membership has continued, and we have not attracted younger members of the community to membership of the Society. In fact the problems that demand our attention have increased, and in my view lead to but one conclusion: namely, unless there is a substantial improvement in our numbers, and in the number of our volunteers, that the Society must have a structural change.

No longer can we continue with only one person as the face of the Society, the person who answers the phone and who greets visitors to the Society. Philip Moses has filled that role for years – but in October he had to seek emergency treatment in hospital, which involved his absence for two weeks. Joe Kensell the Librarian and Archivist was able to attend on Tuesdays – but not on Thursdays, Noela Symonds was already on leave attending to her husband, Leonard. A usual Thursday sees Philip, and Noela and Barbara Temple at the Society. However, it is Philip who knows the procedures

and the ins and outs of the Office systems. When our Konika Minolta printer declared that the paper was jammed, in despair we called for service. If only we had checked that the paper pick-up was engaging with the paper in the drawer..... At least we did get some value when the serviceman called and connected some items of hardware, including a scanner, to the printer.

Much time was spent by the Committee during the year in developing a strategic plan for the Society. The plan was to have been presented to the members of the Society at this present Annual General Meeting for approval by you, our, members. However, unless the Society can respond to the basic demands placed upon it, the best strategic plan would be just whistling in the wind. The strategic plan that the Society has to adopt is one that acknowledges the limitations implicit in the Society. We cannot meet the basic needs of catering for an office that is open twice a week; where we have to house the Archives that have been developed for some 75 years, nor the Society Library housing some hundreds of books relating to Australasian Jewish history.

What we can do, with our current membership and active support, is to publish and distribute a yearly Journal; publish and distribute newsletters; encourage research; encourage competitions to be held in connection with Australasian Jewish history; and arrange speakers on interesting subjects which will attract more than just a handful of attendees. We have to cut our cloth so that we can operate within our physical means. If that means that we have to revisit the strategic plan, then so be it.

The imperatives that we face centre upon the Archives. They have expanded during the year with our receipt of the papers of Rabbi Rudolph Brasch. We need the services of a professional archivist to give our volunteers 'Direction'. The cost will be about \$25,000 a year. We will need assistance to meet this amount, and we might not find that coming from the JCA. We are already looking to the JCA (Jewish Communal Appeal) for a similar amount for the rent that we pay to the SJM (Sydney Jewish Museum).

Looking at the year that has passed, we saw Brian Lenny deciding that he would not continue with his *Window on the Past* series, in which he reviewed past issues of Australian Jewish newspapers. It is a feature that I miss, and I hope that it will be revisited in 2016 and we are seeking a volunteer. The Society's Year 10 Essay Competition had mixed success. It was supported by Carmel College in Western Australia, where it was made a school project. That resulted in 35 entries. There was also one entry from a Moriah School student. Four of the entries were judged equal winners – three from Carmel and the one from Moriah. Our thanks once again to the judges, Howard

Wolfers, Susan Bures and Helen Bersten for their sterling effort. Preparations for the 2016 competition are in the hands of Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen

There been three meetings so far this year, one of them, the talk by the Hon. Tim Fischer AC about his book *Maestro John Monash* being arranged by the Society and the Sydney Jewish Museum at the SJM in Darlinghurst. It drew an attendance on a Thursday late afternoon of about 100 to an entertaining and interesting talk about the injustice practised upon Sir John Monash by the politicians and press of the 1920s. Unfortunately it was not possible at the time to note that a major reason for the formation of the Society in the 1930s was that twenty years after the outstanding leadership of Monash in World War 1, no one had yet had the courage to deem Monash a worthy subject for a published biography. At least this function was well publicised.

Less well attended was the session with Rabbi Dr Robert Lewin held on a Wednesday night in March at the COA's Krieger Centre in Woollahra in which he discussed two Brit Milah controversies, one in 1859 which led to the split in the York Street Synagogue and the opening of an alternative congregation in Macquarie Street. The other occurred in 1903 when a baby who was subject to haemophilia, died as a result of the circumcision. Those who were present sat in a circle and engaged in an enjoyable question and answer. The Society is awaiting an article for the *Journal* detailing the updated research that Rabbi Dr Lewin has investigated.

On Sunday 1st February Rabbi Apple gave an interesting talk with a very personal touch entitled 'Louis Pulver – Heaven-born Instructor of Youth'. In the questions and answers following there was discussion as to whether or not Louis Pulver rode around on a penny farthing bicycle.

The Society has also been involved in the commemoration of the Centenary of Anzac, participating in the service held in the Great Synagogue on 3 May. We have been an integral part of the committee backgrounding the Centenary, and our Library Fund has facilitated the receipt of donations to remember the sacrifice of Australia's Jewish citizens in the 'Great War'.

Your President is the guilty party in causing this year's *Journal* to extend to almost 250 pages with his listing of some of Australia's Jewish citizens who volunteered for military service in the Great War. We will have to rethink how we publish the names of those who either were not included by Harold Boas, or were part of the 20% who did not indicate that they were Jewish when they enlisted, as that would occupy more than 100 pages.

Our Sydney editor, Suzanne Rutland, is to be commended on her

efforts with the *Journal*. Our thanks also go to Helen Bersten OAM, and Philip Moses who complete the editorial team.

My personal thanks go to our Immediate Past President, Sophie Caplan OAM, and our Patron, Dr Harris Lewis AM who have been part of the Committee for many years. Unfortunately Sophie has not been able to attend recent committee meetings, and is temporarily at the Randwick Monte. For their years of service, the Committee has approved Sophie Caplan and Harris Lewis becoming Life Members of the Society.

Russell Stern
3.11.2015

GENEALOGICAL ENQUIRIES 2014-APRIL 2015

This list represents enquiries made to the AJHS until April 2016, where we were not able to supply information. If you did not initiate the enquiry but would like to add information, please write to our genealogist at 146 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst, NSW, 2010.

EDWARDS, Caroline. Born in England c.1823 to Hyam and Caroline Moses, de facto of Peter Johnson. Died Sydney, 1887. Surname also given as Abrahams in some documents. Searching for her year of arrival in Sydney and some clarification regarding her surname.

LEVY, Lewis Pysic, Born London to Hyman c.1856, died 1913, buried West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide. Married Elizabeth (Betsy) Goldsmid in London, 1879. Seeking his mother's name and any information on his family background.

SUSEMAN, Hannah: Born Poland, migrated from England about 1890, died in the Montefiore Home 1893. Widow of Barnett Suseman. Information sought on her background.

NEW MEMBERS, 2015-2016

The following became members during the year:

Garry Eckstein

Adam Ensly

Jean Gellman

David Green

CONTRIBUTORS

Raymond Apple, AO RFD, BA, LLB (Melb), MLitt (UNE), Hon LLD (UNSW), FJC (London School of Jewish Studies), PhD (ACU), is patron and past president of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. He was senior rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for 32 years and was also judge/registrar of the Sydney Beth Din, senior rabbi to the Australian Defence Force and a lecturer at Sydney and NSW Universities. He also served as Past Deputy Grand Master of the Freemasons of NSW and ACT. In Israel he is the President of the Israel region of Rabbinical Council of America and is engaged in research and writing. He has written widely on Australian Jewish history.

Ken Arkwright, OAM, Dip. Acctg, FCPA, FAICD, accountant and cost-accountant, is a Holocaust survivor, who experienced Forced Labor and Concentration Camp and lived the last few months of the war under a false identity. He was president and Councillor of the Retail Traders Association of WA; Councillor of the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Member of the Retail Advisory Council to the Minister (WA Government); Chairman of the Retail Skill Centre of Western Australia; Representative in Tokyo of the Government of Western Australia at the Asian Productivity Forum on Information Technology. He has written four books, cooperated with the publication of additional books and published hundreds of articles in Australia, Israel, Germany and Britain. He was Foundation Member of Temple David (Perth Progressive Synagogue), W.A. Jewish Students, B'nai B'rith Lodge, Perth and the Council of Christians and Jews WA and as a Graduate (Violin-Masterclass) of the Thuringian State Conservatory, Erfurt, Germany, has served as Honorary Cantor/Choirmaster in Germany and at Temple David in Perth. He was awarded the Order of Australia Medal and the Union for Progressive Judaism: Vatic Award.

Judy Bahar, BSc, BA, MAppLing, MA, DipEd, CELTA (nee Weiszman then Kovendi) was born in Hungary in October 1943. When she was five months old her father was conscripted into forced labour camp where he died. When she was eight months old she was transported with her mother to an Austrian camp. They escaped from a death march to Mauthausen and were hidden in an Austrian village

until the end of the war. Judy's mother's remarried in 1947, and Judy can only remember a normal happy childhood. Her family migrated to Australia in 1957 and settled in Sydney. Judy graduated in Science and worked for six years as an industrial chemist during which time she married Robin Bahar and they studied and worked in Israel for a year. She became a teacher to allow her to spend more time with her two children, Michael and Anita. Her further studies earned her a Diploma of Education, a Master of Applied Linguistics, a Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults and a Master of Arts (Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies).

Helen Bersten, OAM, BA, gained her Graduate Diploma in Librarianship at the University of New South Wales in 1964. She was a research librarian in Fisher Library at Sydney University from then until 1970. During that time she spent two years in the University's Rare Book Library. She worked very briefly in the Zionist Federation Library in 1972 and from 1979 was Honorary Archivist of the Australian Jewish Historical Society for thirty-two years, retiring at the end of May 2011. During that period, she spent six weeks cataloguing books in the Falk Library in the 1980s. She received her OAM in 2005 for volunteer services as Archivist. Helen is a member of the AJHS Inc. editorial committee and reviews books for the *Journal* as well as compiling indexes for the *Journal* and *Newsletter*.

Jeffrey Cohen, Rabbi, is Vice President of the Australian Jewish Historical Society {NSW}. For five years he served as the CEO of the Sydney Jewish Museum and is also a past Literary Editor of the *Australian Jewish News*. He is Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales and is recognised internationally in the field of Chaplaincy, serving on the Editorial Board of a number of pastoral care journals.

Rodney Goultman, PhD, MEd, BA, Teach Cert, a former senior academic at the University of South Australia writes in the areas of Australian Jewish history and the Australia-Israel relationship. He has been a political advisor to the Australian Anti-Defamation Commission (Melb), Adjunct scholar at Monash University, past President of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, and a previous editor of both the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* (Melb.) and the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*. Rodney is the author of many articles, and his latest book is *In Their Merit – Australian Jewry and WW1* (Melbourne: Xlibris, 2015).

Joe Kensell, Grad Dip Bus, began his career as a ship's deck officer and later moved into managerial positions in the shipping industry. In the late 1980s he obtained a graduate diploma in business and, in addition to his commercial manager's work, became a consultant for the company in Australia and overseas. In the 1990s he was elected to The Great Synagogue's Board and after retirement in 2002 volunteered as its archivist. In recent years besides volunteering at the Historical Society he has continued at the Great. He did a Master's in Information and Knowledge (UTS) to learn digitisation, archiving, privacy law and similar subjects in order to be better in assisting others in research.

John Levi, AM, PhD is a rabbi emeritus of Temple Beth Israel having served that congregation for 39 years. His PhD was granted by Monash University. He is a member of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and a committee member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (Vic) Inc. His most recent book is *These Are the Names* (2013) – a Biographical Dictionary of the Jews of Colonial Australia.

Steve Schach, BSc, BSc (Hons), MSc, MS, PhD is Professor of Computer Science, Emeritus, and Professor of Computer Engineering, Emeritus, in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, USA. His primary research area is Software Engineering; his research sponsors have included the National Science Foundation, Apple and Microsoft. He is a former consultant to IBM, Hewlett-Packard, and the Institute for Defense Analysis, and has served as an expert witness in a variety of software-related lawsuits in both Federal and State courts in the United States of America. His publications include: *The Structure of the Siddur* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1996) and *The Structure of the High Holiday Services* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2002); 135 research publications in refereed journals and conference proceedings; and 13 best-selling Software Engineering textbooks, translated *inter alia* into Korean, traditional Chinese (for PRC), standard Chinese (for Taiwan), Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch. He has published six espionage thrillers, most of them set in World War II; three of them are co-authored by his wife, Sharon Stein.

Russell Stern, BA LL.M, is currently President of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Inc. and a dedicated researcher into Australian Jewish service personnel.

