AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Milestones and anniversaries are the stuff of history, woven into the fabric of time as the record of our experiences. For the entire Jewish world, 2017 has been a year of big anniversaries. One hundred and twenty years since the first Zionist Congress in Basel; 100 years since the Battle of Beersheba, the Balfour Declaration, and the capture of Jerusalem from the Turks; 70 years since the UN proposed to create a Jewish state; and the commemoration of the half-century since the Six Day War. Many of these events have been highlighted in Lorraine Freeman's feature '100 Years Ago' in this issue of *Journal*. And for we Australians, this year marks the 75th anniversary of the Japanese bombing of Darwin, in which more bombs were dropped, more civilians killed and more ships sunk than in Pearl Harbour, just weeks earlier.

We believe the *Journal* of the AJHS is of the greatest importance, and probably unique, in presenting a chronicle of the wider Australian Jewish experience. We hope both the Melbourne and Sydney issues will be read far into the future as part of the history of our community. Australian Jewish history is barely taught in our Jewish day-schools – indeed, history as such is neglected in the wider Australian school curriculum, making our Society's contribution of special significance.

The ever-higher cost of publishing, printing and distribution of the *Journal* has created a major financial strain on the resources of the Society, especially in Victoria, but we are delighted to announce that through the generosity of the Pratt Foundation we have been promised a very generous two-year grant to help defray the rising costs. We are, in particular, most appreciative of the care and concern of Sam Lipski, CEO of the Pratt Foundation, in presenting the case for the preservation of our history to the trustees. Sam has always been acutely aware of the place history must occupy in Jewish education.

As usual, we present in this issue a wide spectrum of articles reflecting the Australian Jewish experience. Our enthralling cover article by Michael Komesaroff describes the interest, characterised at times by an amusingly misplaced and incompetent zeal, that ASIO had in the Komesaroff/Kaye cousinhood over a period of some years.

Dr Serge Liberman's essay on Carlton in Jewish literature is

supplemented by appreciations of the work of the great Yiddish writer Pinchas Goldhar from both Pam Maclean and Professor Bill Rubinstein, topped off with a delightful description of Drummond Street Carlton by Goldhar himself.

Dr Rodney Gouttman makes a welcome contribution to the historiography of Australian Jewish chaplains who served in World War Two, and Mark Rapoport has written a fascinating commentary on the emergence of Liberal-Orthodox relations in Sydney, a lengthy study on interdenominational disagreements.

Berlin-based musicologist and music critic Dr Albrecht Dümling has contributed an important and revealing essay on Jewish musicians from the Reich who sought refuge in Melbourne during the 1930s. Dr Dümling's major book *The Vanished Musicians,* a study of Central European musicians who came to Australia, is reviewed by Sydney-based musicologist Dr Joseph Toltz, copyright permission having been obtained from the Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group of the UK.

Bill Rubinstein reviews war-historian Mark Dapin's study of Australian Jewish soldiers, *Sudan to Afghanistan*, and also reviews *Falling Stars*, a ground-breaking book on the little known Russian (including Russian Jewish) ANZACS, by Canberra academic Elena Govor. Pam Maclean reviews Dagmar Strauss Yaari's intriguing *Their Lives Before Us*. Joe Lewit reviews a remarkable photographic record of Holocaust survivors, the images taken over some years by a celebrated UK portrait photographer, Harry Borden. Many of the survivors came to live in Melbourne, and Joe tells us that an exhibition of Harry's survivor portraits may come to Melbourne next year. Rabbi Dr John Levi reviews the delightful *My Vice-Regal Life* by Lady Cowen, widow of Sir Zelman Cowen and the patron of our Victorian Society; the book is a remarkable record in diary form of a challenging time in Australia's history.

We take this opportunity to announce that Rabbi Levi, rabbi emeritus of Temple Beth Israel and undoubtedly the doyen of Australian Jewish historians, will not be standing for re-election to our Victorian Society's committee at the next AGM in February 2018. Rabbi Levi has been a member of the Society for well-nigh 70 years. In the early 1960s he gave an address to the Society on his great-grandfather, the Hon. Nathaniel Levi. In 1971 he succeeded Max Gordon as president of the Society, and held that position for many years, during which time he researched *The Forefathers*: *a Dictionary of Biography of the Jews of Australia, 1788-1830*, issued as

a special publication of the AJHS in 1976. Numerous talks, essays and works of scholarship have followed over the years, including a remastered and annotated CD of the music of the Berlin Reform Synagogue, and publication in 1974 of *Australian Genesis: Jewish convicts and settlers, 1788-1850* co-authored with Dr George Bergman. John Levi's subsequent books comprise a second edition (2002) of *Australian Genesis*, increasing the period treated to 1860, biographies of Rabbi Jacob Danglow (1995) and Rabbi Dr Herman Sanger (2010), and the magisterial work *These Are the Names: Jewish Lives in Australia, 1788-1850* (2006; second edition, 2013). John and his wife Robyn are currently enjoying a long-awaited and extended stay in Jerusalem.

Liz James, our indefatigable Honorary Secretary since 2005, stepped down this year after 12 years in that role. To her our Society owe an enormous debt of gratitude. She has been at the centre of all our activities, arranging meetings and outings, answering numerous genealogical inquiries, and sending out information to our members in her quiet and efficient manner. In addition, she has coordinated the collation of a mountain of archival births, marriages and deaths records, a monumental task that will be of enormous benefit to future historians. Liz remains a member of our Victorian committee, and of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (AJGS), continuing her marvellous work in genealogy.

We also want to put on record our thanks to Max Wald, who has resigned from the committee due to pressure from his other voluntary activities for JewishGen and JRI Poland, as well as his work at the Holocaust Centre and the Genealogy Society. For some years Max has led a team of four to index over 2,600 marriage records. He is about to photograph all the Jewish graves at Fawkner Cemetery, and may follow suit at the cemeteries St Kilda, Brighton, Ballarat and Bendigo.

Finally, please note that an article in the last Victorian issue of the *Journal*, 'The Return of Reverend Jacob Lenzer's Piano', misleadingly refers to Lenzer's 'brown beard'. In fact, supplementing that great cantor's operatic bass-baritone voice in ensuring his celebrated stage – perhaps we should say *bimah* presence, was his famously flamboyant flame-coloured hair. In the interests of the historical record, we feel duty-bound to restore Lenzer to the ranks of redheads.

<div style="text-align:right">Howard A. Freeman and Hilary L. Rubinstein (co-editors).</div>

REDS UNDER THE BED: THE SECURITY SERVICE'S INTEREST IN MY FAMILY

Michael Komesaroff

Introduction

For most of the last century Australia's counter-intelligence organisations monitored the activities of people and organisations it believed were controlled or influenced by the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). As a result of this surveillance, the security services maintained a vast library of files on Australian citizens (as well as residents who were not citizens), the overwhelming majority of whom were never a threat to the country's security.[1] In records released by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) I have learned that the Organisation (or its predecessors) kept files on at least seven members of my family. All of the seven were politically active left-of-centre citizens, with four of the seven being people who were involved with organisations or activities that were either pro-Zionist or opposed to antisemitism. In this paper I describe the lives of the seven people with ASIO files. The paper is in four parts, with the first three providing essential background on the family, the history of Australia's counter-intelligence organisations and the Jewish organisations that ASIO believed were subversive. The last part of the paper discusses the contents of the seven files and how the information in them was collected.[2]

Part I: The Komesaroff family

The Komesaroff family can trace its history back to early nineteenth-century Lithuania, the birthplace of Shlomo-Zalman (*c*.1805-*c*.1880), my great-great-grandfather.[3] At the time of Shlomo-Zalman's birth there were no Jewish surnames in Lithuania and people were known by a patronymic. Sometime after his birth and before 1846 when he migrated to Grafskoy, in the Ukraine, then part of Russia (now in Ukraine), Shlomo-Zalman was given the surname Komisaruk.[4] According to family lore this Ukrainian name reflected the status of Shlomo-Zalman, who, as a rabbi, was regarded as the official or *komisar* of his religious clan. However, as the suffix *-uk* denotes the diminutive form, the complete name, Komisaruk, actually

means 'minor official'. The diminutive form was seen as derogatory, akin to being labelled a 'petty bureaucrat'.[5] Often, when members of the family moved to large towns or cities, they adopted the name Komesaroff, which was in keeping with their neighbours, who were usually ethnic Russians. The suffix *-off* in Russian indicates possessive plural, so the meaning of Komesaroff is 'belonging to officials'.

Shlomo-Zalman was the father of four boys, the eldest of whom, Pinkhas (1830-97), also became a rabbi. Pinkhas and his wife, Chaya-Sara (1840-73), lived in Grafskoy, where they raised seven children – four boys and three girls. Two of the boys, my grandfather Menahem-Mendel (1864-1919) and his younger brother Meir (1866-1907), are the patriarchs of the two branches of the Komesaroff family that came to Australia between 1912 and 1922. These family relationships are illustrated in Figure 1.
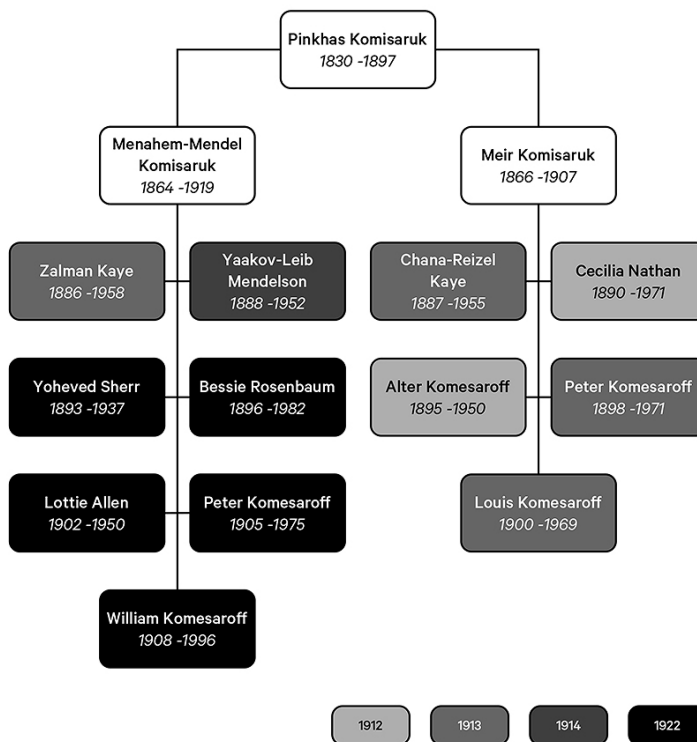

Figure 1: First generation Komesaroff family relationships.
The names are those used in Australia. The year in each shaded box below the diagram is the year of arrival in Australia.

Pinkhas Komisaruk's other children and their descendants migrated to Canada and the United States, though a few remained in what was to become the Soviet Union. Preliminary research on the North American side of the family suggest they were, like their Australian cousins, ardent Zionists, though they were more secular in their Jewish observance. A number were members of socialist organisations including the Jewish Workingmen's Circle, the secular Jewish socialist group the Bund and the extreme left-wing *Poale Zion* ('Workers of Zion'). In North America the family's political allegiance was typical of other Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who formed a substantial core of early twentieth-century progressives and socialists.[6]

In addition to the seven children shown in Figure 1, Menachem-Mendel had two other sons, Chaim-Zev (1884-1901) and Benjamin (1895-1920), both of whom passed away before the last of their family had left for Australia 1922.[7] Also, Meir had a young daughter, Chaya-Sarah (1906-82) whose mother, Tybel (née Zmood; *c*.1866-1906) died within days of her birth. Meir himself died the following year and the girl was adopted shortly after by childless cousins of her mother. When they left Russia, the Australian branch of the family lost contact with Chaya-Sarah but in 1923 her brother, Louis Komesaroff, reconnected with her. At that time Chaya-Sarah reported that her adopted cousins, with whom she had been living, had died of starvation.[8] During World War Two, Chaya-Sarah and her family were evacuated to Tashkent in Uzbekistan where she remained for the rest of her life.[9] Apart from Chaya-Sarah none of Menachem-Mendel's or Meir's children remained in the Soviet Union.

The 12 people identified in Figure 1 as having migrated to Australia are considered as the first generation and they were joined in their migration by four children who are considered the second-generation children. The oldest person of the two generations of 16 migrants was 27 years of age and the youngest, 12 months (see Table 1 for dates of their arrival and other details). Eight of the 12 first-generation migrants married in Australia and raised their children here. The people who migrated, together with their second-generation descendants born in Australia, make a total of 44 people. I am one of those second-generation children, with the last of my generation being born in 1947. A list of the 44 people and their life event statistics is provided as Appendix A which shows that all but 14 of them have died.

In addition to the four second-generation children, the 12 migrants

identified in Figure 1 were accompanied by three family members who are not included in this study because they were not born into the Komesaroff family, but married into it. My grandmother, Beila-Reeva Komesaroff (née Pogorelske, 1865-1935), the oldest member of the immigrant groups and wife of Menahem-Mendel, is not included, because she married into the family. Similarly, Bessie Mendelson (née Svidler, 1894-1974), the wife of Yaakov-Leib Mendelson and Esak Sherr (1872-1978), the husband of Yoheved Sherr (née Komisaruk) are not included because they also married into the family.

Table 1 lists all the migrants, not just hereditary family with the dates and names of the ships on which they arrived.

Table 1: Migration details of extended Komesaroff family who came to Australia

Name*	Date of arrival	Ship	Name recorded on ship's manifest
Cecilia Nathan	10 October 1912	SS *Chemnitz*	Tsiporah Comosaroff
Alter Komesaroff	10 October 1912	SS *Chemnitz*	Alter Comosaroff
Zalman Kaye	8 December 1913	SS *Königin Luise*	Zalmen Kommessarook
Chana-Reizel Kaye	8 December 1913	SS *Königin Luise*	Rese Kommessarook
Tessie Freedman	8 December 1913	SS *Königin Luise*	Tube Kommessarook
Myer Kaye	8 December 1913	SS *Königin Luise*	Maie Kommessarook
Peter Komesaroff	8 December 1913	SS *Königin Luise*	Pinchos Kommessarook
Louis Komesaroff	8 December 1913	SS *Königin Luise*	Lebe Kommessarook
Yaakov-Leib Mendelson	2 March 1914	SS *Friedrich der Grosse*	Jankel Komisaruk
Beila-Reeva Komesaroff**	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Beaby Komesarook
Bessie Mendelson**	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Bessie Komesarook
Norman Mendelson	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Norman Komesarook
Esak Sherr**	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Esak Sher
Yoheved Sherr	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Evay Sher
Ben Sherr	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Mendal Sher
Bessie Rosenbaum	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Bessie Komesarook
Lottie Allan	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Zlate Komesarook
Peter Komesarook	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Pnexes Komesarook
William Komesaroff	9 March 1922	SS *Ballarat*	Woola Komesarook

Sources: National Archives of Australia, various naturalisation files; Public Record Office Victoria, Index of Unassisted Inward Passenger Lists to Victoria 1852-1923.
*The names are those used in Australia.
**Married into the family; not included in this study.

The first of the family to migrate to Australia was Meir's daughter Tsiporah (*c*.1890-1971), who came to Melbourne in 1912 to marry David Zmood (1886-1954). On the long journey from Russia, Tsiporah was chaperoned by her elder brother Shlomo-Zalman (1895-1950). In Australia Tsiporah was known as Cecilia. Her brother, Shlomo-Zalman, was known

as Alter ('the old one' in Yiddish), as his twin siblings had passed away before he was born, and the custom then among Ashkenazi Jews was to name a succeeding child 'Alter'. Acceptance of the new name was believed to deter the Angel of Death from visiting the family again.

Cecilia and Alter travelled to Australia on the SS *Chemnitz*, arriving in Melbourne on 10 October 1912.[10] Neither Cecilia nor Alter is known to have files with ASIO, although, as noted later, each of their eldest sons does have an ASIO file. I believe it is very likely that, because Cecilia had a long interest in left-wing politics, there was a file that may have been destroyed after she died and was no longer of interest to ASIO.

The second Komesaroff group to migrate to Australia were Cecilia and Alter's siblings – 28-year-old Chana-Reizel (1887-1955), 15-year-old Pinkhas (1898-1971) and 13-year-old Yehuda-Leib (1900-69) – who landed in Melbourne on 8 December 1913 on the SS *Königin Luise*.[11] Chana-Reizel was the eldest of Meir Komisaruk's children and when her parents died she took on the responsibility of raising her siblings. When her sister, Tsiporah (Cecilia), left Russia, Chana-Reizel wanted to reunite the family so she decided to migrate with her two brothers Pinkhas (Peter) and Yehuda-Leib (Louis). However, by that time she had married and had two children of her own – Tessie (1911-75) and Myer (1909-96). Chana-Reizel's husband was her first cousin, Shlomo-Zalman Komesaroff (1886-1958), the eldest son of Menahem-Mendel, an older brother of her late father Meir. In Australia Shlomo-Zalman was known as Zalman, and around 1935 he anglicised his surname to Kaye.

Of the six members of the family who travelled to Australia in 1913, two – Louis and Peter – have ASIO files, as do two of Louis' children, Max and Tessa.

The next Komesaroff to come to Australia was my uncle Yaakov-Leib (1888-1952), who arrived on 2 March 1914 aboard the German mail steamer *Friedrich der Grosse*, four months before the outbreak of World War One. Yaakov-Leib was Menahem-Mendel's second son and the younger brother of Zalman, who had migrated with his family the previous year. While the two earlier groups had migrated to Australia for family reasons, Yaakov-Leib's move was motivated by money. He was in dispute with his wife's parents and believed that by coming here he could make sufficient money to return to Russia and repay the dowry they had provided on his marriage to their daughter. Having done that, he reasoned he could live in Russia with his wife and son free of interference from his

in-laws. However, because of the deterioration of conditions in Russia that accompanied the outbreak of World War One and the collapse of Russia's Tsarist regime, Yaakov-Leib chose to remain in Australia, rather than returning to Russia as he had planned.

Yaakov-Leib was a member of the CPA, so it is understandable that ASIO and its predecessor organisations took an interest in him. In 1928 he changed his family name from Komesarook to Mendelson. His father's name was Mendel so his new family name was symbolic, that is the son of Mendel.

The fourth and last group of Komesaroffs to migrate to Australia was Yaakov-Leib's immediate family – his widowed mother (my grandmother) Beila-Reeva; his wife Bessie; his son, my cousin Norman (1913-98); his sisters Yoheved (1893-1937), Bessie (1896-1982) and Lottie (1902-50); and his younger brothers Peter (1905-75) and William (my father; 1908-1996). The group was joined by Yoheved's husband Esak Sherr and their son, my cousin Ben Sherr (1921-2009). The group travelled to Australia on the SS *Ballarat*, landing in Adelaide on 9 March 1922 and then moved on to Melbourne by train.

Unlike the three previous groups that had come to Australia, this last and largest group encountered strong administrative resistance to their migration. Their difficulties were mostly a consequence of the Bolshevik Revolution, which increased Australia's fear of communism and foreigners. Government policy after World War One was opposed to migration from Russia, because the chaos that plagued Australian industry after that conflict was perceived as having been incited by foreign agitators motivated by the Bolshevik ideology.[12] There was also a fear that communist sympathisers could attempt a similar revolution in Australia. Not only did these fears impact immigration from Russia but they also shaped the policies of Australia's embryonic security services which until recent times have devoted the bulk of their resources to the detection and surveillance of communist infiltrators.

Concern about Soviet influence in Australia was heightened in March 1919, following widespread social unrest in Brisbane, where communist-led unionists who were protesting against continuation of the *War Precautions Act,* clashed with recently returned soldiers.[13] The protesters carried red flags which were banned under the Act, and the protests became known as the Red Flag Riots. Mistrust of the communists and the anti-war movement had increased after the March 1918 signing of the Treaty of

Brest-Litovsk, where Russia's post-revolutionary communist government sued for peace with Germany. Russia had been fighting alongside Britain, and its withdrawal from the war was regarded as disadvantaging Britain and its allies, including Australia, so that Germany and Russia were linked in the public mind as a common foe.[14]

Yaakov-Leib, now a successful businessman, lobbied tirelessly to obtain an exemption from the government's restriction on Russian migration so that his family could come to Australia. The targets of his petitions included federal politicians and other public figures, most of whom were from the Labor Party side of politics and had social beliefs that aligned with Yaakov-Leib's own philosophies. The lobbying was effective, and in February 1921 Federal Cabinet gave approval for Yaakov-Leib's family to enter Australia.

Menahem-Mendel Komisaruk's family in 1913 at Grafskoy. Back row (left to right): Louis Komesaroff (Zelman's brother-in-law and cousin), Zelman Kaye, Yocheved Sherr, Benyomin Komisaruk, Yaakov-Leib Mendelson, Bessie Mendelson. Middle row: Tessie Freedman, Chana-Reizel Kaye, Myer Kaye, Menachem-Mendel Komisaruk, William Komesaroff, Beally-Reeva Komesaroff, Bessie Mendelson holding Norman Mendelson. Front row: Peter Komesarook, Lottie Allan

Part 2: ASIO and its predecessor organisations

The history of ASIO is well documented, and many Australians may be aware that a United States counter-intelligence program to decrypt secret messages transmitted by Soviet intelligence agencies – known as the Venona project – had confirmed that the Soviets had penetrated Australian government departments as early as 1943, when diplomatic relations between the two countries was initiated. The Department of External Affairs (now the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: DFAT) had been severely compromised by a spy ring controlled by a CPA functionary, Wally Clayton. Clayton never admitted to his activities but the counter-espionage authorities were able to confirm that for several years he had passed state secrets to his Soviet handler, Feodor Nosov, the correspondent in Australia for TASS, the Soviet newsagency.[15] A life-long communist, Clayton was said to have been embarrassed when paid for documents he provided, because, as he explained to his Soviet handler, he had passed information as a 'duty'.[16] Similarly, most of his informants were also members of the Party who were aware that the information they provided was destined for Moscow.[17] The 1946 Canadian Royal Commission on Espionage came to a similar conclusion – that a fifth column organised by Soviet diplomats existed in Canada and that the communist movement was the principal base from which the espionage network was recruited. In its report the Commission was appalled at how Soviet agents were able to '… find Canadians who were willing to betray their country and to supply agents of a foreign power secret information to which they had access, despite oaths of allegiance, of office and of secrecy which they had taken'.[18]

The same could be said about Wally Clayton and his CPA cohorts who betrayed Australia by providing the Soviet Union with State secrets many of them had sworn to protect.

The Soviet intercepts revealed that, because of Australia's close alliance with Britain and the US, Moscow had obtained highly classified US intelligence through their Australian agents. Our allies reacted to the theft of their secrets by suspending intelligence collaboration with Australia and pressuring the Chifley Labor government to create a security organisation modelled on MI5, Britain's domestic counter-intelligence and security agency. The new agency, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) – Australia's first truly nationwide counter-intelligence organisation – was created by an Act of parliament on 16 March 1949. In their book *Breaking the Codes*, Desmond Ball and David Horner explain that

the Department of External Affairs was so severely compromised that the first 15 months of ASIO's existence were devoted to investigating the penetration of the Department by communist agents.[19] Because of the circumstances under which it was created, ASIO's earliest activities were directed against left-leaning organisations, especially those, such as the CPA, that were seen to be controlled by the Soviet Union. However, the government's reaction to the Red Flag Riots of 1919 shows that Australia's fear of communism predated the creation of ASIO. The Red Flag protesters were led by a number of Russian-born communists who had come to Australia as representatives of the post-revolutionary Bolshevik government – clear evidence that Soviet interest in Australia existed well before ASIO was established.

In the years immediately after Federation (1901), Australia saw no need for a counter-intelligence organisation, but that changed with the First World War, when the secretary of state for the colonies (Andrew Bonar Law) wrote to the governor-general (Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson) suggesting that Australia create a branch of the Imperial Counter Espionage Bureau. This branch, known as the Australian Special Intelligence Bureau (ASIB), was established in January 1916 and maintained a close relationship with state police forces, and later with the Commonwealth Police Force. In 1919, the Commonwealth Police and the ASIB merged to form the Investigation Branch (IB) within the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department. The IB, later known as the Commonwealth Investigation Branch (CIB) and later again as the Commonwealth Investigation Service (CIS), was a relatively small organisation which depended on assistance from State police, especially when applying the provisions of the War Precautions Act.[20] The state police also helped their federal colleagues to register aliens and investigate people applying for an Australian visa or naturalisation.

From its inception, the ASIB – and later the IB and the CIS – concentrated on anti-war and anarchist groups such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which, in 1916, the government declared an illegal organisation. Supporters of Sinn Fein, a political group that sought independence for Ireland and was opposed to the War, were also monitored. Later, after the Russian Revolution, attention was directed to the threat from communism.[21] A similar situation existed in the US where militant IWW affiliates mailed explosives to prominent members of America's economic and political establishment which aggravated community tensions and culminated in the so called 'Red Scare'.

The IB initiated its surveillance of communist organisations in the wake of the 1919 Red Flag Riots, and this surveillance was reinforced with the formation, in 1920, of the CPA, which was endorsed by the Comintern in 1923.[22] Also known as the Communist International, the Comintern, formed in 1919 by Russia's Communist Party, was intended to be the world party of revolution. Essentially, any political party anywhere in the world that wished to be known as 'communist' required the Comintern's authorisation. In return for this recognition, the different communist parties were required to support all the decisions made by the Comintern's Moscow executive. Effectively, the communist leadership in Russia had absolute power over the foreign-based constituent organisations.[23] In addition to the requirement for strict discipline, members were expected to make extraordinary sacrifices including the suppression of all personal feelings and loyalties so they would be prepared to advance the interests of the Party ahead of family and friends.[24]

During the 1930s and 1940s the CPA sent representatives to Moscow to attend Comintern conferences and report on the prospects for revolution in Australia, while the Comintern periodically dispatched representatives to Australia to confirm that its orders were being followed, including approval of key office-holders.[25] Adherence to Moscow's line was further reinforced by local members who attended lengthy periods of study at the International Lenin School in Moscow which were designed to train disciplined and reliable political cadres. David Lowell, who has written widely on the CPA's association with the Comintern, observes that party members seem to have been remarkably compliant with changes in the 'line' coming from Moscow; even the about-face in Soviet policy towards Nazi Germany – signaled by the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, after which the Soviets redefined World War Two as an Imperialistic War instead of one of Fascist Aggression – did not lead to large numbers leaving the Party.[26] This despite the fact that in the year preceding the agreement CPA publications regularly lambasted Hitler, describing him as 'a barbarous monster' and 'a deadly threat to peace' who should be resisted.[27] Before the pact's announcement, Communists in the west denied that such a treaty would be signed, denouncing such rumours as 'Fascist propaganda'.

Earlier, in 1929, another decision of the Comintern tested the loyalty of Jews who supported communism, especially those who were also Zionists and wanted to convert the British mandate in Palestine to a Jewish homeland. On 15 August, over 1,000 Arabs rioted in Hebron resulting in the

death of 69 Jews. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the speaker in the mosque that day, had incited Arab worshippers to violence. *Morgen Freiheit*, the communist affiliated Yiddish language daily newspaper in the United States, initially described the riots as a pogrom, but quickly fell in line with Moscow's interpretation of events, calling it an Arab uprising against the British and Zionist imperialists which had been provoked by 'Zionist-Fascists'.[28] The predominantly Jewish Palestine Communist Party also followed the Kremlin's directive and glorified the "national revolutionary nature" of the anti-Jewish riots. As a result of this incident some of its Jewish members became disillusioned with the Party, but many continued as devoted adherents of communist ideology.

Yaakov-Leib Mendelson, the only 'Komesaroff' confirmed to be a CPA member, remained with the Party throughout World War Two and only resigned in 1946 because he disagreed with Soviet policies toward the creation of a Jewish State. Throughout World War Two, Cecilia Nathan's (née Komesaroff) son, Myer Nathan, who is believed, but not proven to have been a member of the CPA, continued to mouth the Party's line that the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was forced upon Stalin when Britain and France refused to form a military alliance with the Soviet Union that would have contained Hitler.[29] Philip Mendes argues that the fact that my uncle and other communists of Jewish origin chose to remain in the Party despite the Soviet alliance with Hitler suggests their Party affiliation was far more important than their national identity as Jews.[30] I would not confine this observation to Party members who were Jewish but would expand it to include all CPA members, because at the outbreak of the war Moscow directed its Australian followers to frustrate the national war effort by not enlisting in the armed services and boycotting the export of war materials. By complying with this directive from a foreign country that was aligned with Australia's enemy, Australia's communists were demonstrating that their Party affiliation was far more important than their Australian identity.

The two issues that almost certainly raised the concerns of the security agencies in Australia and other non-communist countries were the funding the Comintern provided to its national affiliates and the requirement that affiliates establish a parallel organisation that could pursue Moscow's policies in the event the local Party was declared illegal. There is ample evidence to show that, from its inception, the Comintern made substantial payments to support local communist parties. Documents compiled by the Comintern's first representative in Australia, Aleksander Zuzenko, confirm

that Moscow was prepared to make extensive payments so that member parties could push the communist line in their home countries. In the 1930s, Australia's Military Intelligence believed the CPA was receiving £500 per year from Moscow and that this was only a small proportion of its operating costs.[31] In addition to organisational allocations, the Comintern also made significant payments to individual operatives, like S. Mason, who in 1936 was the CPA's representative to the Comintern and wrote asking for a grant of £5000, as his fare to Russia had consumed most of his money.[32] In his history of the CPA, Stuart Macintyre recounts how, during the 1930s, members returning from Russia would carry wads of cash to supplement the Party's coffers.[33] ASIO's records reveal that Moscow continued to bankroll its Australian suppliant until at least 1967.[34]

Moscow's exhortation to its affiliates that they establish parallel, and possibly illegal, organisations is contained in the *Conditions of Admission to the Communist International*, which detail 21 non-negotiable prerequisites that must be satisfied by a national Communist Party wishing to affiliate with the Comintern. The third condition states:

> In almost every country in Europe and America the class struggle is entering the phase of civil war. Under such conditions the communists can place no trust in bourgeois legality. They have the obligation of setting up a parallel organisational apparatus which, at the decisive moment, can assist the party to do its duty to the revolution. In every country where a state of siege or emergency laws deprive the communists of the opportunity of carrying on all their work legally, it is absolutely necessary to combine legal and illegal activity.

Comintern funding, demands for total obedience to Moscow's policies and the creation of illegal underground cells combined to create an environment where CPA members, like Wally Clayton, believed it was their duty to betray their country by passing state secrets to their Soviet controllers. It was an environment that changed people: it was said that the Australian poet and life-long communist Katharine Susannah Pritchard changed from being a kind and gentle mother to becoming ruthless and willing to do anything that would advance the Soviet cause.[35] In this environment CPA members were a legitimate intelligence target and any counter-espionage agency would have inevitably monitored the Party's activities. While this is an unambiguous and unreserved endorsement of

ASIO's anti-communist objectives, it would be a mistake to extend this assessment to support for the tactics the organisation used to pursue its mission. In its early years ASIO was an ideologically driven organisation that was run by its Director-General, Sir Charles Spry, as his personal fiefdom so it became the ready pawn of its political masters.[36] During this period much of ASIO's data collection was unsophisticated, haphazard and dangerous, with little, if any, analysis.[37] The lack of sophistication and analysis is shown in the interrogation by the Victoria Police Special Branch of members of various Jewish youth movements in May 1950. The examination was initiated by ASIO who were looking for evidence of communist infiltration of Melbourne's Jewish community, but as Philip Mendes points out, the officers detained communist as well as Zionist youth because they did not understand the ideological differences between the two groups.[38]

ASIO's unprofessional use of intelligence material, the need to give more attention to assessing the reliability of sources, the credibility of information and its relevance was raised by the Hope Royal Commission that was established in 1974 to examine Australia's intelligence agencies.[39] The Commission, led by Justice Robert Hope, was the first independent assessment of national security since the formation of ASIO in 1949. The Commission, which reported in 1977, observed that the organisation's culture did not see analysis and assessment as its central role and serving officers described some of their colleagues as 'great clippers of newspapers' and 'not people with an inclination to delve into the meaning of things'.[40]

Six years later, in 1983, Justice Hope led a second Royal Commission which also examined aspects of Australia's security and intelligence agencies. On this occasion he found that many of his earlier recommendations had been implemented, but he also observed that ASIO's filing system still left a lot to be desired:

> Too often files appear to be repositories on which information is placed without much (or sometimes any) thought. There is little sign of effort to review files on a regular basis, or to analyse, distill and reduce the contents. A lot of files I have seen are larger than they need to be and reflect little considered review and assessment of the information that they hold.[41]

Part 3: ASIO's interest in Jewish organisations

In addition to maintaining files on individuals they suspected of being subversive foreign agents, ASIO and its predecessors kept close watch on organisations they believed wanted to do harm to Australia. Indeed, it was usually membership of such organisations that brought people to ASIO's attention. This was certainly the case with the seven members of my family who are known to have ASIO files. For example, my father's first cousins, the brothers Peter and Louis Komesaroff, were prominent in the activities of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism (JCCFA) – which ASIO considered a communist front organisation – so the two (and others associated with the Council) were put on a watch list. Similarly, Louis's elder daughter, Tessa Silberberg, who was a politically active though moderate social democrat, has an ASIO file; her name was found on a subscription list for the Australasian Book Society, an organisation described by ASIO as a publisher 'of selected books in cheap editions' and a distributor of 'books of a leftish nature'.[42] Since ASIO believed the Society was a 'propaganda agency fostered (if not fathered) by the Communist Party of Australia', people who were associated with it were placed under varying degrees of surveillance.[43] Targeting someone for no other reason than they subscribed to a magazine suggests that ASIO did not distinguish between dissent and subversion. A similar view was expressed by Justice Hope who concluded that 'ASIO officers have shown a tendency to think of anyone they chose to call "left-wing" as subversive'.[44]

Of all the Jewish organisations monitored by ASIO or its predecessors, none seem to have received more attention than the JCCFA. The Committee was created in Melbourne in May 1942 by a group of predominantly Eastern European Jews with strong Jewish national and cultural loyalties who were long-established in Australia.[45] As with other groups that ASIO believed were under communist influence, the JCCFA appears to have been modelled on similar Soviet organisations, in this case the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee (JAFC) which the Soviets created a few months earlier (February 1942). Moscow's intention was that the JAFC would promote a pro-Soviet public opinion among Jews in foreign countries so they would be encouraged to support the Soviet war effort.[46] On Stalin's orders the JAFC was dissolved in 1948 and its leaders arrested. The JAFC's fate was a consequence of Moscow's concern that with the end of the war the Committee's activities were becoming too Zionistic which contributed to strengthening the 'Jewish reactionary bourgeois-nationalist

movement abroad' and 'nationalist, Zionist sentiment among the Jewish population of the USSR'.[47]

To justify the closure of the JAFC, the Soviet Ministry of State Security (MGB) accused the leadership of involvement in an American Zionist plot which was hatched when they travelled to the United States during the war to raise funds and support for the Soviet war-effort. The MGB alleged that while in America the leadership conspired with 'American capitalist interests' to create a 'Jewish state in Crimea'.[48] The arrests that followed the campaign to discredit the JAFC paved the way for the infamous 'Doctors' Plot' and other state sponsored antisemitic atrocities which decimated the USSR's Jewish intellectual elite and resulted in some Jews leaving the CPA because they had become disillusioned with communism.

The Australian Council's early leadership included a mixture of Jewish left-leaning social democrats like the Komesaroff brothers (Peter and Louis), and Jewish members of the CPA like my uncle, Yaakov-Leib Mendelson.[49] As indicated by its name, the JCCFA was concerned with the threat from antisemitism, both locally and internationally, which they linked to the rise of fascism in Europe. They also saw antisemitism in Australia as a product of the conservative side of politics, exemplified by right-wing politicians like Henry Gullet, who railed against the influx of Jewish refugees fleeing from Nazi-occupied Europe, as did the authors of articles in publications such as the *Melbourne Truth*, *Smith's Weekly* and the Sydney *Bulletin*.[50]

Until shortly after World War Two, global communism was generally seen to be sympathetic to Jews and to the idea of a Jewish State with Lenin consistently speaking out against antisemitism and the Soviet Union enacting laws that made racism – including antisemitism – illegal and removing Jewish legal disabilities. Up until 1922 when Stalin assumed control of the Soviet Union and began to oppress Jews and close Jewish cultural organisations, communist policy toward Jews was determined by Lenin who took a definitive stand against antisemitism and was devoid of any personal racial prejudice. He never indulged in anti-Jewish remarks, either in private or in public, nor did he exploit the deep-rooted Russian antisemitism to advance his revolutionary cause. He was also more inclined to support some degree of ethnic autonomy for Russia's Jewish citizens than any of his successors, especially Stalin. Lenin's policy with regard to Jewish affairs was different from that of Marx. whom he (Lenin) believed was anti-Jewish. On the other hand, the forces opposed to the Bolsheviks were violently antisemitic and

the instigators of numerous pogroms where much Jewish blood was spilt.[51] On hearing of developments in post-revolutionary Russia, particularly its enlightened approach to minorities like the Jews, some Jews who had left Tsarist Russia for a better life in North America and Australia decided to return to the country of their birth. This group, which had concluded the Bolsheviks represented a 'new hope' for Jews, included one member of the Komesaroff family, Clara Berchansky, who had settled in Canada in 1927 but returned to the Soviet Union in 1936 where she remained until 1962 when the intensive lobbying efforts of her mother resulted in her being released.[52]

This positive view of Lenin does not excuse his lust for power nor does it absolve his ruthless persecution of his own people, even Jews, if they were seen to obstruct his pursuit of a communist Russia.

In Australia, until well into the 1950s, the local Communist Party followed Lenin's policy of consistently opposing antisemitism because it distracted the attention of workers from the evils of capitalism and thereby weakened the labor movement.[53] In a 1944 file note, the CIS took a more pragmatic view when it attributed Jewish support for communist causes to 'the belief that Russia would assist the Jewish race as a whole in obtaining cancellation of the … British White Paper … which provided for a complete cessation of [Jewish] immigration into Palestine … '[54]

The Soviets were also seen as being at the forefront in the defeat of German Fascism, a perception that was reinforced by images of the Red Army occupying Berlin in May 1945 – two months ahead of their American and European allies. The consequence of this sympathy was the perception that the Soviet Union was a utopia that had emancipated its Jewish citizens and what Philip Mendes describes as 'the powerful belief that the Soviet Union was good for the Jews', so it is understandable that the newly formed JCCFA welcomed support from the CPA and its members.[55] Judah Waten, who for a period had been expelled from the Party, was the Council's first paid organiser, but the Council's foundation Executive Committee did not include any communists.[56]

While the JCCFA was criticised by some conservative Anglo-Jews who disapproved of its high and proactive public profile, the Council was remarkably successful, since it was able to unify a Jewish community that was concerned by the antisemitic policies of right-wing regimes. The fact that it was able to reach out for support from sympathisers beyond its own religious compatriots added to the JCCFA's influence, and within two

years of its creation the Council had been appointed to manage the public relations activities of Victoria's peak Jewish organisation – the Jewish Advisory Board.[57]

The Council's fortunes began to change in 1949 with the onset of the Cold War and with increased awareness that Jewish communities behind the Iron Curtain did not feel secure; also, the Soviets had begun to modify their perceived strong pro-Jewish and pro-Israel policies.[58] At the same time, Australian politicians began to draw attention to the number of CPA members who had influence on the Council, which, they concluded, showed that the JCCFA was most likely a communist front organisation. In his 1967 sociological study of the Melbourne Jewish community, Peter Medding argues that while the Council was composed of a large cross-section of the community and it remained united in its fight against anti-semitism and support for the creation of a Jewish State, it had, nonetheless, been infiltrated by a number of avowed communists and fellow travellers. These people had achieved key positions within the organisation, so they were able to influence its policies in accordance with their political views.[59]

The Jewish community's opposition to the Commonwealth government's 1950 plan to resettle non-Jewish displaced Germans in Australia further damaged the Council's reputation and contributed to its demise. Fearing that many of the proposed settlers would be neo-fascist antisemites who had actively served the Third Reich, the community lobbied the newly elected Menzies Liberal government to abandon this resettlement policy. German migration was not an issue for most Australians, and this was confirmed by ASIO who advised the government that only two groups were opposed to the resettlement proposal: Jewish organisations which were incensed because of Germany's involvement in the Holocaust and the CPA which saw the new arrivals as strongly anti-communist.[60] In a broader context, ASIO raised no objections to these people applying for citizenship and praised them for their anti-communism while ignoring the war criminals among them who had left a murderous trail when they migrated from Europe.[61]

Armed with ASIO's assessment Harold Holt, the minister for immigration, responded to the Jewish community's pressure by threatening to prevent the transfer of any funds to Israel and to freeze the bank accounts of local Zionist organisations.[62] Holt's threat was enough to stop wider community protests, but the JCCFA persisted, which led to it being a communal embarrassment and claims that its opposition was politically

motivated and designed to help the communists. Indeed, a major criticism levelled against the Council was that it was more concerned with defending communism than it was in promoting the interests of Melbourne's Jewish community.[63] In 1993, a quarter of a century after it ceased to operate, one of JCCFA's communist founders, Lou Jedwab, had come to the conclusion that one reason for the Council's demise was that it continued to defend 'the USSR when it was no longer defendable'.[64]

The idea of working through front organisations was articulated by Lenin in his 1902 manifesto, *What Is To Be Done?* At that time communism was illegal in Russia, so Lenin proposed reaching the masses through other organisations intended for wide membership.[65] Such groups received the Comintern's endorsement, and until the mid-1950s they were a common vehicle through which Moscow advanced its international objectives. In his history of the CPA, Stuart Macintyre claims that in the 1930s the Australian Party established fruitful connections to Jewish cultural bodies and community organisations, and ASIO files show that this practice continued in the 1940s, when Jewish Party members were directed to establish links with Jewish communal organisations.[66] Because the JCCFA had close affiliations with left-leaning (including communist) groups and individuals, the charge of being a front organisation was particularly damaging and was the basis for ASIO initiating surveillance of the Council and its leaders.[67] Ultimately, the belief that the Council had become a front for the CPA resulted in it being expelled from the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (VJBD) in 1952.[68]

Another Australian left-leaning Jewish political group was the extreme left-wing organisation Gezerd, which was modelled on a Soviet organisation of the same name. Gezerd, an acronym for the Yiddish translation of 'Society for the Settlement of Jewish Toilers on the Land in the USSR', was established in Moscow in 1925, with the aim of promoting the settlement of Jews in Birobidzhan, a desolate area in the far eastern part of the Soviet Union, near the border with China. No Jews had ever lived in the area, and Richard Overy in his book *Russia's War* reports that Soviet propaganda made great play with the idea that at Birobidzhan the regime was protecting the culture and identity of the Jewish people.[69] Though it ultimately failed, the Birobidzhan project was important for Soviet propaganda purposes and the Soviets used its existence as an argument against Zionism, an ideology that rivalled Marxism among gullible left-wing Jews.[70] On the other hand, for many Zionists, including members of the

Komesaroff clan, Birobidzhan was seen as a contingency plan should their efforts at creating a Jewish state in the Holy Land fail.

The first Australian branch of Gezerd was established in Melbourne in May 1930 by a group of Eastern European Jews who included my uncle Yaakov-Leib Mendelson and his non-communist cousin Peter Komesaroff. Many of the founders, including my uncle, had been members of the Jewish Socialist Group and the Kadimah Yiddish culture group, organisations that catered to secular, though Zionistic, Jews from Eastern Europe who were reshaping Jewish communities around Australia. Gezerd has been described by Malcolm J Turnbull as 'a fearlessly Stalinist "satellite" group'.[71] Most of its members in Melbourne were also members of Kadimah, but wanted to create a less diverse, more Soviet-oriented organisation free of influence from their political opponents – the secular and staunchly anti-communist workers' party, the Bund.[72] In breaking with Kadimah the Australian arm of Gezerd wanted to 'spread proletarian culture among the Jews of Melbourne; to assist in the reconstruction of Jewish life in the USSR; and to work with fraternal organisations in the defence of the USSR'. From a local perspective Gezerd claimed to stand 'for a solution to Jewish problems, which are national in form and socialist in content'.[73]

Gezerd was never popular with the conservative Anglo-Jewish segment of Melbourne's community, who described it as a 'Jewish secret society', whose members were 'lacking in restraint and discretion' and were an 'undesirable foreign element'.[74] Despite its rejection by the waning Anglo-Jewish establishment, by the mid-1930s Gezerd boasted several hundred members and in 1938 it opened a reading room and lending library – Culture House – at 717 Rathdowne Street in Carlton. During this period it formed a coalition with the Bund in the common fight against European fascism and antisemitism. This alliance broke down in 1939 when the Nazis signed the non-aggression pact with the Soviets; after this Gezerd's membership declined rapidly until its demise in 1944.[75] Since Gezerd was a strong supporter of the Soviet Union, its members were under regular surveillance by the IB, which opened a file on the organisation in January 1931, just months after the group was formed. The last file entry was dated September 1944, by which time the group was in terminal decline.

ASIO and its predecessors maintained files on other Jewish organisations, including the Bund, Kadimah, Youth Aliyah, Jewish youth groups and the Jewish Welfare and Relief Society.[76] The Kadimah organisation

attracted ASIO's interest because many of its members were communists and it permitted its hall in Carlton to be used for CPA functions. However, these other organisations are not discussed here because only a few of their files have been released by ASIO and these do not seem to refer to any of the 44 members of the Komesaroff family covered by this study.[77]

Part 4: The seven files on Komesaroff family members

As Australia's counter-intelligence services evolved and earlier agencies were replaced with newer ones, files were culled and documents regarded as no longer relevant were destroyed. I am of the firm view that such destruction was not a deliberate policy for disposing of 'incriminating evidence', but was, rather, a practical policy for minimising the cost of file storage. As people died their files were destroyed; files that were not destroyed were later transferred to succeeding agencies, and it is through this process that ASIO holds some files that predate its creation. However, it would appear that on its creation ASIO did not inherit all the files from its ancestral organisations as some of them were 'lost' or 'misplaced'. The Hope Royal Commission describes the time when ASIO took over from CIS as 'a bitter period'. CIS people regarded the contacts they developed as 'personal assets' which they may take with them – along with their own 'personal files' on leaving the organisation. The Commission's report mentions that at least one investigator retained his 'personal files' and did not transfer them to ASIO.[78] This may explain why the files relating to members of the Komesaroff clan appear to be incomplete.

We are now in a period where governments support the preservation of archived records, so future researchers should have far more complete records on which to base their investigations.

Through the National Archives of Australia (NAA) I requested the files from ASIO of all the 44 first and second generation family members. ASIO was able to confirm that they had files on only seven members of my family and at my request, these seven files were transferred to the NAA. The transfer process precludes blanket applications for family or other groups and requires a separate request for each individual or organisation.[79] There are only three instances where I was surprised that the ASIO archivists were not able to locate all the files I sought. The first of these involves Cecilia Nathan (née Komesaroff), who came to Australia in 1912 to marry David Zmood. Cecilia was known to be very active in left-wing politics and during World War One she is alleged to have encouraged her husband,

David Zmood, to flee to America to avoid conscription.[80] A number of family members have claimed she was an ardent member of the CPA so I had expected to find a file. However, in 1928 her marriage ended in bitter divorce and she changed her name several times subsequently; this may have made it difficult to locate a file in 2017. It is also possible that a forerunner of ASIO, the CIB, had a file on Cecilia and when its functions were absorbed by ASIO the file was destroyed because it was regarded as no longer relevant.

I had also expected a file on Cecilia's daughter (Tybel), who lived with her mother, but none was located. Several people who knew her told me that Tybel had been a member of the CPA. Unless the staff within ASIO have conspired to prevent my access to the file, which I do not believe, it is more than likely the file was either misplaced or destroyed when Tybel passed away.[81] People familiar with ASIO's record management give credence to the possibility of misplaced or destroyed files and describe a system with 'serious deficiencies, lacking an adequate system for storage and retrieval … '[82]

I was also disappointed that I could not locate a file relating to myself. In my youth I had been active in student politics, including opposition to the Vietnam War, and for a period in the 1980s my work required me to travel regularly to the Soviet Union. Also at different periods in the 1990s my employment required that I live in Communist China and post-Communist Russia. It is possible that my opposition to the Vietnam War was less relevant and noteworthy than I had believed, and as for my trips to the Soviet Union, this information could remain embargoed by the NAA's 30-year open access period.[83] It is also possible that my unfulfilled expectations reflect my paranoia.[84]

The absence of a file on me reminds me of a story told by my friend, the late Stephen Murray-Smith, who in 1982 applied to the newly elected Cain Labor government in Victoria for a copy of his Special Branch file.[85] Race Mathews, a close friend of Stephen's and the minister for police and emergency services, reported that the Special Branch had claimed not to have a file on the former CPA member. Stephen's response was to ask the minister not to tell anyone there was no file, as in the circles in which he moved, not to have a file would send a message that could cause him long-term problems. Around the same time, Stephen's friend, the social commentator and former communist, Phillip Adams had requested his ASIO file. When told 'you don't have a file' Phillip began to question the

Organisation's competence.[86]

The subjects of the seven ASIO files include three first-generation migrants and four second-generation people who were born in Australia. They range across the left side of the political spectrum from social democrat to at least one card-carrying member of the CPA. They were all proud Zionists whose religious observance spanned Liberal or Reform Judaism to traditional Jews who maintained kosher homes and regularly attended synagogue. None held derogatory or self-hating views of Jewish people, nor were any apostates who had renounced Judaism. Generally they were owners of small businesses and had no affiliation with industrial organisations such as a trade union. Five of the seven had tertiary education qualifications, four in science and one in the humanities.

None of the seven is alive today so I have not been able to discuss their records with them, though in each case I provided copies of the documents to surviving close family members, usually their children or grandchildren. In almost every case, the family member was surprised to learn of the existence of the file, but were not necessarily shocked by the contents, though they expressed surprise that government could spend tax payer's money on such mundane data collecting that did not seem to have any relevance to national security.

All the files relating to members of the Komesaroff family are relatively slim, with none exceeding 110 pages – embarrassingly small when compared with the 88 volumes totalling 14,000 pages that ASIO compiled on the CPA's national secretary, Laurie Aarons. However there seem to be as many files on the Komesaroffs as there are on the three generations of Aarons family members who dominated Australia's Communist Party.

Yaakov-Leib Mendelson

My uncle, Yaakov-Leib Mendelson, who was born in Grafskoy in 1888 and came to Australia in 1914, was an early, although not a founding, member of the CPA.[87] The Party was formed in 1920 and he joined around 1929, before the rise of Hitler and at a time of global economic uncertainty during which he was declared a bankrupt and moved from Ballarat to Melbourne. It was at this time that, owing to the shame of the bankruptcy, he changed his name (from Komesarook to Mendelson). So committed was Yaakov-Leib to the communist cause that he commissioned a terrazzo tile floor featuring a hammer and sickle for the side porch of his Melbourne home. His wife, Bessie, embarrassed by her husband's politics, tried to conceal

the symbol with a strategically placed doormat, but she was not successful, as the feature was simply too large.[88]

The 1929 date fits with reports cited by David Rechter that around this time Yaakov-Leib was an active participant in left-wing organisations, including the Jewish Socialist Group and Gezerd.[89] Later he was prominent in the leadership of the Jewish fraction of the CPA, as well as being active in the International Association of Friends of the Soviet Union and the Australia-Soviet Friendship League.[90] (The CPA, and other Communist parties in English-speaking countries, used the term fraction to describe organisational units which were formally affiliated with, but subordinate to, the Party's district or regional branches. The term faction was not used, since it implied a degree of autonomy and democracy that did not apply to the Party's centralised organisational structure, which was required strictly to adhere to the Comintern's instructions.) Confirmation that Yaakov-Leib joined the CPA around 1929 comes from a letter he wrote in 1946 to the *Australian Jewish News*, where he claimed to have been a member of the Party for 17 years.[91] However, his diaries and the reminiscences of con-temporaries would suggest that Yaakov-Leib harboured strong left-leaning views from an early age. During his years alone in Australia he recorded his thoughts and experiences in a diary which makes it clear he was com-mitted to the communist cause even before 1914 when he left Grafskoy, and his later experiences only sharpened his commitment. On his return journey to Europe in 1921 to reconnect with the family, Yaakov-Leib wrote that having boarded the ship, he went down to the third-class cabins

> … to find my equals and here you can see the capitalist might even without glasses … Here I met the Russian working class, who after a long exile, in Australia or New Zealand, in the mines and sugar plantations, who didn't have any rights under the previous regime, even the right to go home, now they carry their parcels to the free Bolshevik Government.[92]

I find it hard to reconcile the writer of these words with the person who campaigned tenaciously against very high odds so his own family could come to Australia from Russia. If Yaakov-Leib had truly believed the Bolsheviks offered freedom, why did he lobby the Australian Government for passports for his family, as it would have been much easier for him to return to live in Russia? After careful consideration I have formed the view that from around 1917, when he began to petition to have his fam-ily granted approval to come to Australia, until 1922, when they arrived

here, Yaakov-Leib's public statements were designed to appeal to government officials who, at that time, were fearful of communist influence and opposed issuing entry permits to Russian nationals.[93]

While Yaakov-Leib may have wanted to conceal his radical views he appears to have let his guard down in 1919 when he wrote a short piece on antisemitism for the Sydney magazine *The International Socialist*.[94] Despite this lapse his pretence seems to have been successful, because in May 1921 the government issued entry permits for the family.[95] However, my uncle's reports to the Australian press on meeting the family across the border from Russia were critical of the terrible situation in the country of his birth and this prompted another Sydney publication, *The Communist*, to label Yaakov-Leib as someone who while in Australia 'found it be quite easy to pass as a revolutionist of a sort' but the closer the 'shopkeeper from Ballarat' came to Russia the 'the nearer he got to Kerensky'.[96] The article then challenged 'the small shopkeeper' to inform them 'through the capitalist press exactly what changed his mind'.

As a high-profile CPA member of 17 years' standing, it is not surprising that Yaakov-Leib attracted the attention of Australia's security services. However, what *is* surprising is that the file they kept on him is remarkably thin – a mere 11 pages – and it only covers the last few years of his life.[97] I suspect there may have been an earlier file created by ASIO's predecessor, the CIS and for the reasons explained earlier, it was not transferred to ASIO when that organisation was established.

The information contained in Yaakov-Leib's file is mundane and much of it has been extracted from electoral rolls, newspaper articles and other public documents. An index card in the file records that in 1946 my uncle was secretary of the Jewish branch of the CPA and that in 1944 he was a member of the JCCFA. The same card notes that 'during the war years he was active in importing Russian literature' and was president of the 'Jews [sic] Group – Russian Br. [Branch] Aust. [Australian] Red Cross'. Yaakov-Leib's association with the Red Cross was hardly a secret, as it was reported in the daily newspapers when he and his wife, Bessie, hosted a card party to raise funds for the Melbourne Lord Mayor's Russian Relief Fund.[98] Similarly, his importation of Russian literature, including Russian and Yiddish editions of *Einigeit*, the JAFC Committee newspaper, was well known through advertisements he placed in newspapers such as the Melbourne *Argus*.[99]

Yaakov-Leib's file records that in June 1948 he paid £10 for a

subscription to *The Tribune*, the official CPA newspaper.[100] A file nota-
tion states that the information was obtained from a receipt book that
the authorities had acquired in July 1949 when they raided Marx House,
the CPA's Sydney headquarters. That a self-declared member of the CPA
would subscribe to *The Tribune* would hardly be a secret, but this subscrip-
tion does come as a shock to me, because Yaakov-Leib had broken with
the Party three years earlier, in March 1946.

Yaakov-Leib's file has another unexpected revelation – his mem-
bership of the radical New Zionist Organisation. This organisation and
their youth group, Betar, followed the teachings of Vladimir Jabotinsky,
a right-wing radical who advocated violence as a means of establishing
a Jewish State that would occupy both sides of the Jordan River. Given
Yaakov-Leib's strong socialist and pacifist beliefs, it is surprising that he
was attracted to a movement whose philosophical leader was a right-wing
antisocialist advocate of violence. It is possible that ASIO may have, yet
again, confused my uncle with someone else with a similar name, but as
his subsequent resignation from the CPA illustrates, Zionism was far more
important to Yaakov-Leib than communism so it is possible that the refer-
ence could be to him.

Although Yaakov-Leib's personal file is thin, the file opened by ASIO
on the CPA's interests and activities in the Jewish community is far more
revealing about his work and what motivated him to join the Party and
other extreme left groups.[101] The file has numerous examples of the ways
in which the Party sought to infiltrate Jewish organisations, by emphasising
communist opposition to antisemitism and describing how Soviet troops
were sacrificing themselves to destroy the antisemitic fascists. The first
page of the file is a closely typed statement of 'tasks of Jewish communists
in the struggle against antisemitism and for the rights of the Jewish people',
which was published toward the end of World War Two.

The document is essentially a call to arms for Jewish communists
to campaign within the wider Jewish community about the evils of
antisemitism. The statement argues that with the War coming to an end,
reactionary forces will emerge that will use antisemitism to sow discord
between all elements of society, the implication of these statements being
that antisemitism is a tool used by the capitalists to deflect attention from
their own actions by creating disharmony within the working class.[102]
For a world that was just beginning to realise the full horrors of the Nazi
Holocaust, communism, which preached freedom and equality, appealed

to many Jews, especially those who, like my uncle, were more secular than religious. Except for a brief period the communists had always challenged the Nazis and they seemed sincere in their condemnation of race hatred, so it is understandable why many Jews, my uncle included, were attracted to communism, which seemed to respect Jews and our culture, and it is for this reason that the IB description of Yaakov-Leib, in 1943, as 'extremely active in any matters concerning Soviet Russia to which country he has a deep and abiding attachment', rings true.

The ASIO file on the CPA's activities in the Jewish community makes abundantly clear that Yaakov-Leib had 'a dominant personality' and was an indefatigable worker supporting the communist cause and opposing antisemitism. He was co-chairman of the Russian Aid and Comforts Committee, which raised money for the Jewish community of Kuibyshev (now known as Samara), Russia's sixth-largest city. With less than 10,000 Jews, Kuibyshev had a relatively small Jewish population but the attraction to Australia's Jewish comrades was that during World War Two it was the head quarters of the JAFC.

Selling subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals like *Moscow News*, *Pravda, Izvestia* and *Patriotic War* helped raise funds for the Kuibyshev project, but also drew the attention of Australia's counter-intelligence service. When briefed on this fundraising in March 1943, the minister for immigration, Arthur Calwell, recommended that the IB take action to monitor the donated money because, he believed that, rather than going to Russia, the money would most likely be diverted to communist propaganda in Australia.

Unaware of government concerns that the proceeds of the sale of Russian newspapers could be diverted, Yaakov-Leib did a sterling job selling subscriptions. The wartime censors provided their colleagues in the IB with a list of the names and addresses of people who had taken out subscriptions. The names include those of Yaakov-Leib's brother Zalman Kaye (previously Komesaroff; another of my uncles) and his cousin Peter Komesaroff, as well as other names, including those of B. Pogorelske, Batagol Brothers, E. Perlman, J. Chanen and S. Brilliant, people who were peripherally linked to my family.[103]

A surprising omission from Yaakov-Leib's file is his very public letter of resignation from the CPA, which was published in the *Australian Jewish News*.[104] However, the letter is in the ASIO file that records the CPA's interest in the Melbourne Jewish community. The fact that the letter

is in that file and not in his personal file indicates that my uncle's records were most likely culled after he left the Party, or else documents were misplaced when the files were transferred to the newly formed ASIO.

Yaakov-Leib resigned from the CPA in 1946 because his communist confrères would not support an independent Jewish state. In 1946, an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was set up to examine conditions in Mandatory Palestine, with a view to recommending future action by the Mandatory power, Britain. The Inquiry took submissions from many sources, including the Communist Party of Great Britain, which was repre-sented by Jack Gaster and Phil Piratin, both sons of prominent and religious British Jews. These two communist representatives advised the committee that Palestine should become an independent state, with Jews forming a national minority with equal rights. At this time, 1946, memories of the Holocaust were still fresh in people's minds and for Jews, especially life-long Zionists like my uncle, a sovereign independent Jewish state was the only protection against another mass murder of Jews. Subsequent events, especially the collapse of Yugoslavia, Lebanon, and Pakistan, demonstrate that artificially created multi-national states along the lines recommended by Gaster and Piratin are doomed to failure.

Owing to his knowledge of how the Party operated, Yaakov-Leib took it that, in accordance with the Comintern's rules, Gaster and Piratin were articulating the Moscow view that was now opposed to an independent Jewish state.[105] The fact that Gaster and Piratin were Jewish was irrel-evant to Yaakov-Leib, because as a secular Jew, he was not well-disposed towards religious Jews and he expected more from the religion he practised – communism – so he resigned from the CPA. Initially the Party would not accept his resignation, and Ralph Gibson, a CPA organiser, came to his house in an attempt to have him reverse his decision. At the time my father (William Komesaroff) was visiting and was asked to leave the room while his brother and Gibson talked, but this was to no avail as my uncle was firm in his commitment to abandon the Party. Resigning from the CPA in 1946 shows Yaakov-Leib to be far more prescient than many other Party faithful who waited until the show trials of the 1950s (and beyond) to sever their connection to communism. Also, his disillusionment with the Party demonstrates that for my uncle Zionism was a far more important ideology than communism.

Yaakov-Leib was an occasional contributor to 'Letters to the Editor' columns in various newspapers. Mostly he wrote to attack antisemites and

their statements, and it is sad that little of this correspondence remains and that none of the letters are included in his file. Yaakov-Leib was 26 years of age when he migrated to Australia so he was not a native English speaker; nonetheless his letters of protest reveal a confidence and pro-ficiency not normally encountered in foreign-born speakers of English. The earliest example of his public writings I have found was published in 1919 when he had only been in Australia for five years. The letter, to Peter Simonoff, the Soviet Union's first consul to Australia, refers to the dangers of antisemitism.[106] In the same year he wrote to a contact at *Poale Zion,* a Marxist-Zionist movement in New York, lamenting that Australian Zionists were as hostile to Labor Zionists as 'the American Jewish People are to free (i.e. communist) Russia'.[107]

Many years later, in May 1944, Yaakov-Leib wrote to the Burnie (Tasmania) *Advocate* criticising a speech delivered in the Senate by the Tasmanian Labor Senator Richard Darcey. Darcey, a friend of the notori-ous antisemite Eric Butler, of League of Rights infamy, announced to the Senate that the Jews had started the Russian Revolution. In his rebuttal letter, Yaakov-Leib likened Darcey's thinking to Hitler's accusing the Jews of being communists and at the same time labeling them international capitalists. My uncle ended his polemic by recommending that the senator read a chapter, 'Jews' Financial Power', in the book *Anti-Semitism* by the Jewish-Swedish historian Hugo Valentin.[108]

A brief version of Yaakov-Leib's letter denouncing Senator Darcey also appeared in the CPA's official newspaper *The Tribune*.[109] This version is not included in Yaakov-Leib's file, but it is cited in an immigration file on his younger brother, Peter Komesarook, who was attempting to sponsor the family of his wife, Rebecca (1903-81), as migrants to Australia. Vetting of sponsors was undertaken by the IB, which also monitored the local communist press. The IB did not recommend the sponsorship because, while they noted that Peter was a 'nice fellow', they did not believe he was financially strong enough to be a suitable guarantor.[110] The fact that the notation is in Peter's and not Yaakov-Leib's file is another indication that, over time, files have been culled.

As with the other Komesaroffs who were the subjects of ASIO surveillance, some of the information recorded in Yaakov-Leib's file is clearly incorrect. One entry confuses Yaakov-Leib with another person, a much younger man named Mendelsohn, who was born in Poland and arrived in Australia from Manila in 1945. In April 1944 the authorities

had made a similar mistake, again confusing Yaakov-Leib with another person. These errors probably arose because the authorities could not agree on the correct spelling of my uncle's surname, often describing him as 'Mendelsohn' and not 'Mendelson'. Indeed, his ASIO file is incorrectly labelled 'Mendelsohn'.

Until I began researching I believed Yaakov-Leib had resigned from the CPA in 1939 in protest over the unexpected and cynical Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. By 1939 Hitler's antisemitic polices were well known and I had thought my uncle would have had difficulty rationalising support for any government aligned with Hitler and especially after the CPA had instructed its members to obstruct what they judged to be Australia's 'imperialist' war effort against Nazi Germany and their Japanese allies. But he appears to have continued his Party membership even after June 1940, when Canberra banned the CPA owing to concerns that its unswerving allegiance was to the Soviet Union, which was in alliance with Germany, a country with which Australia was at war. There was also a fear that because of this alliance Australia could at some time in the future find itself at war with the Soviet Union. The ban on the CPA was not removed until December 1942. The fact that Yaakov-Leib remained a Party member during this time continues to astonish me. It is possible he was conflicted initially, and Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 may have resolved his dilemma in favour of the CPA. It is also possible that he never fully resolved the matter which continued to fester and become an element in his 1946 decision to leave the Party.

Yaakov-Leib is the only one of the seven people covered in this paper who was confirmed to be a member of the CPA, and I have always had difficulty understanding the source of his personal political and religious philosophy. As a youth in Russia he read widely in history and this informed his sophisticated understanding of Zionism, a cause to which he remained committed throughout his life. Yet Yaakov-Leib was an avowed atheist who had formed his views well before arriving in Australia. When leaving the family home in Grafskoy to start his journey to Australia, Yaakov-Leib's mother had reminded him to follow the Jewish custom of kissing the *mezuzah* at the door when leaving to go on a long journey. In his diary Yaakov-Leib records: 'She already knew I did not believe it, and I only did so for her sake.'[111] Yaakov-Leib was the only one of the first generation Komesaroffs who chose not to observe Jewish law and religious practice. I continually ponder on how and where he developed these views. Because

of the restrictions the Russians placed on their Jewish citizens, the family lived in a fairly closed society – not a good environment in which to explore ideas that ran counter to those of this society, and in particular to the beliefs of one's own family.

While I continue to ponder how Yaakov-Leib developed his philosophical views on social and religious questions, they were, nonetheless, not uncommon for Jews of his generation and especially for those who, like him, had migrated from an insular Jewish colony to a more cosmopolitan city. On learning that injustice and antisemitism followed them when they left their closed traditional communities, these Jews became revolutionaries fighting injustice, since they believed that only a revolution could bring about much-needed security. As Stanislaw Krajewski has observed: '… feelings of hopelessness always lead to radical attitudes. In the case of Jews, lack of hope for satisfactory careers in a society permeated by antisemitism resulted in the belief in the necessity of a revolutionary change of the social order.'[112]

It is therefore not surprising that many Jews welcomed Russia's new Bolshevik government because they believed that a new order was essential if their lives were to be improved. In embracing communism Jewish radicals like Yaakov-Leib accepted the premise that in a post-revolutionary society all people would be equal, so there would be no antisemitism. And certainly, during the early years of the republic that was to become the Soviet Union, Jewish life did improve; Jews were free to live and study where and what they wanted. During this initial period, the pogroms that had characterised the Tsarist period seemed to be a thing of the past, and there was a belief that communism had created a utopia which included the Jews. However, this hiatus did not last long. By 1922, when Stalin became leader of the Soviet Union, the Jews were again vulnerable and discrimination became an ever increasing fact of life for the Jewish population. Unfortunately it took many years before Jewish adherents to communism realised they had been duped. In my uncle's case the realisation came towards the end of his life.

Myer Nathan

Myer Nathan, who was born in Melbourne in 1916, was the eldest child of Cecilia Nathan (née Komesaroff) who had come to Australia in 1912 to marry David Zmood. The marriage ended in divorce in 1928 and sometime later Cecilia and her three children (Myer, Tybel and Moses) changed their

surname from Zmood to Nathan.

Myer's file was opened in September 1959 after the Victoria Police Special Branch had traced him as the driver of a car that had been reported at Unity Hall in Bourke Street when a CPA function was held there.[113] Unity Hall was owned by the Railway Union and the talk attended by Myer was delivered by Jimmy Coull, a CPA member and leader of the Liquor Trades Union. The car, owned by Myer's sister, Tybel, who did not drive, was reported at the same location in December 1959, and this time the lecture, entitled: 'I saw socialism in practice', was delivered by Ernie O'Sullivan, who had just returned from a visit to Eastern bloc countries. Myer was again seen driving his sister's car at Unity Hall in January 1960, when another communist, Eric Thornton, spoke on: 'Anti-Semitism and the Nazi revival'.

The reports of Myer's attendance at CPA meetings and the presence of his sister's car at Unity Hall led ASIO to request the Special Branch to make enquiries about the Nathans. The officer delegated with this task contacted a friend at the local post office who was unable to help, except that 'he knew Mrs Nathan and did not like her, as she was sour and unfriendly'.[114] Hardly objective counter-intelligence pearls of wisdom! The source made no reference to Myer, nor was the informant aware that there was a brother, Moses.

Myer Nathan's file ends abruptly and without explanation at some time after 1960. With the exception of Myer's name and date of birth, the final folio – the last of ten – is fully redacted. For a likely fellow-traveller who attended three CPA lectures over a period of four months the file is not very large. There is no suggestion in the file that because of his attendance at CPA functions, Myer was a member of the Party though, shortly before his death in 1998, he readily admitted to a close relation that as a youth in the 1930s he had joined the CPA and this had been one of the biggest mistakes of his life. He claimed to have resigned in 1968 in protest over the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia.

As with other members of his family who have ASIO files, the letters Myer wrote to the editors of newspapers reveal a man with strong, even zealous pro-Soviet tendencies who seems to have remained devoted to the communist cause even when Stalin formed the non-aggression alliance with Hitler. For example, toward the end of World War Two he wrote to the Melbourne *Age* suggesting the 'German-Russo' (sic) non-aggression pact was necessary for Russia's defence and that the Soviet Union's

unprovoked attack on Finland was a consequence of the Soviets being 'obliged to take serious measures to increase its security'.[115] At the time the CPA was articulating the view that 'Finland was a reactionary vassal of imperialism'.[116]

Myer's strong interest in Russia and communism is confirmed by a small library of books on Russia that he left to a family member on his passing. The books were English translations of Russian monographs published in the 1920s and 30s that extolled communism and the Soviet Union.

As mentioned earlier, I find it strange that there are no ASIO files on Myer's mother Cecilia or sister Tybel. In his extensive study of the descendants of the Vilna Gaon, Chaim Freedman notes that for many years Tybel was a member of the CPA and that the house she shared with her mother was decorated with photographs of Lenin and Trotsky.[117] I have been told that the pictures were bought by Cecilia when she left Russia to come to Australia. I have heard similar reports from other family members and friends who knew both women and described them as uncritical supporters of communism. There was even a suggestion the breakdown of her marriage was due to Cecilia's unquestioned loyalty to the communist cause which was a continual source of conflict with her more politically moderate husband.

Peter Komesaroff

Pinkhas Komisaruk, or Peter Komesaroff, as he was known in Australia, was born in Berdiansk, Ukraine (then part of the Russian Empire), in 1898, the fourth surviving child of Meir Komisaruk. Peter came to Australia in 1913 with his siblings and his brother-in-law Zalman Komesaroff (who later changed his name to 'Kaye'). Peter's younger brother, Louis, also merited his own ASIO file.

In 1916, despite being below the minimum legal age for enlistment and having been in Australia for only three years, Peter ran away from Melbourne to New South Wales, falsified his age – he claimed to be 22 years and 10 months – and joined the Australian Army (Australian Imperial Force; AIF). His enlistment papers record his height as 5 feet 3 inches and his chest measurement as 34 inches.[118] Obviously it was much easier to falsify his age than it was to manipulate his physical measurements! After induction Peter was shipped to the Middle East and then Europe, where he was badly wounded fighting on the Western Front. He received medical

attention in England but was not repatriated to Australia until after the end of the war, and the injuries he sustained fighting for his new country affected his health for the rest of his life.

As the following story testifies, Peter was a very principled man with a strong sense of social justice. At a public meeting held in August 1943 by the Carlton-Fitzroy sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA), a resolution was put 'protesting against foreign-born persons and naturalised British subjects being permitted to sell any commodity' in the area. 'So-called naturalised aliens were only aliens after all and should be stopped from carrying on business in the district while Australians were away fighting', argued the sub-branch president.[119] Peter, an active RSSAILA member and an executive of the neighbouring Brunswick sub-branch, was present at this meeting; he stood up and asked if the motion included him, a naturalised British subject who had been crippled serving in the AIF. Despite Peter's opposition, the resolution was carried, after which he again stood up, tore off his RSSAILA badge, tossed it at the chairman and announced he was resigning from the League because he believed it to be 'a fascist-controlled organisation'.[120] The meeting had not been endorsed by the Melbourne head office of the RSSAILA which subsequently issued a statement that it found the motion repugnant.[121]

His brush with the RSSAILA would suggest that Peter should have a voluminous file dating back many years, but surprisingly it is remarkably thin – only five folios – and apparently it was opened only in September 1953, when a paid informer drew ASIO's attention to an advertisement in the *Jewish Herald* for the Commonwealth-sponsored Fellowship of Australian Writers.[122] The advertisement mentioned some people who were communists, some who were writers, and some who were both; and one named Peter Komesaroff. However, despite the appearance of being a new file, the folio notes that Peter was already known to ASIO through his file (VPF 127) that was started in the 1930s, probably by the CIB. Unfortunately these early papers are no longer available and were probably destroyed during an earlier document rationalisation or else were not transferred to ASIO.

It is most likely that Peter first came to the attention of the security services in 1933, when he represented Gezerd at a conference organised by the State Provisional Anti-War Committee.[123] His role as foundation

honorary secretary of the JCCAF would also not have passed unnoticed. Apart from his role in the Council, Peter was quick to use the public media to challenge what he saw as antisemitism, and this practice would also have drawn attention to him.[124] There is no suggestion in his file that Peter ever joined the CPA; however some of his family believe he was a member, but resigned in the 1950s as knowledge of Stalin's antisemitic purges became known outside of the Soviet Union. It is possible this information is contained in the first part of the file which cannot now be located. However, I doubt that Peter was ever a member of the CPA. As explained below, in 1940 Inspector Roland Browne, head of the Melbourne office of the CIB, claimed to know Peter and vouched for his loyalty. I find it hard to believe that he would have done this had there been any suggestion that Peter was a communist. Also, a former executive member of the Party who resigned in 1954 knew Peter's children, but cannot recall him (Peter) ever having joined the CPA.

Peter became a naturalised Australian in 1936 and his naturalisation file includes the following comment from the Victorian Special Branch which were asked to comment on his character and suitability as an Australian citizen: 'he holds advanced views but not incompatible with good citizenship and is not a member of the Communist Party'.[125] Peter's daughter, Thelma Webberley, believed her father was a socialist and not a communist and that possibly Stalin cured him even of that.[126]

The second entry in Peter's ASIO file, also from a paid informer, is dated 18 October 1957 and reports on a meeting of the Essendon Branch of the Eureka Youth League – the youth wing of the CPA – where a delegate mentioned that he had been experiencing difficulties with his eyes and had had excellent results from treatment by a local optician, one Peter Komesaroff. The next file entry lists subscribers to the Australasian Book Society and includes Peter's name and address. The acquisition of this list also necessitated payment to an informant.

The last entry in the file is a report from an unidentified woman, another paid informant, who claimed that she had been told by the communist author Judah Waten that Peter was a cousin of Mena Werder, who for a period was married to Felix Werder, the German-born composer who had come to Australia in 1940 on the notorious internee ship HMT *Dunera*. ASIO probably overpaid for this information, because the informant failed to report that Mena was Waten's sister and the siblings were first cousins of

Peter's wife Sarah (née Isaacman). Nowhere in Peter's meagre file is this detail recorded, nor is the fact that in 1940 he was the Consul for Russia in Victoria.[127]

During World War Two, Peter was active in the formation of the Jewish War Effort Circle (JWEC), of which he was honorary secretary. The Circle, which was a response by Australia's Eastern European Jews to a series of antisemitic incidents, worked closely with the Red Cross to provide servicemen of all faiths with various comforts. In the first three years of the war the Circle distributed £25,000 to patriotic funds, including providing two cars for the Australian Comfort Funds Appeal and £1,369 to the Heidelberg Military Hospital.[128] The JWEC also supplied prayer books to Jewish servicemen, but this and its other charitable activities did not meet with the approval of the old Anglo segment of Australia's Jewish community, who complained the work was unnecessary and would 'do more harm than good in combating anti-Semitism'.[129] Peter responded to this charge by arguing that: 'We as Jews insist on our rights to be protected against anti-Semitism'.[130]

As with his other first-generation cohorts possessing ASIO files (his cousin Yaakov-Leib Mendelson and his brother Louis Komesaroff), Peter was an avid letter writer, especially when it came to challenging antisemitism and defending Israel. In 1949, shortly after the creation of Israel, he wrote to the Melbourne *Argus* correcting an article by an anti-communist representative of the pre-war Polish government who had claimed that because of the difficulties it faced, Israel would end like Poland – occupied by more powerful neighbours. Challenging the analogy, Peter wrote that Israel was different from Poland because 'it is based on truth, justice and democracy and if left alone Jews and Arabs will settle their differences in a matter of weeks'.[131]

In June 1940, during the darkest days of the war, Peter, wrote to *The Argus* challenging a letter from a C.F. Bardwell of Elwood who had written to the paper objecting to Australia accepting Jewish refugees from Germany on the alleged grounds that they could not quickly shake off their former allegiances. In a tightly written response, Peter wrote that because they enjoy equality of citizenship, Jews must be loyal to Australia and he cited the fact that many had enlisted in active service to fight the common enemy, Nazi Germany, which he described as 'the beasts of civilisation'. Peter concluded his letter by urging Bardwell 'not to waste his energies in antisemitic letters to the Press … Let Jew and gentile, having the freedom

of the world at heart fight shoulder to shoulder in the struggle against the greatest menace the world has ever known'. [132]

Peter's tireless work for Jewish causes, particularly in support of his co-religionists fleeing Nazism, is another aspect of his public life that is not revealed in the ASIO file. In the late 1930s Peter personally organised individual members of the Jewish community to sponsor these refugees as migrants to Australia. After the war, Peter was the Victorian Director of Aid for Israel, which today is known as the United Israel Appeal. He was also active in the group that created Australia's first Jewish day school, Mount Scopus College.

Louis Komesaroff

Yehuda-Leib Komisaruk, or Louis Komesaroff as he was known in Australia, was the younger brother of Peter Komesaroff. He was born in Berdiansk in 1900, the son of Meir Komisaruk, and arrived in Australia in 1913.

Louis's file was opened in 1918 when the military censor trans-lated a Yiddish-language letter from Kopel Cohen in Russia to one 'Leon Komesaroff', but it is doubtful if the reference was to Louis, as the person named as 'Leon' was 12 years older and lived in Horsham, Victoria.[133] The translated letter mentions the so-called Leon's wife who had passed away, his child and his sick parents. However Louis was not married at that time and both his parents had passed away around 1906. 'Leon' was born in the same year as Louis's cousin Yaakov-Leib Komesarook (later Mendelson) and many of the details match those of Yaakov-Leib's life, with the excep-tion that Yaakov-Leib's wife was alive at this time. On balance I believe that 'Leon' was Yaakov-Leib Komesarook and not his cousin Yehuda-Leib (Louis) Komesaroff. Over the years, because of the similarity of their first names, the security agencies confused the two cousins. Indeed, in 1940, the CIB directed its field officers to identify Louis, as they had four files for people with the surname Komesaroff.[134]

The next major entry in Louis's file is in March 1933, when the CIB monitored a business trip of his to Wonthaggi in Victoria. At the time Louis was working as a travelling optician, and the officer filing the report wrote that he viewed the 'optical work' as a 'blind' for the great deal of com-munist work Louis was doing in the district.[135] The officer also noted that Louis was regarded 'as being a dangerous and very subtle individual'.

Despite the adverse report on his activities in Wonthaggi, there was

no follow-up on what Louis was doing or why he was in the area. The next entry is in June 1940, when T. J. Edwards of Maffra, Victoria, wrote a letter of complaint about Louis to the minister for defence. At the time the CPA had been banned under wartime regulations because of the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Australia's enemy, Germany. Edwards's letter, which is lengthy – more than two typed pages – refers to 'Komesaroff's propaganda' and makes many serious but unsubstantiated allegations. However, it seems that the purpose of Edwards's letter was to seek the support of the security agency against legal action threatened by Louis, because Edwards's unfounded public criticism had caused Louis to lose business. Even though the complaint strongly suggested self-interest it was passed on to the head of the CIB in Canberra, Colonel Harold E. Jones.

Jones asked his office in Melbourne to supply a background note on Louis and the agents provided a very comprehensive briefing which included his medical history. On reading the note, Inspector Roland Browne of the CIB's Melbourne office wrote: 'I would hesitate to call this man a Fifth Columnist', and suggested that a 'warning about careless talk in these difficult times from a person who would command his respect might not be amiss'. The only problem was that the briefing referred not to Louis, but to his brother Peter. Browne was unaware of the mistake, but when the error was bought to his attention, he spoke to Peter Komesaroff about his young brother. As a consequence of this meeting, Louis took the bold step of coming to Melbourne from his home in Bairnsdale to confront the CIB over Edwards's allegations. Louis explained to the interviewing officers that he had regarded Edwards as a friend with whom he frequently discussed international affairs, but the man was also a customer who was behind on his account, and it was possibly for this reason that Edwards had made the allegations against him. In his note of the meeting, Inspector Browne describes Louis as 'of Russian Jewish birth [who] has assertive qualities in argument'. He also mentions that in recent times Louis had formed a group to assist soldiers' dependents. The note, dated 16 August 1940, concludes with the following sentence: 'I have known the Komesaroffs for years – there are several serving in the war. I have no doubt about their basic loyalty although they are somewhat "leftist" in their views'.[136]

Browne's endorsement of the Komesaroff family did not lead to closure of the file, since within months of his report an unsigned letter turned

up at the Censor's office claiming that Louis and his wife's family were disloyal communists who refused to stand during the national anthem.[137] The unknown writer urged the police to watch Louis because he was doing harm to the country. The authorities appear to have ignored this letter, but a note from the Bairnsdale police in 1949 drew attention to Louis's pro-Russian views and asserted that as president of the local branch of the Australian Labor Party, he had stacked the branch with radicals. The policeman wrote that he believed that Louis was 'a keen and enthusiastic supporter of Communism' who was 'a strong, silent shrewd worker in the cause of Communism', even though, as the officer readily admitted, there was 'insufficient proof of this'.

The file shows no follow-up action after this note, with the next folio dated more than 18 months later, reporting that communist activity had fallen in Bairnsdale since Louis had gone to live in Melbourne. Learning that Louis had come to their area, police from the Special Branch in Melbourne took another look at him, but 'failed to discover any activity by him … for the last two years'.

Apart from a surveillance report from a paid informant that Louis had attended a reception for the Georgian State Dancers hosted by the Australia-Soviet Friendship Society, and a copy of a letter he had written to the *Jewish News* in support of the JCCAF, the rest of Louis's file contains extensive extracts from his son, Max's file and a couple of folios reporting on his daughter, Tessa. Details of Max's and Tessa's files are discussed later.

Like his elder brother Peter, Louis was an early member of the JCCAF, but, surprisingly, ASIO has no record of his membership and, apart from a copy of his letter to the *Jewish News* supporting the JCCAF, it appears that ASIO was unaware of his membership. Another surprise, particularly given the criticism of him by people in Bairnsdale, is that the file does not contain any of the many letters and articles Louis wrote for publication in the local press, particularly the *Gippsland Times*.[138] Examination of contemporary newspapers reveals Louis to have been a prolific writer and campaigner on three issues: support for Russia against Germany, support for a Jewish homeland, and opposition to antisemitism. Louis's writing seems to have dropped off during the period when Germany and Russia had a non-aggression pact and the CPA was banned in Australia, but picked up in late 1942 when the Curtin government lifted the ban.

When he became aware of the extent of Stalin's great purges, Louis

wrote to Stalin seeking confirmation that the country's Jews were not being persecuted. His family understand Louis received a response to his letter from the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, who wrote denying the Soviet Union was oppressing its Jewish citizens and that in Russia antisemitism was illegal. I have not been able to locate the letter and I have not been able to determine when the correspondence occurred, but if it is true then it is somewhat ironic as Molotov's wife, who was Jewish, was arrested in 1949, charged with Zionism and sent into internal exile, where she remained until 1953 when Stalin died. Louis's correspondence with the Soviet leadership suggests a naivety that can only be explained by the fact that he was probably becoming disillusioned with the Soviet Union, since despite the rhetoric he could see that in Russia communism had not eliminated the persecution of Jews. In this he did not diverge from many of his close relations and co-religionists who had once perceived the Soviet Union as a utopia that had emancipated its Jewish citizens but was now persecuting them.

Louis's letters to the press reveal a proud Jew and a passionate Zionist who had a strong interest in international affairs and was remarkably perceptive. He was driven by his antipathy towards antisemitism, which he linked with fascism. Until he became aware of Soviet antisemitism, Louis's positive, almost idealistic, attitude to Russia was another factor that shaped his thinking. All these characteristics are revealed in the following extract from a letter to the Melbourne *Argus* that he wrote in 1940 when communism was banned in Australia and Russia had a non-aggression pact with Germany:

> Russia should be reminded that arming herself in isolation from the rest of the world will not stop the Germans from plundering one country after another until it precipitates war on a world wide scale, including Russia. You will say that Germany has a non-aggression pact with Russia. What are Hitler's pacts worth? Hitler the liar has broken more than he can remember'.[139]

Given subsequent events, these sentiments were remarkably prescient.

Max Komesaroff

Of the seven files released by ASIO, none is more egregious than that of Max Komesaroff.[140] Max was Louis Komesaroff's son. He was born in Melbourne in 1927 and, like many of the second-generation Komesaroffs

born in Australia, he distinguished himself academically, earning a scholarship to Ormond College at the University of Melbourne, where he graduated in optometry and subsequently in geophysics. For most of his working life he was involved with the Radio Telescope at Parkes in western New South Wales and much of his published research is still cited in academic journals.

Max appears to have come to ASIO's attention because, like his father Louis, he was a member of the JCCFA. It was as a representative of that organisation that he visited the attorney-general of Victoria, Trevor Oldham, in 1949, to protest a proposal by the Victorian Liberal Government to amend the Police Offences Act to make it a crime 'to excite abhorrence against any religion or religious denomination or sect or against any members of any religious denomination or sect'. Those found guilty of the offence were liable to a fine of £100 or 12 months in gaol. The proposed amendments bring to mind the current controversy surrounding Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, except the 1949 proposal was strongly opposed by the left side of politics, particularly CPA members and fellow travellers while today it is the right that want to abolish 18C.

Initially Oldham claimed that the proposed amendments were designed to punish those disseminating extreme anti-Catholic or antisemitic propaganda, but when pressed he changed his tune and agreed that the amendments were directed against the CPA, 'which was fostering dissension among religious groups in an attempt to further its own policy'.[141]

Known as the Anti-Bigotry Bill, the proposal was, as expected, roundly condemned by the mainstream press – but the largest and most vocal opposition came from the union movement, especially those on the left or under the control of the CPA. On the other hand, the legislation was heavily supported by the Catholic church and in particular its influential Melbourne leader, Archbishop Daniel Mannix. The *Sydney Sunday Herald* summed up the view of civil libertarians when it said:

> How convenient it is becoming to defend any illiberal or repressive proposal by declaring it anti-Communist in purpose! … Because Communists and fellow travellers are against it, everyone else is expected to be for it.[142]

The JCCFA opposed the Anti-Bigotry Bill because they believed it violated civil liberties and would prevent Jews from criticising antisemitic religious denominations.[143] However, in his study of the Council's structure and function, Allan Leibler claims that the true motive was that

the proposed legislation would have silenced communist criticism of the Catholic church.[144] I believe that both these explanations are applicable.

After receiving numerous delegations seeking the withdrawal of the Bill, the government abandoned the planned changes and, although the matter was forgotten by many, including the protesters, ASIO was busy assembling files on the 'communists and fellow travellers' who had opposed the legislation. Included in this group was Max Komesaroff. An entry in his file, dated 11 May 1951, refers to a report in the Melbourne *Herald* of 23 September 1949, which listed the names of organisations whose representatives had visited the attorney-general to request him to withdraw the proposed legislation. The newspaper report explicitly stated the protesters were communists and mentioned one 'M. Komesaroff who represented the Jewish Council to Combat War and Fascism [sic].[145]

The file note – written nearly two years after the newspaper report referring to Max – states that a search of ASIO records 'had failed to reveal any further trace of M. Komesaroff being associated with any of the Jewish societies on record', so the investigating officer concluded that the 'M. Komesaroff' was Max Komesaroff. Later in the file, mention is made that the 'M. Komesaroff' referred to in the report may not have been Max, and later still there is a hand-written notation stating: 'Identification is unsatisfactory'. Despite the file notation that the identification needed to be confirmed, there is no record showing that this was ever done, or that 'M. Komesaroff' could have been someone other than Max. The lack of source validation is a continuing theme within the seven ASIO files.

The possibility that 'M. Komesaroff' could have been Max's cousin, Morris Komesaroff, did not seem to be a concern. Morris (see details of his file below) was only six years older than Max and in his later life he had numerous confrontations with the authorities over civil liberties. Morris's son, Paul Komesaroff, believes that it is unlikely that the 'M. Komesaroff' was his father, but because Morris was a staunch libertarian who took great delight in challenging authority, I regard it is possible that 'M. Komesaroff' could have been Morris.

Max's case (and reputation) was not helped by the fact that the news-paper report that named him linked him to Brian Fitzpatrick, who was well known to ASIO as the troublesome socialist who led the Australian Council of Civil Liberties. Early in Max's ASIO file an officer reported that he 'is the son of Judah-Leib Komesaroff about whom there is a considerable

file consisting of allegations regarding communist sympathies'. However, the officer did acknowledge that despite investigation the allegations were never substantiated.

As a geophysicist working with the Bureau of Mineral Resources (BMR), Max required a security clearance, so ASIO's interest in him would now follow him for the rest of his working life. This, despite his colleagues and supervisors reporting that he was 'quiet, unobtrusive and a satisfactory worker', who was not 'revealed as anything but a hard-working person'. Ultimately ASIO's head office concluded that Max was an unlikely security risk and directed its Victorian Regional Director to advise the Public Service Inspector that there was no adverse report against Max. 'However, his name should be kept in mind by Victorian Officers who deal with CSIRO [Commonwealth Scientific, Industrial and Research Organisation] or the University'.

In June 1953 a requirement for Max to visit the Northern Territory to work with the BMR's Airborne Scintillometer Unit prompted ASIO to have another look at Max and his father. On this occasion the Special Branch was asked to investigate both men to see if they harboured any sympathy for Russia, the CPA or any allied front organisation, with particular attention to the JCCFA. The Special Branch constable delegated to make the enquiries consulted the local electoral roll before approaching neighbours, who reported that the Komesaroff family kept to themselves but were known to have parties where people spoke in foreign languages. The informant added that the family had a good reputation, although he considered Louis to be ill-mannered. The informant judged Max to be 'unlike a normal youth in such that he has a habit of walking with his head down. He does not seem to have the normal interests of a man of his age and lacks the spring in his step'. Clearly very perceptive and relevant observations!

Nothing came of the Victorian Special Branch's investigation, because before it was completed Max resigned from the BMR to join the Division of Radiophysics of the CSIRO, in Sydney. The Victorian file was passed to ASIO's New South Wales regional office. The papers included a note that recent articles in the *Jewish Herald* had reported that, in 1947, Max and his sister, Tessa, were well known leaders of the Jewish Students' Group; there was also a note that Max was coming to Melbourne to attend a farewell party for Tessa, who was about to leave on an overseas trip to

Europe and Israel. No conclusions were drawn and no comments were made about the Jewish Students' Group, which was a group of tertiary students and recent graduates who met to discuss an eclectic range of Jewish topics. The Group was formed in 1941 by Dr David Tabor, a prominent British physicist, who was then undertaking research at the University of Melbourne. Tabor's hope was that the Group would encourage support for Zionism and produce the next generation of leaders for the local Jewish community.[146] Dr Tabor was relatively conservative though the Group was known to have included left-leaning Jewish students, some of whom were members of the CPA. ASIO appears to have a file on the Group but has yet to release it. However there is no evidence that either Max or his sister had 'graduated' from the Group to the CPA.

The final entry in Max's file is dated October 1969. Marked 'Secret', the folio contains a list of people whose residential addresses appeared in a document obtained from the CPA office in Sydney – presumably acquired in a clandestine raid. But the address given for Max is that of his parents' home in Melbourne – somewhere he had not lived since his move to Sydney 15 years previously. There is no evidence to show that, after moving to Sydney, Max continued his membership of the JCCFA; it is more than likely he had severed his connection around 1952, when the Council was expelled from the VJBD. Max's father (Louis) and uncle (Peter), who were at various times on the JCCFA's executive, are understood to have resigned around that time. Despite leaving the Council, Max never forgot his principles, leavened with humour, as demonstrated in the following letter he wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1987 following a report that a Queensland businessman, Michael Gore, had referred to visitors from the southern states as cockroaches:

> Sir: Reading the recent comments by Mr Michael Gore on the subject of cockroaches which said, inter alia, "the streets these days are full of cockroaches and most of them are human", I was reminded of a story told by my Russian Jewish grand-father.
>
> A Jew was selling spectacles in a Prussian town. A Prussian officer seized a pair of spectacles, put them on and then, looking at the Jew, said: "These spectacles are no good, Jew. When I look through them, all I see is a swine". The Jew said: "But that's impossible, these are excellent spectacles".
>
> The officer repeated his comment and the Jew repeated his protest.

> The Jew then seized the spectacles, put them on his own nose, and looking at the officer, said: "My God, you're right."

Max Komesaroff [147]

Tessa Silberberg

Tessa Silberberg (née Komesaroff), who was born in Melbourne in 1929, has the distinction of being the only woman among the seven and the third member of her immediate family to have an ASIO file.[148] As noted earlier, her father Louis has an extensive file as does her brother Max. Tessa's file was opened in October 1954, when a paid informant provided ASIO with a list of the names and addresses of people who subscribed to the Australasian Book Society.[149] Brief details of her father and brother are included in Tessa's file, as are details of her passport, collected when she applied for travel documents to visit Europe and Israel in 1955.

The final folio in Tessa's file (in June 1959) is a note reporting on an index book listing the names and addresses of people who had purchased publications from the CPA-owned Pioneer Bookshop in Sydney. Like the first folio in Tessa's file, this information was provided by a paid informant, who appears to have been very close to the CPA's Sydney branch hierarchy. Apart from the comment that she was a reader of left-wing literature, no other allegations were made against Tessa, and there are no entries in her file after June 1959. However, Tessa's name does appear in the file of a fellow student and friend, Bernard Rechter, a self-declared member of the CPA until 1954 when he became disillusioned and left the Party.[150] A folio on Bernard's file refers to his involvement with the Melbourne Jewish Youth Council (MJYC) of which Tessa is recorded as vice-president.[151] The Council seems to have been an alliance of various religious and Zionist youth groups, including the Jewish Study Group. It first came to the CIS's attention in 1944 when it wrote to the JAFC in Moscow and again in 1946 when the Service believed, incorrectly, that the MJYC had sought affiliation with the World Federation of Democratic Youth, a Communist front organisation. The next year, 1947, ASIO records show the group was invited to send a delegate to the JCCFA.[152]

As well as being active in the leadership of MJYC and the Jewish Study Group, Tessa was a member of the Melbourne University Labor Club and attended marches and demonstrations, particularly in relation to the peace movement, but none of this information is recorded in her ASIO file. ASIO also maintained a small file on the Labor Club. A mere

15 folios, it covers the period 1947 to 1949, a time when Tessa attended Melbourne University, and the Organisation estimates the Club had around 100 members of whom 25 were suspected of being associated with the CPA. The file lists the 25 Party members and Tessa Komesaroff's name is not included.[153] A member of both the Labour Club and the Party whose name appears on the list has confirmed that Tessa was an active member of the Club but she had no connection with the CPA and was probably unaware of how Party members manipulated the Club's activities.

Morris Komesaroff

The most recent Komesaroff file is the one for Morris Komesaroff, who was born in Melbourne in 1922. Morris, also known as Moishe, was the eldest son of Alter Komesaroff, who had come to Australia in 1912. A brilliant student, Morris won a competitive scholarship to Scotch College, where he graduated as joint dux in 1939, and was awarded a scholarship to study Law and Arts at the University of Melbourne. After graduating from university Morris had an outstanding legal career specialising in property law; he conceived and developed the strata title form of building subdivision, which revolutionised apartment ownership and remains the basis of much of Australia's current residential development.[154]

Morris could be an irritant to officialdom, especially in matters of principle, when he was a fearless and uncompromising advocate. It was through his actions that the Legal Profession Guarantee Fund was established to compensate clients who suffered losses in their dealings with lawyers. He also persuaded banks to pay the interest earned on solicitors' trust accounts into the Fund.

While he could be difficult, even litigious, Morris was never affiliated with any political party and so it is surprising that ASIO took an interest in him.[155] Morris's file was opened in June 1973, when he planned to visit China with his wife and daughter.[156] Gough Whitlam had been elected prime minister on 5 December 1972 and on 21 December of that year the new government recognised the communist People's Republic of China. The previous Australian government had refused to acknowledge the People's Republic; instead it had recognised the Republic of China, governed by the Chinese Nationalists in Taipei. With the change in recognition, Australian citizens were now permitted to visit mainland China, but the file on Morris suggests that ASIO had yet to modify its practice of recording the details of Australians planning to travel to that country.

Morris's file is very slim – only three folios – and contains a list of names of people who had registered an interest in travelling to China now that it was open to holders of Australian passports. The file note is marked 'Secret' and 'Non Gratis', indicating that ASIO had paid for the information, which most likely came from an employee of the travel agency that organised the trip. It is also possible that the informant was affiliated with the CPA, as there is a notation alongside one name that the person was rejected 'on instructions from the Communist Party Australia (Marxist-Leninist). The reason for the rejection was not known'.

Morris and his wife did travel to China in late 1973, but his son Paul had made a visit a few months earlier and there is no reference to that trip on Morris's file, nor are there any references to his son's involvement in anti-Vietnam War protests and other left-wing activities. Referring to the activities of immediate family members who were of interest to ASIO was a common practice, and the fact this was not done with Morris's file suggests either an error on the Organisation's part or else that Paul did not have a file – something he believes is unlikely. It is also possible that any file on Paul would still fall under ASIO's 30-year open access period.

Morris's file, which is linked to a similar document created for his wife, Hadassah (née Sher), fails to mention her impeccable left-wing credentials. Though not a communist, her father, Israel Sher, had been the inaugural vice-president and later president of the JCCFA and other Jewish communal organisations that were monitored by ASIO. He was one of the first of the JCCFA's leadership to acknowledge that the Council had been wrong over Soviet antisemitism.[157] Hadassah's aunt, Fredda Brilliant, was a sculptor who worked for the Comintern in Moscow during World War Two, and her cousins, Rivka Brilliant and Miriam Brilliant, were members of the CPA. ASIO maintained files on the three women.

Supporting the view that there were lacunae in ASIO's system is the fact that earlier, in 1966 at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Morris had travelled to China through Hong Kong without the approval of the Australian Government. At the time Australian passports were marked not valid for China or North Vietnam, and violating these restrictions should have attracted ASIO's attention.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that, owing to the strong support for communism among sections of the Australian Jewish community, ASIO and its

predecessors took a close interest in a number of Jewish organisations and individuals, including at least seven members of the Komesaroff family. Most of these seven people were left-leaning secular Zionistic Jews, only one of whom was known to be a member of the CPA, and he resigned from the Party because of its policies toward the creation of a Jewish state. Four of the files were created because the subjects were associated with Jewish organisations that were being monitored. The other three files relate to one person who subscribed to the Australasian Book Society, one who was a visitor to China, and one who attended CPA lectures. The fact that there are only seven files suggests that the Komesaroff family was not targeted as such.

While the contents of the seven files differ, they do share a number of common themes, namely: the subjects tended to be secular Jews with an antipathy to antisemitism and who were strong supporters of a Jewish homeland; much of the information collected involved mundane details that were obtained from paid informants or public documents such as electoral rolls and vehicle registration records; there is no incriminating evidence or suggestion that any of the seven people targeted were involved in any illegal activity or were a threat to Australia's security; there is no evidence that any of the seven were monitored surreptitiously through telephone intercepts or other covert surveillance methods – this suggests that they were of only peripheral interest to the counter-intelligence agencies; most, but not all, of the files are incomplete, and some of the missing folios appear to have been culled during the various organisational changes that culminated in the creation of ASIO. There are redactions that were to be expected, but I believe it is extremely unlikely that the missing pages were deliberately withheld; each of the files includes factual errors, ranging from minor mistakes such as incorrect or old residential addresses to scandalous lapses, including confusing people with similar names. In some cases essential information such as membership of the CPA and participation in public protests seems not to have been known; The files represent a collection of disparate information of varying degrees of accuracy and value, and there is no evidence of any meaningful 'big-picture' analysis from which conclusions were drawn.

Appendix: First- and second-generation members of the Komesaroff family. Names of the first generation are the names by which they were known by in Australia.

Table 2a. Descendants of Menahem-Mendel Komisaruk

First generation	Second generation	Country of birth	Year of birth	Year of death
Zalman Kaye*				
	Myer Kaye	Russia	1909	1996
	Tessie Freedman	Russia	1911	1975
	Peter Kaye	Australia	1915	1995
	Bill Kaye	Australia	1919	2012
Yaakov-Leib Mendelson				
	Norman Mendelson	Russia	1913	1998
	Minnie Fisher	Australia	1923	1992
Yoheved Sherr				
	Ben Sherr	Russia	1921	2009
	Lily Chester	Australia	1923	
Bessie Rosenbaum				
	Max Rosenbaum	Australia	1927	2008
	Shirley Wise	Australia	1937	
	Sid Rosenbaum	Australia	1935	
Lottie Allen				
	Shirley Murray	Australia	1939	
Peter Komesarook				
	Minnie Shaul	Australia	1927	
	Ben Kaye	Australia	1929	
	Sam Komesarook	Australia	1933	1994
William Komesaroff				
	Beverley Harari	Australia	1939	
	Michael Komesaroff	Australia	1945	
	David Komesaroff	Australia	1947	

*Zalman Kaye was married to his first cousin, Chana-Reizel Kaye, and so their four children are listed twice, as descendants of both Menahem-Mendel and Meir Komisaruk

Table 2b. Descendants of Meir Komisaruk

First generation	Second generation	Country of birth	Year of birth	Year of death
Chana-Reizel Kaye*				
	Myer Kaye	Russia	1909	1996
	Tessie Freedman	Russia	1911	1975
	Peter Kaye	Australia	1915	1995
	Bill Kaye	Australia	1919	2012
Cecilia Nathan				
	Myer Nathan	Australia	1916	1998
	Tybel Nathan	Australia	1917	1973
	Moses Nathan	Australia	1921	?**
Alter Komesaroff				
	Morris Komesaroff	Australia	1922	2007
	Tess Green	Australia	1924	
	Norman Komesaroff	Australia	1927	1965
	David Komesaroff	Australia	1933	2007
	Eddie Komesaroff	Australia	1934	
Peter Komesaroff				
	Thelma Webberley	Australia	1924	2015
	Miriam Mantel	Australia	1926	
	Judith Same	Australia	1930	
Louis Komesaroff				
	Max Komesaroff	Australia	1927	1988
	Tessa Silberberg	Australia	1929	1991
	Ruth Holan	Australia	1934	

*See footnote in Table 1a.

** I understand that Moses (known as Mossy) died around 1984. However, I have not been able to confirm the date.

Notes

1. ASIO is reputed to have collected a library of files containing details on half a million Australian citizens.

2. As with all my writing on the Komesaroff family, this paper is dedicated to my grandchildren, Zoe and Asher Komesaroff and their generational cohorts so they will know from where they have come and how privileged they are to live in this wonderful country. I hope they understand that with this privilege comes responsibilities.

3. A more complete history of the Komesaroff family can be found in William Komesaroff, *What the Eye Will See: An Australian Immigrant Story* (Melbourne: Makor at Lamm Jewish Library of Australia, 2014); Keith Freedman, *Our Father's Harvest: A History of the Komisaruk (Komesaroff) Family* (Privately Published, 1982); Chaim Freedman, *Our Father's Harvest Supplement* (Privately Published, 1990); Chaim Freedman, *Eliyahu's Branches: The Descendents of the Vilna Gaon and His Family* (New Jersey: Avotaynu Inc., 1997). The family's oral history relates that the Komisaruk surname dates to 1846 when the patriarch, Shlomo-Zalman migrated to Grafskoy but it is possible that it predates this because in 1804 a ukase from Tsar Nicholas decreed that all Jews adopt family names. The 1816 Russian census for Lithuania records the name Komisaruk, the name that was used in Grafskoy.

4. After the 1917 Revolution, Grafskoy was renamed Proletarsky.

5. Members of the Komesaroff family who were born in Russia had more than one first name. They received a Hebrew name at birth and they took on an English name when in Australia, often when they were naturalised as Australian citizens. In some cases, after naturalisation, the family continued to refer to them by their Hebrew names. The family name has also varied over time, changing from Komisaruk to Komesarook and Komesaroff. When referring to first names and surnames I have used the family name of the person concerned as it was at that time.

6. Joseph Berger, 'Are Liberal Jewish Voters a Thing of the Past?', *New York Times*, 13 September 2014.

7. Komesaroff, op. cit., p. 24.

8. 'Under the Clock', *Shepparton Advertiser*, 2 August 1923.

9. Freedman, op. cit., p. 222.

10. Solomon's immigration file (National Archives of Australia (NAA): Department of Home and Territories, Central Office; A1, *S. Solomon Komesaroff - Naturalization*) nominates the arrival date as 3 October but this conflicts with contemporary newspaper reports such as the Melbourne *Argus*, 10 October 1912, which report the date as 10 October.

11. NAA: Department of External Affairs; A1, Correspondence files, annual single number series 1921; *Zalman Komesaroff – Naturalization*.

12. J.Doulman and D. Lee, *Every Assistance & Protection: A History of the Australian Passport* (Leichardt: Federation Press, 2008), p. 82.

13.   The *War Precautions Act 1914* was an Act which gave the Government of Australia special powers for the duration of World War One and for six months afterwards. The powers were exercisable by regulation so they did not need to be passed by Parliament in order to become law. Some of the activities carried out under the authority of the *War Precautions* Act include cancellation of commercial contracts with firms in enemy countries, levying of an income tax, issue of passports, price fixing, interning of 'enemy aliens' and censorship of publications and letters.

14.   Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia From Origins to Legality* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998), p. 48.

15.   David Humphries, 'The spy who came in from the cold after his death', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 June 2010.

16.   David W. Lovell and Kevin Windle, *Our Unswerving Loyalty A documentary survey of relations between the Communist Party of Australia and Moscow, 1920–1940* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2008), p. 40.

17.   Desmond Ball and D.M. Horner, *Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Network, 1944-1950* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin 1999), p. 233.

18.   NAA: Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security; A8908, Seventh Report, Jacqueline Templeton, *Australian Intelligence / Security Services 1900-1950,* vol. 2, p. 65.

19.   ibid., p. 300.

20.   David Horner, *The Spy Catchers; The Official History of ASIO, 1949-1963* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin 2014), 4.

21   ibid., 5.

22.   The Comintern was also known as the Third International.

23.   David W. Lowell, 'Unswerving Loyalty: Moscow and the Communist Party of Australia, 1920-40', *Quadrant,* May 2008, pp. 80-6.

24.   Macintyre, op.cit., p. 41.

25.   Ball and Horner, ibid., p. 220.

26.   Lowell and Windle, op.cit., p. 53.

27.   L.Sharkey, 'Resist the Fascist Aggressor', *Workers Weekly*, 16 September 1938, 'Big Meetings Support Czechs", *Workers Weekly*, 30 September 1938, and 'Nor Bargains with Fascist Warmakers', *Workers Weekly*, 22 August 1939.

28.   'Remembering the Hebron Riots, 1929' *Forward*, 20 August 2004, http://forward.com/culture/5186/remembering-the-hebron-riots-1929/.

29.   Myer Nathan, 'Letters to the Editor: Poland and Hitler', *The Age*, 13 January 1944.

30.   Philip Mendes, 'American, Australian, and other Western Jewish Communists and Soviet Anti-Semitism: Responses to the Slansky Trial and the Doctors' Plot 1952–1953', *American Communist History,* vol. 10, no. 2 (2011), p. 51.

31.   Frank Cain, *The Origins of Political Surveillance in Australia (*Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1983), p. 253. Today £500 would be equivalent to $46,000.

32. Mason is a pseudonym for an Australian communist whose real identity remains unknown. It is possible that it could refer to either Steve Purdy or Jack Miles.

33. Macintyre, op.cit., pp. 356-57.

34. John Blaxland, *The Protest Years: The Official History of ASIO, 1963-1975* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2015), pp. 93-94.

35. Ball and Horner, ibid., p. 237.

36. Blaxland, op.cit., p. 9. Blaxland writes that W.C. Wentworth, a staunchly anti-communist parliamentarian requested and received personal briefings for himself on political enemies. ibid., p. 61.

37. Horner writes how the early security services were used for political purposes and that it was quite a normal occurrence for ministers to telephone the various branch offices to give them instructions. Horner, op.cit., p. 28 and p. 16.

38. Philip Mendes, 'Rogue Police Action: The Melbourne Jewish-Communist Controversy of May 1950', *Recorder*, June 2010, p. 2; NAA, A6122 Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office, *Kadimah (Jewish Youth Organisation in Victoria*); 'Kadimah Meeting: Protests on Police Interrogations', *Australian Jewish News*, 30 June 1950.

39. Blaxland, op.cit., p. 20.

40. ibid., p. 21.

41. Meredith Burgmann ed., *Dirty Secrets: Our ASIO Files* (Sydney: New South Publishing 2014), p. 35.

42. NAA, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office ; CA1297; Series A6122, 'Australian Book Society – NSW – volume 2'.

43. NAA, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office ; CA1297; Series A6122, 'Australian Book Society – NSW – volume 3'.

44. Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security, *Fourth Report: Volume 1*, 1978, 31.

45. The rise and fall of the JCCAF has been well documented. For example, Philip Mendes, 'The Cold War, McCarthyism, the Melbourne Jewish Council to combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, and Australian Jewry 1948-1953', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 24, no. 64 (2000), pp. 196-200; idem., 'The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism: An Historical Reappraisal', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* (henceforth cited as *AJHSJ*), vol. X, part 6 (1989) pp. 524-41.

46. The JAFC was one of five similar organisations which included the Women's anti-Fascist Committee, the Committee of Scientists, The All-Slavic Committee and The Youth Committee that were created by the Soviet Union in early 1942 after it was invaded by Germany. These organisations were designed to attract specific western social groups that could contribute to the Soviet Union's war effort.

47. Robert Gellately, *Stalin's Curse* (New York: Albert A. Knopf, 2013), pp. 189-90.

48. ibid., pp. 348-49.

49.   As pointed out later, some of Peter's family believe he was a member of the CPA, but there is no mention of this on his ASIO file and the available evidence suggest he was never a Communist.

50.   Mendes, 'The Cold War, McCarthyism, the Melbourne Jewish Council', p. 197.

51.   *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, eds. (Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), vol. 5, pp. 91-101.

52.   In 1974 I was in Israel and Clara's mother, Rachel Luban (née Komisaruk) told me that after decades of fruitless lobbying to have her daughter permitted to leave the Soviet Union, she wrote to the Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev. In her desperation she wrote in Yiddish and shortly after posting the letter she was advised that Clara was leaving for America.

53.   L.Sharkey, 'Labor Movement Must Fight Anti-Semitism', *Workers Weekly*, 24 February 1939, and 'The Jews and International Capitalism*', Workers Weekly*, 14 March 1939.

54.   NAA, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office; CA1297; Series A6122, 'Australian Soviet House, Australian Soviet Friendship Society, Victoria'.

55.   Mendes, 'American, Australian, and other Western Jewish Communists and Soviet Anti-Semitism', p. 151.

56.   Idem., 'The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism: An Historical Reappraisal', p. 525.

57.   ibid.

58.   ibid. The feeling of insecurity coincided with a powerful review of Russian attitudes towards its Jewish citizens which catalogued the long history of poor treatment by the Soviet Union of its Jewish inhabitants. See Solomon M. Schwarz, 'The New Anti-Semitism of the Soviet Union', *Commentary*, June 1949, pp. 535-45.

59.   Peter Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival: A Political and Sociological Study of an Australian Jewish Community* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1967), pp. 63-64.

60.   Horner, op.cit., p. 253.

61.   Frank Cain, 'Intelligence writings in Australia', *Intelligence and National Security,* vol. 6, n. 1, 1991, p. 249.

62.   Mark Aarons, *War Criminals Welcome: Australia a Sanctuary for Fugitive Criminals Since 1945* (Melbourne: Black Inc, 2001), p. 285. Aarons also alleges that ASIO knowingly recruited Nazi war criminals and collaborators as intelligence sources and agents and used them in anti-communist operations. ibid., p. 12.

63.   Philip Mendes, 'Jews, Nazis and Communists Down Under: The Jewish Council's Controversial Campaign Against Germans Immigration', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 33, issue 119, pp. 73-92.

64.   Jedwab, op.cit., p. 87.

65.   Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), p. 72.

66.   Macintyre, ibid., p. 257.

67.   The National Archives in Canberra hold at least 13 files on the JCCFA and several of them cover the CPA's interest in the Council. For example, NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office; A61221, 'Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism', ASIO file, vol. 7 [166 pp.]. It is likely that the Organisation has more files that it has yet to release.

68.   In 1945 the Jewish Board of Deputies replaced the Jewish Advisory Board as the peak Jewish community organisation in Victoria.

69.   Richard Overy, *Russia's War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 33.

70.   'Birobidjan', in *The Encyclopaedia and Dictionary of Zionism and Israel,* http://www.zionism-israel.com/dic/Birobidjan.htm. Accessed 17 October 2016. Gezerd was often reported on favourably by the Australian communist press, 'Anti-War Congress', *Workers' Weekly*, 14 April 1933; 'Against Persecution of Jews', *Workers Weekly*, 3 March 1933; 'Gezerd Meeting Refutes Anti-Jewish Tales', *Workers Weekly,* 18 January 1935.

71.   Malcolm J. Turnbull, *Safe Haven: Records of the Jewish Experience in Australia* (Canberra: NAA, 1999), p. 8; Macintyre, ibid., p. 267.

72.   David Rechter, 'Beyond The Pale: Jewish Communism in Melbourne', unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Melbourne (1986), pp. 38-42.

73.   Lou Jebwab, 'The Kadimah Youth Organisation in Melbourne: Reminisences, 1942-53', *AJHSJ*, vol. XII, part 1 (1993), p. 79.

74.   'Social and General', *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 21 April 1933; 'Religion or Politics?', *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 17 February 1933; 'Victorian Jews Protest: Gezerd Society's Meeting', *The Age*, 11 April 1933.

75.   Turnbull, op.cit., p. 108.

76.   Today the Jewish Welfare Society is known as Jewish Care.

77.   ASIO officers seemed to be avid readers to the *Australian Jewish News* and the *Australian Jewish Herald* as many of their files include clippings from these publications. The Organisation regarded the *Herald* as 'absolutely loyal', while the *News* was judged to be 'definitely pro-Communist'. NAA, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office, A6122, 'Communist Party of Australia: Interest and Activities in Jewish Community', 2 August 1943.

78.   NAA: Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security; A8908, Seventh Report, *Australian Intelligence/Security Services 1900-1950*, vol. 2, pp. 78-83.

79.   In Australia access to archival records is governed by the Archives Act 1983, under which Commonwealth government records are released for access by the public when they reach what is known as the open access period. Depending on when the document was generated the open access period ranges from 20 to 30 years after the document was created.

80. 'St. Kilda Maintenance Claim: Complaint About Relatives; Orders Made Against Husband', *Prahran Telegraph,* 25 May 1928.

81. If ASIO had located the file but wanted to withhold it they could have released it but with sections redacted. Redacting parts of a file is legal under the Archives Act and judging from the files I have seen it is not an uncommon practice.

82. Blaxland op.cit., p. 20.

83. ibid., p. 243. During the Vietnam War (1962-75) I was balloted for national service but was rejected after a medical examination. I have always believed that the rejection was justified because of poor physical fitness caused by grotesque obesity; however I could have been mistaken because Blaxland reports that any person who took an active part in the anti-Vietnam or anti-conscription movement was almost certain to escape call-up since ASIO screening was designed to eliminate such people.

84. ibid.

85. Special Branch were units within the various state police forces that cooperated with ASIO in matters of counter-intelligence.

86. Burgmann, ibid., p. 73.

87. NAA, Investigation Branch, Victoria; CA1297; Series A6126, 'Mendelson, Jacob Leib'.

88. Such fervour from CPA members was not unusual. When the Australian poet and life-long communist Katharine Susannah Prichard died in 1969 her coffin was draped in the Red flag.

89. Rechter, op.cit., p. 38.

90. ibid., p. 74. ASIO files refer to the Jewish Branch of the CPA but former Party members have told me there was a Jewish fraction within the Party but no specific Jewish branch. The fraction was essentially a caucus of Jews who were members of official Party branches, for example the St Kilda Branch, but they also met as a group to discuss Jewish topics. The Jewish fraction was a formal caucus in that it was recognised by the CPA's central committee.

91. J. L. Mendelson, 'Resigns From The Communist Party', *Australian Jewish News*, 1 March 1946.

92. Yaakov-Leib Komesarook, op.cit., p. 36.

93. NAA, Series A367, Naturalisation Correspondence files, single number series with year prefix, 1916-1927, Naturalisation.

94. J.L. Mendelson, 'Queries and Answers', *International Socialist*, 1 November 1919.

95. J.L. Komesarook, 'Letter of Thanks', *Ballarat Star*, 19 May 1921.

96. Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970) was moderate socialist who led the Russian Provincial Government until 7 November 1917 when he was overthrown by the Bolsheviks and forced to flee the country. The newspaper reports include 'Conditions in Russia: Former Geelong Business Man Relates Experiences'; *Geelong Advertiser*, 5 May 1922; 'Escape from Russia: Harrowing Experiences';

Grafton, NSW, *Daily Examiner*, 23 May 1922; 'Brisbane Russians: Escape from the Bolsheviks', Brisbane *Daily Mail*, 4 February 1922; 'Soviet Russia: Not Fit to Live In', *Ballarat Star*, 6 February 1922; 'Retreat from Moscow: A Family Disillusioned – No Place Like Australia', Perth *Sunday Times*, 30 April 1922.

97. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Central Office; A6126, 'Mendelson, Jacob Leib'.

98. 'Life in Melbourne: Party for Russian Fund', *Argus*, 12 December 1941.

99. 'War & Working Class', *Argus*, 6, 13 June 1945.

100. In today's money this would be equivalent to $600 which seems a lot for a subscription to a newspaper.

101. NAA, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office, A6122, 'Communist Party of Australia, Interest and Activities in Jewish Community'.

102. Robert Bozinovski points out that the CPA was also involved in the publication of various pamphlets to debunk race theories and counter racism itself and these publications included a vast amount of literature condemning antisemitism. Robert Bozinovski, 'The Communist Party of Australia and Proletarian Internationalism 1928-1945', unpublished PhD thesis, Victoria University, April 2008, p. 238.

103. NAA, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office, A6122, 'Communist Party of Australia, Interest and Activities in Jewish Community', 14 October 1943.

104. Mendelson, *Australian Jewish News*, 1 March 1946.

105. The Soviets did not pursue the policy recommended by Gaster and Piratin and on 29 November 1947 they voted in the United Nations to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state.

106. Mendelson, 'Queries and Answers', loc.cit.

107. Zosa Szajkowski, *Jews, Wars and Communism* (New York: Ktav Publishing 1974), 92.

108. J.L. Mendelson, 'Russian Revolution', Burnie *Advocate,* 17 May 1944.

109. J.L. Mendelson,' Hitler's Theory', *The Tribune*, 12 May 1944.

110. NAA, Investigation Branch, Victoria; B741; Series V/3900, 'Peter Komesarook'.

111. Jacob-Leib Komesarook, *The Progress of My Migration* (Melbourne: 1919), p. 3.

112. S. Krajewski, 'Jews, Communists and Jewish Communists, in Poland, Europe and Beyond', *Covenant Global Jewish Magazine* (2003), vol. 1, no 3.

113. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Central Office; A6119, 'Nathan, Myer (aka Zmood, Myer)', vol. 1.

114. Mrs. Nathan was Cecilia Nathan (née Komesaroff), mother of Myer and Tybel.

115. Myer Nathan, *The Age*, 13 January 1944.

116. Macintyre, op.cit., pp. 387-88.

117. Freedman (1927), op.cit., p. 218. Freedman's mother Tessie was Cecilia Nathan's niece and Tybel's cousin.

118. In his book, *In Their Merit: Australian Jewry and WWI* (Melbourne: Xlibris, 2015), p. 35, Rodney Gouttman writes that on his enlistment forms Peter declared his religion as 'Synagogue'.

119. James Waghorne and Stuart Macintyre, *Liberty: A History of Civil Liberties in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2011), p. 67.

120. Elena Gover, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), p. 228.

121. 'It Can Happen Here', *Australian Council for Civil Liberties*, March 1944.

122. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Central Office; A6119, 'Komesaroff, Peter (aka Komesarook) Miscellaneous Papers'.

123. Rechter, op.cit., p. 57.

124. J.L. Komesaroff, J L. 'Refugee Jews', Melbourne *Argus,* 13 June 1940.

125. NAA: Department of the Interior [I], Central Administration; A1, 1936/8862, 'P. Komesaroff Naturalisation'.

126. Gover, ibid., p. 232.

127. 'Jottings of Jill', *Gippsland Times*, 7 December 1942.

128. Today this would be equivalent to $1.7 million. 'Commodious Recreation Centres For Allied Servicemen', *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 7 October 1944; 'News In Brief', Melbourne *Age*, 8 August 1941; 'Gift to Hospital', Melbourne *Age*, 10 April 1942. Ironically, in 1971 Peter died while being treated for war injuries at the Heidelberg Hospital.

129. Jacob Jona, 'Anti-Semitism in Australia', *Australian Jewish Herald,* 22 January 1942.

130. J.L. Komesaroff, 'War Effort Circle's Reply', *Australian Jewish Herald,* 29 January 1942.

131. P. Komesaroff, 'Future of Israel', Melbourne *Argus*, 17 June 1949.

132. Idem., 'Refugee Jews', Melbourne *Argus*, 13 June 1940.

133. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Central Office; A6119, 'Komesaroff, Jacob Louis (aka Judah Leib) volume 1'.

134. One of the files would have involved Louis and his brother Peter while another could be that of their cousin Yaakov-Leib Mendelson (formerly Komesaroff). It is possible that the fourth file could be that of Cecilia Nathan (née Komesaroff).

135. The words 'optical work' and 'blind' were used by the officer. Obviously he was unaware of the pun.

136. There were at least six members of the Komesaroff family who enlisted in World War Two, the oldest being my uncle, Peter Komesarook (V512320) who came to Australia in 1922. The second generation were represented by Norman Mendelson (VX95080) and Ben Sherr (VX142376) who migrated to Australia as children in 1922, their Australian born cousins Peter (VX59291) and Bill (V66167) Kaye as well as their (Peter and Bill's) cousin Morris Komesaroff (V158273) who was also born in Australia. Peter and Bill Kaye were the only

commissioned officers and Morris Komesaroff was the only member of this group to have an ASIO file. This list does not include Komesaroff spouses who also enlisted.

137. At the time, *c*.1940, the Australia's national anthem was *God Save the King* and in 1937 Louis had donated a large framed photograph of the monarch, King George IV, to the Gippsland Hospital, 'Gippsland Hospital', *Gippsland Times*, 14 October 1937.

138. J.L. Komesaroff, 'World Peace: Britain and Russia Hold Key', *Gippsland Times*, 20 April 1938; 'A Challenge', *Gippsland Times*, 6 July 1942; idem., 'Correspondence: Russian Controversy', ibid., 14 December 1942; idem., 'Life in Russia', *Gippsland Times*, 9 July 1942; idem., 'The Jewish Problem', ibid., 10 July 1944; idem., 'Correspondence: A Rejoinder', op.cit., 6 July 1944; 'Russia and the War', ibid., 16 November 1942; 'The Answer – £700', ibid.*,* 30 November 1942; idem., 'All Against Hitler', Melbourne *Argus*, 1 June 1940.

139. Komesaroff, 'Refugee Jews', loc.cit.

140. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office; A6119, 'Komesaroff, Meir Max, Miscellaneous Papers'.

141. 'Candid Comment', *Sydney Sunday Herald*, 2 October 1949.

142. ibid.

143. W.D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History Vol II 1945 to the Present* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann 1991), p. 406.

144. Allan C. Leibler, 'The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism'*,* unpublished BA (hons.) thesis, University of Melbourne (1968), p. 87.

145. *Reds in Church Deputation*, Melbourne *Herald,* 23 September 1949, p. 3.

146. Daniel C. Tabor, 'The General Awakening of Jewish Consciousness: The Development Of The Jewish Students' Group In Melbourne', *AJHSJ,* vol. XXI, part 1 (2012), pp. 61-85. ASIO has a file on the Jewish Students' Group and I have requested access but at the time of writing it has yet to be released.

147. Max Komesaroff, 'Regular Shorts', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 1 December 1987.

148. If Tessa's mother, Fanny Komesaroff (née Feinberg) is included there were four people in Louis Komesaroff's family who were the subject of ASIO files, so the third sibling, Ruth Holan (née Komesaroff) is the only member of her immediate family who did not have a file.

149. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Central Office; A6119, 'Silberberg, Tessa (née Komesaroff), Miscellaneous Papers'.

150. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office; A6119/99, 'Rechter, Bernard Volume'.

151. ibid., 21 April 1950.

152. As with the Jewish Students' Group, ASIO has a file on the Melbourne Jewish Youth Council and I have requested access, but at the time of writing it has yet to be released.

153. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Central Office; A6122, 'University Labour Club Melbourne(July 1947-March 1949)'.

154. Doug Button, 'Morris Komesaroff: A brilliant legal mind and lover of the arts', Melbourne *Herald-Sun*, 26 September 2007.

155. 'Solicitor charges QC', *Canberra Times*, 12 September 1978.

156. NAA: Australian Security Intelligence Organization, Central Office; A6119/6248, 'Komesaroff, Morris/Moische Miscellaneous papers'.

157. *Australian Jewish News*, 30 May 1958.

WRITING JEWISH CARLTON

Serge Liberman

(*Based upon a talk presented to the Carlton Community History Group, December 2014*.)

I begin with a supposition – perhaps a prediction – namely, that Carlton will long remain in the archives of the Melbourne Jewish community. Books and theses, memoirs and accounts of its one-time Jewish residents and institutions have been written, while a sprinkling of a younger Jewish generation still continue to make it their home. Further, mere mention of the name Carlton to anyone who has had either a personal, family, schooling or social connection with it will evoke the memories of it, and ongoing nostalgic fondness for the place. The fact is evidenced by two collections of personal accounts edited by Julie Meadows and published within the past four years, penned by 100 former Carlton residents who together span the half-century 1925 to 1975.

Of the earliest presence of Jews in Carlton, little documentation is readily to be had but it is known that there were Jews in Carlton already in the latter part of the nineteenth century: possibly even since the Gold Rush, but more certainly from the 1870s when the suburb was peopled, among others, by traders, pawnbrokers, tailors, carpenters, compositors and hawkers, most of whom came from Germany, Eastern Europe and Russia, at times via England. They comprised a goodly number of Yiddish-speakers, secular cultural Jews and religiously Orthodox Jews. The latter's religious needs were catered for by self-organised prayer and study groups and a ritual circumciser in the early 1890s. In that same period, 'a boarding house culture' developed in Carlton for the accommodation of Yiddish workers.

One would wish to be able to offer more information about how Carlton's Jewry grew in this late nineteenth to twentieth century period and how they adjusted to this country and became integrated as a Jewish community there. But thus far, this period for them, in contrast to the Jews south of the Yarra, remains a gap in the ongoing linear continuum of Jewish settlement in Australia.

Hence, we will fast forward the clock to 1908, since even if only circumstantially it indicates that there was already a Jewish presence in Carlton and its surrounds, and because that year signalled a specific incident that drew open the curtains upon the Jews north of the Yarra. It was an incident that was to have ongoing implications for Melbourne's Jewry to this day when viewed further in the context of the inter- and post-war migrations of Yiddish-speaking Eastern European refugees.

For, in November of that year, there arrived in Melbourne a 46-year-old-man by the name of Samuel Weissberg, a Polish-born cigar-maker, hairdresser and Yiddish actor who had come from London to stage Yiddish theatre in Australia. He had been told that, with over 10,000 Jewish families in Melbourne alone and another 8,000 in Sydney, he would make a fortune there. Right away, however, he was disabused of that advice by a more seasoned Jewish local. He had been badly directed. There were nowhere near those numbers here. But Weissberg did not despair. Even if only to save face back home and because he had gone to great expense to undertake his 12,000-mile journey to Australia, he would yet have his theatre. And on asking where he might find a Jewish boarding house to stay, he was led to one in Cardigan Street where he made himself known as a cigar-maker.

However, he was quickly recognised and pointed out by another person there who had personally seen Weissberg perform abroad. Immediately, the room became crowded. Weissberg made his purpose known. That same evening a theatre committee was formed, on the following day, it being the *Chag ha'susim* [festival of the horses], Melbourne Cup Day, the committee came together to plan ahead, and two months later Melbourne's first performance of a Yiddish play was performed at the Temperance Hall. It met with great success and demands for a repeat. This led to the inauguration of a popular and keenly patronised Yiddish theatre troupe that, with the successive arrival to Melbourne of more Jewish migrants with actors among them, was to endure another 70 years into the 1980s. Although Weissberg himself appears to have been involved with the theatre for only a few more years, he remained in Melbourne where he worked as a hairdresser at 110 Rathdowne Street, dying here at the age of 83.

Three years later, in 1911, another milestone – some said as a direct consequence of Weissberg's theatre – was set with the creation of the social and cultural institution, the Kadimah ('Forward'). Located first towards the Spring Street end of Bourke Street, within four years it moved to the more

spacious 313 Drummond Street and in 1933 transferred again to a hall at 836 Lygon Street – equipped with a library, a stage and an auditorium seating 400 people. There it appended to its name the rider Yiddish Cultural Centre, and became an all-in-one venue for theatre, discussion, debate, concerts, recitals and a long-maintained succession of eminent writers and scholars brought from abroad as speakers.

Concurrent with the steady Eastern European migrations and the Kadimah's Carlton heyday from the 1930s to the late 1960s, its residents saw the creation of a succession of local facilities: Monash House at the corner of Canning and Kay Streets, synagogues in Palmerston, Pitt and Rathdowne Streets, a Hebrew school, a Yiddish school, a printery in Faraday Street, delicatessens and kosher butcheries, the publication of Yiddish newspapers, journals and books by local authors and the allotment of a Jewish section in the Carlton General Cemetery. Towards the end of that era as ageing took its toll upon the elderly, and others moved east- and south-ward to the more favoured suburbs of Kew and St Kilda and beyond, Carlton's Jewry waned. Only a stalwart relative few remained. Consequently, in 1968 the Kadimah also resettled south of the Yarra in Elsternwick where it remains active to this day, its former Carlton home recognisable today as the Italian Eolian Hall.

With the bulk of its history having now been told, Carlton will from hereon be rendered from a different angle: not in the context of history and memoir but instead as portrayed by Jewish authors through their writings. Which leads me directly to the early years that depicted Carlton in literary works, often set in the 1920s and 1930s.

Although published as late as 1980, the most evocative of these is a short novella, *Thousands of Years through the Eyes of a Child*, by Yetta Rothberg who was born in Carlton in 1919. In it, she writes of that stretch of Drummond Street bounded by Elgin and Faraday Streets which she describes as a first stepping stone for many in this promising free country, which held, in her words, many areas of wonder, excitement and terror, especially for the children who lived nearby: a strip where she recalls a haberdashery, a yeast-smelling cake shop, a lolly shop, the Salvation Army Hall, the police station, a factory with four gargoyles and a lane where rats ran rabidly, threatening shadows fell and children often played their erotic games.

Having said this, rather than continue to paraphrase her recall of the Carlton she knew, let us permit Yetta Rothberg herself to tell of the Carlton

familiar to her:

> Into this area came a particular type of migrant, from Russia, Poland, often via England, picking up a little of the language en route. They came unheralded, unwelcomed. Often their boldness and motivation were unknown. One heard fragments of their background, childhood dreams, poetry read under a remote tree, stories of village weddings. Unheralded they came, their boldness and optimism often unrecorded.
>
> They brought their families here, and then augmented their families in the new environment. Slogged away at their work, maintaining their dignity and love of their religion. They picked up crumbs of friendship and were accustomed to the barbs of persecution. They carried a strange, noble optimism and dignity in their work, dress and dedication to their own group and to the new land around them. Many of their ideas and dreams they projected on to their children. An extension of themselves, the children often suffered from the ambivalence of their own personalities, the expectations demanded of them, and the guilt of failure.

Depicting a related period is Jean Holkner, born in 1926 to parents from Palestine, whose *Taking the Chook and Other Traumas of Growing Up* (1987) consists of a series of humorous vignettes in the selfsame streets of Carlton in the 1920s. In contrast to Yetta Rothberg's overall darker portrait, this book is more playful, filled with homely tales of an ordinary Jewish family, laced with anecdotes of the author's own growing up with assorted neighbours around her, falling in love and of a school ball, a Christmas tree in a Jewish home, taking a live chicken to the local *shochet* in preparation for the Sabbath meal, trying to obtain and retain a job, and her other traumas of being too tall, being overweight or having feet that are too big – in sum, one would say, the traumas simply of being a girl. In a later young person's novel titled *Aviva Gold* (1992), Holkner tells of another girl's attempts to deal with her family's uprootedness from her safe Melbourne home to live in Palestine in 1935 to fulfill her father's obsession with the Holy Land – one of the few instances where Palestine or, as it later became, Israel, is dealt with in Australian Jewish writing.

In ways that in parts resemble the mood of Yetta Rothberg's novella are the stories of the Yiddish-language writer Pinchas Goldhar, after whom Goldhar Place in the heart of Lygon Street is named. Where both Yetta

Rothberg and Jean Holkner were Carlton children from the outset, Goldhar came to Australia in 1928 as a 27-year-old dyer and writer from Poland. When, after a period of literary silence, he found his voice, he set to writing a succession of stories, which were gathered together into a collection titled, in its English translation, *Stories of Australia*. His narratives, which are very much engaged with Jewish life, travails and ordeals in Australia, were almost uniformly gloomy and pessimistic. One of these, 'Café in Carlton', for instance, tells of the owner of a kosher restaurant in Rathdowne Street which is repeatedly daubed with a swastika or antisemitic scrawls on its door by local louts, this leading him to recall Berlin where he also had a restaurant that had likewise been targeted for assaults during the ever more threatening ascendancy of the Nazi regime. But rather than dwell on the negative, as we did with Yetta Rothberg, we will give voice to Goldhar himself as he recalls his 'Drummond Street' through its periods of flux.

[Goldhar's 'Drummond Street' is reproduced in its entirety on pages 505-7 in this issue – Eds.]

Something of the Jewish movement to Melbourne's south is captured too in Harry Marks's *The Heart Is Where the Hurt Is*, published in 1966 by a fifth-generation Australian born in 1922. Here, a young Jewish girl whose parents have been captured in Germany by the Nazis is sent to stay with relatives in Melbourne, where she confronts difficulties with school-ing, awakening adolescence, antisemitism and first love. Marks's Carlton, however, is a happier place than Goldhar's. For, as he tells it:

> Fondly, [Sophie] thinks of the Carlton days when they first came to Melbourne. 'Little Jerusalem', Gentiles used to call it, before the great exodus to St Kilda. Hard, sad days, touched with many happinesses. Days already memories. But alive! So alive! People everywhere. Always someone to talk to. Streets vibrating with talk. Day and night. There was time to talk, whatever else had to be done. Over fences and cast-iron gates, in shops, out of shops, sitting at windows or on ribbon-like verandahs. And at her machine, before Max was born, in between coats.

Having thus established through these writings the setting of Carlton in the 1920s and 1930s, let us proceed towards telling more about its people, their lives and their concerns in a comparable way.

A contemporary of Pinchas Goldhar was another Yiddish writer, Herz Bergner, born in Poland in 1907 into an artistic family. Along with his nephew, the artist Yosl Bergner, he became part of the local social realist

school of writers and artists in the 1930s and 1940s. Arriving in 1938 as an already published novelist, he immediately continued with his writing. His literary forte was novels and short stories, two of these novels having been translated into English. The first, *Between Sky and Sea*, translated by Judah Waten, published in 1946 and recently republished, was awarded the Gold Medal of the Australian Literature Society for the best book of that year. It tells of a boatload of Jewish refugees from Europe during World War Two seeking, but everywhere being refused, asylum, only to sink in mid-ocean with total loss of life.

But the work that is more pertinent to our purposes is his *Light and Shadow* of 1963, a novel that tells of a three-generation Jewish migrant family that initially settles in a small country town and then moves to 1920s Carlton. In terms of adaptation, the grandparents have the worst time of it. They are bewildered by the unfamiliar, they remain bound to the traditions of their heritage and are too old to grapple readily with the challenges of language, lifestyles and Australian mores that they face. Upon the middle generation – the central figures of the father, Hersh and his wife, Shaindle Zeling – are imposed comparable demands of integration into an alien Australian milieu without losing their own fundamental identity as obser-vant Jews. But they are compelled to make compromises – particularly in the observance of the Jewish Sabbath – for economic survival, personal advancement and, not least, for the advancement and future security of their three children, above all through the provision of their education, so strong a desideratum of every Jewish parent.

As for the children themselves, before them is laid out a constantly unfurling carpet of worldly attractions and possibilities – professional, social, cultural, ideological – their choices at times putting them at odds with their parents. So that while the daughter does the 'right' thing by mar-rying into the faith, the older son 'marries out', this arousing his parents' dread of his drifting from his Jewishness towards assimilation, while the younger son migrates to Israel which, by this time, has but recently been established. As a novel of three generations, *Light and Shadow* thereby highlights a range of interwoven themes common to Jewish (as also to other) migrant peoples alighting upon Australian shores.

Judah Waten's novel *Distant Land*, published a year later in 1964, follows in a similar vein. Born in Odessa in 1911, Waten lived until 1925 in Perth when the family moved to Melbourne. Here he, too, became part of that intimate social realist milieu which, among others, included Noel

Counihan, Vance and Nettie Palmer and the Bergners. And like Goldhar and Bergner, he too delves into the adaptive lives of Jewish migrants in Australia. However, his work, unlike theirs, is overall more cosmopolitan through its incorporation of other ethnicities as well – Italian, Greek, Chinese and German. In his substantial literary output, Carlton receives its chief prominence in *Distant Land*, although dealt with also to an extent in *Season of Youth* and *So Far, No Further*.

Overall, *Distant Land* covers similar ground as Bergner's *Light and Shadow*: in this instance, telling of a couple's migrating from Poland also in the 1920s and of their three increasingly well-acclimatised children each going a separate way. Here Joshua Kuperschmidt – his name later changed to Cooper – is an idealist, a man who aspires to learn languages in order to be able to bring people together through mutual understanding. In turning to other languages, he sees himself as becoming not less a Jew, but rather more so, an innate humanist who respects all mankind, strives for justice and trusts in intellect. It is his wife, Shoshanah who – through a trait common to Waten's other writings where the woman tends to be the dominant person in his families – is the more practical and materialistic but at the same time the devoted, loving, go-getting wife and mother, through whom the family in time attains its wished-for status and security. Of the children, the eldest enters his father-in-law's business and becomes – unflatteringly – a narrow-minded self-righteous member of the Jewish Establishment; the daughter, as her mother is to her father, is a dedicated support and guide to her cancer-researcher husband; while here, it is the younger son who marries a non-Jewish girl. As for Joshua himself, living alone at book's end, now that Shoshanah has died and the children have left the coop, he comes no longer to value his past ideals – ideals which he has tried to realise through his children and which have now faded into the ether.

A generation on among Jewish writers, we come to Morris Lurie, who passed away in late 2014 at the age of 75. Lurie was born and raised in Carlton but despite his having been a much-travelled writer who conveys well the places where he or his characters have lived or passed through, few of his novels and stories are set there. He did however leave an autobiography titled *Whole Life*, although he was then, in 1987, only 48, a work largely written in his commonly-encountered gushing staccato style. And in it, he wrote:

Let's start with the houses.

The first house I remember was very small. Tiny. Bijou. Petit. Semi-detached. A maisonette. One of a pair. Built I don't know exactly when but I think in the thirties, when there was a vogue for such things, and certainly there was an echo of Art Deco in its stucco and brick. The window box. The tiny front porch. The way the bricks on the façade drew a decorative straight line. There was just that touch of fanciness, albeit on the smallest scale. Those twin brick maisonettes were the only ones of their kind in the street, everything else was older, earlier, and so, despite its tiny size, our house always felt to me somehow better than everyone else's, special …

… a house – [he continues] - cramped and tight, with not a single unused space, where there is, yet, room to make a train in the passage with the dining room chairs, to build forts and garages and houses with his blocks, play with his soldiers, play with his marbles, read his beloved comics, have fights and make plans and sleep and dream.

And so on, these early passages leading into a personal recounting of his life to the time of writing, of which, in a review of the novel in *Overland*, I wrote:

Morris Lurie's autobiography, *Whole Life*, is a howl. Not the howl of laughter that the reader who sees Lurie as a humorist might expect; but rather a howl of anguish, of agony, of the most exquisite pain that comes from being repeatedly kicked in the guts by almost everyone within kicking reach.

For, in that same house where he played and dreamed, are gathered the members of his family who had already appeared separately in earlier sometimes savage stories dispersed through his collections: the coarse, boorish, philistine, cuttingly critical father; the hard, bony, irascible, loveless and sadistic grandfather; the cold and curtly dismissive grandmother; and his crabby cantankerous sister; not to mention the family's wider relatives and friends insensitive to young Morris as a boy. Only his mother emerges as positive and redeeming in this ménage, she whom he describes as the miraculous servant, the housekeeper, the wife and mother who works, slaves, cooks, hosts, sews, keeps a market stall, never borrows, never owes, never wastes, the kind who, as described in Proverbs as an *eshet chayil*, a woman of worth, a woman valued far above rubies.

The salient point is made – a record of rejection, rejection, rejection,

coupled with a yearning for acceptance. But with a certain degree of catharsis or exorcism having been attained, whereas at the beginning of the book he rails at them (20 years after their passing) for his family's 'dumbness, blindness and unfeeling stupidity' and writes that had it been of the slightest use he would 'drive to the cemetery where they are buried and piss on their graves', by the end he does offer a hint of understanding of them, and of pity and grieving. In a tentative way he evokes, even if only in his fantasy, a scenario in which he perceives a hint of finally finding the acceptance that he has so long and so painfully sought.

Where, with Lurie, I have been talking about the 1940s and early 1950s, I move on now to another former Carltonite, Lily Brett, who was born in Germany in 1946 and came to Australia with her parents two years later. We enter the 1950s and beyond. She has written much poetry and prose and it is in her poetry that the clearest description of Carlton is to be found: in her collection *In her Strapless Dresses* is a poem titled 'In Carlton' (here compacted from her trademark vertical layout):

> In Carlton/ where I grew/ up/ the streets/ were full of Italians/ and Germans/ and Maltese/ who'd/ come here/ for a new beginning./ We lived/ on/ Nicholson Street/ and/ across/ from us/ were/ dimly lit/ cafes/ dark/ opaque/ caves/ where men/ smoked/ and played cards/ and billiards/ and shouted./ There was/ a barber/ who doubled/ as a/ ladies/ hairdresser/ and another/ barber who sold/ Jews/ their jewellery/ And cutlery/ in/ a/ room/ upstairs/just above / his/ barbers chairs./ each Saturday/ we went/ to the Victoria Market/ we bought apple/ and oranges/ and mandarins and cherries/ my father/ bargained/ with the Chinese sellers/ and swapped/ greetings/ in Yiddish/ with/ the Italian/ florists … I was fearless/ When I lived/ In Carlton …

And so on.

As for her other more novelistic writings, without overtly asserting as much, her novels do possess a Carlton-like 'feel' about them, telling largely of how immigrant Holocaust survivors and their offspring deal with their European past: on the one hand, some through repression of it and silence or bitterness over their losses, others through attempts to recreate a semblance of what they had lost; for instance, by establishing new families, revivifying dancing or catching the sun. Many of these writings, although laden with profound inner pain, are also leavened by a goodly

modicum of irony and humour.

More directly apropos of Carlton, Lily Brett's rendition of it in her poem dovetails well with that of her younger sister Doris Brett, born in Melbourne, who is a writer too and a practising psychologist. From a brief autobiographical piece that she wrote, we learn that the family lived for some eleven years or so in a two-bedroom workers' cottage in Nicholson Street among fellow survivors and migrants, before moving to Elwood. In this piece, more than describing her visual brick-and-mortar surrounds, she stresses her own inner experience of living there – literally announced by the very first word of her memoir: the experience of freedom, the sense of freedom whenever she thinks of Carlton – the freedom enjoyed by her parents who had each survived concentration camps during the Holocaust and met 'miraculously' after the war and who, on arriving in Australia, were determined to acclimatise here. And it is freedom, too, that Doris Brett so delights in with friends around the streets and laneways of Carlton, a milieu free of antisemitism, coupled with the family's wonderfully maternal Gentile neighbour and the local Lee Street State School which she adores for its young and enthusiastic teachers, one of them having been the present-day much-esteemed writer Gerald Murnane.

Proceeding from here to another stalwart Carltonite's domain, Arnold Zable's *Scraps of Heaven* is Carlton through and through. Born in Wellington in 1948 to parents from Poland, he came to Carlton with them while still an infant. There, raised in a home steeped in literature, Yiddish language, folklore and learning by a gentle, quietly spoken and humble father, himself a modest poet, Zable developed a flair of his own for storytelling. And his *Scraps of Heaven* – like his *Jewels and Ashes*, *The Fig Tree*, *Café Scheherazade* and *Sea of Many Returns* – is full of stories, in this instance set fully in Carlton, where against the background of its Lygon, Drummond and Rathdowne Streets and prominent landmarks, he spins his tales about its people. In many instances, they are real people of whom he tells, identified by their own given names: immigrants too in the main, variously actors, market stall-keepers, machinists, drifters and more, many of them survivors 'lost in reveries upon former homelands and journeys long past' even as they go about their lives in the present.

From the beginning Zable sets the scene which gives a taste of the experiences, imagery and flow of the prose that traverse the book – a simple scene probably still familiar to many people from the 1950s and 1960s, when the 'milko' would deliver the daily milk to the front door.

Late at night, weaving in and out of his dreams, comes the neighing of a horse, the metallic clip-clop of hooves, the rattling and tinkling of bottles, the quick rhythmic steps of a man on the run, interrupted by the creaking of the front gate flung wide open; and from his half-sleep Josh can hear him, the milkman, deposit the half-dozen or so bottles by the front door. It is a comforting sound, a familiar sound. It has about it a sense of orderliness and regularity. It emanates goodwill and seems to whisper: All is well in the world. While you sleep, little children, you are being looked after.

Josh has never seen the face of the milkman. He remains a creature of the night, of the pre-dawn hours. All he knows of him is the sound of his deliveries, the footsteps, the final swing of the gate shut as he retreats on the run back to the milk cart. Then, like phantoms, the horses move on, the neighing subsides, the jingling vanishes into the distance. And there, in the morning, as if to prove it was not merely a dream, stand the bottles, gleaming white, arranged by the doormat, twinkling with dew, while on the road lies a tail of horse manure.

Ah! For Romek Swerdlow, Josh's father, this is gold. He rolls up his sleeve, shoves the manure into a bucket and carries it on the run, through the house, to the backyard, where he spreads it over his vegetable patch under an early morning sun.

This last cameo, which I too describe in my 'Two Years in Exile' on writing about my father doing the same even though my family lived then in nearby Northcote, leads me to my own writings about Jewish Carlton – to which I came long after, in 1974, upon joining a medical practice there.

Warsaw-born, my parents had lived out the war in Siberia and Uzbekistan where I was born. At war's end, with me in tow, they headed back to Poland, where not one member of their respective families had survived. We moved on via a displaced persons' camp in Germany and three years in Paris, ending their condition of statelessness in Melbourne in 1951.

In Australia, we settled first in Northcote, which, to my mother, was an exile, a wilderness at the rump of the world, a suburb that was still under development and extension at the time, where she felt profoundly isolated and unhappy but which, for myself, was a home – as I later wrote of it,

'home being where one's feet ran most freely'. After two years, as did many others, we too moved to St Kilda, but Carlton, through the Yiddish theatre, Habonim meetings, Hebrew school and visits to friends who still lived there, remained a constant on my parents' radar and mine.

Upon joining that Lygon Street medical practice more than 20 years later, I found myself in a milieu that, from the outset, notwithstanding the ailments, concerns and angst with which patients presented, was a homely mini-universe of sunniness, geniality and good humour peopled by Australian office-workers, Italian restaurateurs, Greek builders, Maltese technicians, Lebanese traders, Armenian jewellers and Jewish tailors, fruiterers, milliners and factory-owners.

Arrived variously before or since the war, these Carlton Jews were of a kind, nearest kin to my parents and, hence, to me too, the kind whose collective past, personalities, outlooks and concerns I knew and under-stood best: East European-born, Yiddish-speaking and lower middle-class working people in the main but by that time more advanced in age and among the last of the local Mohicans. The greater number of the suburb's former residents had by then moved to other homes across the Yarra, to the St Kilda Road Montefiore Homes for the Aged or, in the way of all flesh, to their final resting-places in the *beit olam* [cemetery] of Lygon Street, or Fawkner or Springvale.

It was natural, therefore, that when I set about writing my more spe-cifically 'Jewish' stories, it was they and their children – my peers – who loomed largest before me in a composite way as my models. And so, as Pinchas Goldhar, Herz Bergner and Judah Waten had done before me, a goodly number of these were tales of survivors affected by the conse-quences of dislocation and loss, material and existential alike, as they tried to establish a safe and secure untrammelled haven in an alien, unfamiliar Australia. They tried too to adapt to its wider society while simultane-ously seeking to preserve values and traditions brought with them from '*di alte heym*' – bulwarks against the feared assimilation or intermarriage of their children; or tried still further to come to terms with or negotiate the widening gap between themselves and their children, the one still haunted by, or 'living in' the past, the other increasingly acted upon by their ever-broadening schooling, professional and social aspirations and expanded worldly circuits with eyes set more towards the future. Not infrequently they culminated precisely in the realisation of their parents' concerns over ensuing assimilation and intermarriage.

And more, too: their wartime experiences having raised issues of maintaining remembrance and transmission of the calamity just past, questionings of God's reality and their own beliefs in His imputed prescience, benevolence and protectiveness in the face of radical evil, and, among other existential dilemmas, the interplay between divine determinism, individual free will and chance.

At this time of writing, to the best of my knowledge (and to employ a term I used above) I appear to be the last of the Mohicans who has written fiction set in Carlton, these stories peppering my successive collections of stories, with the last, *Where I Stand*, being wholly located there. May there be other writers who will still in time come forth.

So does this Cook's tour of 'Writing Jewish Carlton' come to its end. And the tour leaves the reader with a memorable gilt-edged remark made by American writer, Jamaica Kincaid: 'Large events operate within a single person'. To which I would add: 'And, through the lives of its people, they can operate, too, within a single place.'

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'JEWISH LIFE APPEARS TO BE FROZEN, STATIC, LIKE A PUPPET PLAY': PINCHAS GOLDHAR'S STRUGGLE FOR YIDDISH CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY IN AUSTRALIA[1]

Pam Maclean

Pinchas Goldhar (1901-47) arrived in Australia in 1926[2] from Poland. A committed Yiddishist writer and active journalist in Poland, he found life in Australia confronting. He had abandoned a flourishing cultural world where he felt himself at the centre of a resurgent Yiddish literary scene for what he regarded as the stultifying environment of the Melbourne Jewish community. Goldhar's earliest publications in Poland consisted of experimental poetry, and his description of readings by the young Yiddish poets Peretz Markish (1895-1952) and Melech Ravitch (1893-1976) that he had attended just five years before his migration provides insight into the cultural milieu that was now relegated to memory:

> I saw Melech Ravitch for the first time, some ten years ago. It was at an evening honouring Peretz Markish that was held at the large Philharmonic Hall in Lodz. That evening both Ravitch and Markish read their own works. Markish, a thin, dark youth, with a head of pitch black, wildly dishevelled hair and sparkling, vibrant, sexy eyes, read his futuristic poems, which sounded like a communist manifesto, in a deep, loud voice. A stormy knot of inflamed nerves engulfed the world with the wild, tragic protest of the workers' battle, singing joyous praises to the rule of the workers' party in the Soviet Union.
>
> I am a telegram, the wind is my dispatcher,
> Who will bother, who will care?
> The wind will blow me from land to land, from road to road,
> I will be recognised by those who know.
>
> Markish's stunning, futuristic phrases fell like scalding balls of fire upon his bewitched, enthralled audience, which

was barely able to follow the flood of the lightning-fast, exotic and extraordinarily crafted images of Markish's manifesto poetry.

Then Melech Ravitch appeared on the stage. He was a well-built man with large, expressive, thoughtful eyes and a well-combed, black velvet, heart-shaped beard. (Ravitch is now clean shaven). He began reading his poem 'Prehistoric Landscape', in a quiet, yet cheerful voice. This poem was steeped in deep isolation. The high spirit of his poetry immediately lifted the atmosphere in the audience, following after Markish's call for battle that had just rung out over the auditorium.[3]

Goldhar moves on to consider Ravitch's literary contribution in greater depth. Like Markish, Ravitch belonged to the avant-garde experimental group of Yiddish poets writing in the 1920s who 'In their race for original-ity … created artistic and creative anarchy'.[4]

Fortunately, in Goldhar's eyes, Ravitch's writing developed beyond a focus on form to an interest in social life.

Ravitch brought back true content, the very Jewish foundations of poetry. He was imbued with a deep, creative integrity that he expressed honestly and openly in each of his works, never allowing himself to be drowned out by the screams of the rising new poets who demanded 'art for art's sake' and jeered cynically at the outmoded and old-fashioned art form that still strived towards an ideal.

Ravitch carries this artistic integrity and independence to this very day. His artistic persona has changed over the years; he lowered himself from his elevated position as a philosophical writer, a writer of ideas, he wandered into the world of writing with a social conscience. It was completely irrelevant to him that the social writing mode had fallen out of vogue even in Soviet Russia. Art forms and art streams held no signifi-cance for Ravitch. He just moved along on the honest and brave artistic path that he marked out for himself. This is the only path that can be taken by a divinely gifted artist.[5]

While Goldhar's article is designed to set the scene for Ravitch's imminent arrival in Australia,[6] arguably its significance lies as much in what it tells us about Goldhar, as it does about Ravitch.

Before his migration to Australia Goldhar too had been an experimen-tal poet but, as with Ravitch, his literary sensibility was transformed from

engagement with abstract poetic form into searing realism. In Goldhar's case this involved 'wandering' into the genre of the short story that proved to be the perfect vehicle for his critique of Australian Jewry's failure to embrace what Goldhar considered to be the essence of Jewish culture, Yiddish. This failure affected him in a profoundly personal way that, while revealing itself in his literary writing, was, as the following discussion shows, clearly evident in his broader journalistic and often highly polemical writing. Indeed, the themes informing his literary writing run closely parallel to the preoccupations of his non-fictional writing.[7]

Linguistic and cultural isolation reinforced a feeling of loneliness that never left Goldhar. Yiddish writer Yehoshua Rapaport (1895-1971) arrived in Australia from Shanghai just weeks before Goldhar's premature death. Although this is when the two writers met for the first time, despite their brief acquaintance, Rapaport's remembrance captures with remarkable insight how heartbreaking Goldhar's situation in Australia was.

> Pinchas Goldhar felt the intense tragedy of the modern-day Jew, who had lost the solid link that had held him so securely in the past. The old supports had not as yet found any replacements.
>
> He understood this tragedy only too well, because he had himself suffered so intensely from this loss. …
>
> Unfortunately, the community was made up of only other alienated, uprooted people, most of whom did not have the same dreams and desires.
>
> 'How can I explain to you the depth of my loneliness?' he once said to me, his true words passing through the barriers of his eyes and his voice, until finally he allowed them to pass through the last barrier of his lips. 'Can you possibly understand how I felt coming to Australia twenty years ago? I used to go out into the streets of Carlton and saw an Australian stand quietly, lazily, on a street corner, doing absolutely nothing at all for an hour, maybe two hours. I thought that he was mad and that I had wandered into a country of madmen. I used to walk around the streets for hours, weeping and weeping'.[8]

The welcome publication of Goldhar's collected stories in English translation now enables the wider reading public access to this poignant world of the Eastern European Jewish migrant in Australia from the 1920s

to the 1940s as experienced by Goldhar.[9]

Some early stories such as 'Ma Nishtana?' (1931), 'The Shofar Blower' (1931) and 'The Selling of Joseph' (1933) hark back to Jewish life in Poland, and 'Cain' (1933), inspired by Goldhar's brief visit to Germany in 1932, presents a remarkably prescient account of the murderous intent of Hitlerian antisemitism. Other stories published before the outbreak of the Second World War deal with Goldhar's frustration with what he perceives to be not only the Australian-Jewish community's cultural philistinism, but its moral superficiality, bordering on corruption. This critique emerges most powerfully in stories like 'The Circumcision' (1931), 'The Pioneer' (1937) and 'The Last Minyan' (1939). A counter-narrative is constructed in these stories that contrasts the image of the honest, straightforward Australian who maintains a sense of cultural integrity with that of the Jews who have lost their cultural authenticity.[10] With the increasing realisation of the fate of European Jews in the Holocaust, Goldhar's stories, including 'Compatriots (Landslayt)' (1943) and 'In a Quiet Street' (1944), turn to the desperation and helplessness of those left behind in Australia without news of their loved ones. While the stories set in the latter years of the war still retain a critical edge, with Goldhar highlighting the lack of empathy shown towards their fellow Jews by those seemingly blind to the events unfolding in Europe, compassion for those in despair tempers his judgemental tone. By the time we come to the stories set in the immediate postwar period, critique of Australian Jews is replaced, in the case of 'Café in Carlton' (1945), by visceral anger towards Nazi perpetrators, and, in 'Drummond Street' (1949), by hope that with the influx of Jewish refugees the community will regenerate.[11] The evolution of these stories from the depiction of traditional Jewish life in Poland to accounts of Jewish cultural and religious stagnation in Australia and, finally, to a painful confrontation with the catastrophic impact of the Holocaust, follows Goldhar's deeply personal struggle to develop a meaningful Jewish life in Australia.

Given how strongly Goldhar championed Yiddish as the embodiment of Jewish cultural and national values, and used his stories as the prime vehicles for promoting his passionate advocacy of Yiddishism, it is surprising to discover that not only was Yiddish not his first language but, by his own admission, his engagement with Yiddish came relatively late. In a 1933 article challenging the commitment of the Kadimah (the Jewish cultural organisation established in 1911 by Eastern European Jewish migrants that was relocated in 1915 from central Melbourne to Carlton) to Yiddish,

Goldhar recounts his belated realisation of the significance of Yiddish for Jewish identity and culture. He recalls: 'I, along with most other Jewish children, was also brought up in a foreign culture'. Even though he attended a Zionist school, he was immersed in Polish and German literature and made frequent school trips to see Polish and German plays, 'but not', as he wryly comments, 'to the Yiddish theatre!'. The transformative moment came when he attended a Yiddish play independently of his school:

> But it was the humble, poor Yiddish theatre that really affected me, each word that I heard was immediately inscribed on my heart, every intonation of the language, each movement by the actors roused me to my very soul. It was the first time in my life that I had ever really seen a part of myself paraded on the theatre stage, the most intimate, secret emotions suddenly unfolded before me under the bright Roman lanterns of the stage. Later, when I first came to read Peretz's writings, I underwent a similar experience. I seemed to have uncovered new creative horizons. And I am able to say in all certainty that only through the Yiddish culture was I finally able to understand other world cultures. Understandably, I learnt Yiddish, in far shorter time than it had taken me to learn other languages.[12]

Goldhar was unable to comprehend the failure of his fellow Jews to share his passionate belief that only through language could a nation's essence find true expression, hence his relentless attacks on the Kadimah where, he asserted, Yiddish was 'regularly destroyed, in a most murderous manner'.[13]

Continual conflict with the Kadimah over its apparent downgrading of Yiddish contributed to Goldhar's sense of isolation and frustration. Whether chastising the Kadimah for conducting the opening speeches for its new building in English, issuing invitations to its annual general meeting also in English, or publishing its annual report in English 'with only a pathetic four-page supplement appearing in Yiddish', Goldhar was relentless in his critique of the Kadimah leadership whom he accused of pandering to the interests of the established Australian-Jewish community and promoting an 'English-based assimilation' because

> The Kadimah is too embarrassed to use Yiddish. Yes, too embarrassed. They do not want those rich and well-established Jews who live near the Yarra to be shocked when they are

confronted by Yiddish words. Those people, who occasionally grace the Kadimah with their presence at a musical concert, hold more sway with the Kadimah committee than do the hundreds of the simpler, poorer inhabitants of Carlton, who live, think and breathe in Yiddish. They are the backbone of the Kadimah, and are not at all embarrassed by the Yiddish language.[14]

Clearly recognisable in this assessment of the antipathy felt among Jewish communal leaders towards recent arrivals are the acerbic themes permeating Goldhar's representation of the Australian-Jewish life in his stories.

His anger at assimilationism promoted at the expense of a nurturing of 'authentic' Jewish national values was not without foundation, as this anecdote, recounted following Goldhar's death, illustrates:

The Kadimah organised an evening to mark the occasion [of the publication of the Yiddish-language First Australian Almanac (1937)]. After the program, when people were still milling around the foyer chatting, one of the dignitaries of the community cornered me, pouring … out his displeasure.

'Goldhar is really everything that they have said about him, but why does he have to make us look so bad?'

' – ?'

'I am sure that they will translate his book into English, what will the Gentiles think of us then?'

I tried to explain to the complainant that it is exactly works like these that will gain us respect from the Righteous Gentiles, they will glorify the name of the author, as well as his nation. Trying to convince him, was a hopeless task.[15]

Thus, while within his immediate cultural circle Goldhar's genius was recognised, his position within the broader Jewish community remained contentious and this fed into a vicious cycle of further depression and alienation.

Unlike many of his fellow Jews in Australia Goldhar had the 'advantage' of directly experiencing the rise of Nazism. During his 1932 visit to Germany he personally witnessed Hitler delivering a speech and was under no illusions about the implications for Germany's Jews of Nazi antisemitism.[16] For Goldhar, writing in March 1933, the situation of Jews in Germany illustrated in the most tragic way the dangerous consequences

of cultural and linguistic assimilation:

> The whole world has closed its doors to the German Jews, there appears to be no place of refuge for them. The twentieth century has closed all gates and doors to them. They have but one choice, to perish sacrificially on the bloodthirsty nails in the swastika's rule of darkness. They have no hope of opposition or defence, protest is useless, and appeal to the world will, as always, fall on deaf ears.
>
> We can learn an important lesson by studying the German Jews, who have tried for 150 years to assimilate, to become part of their neighbours. They sacrificed their greatest sons, from Heine and Meyerbeer, from Reinhardt to Liebermann, on the altar of high German culture and progress. They took great pride in how they differed from the 'Ostjuden'. It is not now the time to make these judgements, we are seeing the destruction of one of the most important, and oldest, Jewish communities of our time. It has probably been the most important Jewish community for the last thousand years of our history. A part of our people is being brutalised by a bloodthirsty regime, right in the middle of the modern world. Our hearts are not only breaking with empathy, but also with bitter disappointment that all this is happening in – Modern European Culture.[17]

Twelve years later Goldhar's worst fears were realised on a scale he could not have anticipated.[18]

The consequence was for Goldhar gut-wrenching – the devastating loss of millions of Jewish lives and, if possible, more tragically, the virtual extinction of the Yiddish-speaking world, his cultural raison d'être. Writing in 1945 he lamented:

> We are living at a tragic time, where the sheer survival of our nation stands in jeopardy. With the destruction of European Jewry, we lost the main source of our creativity, from the strength of a living, vibrant, people. We lost a third of our people, mathematically it was a third, but if we look at the cultural achievements of those people, we realise that we have lost our source, the very foundation that supported Jewish national existence throughout the world.[19]

Given his recognition of the dire threat posed by Hitler to German Jews already in 1933, Goldhar's despair turns to angry frustration as he rails against his fellow Jews' lack of advocacy on behalf of European Jews during the dreadful period of their destruction in the Holocaust:

Nearly half of the Jewish people were poisoned and slaughtered, whilst we stood by helplessly, despondently groaning and we had nothing more than a tear of pity to shed for that fearful catastrophe for European Jewry. Day by day during those atrocious five years our own flesh and blood was being continuously massacred. Never has such a devastating punishment been meted out on a people. But we, the remainder of the Jews, in the safe, secure and satisfied western countries, were completely unable to respond to the seriousness of the situation. The hands of the human sacrifices stretched out to us for help, from the death camps and the burning ghettos. The screams of those who were beaten and murdered called out to us, imploring with their dying breath. Save us! Do not let us perish! Proclaim our slaughter to the world! Scream! Put yourselves on the line for us! My hand simply will not stop writing about the timidity and insecurity that we showed during the last five years. Each one of us must feel their own deep guilt, in their heart of hearts. They are well aware that during that bitter time we abandoned our brothers. No matter how hopeless the situation appeared, there must have been opportunities to save just even a part of the annihilated millions.[20]

Nonetheless, Goldhar refused to accept that the future was hopeless for Jews as long as they had the courage to eschew Jewish self-hatred and embrace an authentic Jewish identity:

Our pained and troubled generation has to find the way back from Jewish individuality to Jewish unity. This has to be done through the uplifting of Jewish self-awareness and the strengthening of Jewish identity. The essence of our salvation lies within ourselves. We have to free ourselves of the defeatist hatred and abnegation that is eating up the heart of the Jewish people and rip out from ourselves our inner exile, the fear of showing our real selves to the outside world. If we are able to do this successfully, there would be no power in the world that would be strong enough to destroy us. We will survive all our problems, and live to see the true, new world, at the end of days.[21]

It is ironic that barely a year after writing this Goldhar died. His

compatriots, though heartbroken by his death, recognised the unresolved tension between his feelings of intense loneliness and despair, and his sustained faith in the power of Yiddish to salvage Jewish cultural existence, first from the extreme isolation of Jewish communal life in Australia, and then from the wreckage of the Holocaust. In his eulogy the Warsaw journalist and writer, Abraham Shulman (1913-99),[22] who after his arrival in Melbourne in 1939 came to know Goldhar well, captures perfectly the tragedy and achievements of Goldhar's writing, 'All of the stories that he wrote in Australia, have an overpowering feeling of sadness. Tragic emotions surround his stories of the immigrant life, built up on the foreign, sandy and thankless soil. Goldhar, the writer, sees all the shadows lurking behind the local life, he uncovers all the wounds that were grown in the typical Jewish manner on local soil. Still, Goldhar remained an optimist. His deeply rooted love for Yiddish and for Jewish ideals never diminished, in fact, they fuelled his active and devoted efforts for Jewish culture in our own community'.[23]

Endnotes

1. Research and translations for this article were assisted by an Australian Research Council grant. Translations from the Yiddish are by Tania Bruce. The title quote comes from Pinchas Goldhar, 'Language and Culture', *Oystralier Leben*, 28 April 1933 [Yiddish].

2. In earlier publications, I wrongly suggested Goldhar arrived in 1927. Thanks to Rita Erlich for correcting my error: personal communication, 18 October 2016.

3. Pinchas Goldhar, 'Melech Ravitch', *Oystralier Leben*, 9 June 1933 [Yiddish]. For a sense of what a recitation of Markish's poetry sounded like see the remarkable YouTube video 'August 12,1952: We Had No Idea About the Murder of Peretz Markish and the Soviet Yiddish Poets' https://youtu.be/nfKBlSQCV9E (accessed 13 August 2017). Iosif Lakhman recounts for the Wexler Oral History Project a conversation with Markish's widow that includes reciting by memory a poem by Markish which is very similar to the one cited by Goldhar. The brief video is subtitled in English. Further details of Markish's caree and murder at the hands of Stalin can be found at www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Markish_Perets (accessed 13 August 2017).

4. ibid.

5. ibid.

6. Ravitch was sent to Australia in the wake of the rise of Nazism with the aim of investigating the possibility of establishing a Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys in Western Australia, the so-called, and ultimately futile, Kimberley Scheme. Ravitch left for Canada in 1938. See 'Biographies. Melech Ravitch (1893-1976)', Yiddish Melbourne, Monash University, http://future.arts.monash.edu/

yiddish-melbourne/biographies-melech-ravitch/ (accessed 31 July 2016).

7. In 1931 Goldhar founded and edited the first Yiddish newspaper in Australia, *Oystralier Leben*, and after its closure in 1933 continued to contribute to the Australian Yiddish press in its various incarnations.

8. Yehoshua Rapaport, 'Pinchas Goldhar. On his Untimely Death,' *Australian Jewish News*, 31 January 1947 [Yiddish].

9. *The Collected Stories of Pinchas Goldhar: A Pioneer Yiddish Writer in Australia* (Ormond, Vic.: Hybrid Publishers, 2016).

10. For Goldhar's admiration of Australian cultural values see Pam Maclean, 'Introduction', ibid., pp. 1-16.

11. The 1949 publication date refers to the posthumously published story in Pinchas Goldhar, *Gezamlte Shriftn fun Zayn Literarisher Yerushe* (Melbourne, Vic.: The Friends of Yiddish Literature, 1949).

12. Goldhar, 'Language and Culture', loc.cit.

13. ibid.. See also Pam Maclean, 'Pinchas Goldhar: His Yiddishist Vision – A Flawed Nationalism?', *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1991), pp. 21-33 for a discussion of Goldhar's concept of linguistic nationalism, his conflict with the Kadimah and ambivalent attitude to Zionism.

14. Pinchas Goldhar, 'Yiddish at the Kadimah', *Di Yidishe Voch*, 19 October 1934 [Yiddish].

15. B. Warshavsky, 'At the Freshly Dug Grave of My Dear Friend Pinchas Goldhar,' *Oyfboy*, February 1947 [Yiddish].

16. Maclean, 'Introduction', op.cit., p. 3.

17. Pinchas Goldhar, 'Modern European Culture', *Oystralier Leben*, 17 March 1933 [Yiddish].

18. In his eulogy fellow Yiddish writer Hertz Bergner (1907-70) comments on Goldhar's remarkable omniscience, 'Everything that Goldhar wrote, everything that Goldhar did seemed to be influenced by his all-seeing, all-knowing, intelligent perception…':'Standing at the Open Grave of My Close Friend,' *Oyfboy*, February 1947 [Yiddish].

19. Pinchas Goldhar, 'Does Anti-Semitism just Attack us Physically?,' *Oyfboy*, September 1945 [Yiddish].

20. Idem., 'Anti-Semitism and National Self-consciousness,' *Oyfboy*, December 1945 [Yiddish].

21. ibid.

22. 'Abraham Shulman', https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Shulman (accessed 25 June 2017). Shulman remained in Australia for ten years before emigrating to Paris and then the United States.

23. A. Shulman, 'No More Pinchas Goldhar', *Oyfboy*, February 1947 [Yiddish].

PINCHAS GOLDHAR REMEMBERED[1]

William D. Rubinstein

Pinchas Goldhar (1901-47) was born in Lodz, Poland and, after graduating from Warsaw University he worked for a Yiddish newspaper in his native city and translated works into Yiddish. In 1926, together with his widowed father, brother, and sister, he migrated to Melbourne, where his father established a business as a dyestuffs merchant in Carlton, Jacob Goldhar & Sons, of which he was a partner. From 1928-31 he became editor of the first Yiddish newspaper in Australia, the *Yiddishe Naies.* Goldhar began to write stories and commentaries in Yiddish and English, and in 1939 published *Stories From Australia,* the second Yiddish book published in this country. He became part of a circle of Progressive writers and intellectuals in Melbourne. The circle included such figures as the artist Yosl Bergner and the author Judah Waten (who later wrote Goldhar's entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*) among local Jews, and non-Jewish leftist intellectuals like Vance and Nettie Palmer, Brian Fitzpatrick, Noel Counihan, and Vic O'Connor. Goldhar died at the age of only 46, of heart disease and diabetes, compounded, it is said, by carrying heavy sacks of dyestuffs around his factory. He was well appreciated in his lifetime, but since his death has achieved an enhanced reputation as probably the foremost Australian Jewish writer of his time.[2] It is highly appropriate that a new collection of Goldhar's stories, many of which had not previously been translated into English, should now appear.

Shortly before his death, Goldhar paid a visit to Ballarat to meet the Australian-born writer Nathan F. Spielvogel, at the time probably the best known Jewish writer in the country, who maintained a private museum of Jewish artefacts. He was accompanied by Judah Waten and by a Jewish lawyer named Aaronson. After visiting Spielvogel's private museum, Goldhar suddenly disappeared. He later wrote to Aaronson:

> I am terribly sorry for giving you so much trouble because of my sudden departure from Ballarat … The visit to the museum terribly depressed me … The museum smelt to me with the decay of death. It struck me that Spielvogel personifies our Jewish fate. We are dying out. In Europe we get exterminated

by Hitler, and elsewhere we just dwindle away slowly and painlessly … Who is going to start Jewish life anew? What I saw in Ballarat is just a miniature of what is going on in Melbourne and Sydney[3].

This extract, in a nutshell, presents the viewpoint consistently enunciated by Goldhar in his stories, which might be described as highlighting the double destruction of the Jewish people – in Europe by Hitler, in Australia by the small size of the local Jewish community, its lack of viable Jewish institutions or a Jewish dynamic. What is striking from Goldhar's writings is that he offers no solution of any kind to this grimly pessimistic view of the Jewish situation, either internationally or in Australia. One might, indeed, examine all of the leading Jewish stances of the time which Goldhar did *not* accept. Although he was married in 1934 in the Carlton synagogue, he was not a religious Jew. He was not at that time a Zionist and his stories seldom or never mention Palestine. Even more surprisingly, and despite his association with local radicals, he was not a Marxist, and his stories have nothing whatever to say about 'class exploitation', the class struggle, working-class unity, or the like, and do not praise Stalin or any other left-wing figure. Goldhar was, in all likelihood, a Bundist, a Jewish social democrat, but in a non-ideological way. One point worth noting is that he was a businessman. Jacob Goldhar & Sons was hardly the Myer Emporium – it was a small business, like hundreds of others – but it had to make a profit to survive. Unlike others in his circle, Goldhar was not a lawyer, an academic, or a freelance writer or artist.

Indeed, although Goldhar was part of a circle of progressive intellectuals, it is evident that his stories do not include any of the tropes. It seems clear – to me, at any rate – that Goldhar does not really *like* his non-Jewish neighbours in Carlton, regarding them, it seems, as a gang of alcoholics, gamblers, petty criminals, fraudsters, prostitutes, and general lowlifes, more attractive than the gentile *lumpenproletariat* he knew in Poland only in that they were not grossly antisemitic. Goldhar's story 'The Circumcision' is a full-scale attack on intermarriage. He, in other words, lacked the universalistic humanitarianism of Sholem Aleichem or of others in that strand in Yiddish writing.

Goldhar died tragically young in 1947. Ironically, this was the precise moment when the 'double destruction' visited upon the Jews was to change decisively for the better. In that year, the UN divided the Palestine mandate into Jewish and Arab states; the State of Israel was proclaimed in May

1948, absorbing most Holocaust survivors. In Australia, 1946-47 marked the beginning of the wave of post-war Jewish immigrants to the country, perhaps 30,000 or so in all, totally transforming Jewish life here. Chiefly Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors from Poland, who mainly settled in Melbourne, they ended the likelihood of Australian Jewry 'dwindling away slowly and painlessly'. They established the network of Jewish institutions we know today, at a time when, unlike the 1930s, there has been general and continuing prosperity. This change was symbolized in 1968 when the Kadimah itself moved from Carlton to Elsternwick, a more affluent suburb south of the Yarra.

When a great artist or writer dies young, there is always endless speculation as to what he or she might have accomplished or gone onto next. For instance, there has been a great deal of debate over whether George Orwell (Eric Blair), who died in 1950 at the age of only 46, just after writing *1984,* would have become a Thatcherite Conservative if he had lived into the 1980s. The same kind of speculation naturally arises with Pinchas Goldhar, who enjoyed only half a career before his tragic death at the same age, and just at the time when events in the Jewish world, both internationally and in Australia, changed for the better. What would Goldhar have believed if he had also lived into the 1980s? Obviously, it is impossible to answer this question, but it seems very likely to me that he would have moved in the direction of becoming a conservative Zionist rather than remain on the left. Everything in his published works strongly suggests this. He would presumably not have moved to Israel, as his friend Yosl Bergner did in 1950, but he would, it seems to me, have fully accepted the conservative and Zionistic consensus that has emerged among Australian Jewry during the past 60 years. Whether he would have fully approved of Israel's policies on the West Bank and Gaza, or of the extraordinary growth of Charedi Judaism, is more debatable, but it seems to me that his stories, written long before, presage such a change in his outlook.

Endnotes

1.   This article is based on a talk given by me at the Kadimah in Melbourne on 12 February 2017, at the launch of *The Collected Stories of Pinchas Goldhar: A Pioneer Yiddish Writer in Australia* (Melbourne, Hybrid Publishers, 2016), with a preface by Serge Liberman and an introduction by Pam Maclean. My assessment of Goldhar is somewhat similar to that of Serge Liberman, in his 'Australian Jewish Fiction: A Bibliographical Survey,' in David Brauner and Axel Stahler, eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to Modern Jewish Fiction* (Edinburgh, 2015). I only read Dr Liberman's article after writing my own interpretation of Goldhar.

2.   I was first introduced to Pinchas Goldhar by Pam Maclean, who was my colleague at Deakin University for many years. I recall reading Goldhar's story 'A Café in Carlton' in an hotel room in London, and being extremely impressed by it.

3.   Cited in H. Brezniak, "Pinchas Goldhar", *The Bridge,* May 1967.

DRUMMOND STREET

Pinchas Goldhar

[*This translation, by R. Z. Schreiber, is taken from* Pinchas Goldhar, Gezamelte Shriften *(Collected Writings), Melbourne, 1949, pp. 181-84 – Eds*.]

Drummond Street, a poor, working-class street close to the centre of the prosperous noisy city of Melbourne, absorbed many Jewish migrants. Its houses are poor and old with rusty galvanised-iron roofs and peeling walls. From the open doors exude the smells of sweaty bedding and poor food. Their low windows, covered with cheap old-fashioned hangings and drab tattered blinds, look blankly but patiently onto silent sidewalks. Drummond Street is empty all day with seldom any passers-by to break the monotony. From the police station, which is half obscured by ailing trees, there occasionally sidles out a dark-uniformed policeman who disappears immediately like a clandestine shadow into one of the side streets. At the opposite end of the street is a bar half-clad in polished red tiles.

A dreary sleepy buzzing can be heard from inside this pub and from time to time the half-closed glass doors spew out a drunkard. The pattern is constant. These men wear crumpled clothing and have sickly red cheeks. Their eyes screw up against the glare of the sun as they scrutinise the street in blinking surprise. With lurching movements and staggering steps, they ponderously seem to shy away from the silence of the street.

An elderly, sweating woman sits on the steps of a house stripping green peas and half-rotten cabbage into a dish. Her face is liquor-swollen and her head covered with scraps of old newspapers into which is rolled her dirty grey hair. These primitive homemade undulations make her hair resemble a bunch of black and white bananas. A hungry cat arches itself against her legs and, from time to time, pushes its wet nose into the basin of peas.

In the middle of the street, spread-eagled with rump uppermost, sprawls a sleeping dog. The whole street seems to be governed by the leisurely peace of a long tropical day.

At sunset, Drummond Street takes on new life. Motor-bikes roar

past and bicycles make soft swishing sounds in the softened asphalt of the road. Housewives, parcels in hand, hurry to prepare a quick meal for their home-coming husbands; children with sweets clutched in their dirty hands chase each other about noisily. Italian ice-cream vendors bring out a resounding multitude in response to the summons of the copper bells attached to their red-gold-lettered barrows. Through a window rasps an old waltz from a worn recording, while a local bar resonates with laughter and freewheeling fun. Its glass door is never still, perpetually fanning back and forth with the unceasing movement of its clients as the thick and cloying smell of beer emanates from it into the street. On the steps of the houses, tired working-men suck peacefully at pipes or chatter and horse around with their women-folk or, half-stripped, displaying their hairy chests and bronzed muscles in the dusk, cool the sweat from themselves in the evening breeze while, at times, a procession of the Salvation Army marches down the street, singing hymns to its accompanying band on its way to the small Salvation Army Church. And, when the street lamps flicker to life as the sunset fades into darkness, youngsters gather outside the now-closed bar, laugh and flirt and play mouth-organs. Girls in short light summer dresses wiggle their hips to the sound of the music and their passionate moist eyes shine from heavily powdered faces. The young men, chests thrust forward, strut about and ape their elders by dragging at cigarettes and bumping into the girls. Soon they pair off and disappear into dark corners and shadowed narrow passageways between the houses, and damp passionate whispers break into the late evening silence. The heavy tropical night clothes Drummond Street in silence and a soft silky darkness.

So lived Drummond Street for many years – a monotonous, hard-working, beer-swilling and earthy yet romantic life.

There was a time, however, when Drummond Street looked different. Many years back when gold fever gripped the country, adventurers from all over the world stormed to Australia. In those days, Drummond Street was a Jewish street. The first Jewish migrants to settle there were from England and Germany; they were then followed by newcomers from Tzfat and Jerusalem, by Nikolaievsky soldiers[1] who deserted from the army and escaped exile with Jews from Rumania, Hungary, Poland and Galicia,

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1   The reference here is to Jewish conscripts in the Tsarist Army. As decreed in 1827 by Tsar Nicholas 1, these forced recruits had to serve for the draconian period of 25 years, during which repeated efforts were made to convert them to Christianity – Eds.

whereupon Drummond Street echoed to the sounds of many languages. Jewish shops and small clothing factories were opened. The street was alive. The Jews worked hard and noisily. They, their wives and their children worked and saved, had no rest and little sleep and saved penny upon penny. Good times came. The small businesses became large department stores and the little workshops, factories. The Jewish women added flesh and their large dark eyes became harder and more tired with success.

When Drummond Street became too constricted, the Jews began to spread out to other streets in Carlton; later they moved to respectable St Kilda, which had grown and expanded into a suburb of clean villas at the shore of the sea. The little factories and shops began to move to the city itself and Drummond Street began to die as factory windows were boarded up and large 'To Let' notices sprouted in every yard. Then the empty houses were sold to the new poor, to Syrian shirt-makers and Indian hawkers. From a rumbustious Jewish life were left only a few poor market stall-holders and dealers in old clothes. Like an orphan stood a little old house with a dirty window in which an all but erased sign read Hatkhiya[2] Zionist Organization. Yet, who knows, this old half-erased sign may have been the thing that drew a new wave of migrants to Drummond Street after the war and the street came to life again.

After many years, people could again be seen with sad eyes and suffering Jewish faces. They wandered in groups with searching eyes along Drummond Street, dressed in new suits from which could be smelled mothballs and on which numerous creases betrayed their fresh unpacking from suitcases. They greeted each other with '*Sholem aleykhem*', inquired about each other's livelihood and joked about the Golden Country, Australia. From the curtained windows and half-open doors, suspicious eyes assessed the new arrivals and throughout Drummond Street could be heard the quiet buzz, 'Jews'.

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2   Meaning 'rebirth,' and most commonly transliterated 'Hatchiah' during its existence – Eds.

AGAINST THE ODDS: THE AIF HEBREW CHAPLAINCY OF WORLD WAR TWO

Rodney Gouttman

The appointment during World War One of an Australian Hebrew Chaplain to the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) smoothed the path for a similar representation in the Australian military forces of World War Two. Original difficulties that confronted this choice were threefold. First, since the appointment of a chaplain for the extremely small AIF Chaplaincy was based on the demographic pull of each religious denomination in the Australian National Census of 1911, the miniscule Jewish community did not really rate representation. It was only when Christian chaplains refused, or were reluctant, to minister to Jewish soldiers, that a Hebrew chaplain was sought.[1] Second, there was a dearth of suitable candidates.[2] Third, synagogues were extremely loath to release their ministers for military service abroad.[3] The latter two problems were resolved in 1915 when Perth Hebrew Congregation grudgingly released its minister, the Reverend (later Rabbi) David Isaac Freedman, to fill the AIF's first-ever post of Hebrew Chaplain.[4] Thus when Australia's prime minister Robert Menzies declared his country at war with Nazi Germany, on 3 September 1939, there was no question as to whether a Jewish minister would receive a position in the soon to be formed 2nd AIF Chaplaincy. The only conundrum was who that person would be.

The AIF Chaplains' Department in World War Two was very small, with its members, as in World War One, chosen by leaders of religious denominational constituencies in consultation with the Army authority. With respect to Australian Jewry in World War One, this meant in dis-cussion with Rabbi Dr Joseph Abrahams of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. At the time, he was recognized by the army as 'Australia's leading rabbi'.[5] For the 2nd AIF, the point man was Rabbi Jacob Danglow of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, considered then the doyen of Australian Hebrew chaplains. Such a reputation was built on a combination of factors. He had acted as a part-time Hebrew chaplain to the Australian home forces since 1908, was the successor to Hebrew chaplain Major Freedman on the Western Front in 1918, and had maintained close personal contact with

Jewish war veterans of World War One.[6]

The initial Hebrew chaplain in the 2nd AIF might well have been the rabbi of the Perth Hebrew Congregation, Reverend Louis Rubin-Zacks. And had this had come to pass, he would have followed blithely in the footsteps of his predecessor at the Perth Hebrew Congregation, D.I. Freedman, in World War One. Both men were military chaplains before those respective wars.

Rubin-Zacks was inducted as the religious leader of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation in 1937 after his arrival from London. Soon after, on 28 September 1937, he was appointed Chaplain 4th Class (Hebrew) at Australia's 5th Military District, HQ Adelaide, with the rank of captain.[7] En route to Adelaide his ship had docked at Fremantle, where he had, as it turned out, fortuitous meetings with some members of the Perth Jewish community. He must have made a good impression, for following the death of Rabbi Freedman on 24 June 1939 he was invited to Perth with Adelaide Hebrew Congregation's permission to conduct Freedman's funeral and to deliver the eulogy. However, upon his return to Adelaide he promptly resigned from the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation despite the fact that much time on his contract was yet to lapse, and flew back to Perth to become Freeman's successor at the Perth Hebrew Congregation.[8]

His induction at the Perth Hebrew Congregation was delayed by undisclosed illness.[9] With hindsight, this may have been a harbinger for his future military service. Rubin-Zacks was adamant, when he joined the Perth Hebrew Congregation, that he be allowed to continue as a Hebrew chaplain.[10] On 3 December 1939, exactly two months after Menzies declared Australia at war with Germany, and 20 days following his installation as rabbi of the Perth Hebrew Congregation, 30-year-old Rubin-Zacks was transferred from the 5th Military District, Adelaide, to the 6th Military District HQ, 2nd AIF in Perth.[11] But a few days later, on 11 January 1940, after being granted a week's leave of absence without pay, he was promptly discharged on unrevealed medical grounds.[12] Once recovered, he ministered to Jewish servicemen and women of the Australian, American, and British forces encamped in the area of Western Command.[13]

Had the discharge from the AIF not occurred, one can only speculate how the Perth Hebrew Congregation might have reacted to its recently appointed religious leader being sent abroad for a lengthy period of time. For it was with great misgivings that it had released his predecessor, Freedman, in World War One and forced him to return from the Western

Front in 1918 after an absence of two and a half years.[14]

With Rubin-Zacks out of the frame and Australia's 6th Division preparing for immediate overseas duties, the position of AIF Hebrew Chaplain became an urgent matter, especially when there were few suitable candidates available. Though direct evidence is lacking, Danglow's fingerprints must have been all over the AIF request to the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation that its assistant minister, Reverend Lazarus Morris Goldman, be the man for the job. He was well within the recruitment age being in his mid-30s.[15] It was said he was a 'good mixer',[16] which probably meant he would be able to deal with men of varying degrees of religiosity. Danglow was well acquainted with the candidate's personality, religiosity and Jewish learning, when the latter was employed as an assistant minister and headmaster of the Hebrew School at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation for three years before moving on to the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.[17]

When approached about the position, Goldman was surprised that someone like him would be chosen. His reasons may have been several, but one might have been that he felt inadequate, never having been a military chaplain like his senior at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, Rabbi Harry Freedman. Nonetheless, with that congregation's support he agreed, but only after extracting two provisions: that any gap between his army pay and synagogue emolument be covered, and that on his return, he could resume his position at the congregation on the same employment conditions.[18]

Goldman enlisted on 2 February 1940, as Chaplain (Hebrew) 4th Class, 2nd AIF HQ (Middle East) with the rank of Captain,[19] trained at Puckapunyal in Victoria, then Inglewood in Sydney. At the former, he conducted his first Sabbath service,[20] and while there persuaded some Jewish recruits who had enlisted as Christian to formally acknowledge their true religious affiliation.[21] Such religious subterfuge was far from uncommon, as it had been in World War One[22] and the Boer War before it.[23]

He sailed from Port Melbourne with the 6th Division AIF aboard the HMT *Strathaird* on 15 April 1940. The convoy paused briefly at Fremantle where he met with Reverend Louis Rubin-Zacks and dignitaries of the Perth Jewish community.[24] It then continued to Colombo and Aden, from where the 6th Division crossed to Gaza arriving on 18 May 1940, and then moved to bivouac in Palestine.[25] On the water, he conducted a Passover seder for three fellow Jewish servicemen, and took care of their religious

needs.[26] Along the way, in the benign Australian tradition, the chaplain acquired several nicknames, one being such as 'Foreskin Ned'.[27] Once in Palestine, he was invited by the British military authorities to also minister to its Jewish members.

Sad to say, no detailed information has come to light concerning Chaplain Goldman's approach to Judaism, preaching, or pastoral care. Nor is there a body of soldier literature, such as letters home, that might have provided insights as to his praxis. It is known that he compiled a small war diary, but unfortunately it is now missing.

Commentary on his role in Palestine appeared in the *Monthly Bulletin* of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) of 1 September 1941. This edition not only featured photographs of Australian troops planting 150 trees in Gan Meir, Tel Aviv, on Anzac Day, but also an address in Sydney by I.F. Maxwell, on leave from his role as the Young Men's Christian Association's (YMCA) Welfare Officer in Palestine.[28] He attributed much of Palestinian Jewry's warm welcome of Australian troops to the efforts of Padre Goldman. He might have mentioned a predisposition for such greetings born of relatively recent memories of the ANZAC forces in the Middle East campaign in World War One.[29] Australian troops were embraced whatever their creed, and the speaker himself had experienced this generosity of spirit. Moreover, he applauded Goldman for the open house program for Jewish soldiers on Purim, driven by his desire that they at least touch base with normal Jewish life. In this endeavour he was assisted by many prominent Jewish individuals throughout Palestine.[30] Soldiers' Huts were opened in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv for the enjoyment of Allied troops – Polish, Free French, Czech, British, and Australian. In Tel Aviv, the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) organized a tea party on the Allenby Road most Sunday afternoons with full entertainment for about 100 soldiers. Then there was the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, which performed concerts for the troops, and the mobile Palestine United Films group which at the various camps showed of recently produced films. Not only was Maxwell in awe of material advancements made by Palestinian Jewry, but could not wait to return to the Holy Land to be in-charge of YMCA. services.[31]

Corporal M. Lapin, writing from Palestine on 3 October 1941, praised the chaplain for being as sensitive to soldier 'appetites' as to their spiritual needs, so that whether before and after the service: 'There is always something in store for us, wine and nuts, or some other refreshments, even

a beer can be procured, but last time we had a large parcel of tinned corn, beetroot, green peas and carrots sent over by some kind Melburnians of the Jewish Community, and we didn't have plates or knives or anything, but it didn't stop us eating on envelopes, scraps of cardboard, or even hands.'[32]

Whether for reasons of stomach or soul, he assessed the services as popular and well attended. They ended with the Australian National Anthem and *Hatikva*, the latter 'when sung here … has more meaning, as we sing it while we are aware of the situation others at home doubt'.[33] And he added that 'Those who could attend Rosh HaShannah in a private home, all they had to do was to apply at the Service Club at Rishon Le Zion, Tel Aviv, Haifa, or Jerusalem. Spaces were reserved in Yeshurun Synagogue for any army/air force personnel from Australia'.[34]

In August 1941, Goldman was the victim of a slur by Company Quartermaster Sergeant McKnight, accusing him having a 'disloyal attitude'. Though the context and motivation for this slander was not revealed, it was formerly investigated. The complaint was found groundless and ridiculous, and the decision was there would be no black mark against the chaplain's name and character.[35]

Goldman fully imbibed the religious atmosphere of the Holy Land, and met many of its leading rabbis. Though only there for a half a year, he successfully sat for his *Smicha* (rabbinical certificate),[36] emulating Major Rabbi D. I. Freedman of World War War memory, who obtained his while on service in Egypt.[37] For his efforts, Goldman received congratulation from the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.[38]

In Cairo, the chaplain met Colonel George Alan Vasey, Adjutant and Quartermaster General to the Commander of the 6th Australian Division, Lieutenant General Thomas Blamey, to discuss Jewish matters within the army.[39] In early February 1941 he was granted permission to visit military camps in Egypt from 7 to 11 August, and once every four months on the condition that his visits did not exceed two weeks.[40] He received Passover greetings on behalf of the Jewish troops from Rabbi Israel Porush in Sydney and during his response revealed he had secured permission for troops in Palestine to attend Seder celebrations in Jerusalem, and those in Egypt in either Cairo or Alexandria.[41]

When the 6th Division left Australia, it was to train in Palestine prior to sailing to Europe to confront the military might of Adolf Hitler. However, this objective was derailed when France fell to the Germans in June 1940, and Benito Mussolini threatened British interests in North

Africa, including Egypt and its Suez Canal.[42] The AIF was then dispatched to help the British defend its interests in the region.[43]

Goldman's war record in the Australian National Archives is exceedingly bare. His duties, according to Isidor Solomon, took him from Palestine to Mersa Matruh, El Alamein and Tobruk.[44] A reference in the Rabbi Danglow archives has Goldman touching base in Helwan, Ismailia, Alexandria, Ikangi, Bir-al Arab (Bardia), Tobruk, El Alamein, El Agheila, Beirut, Aleppo, Lattaquia, and Tripoli.[45] However, this record fails to match places with dates.

One problem the chaplain faced was obtaining suitable transport to carry out his work more efficiently and speedily. The matter attracted Danglow's attention for several weeks.[46] Attempts were made within the Jewish community to raise enough money for the chaplain to purchase a car.[47] A father whose son was serving with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in the Middle East wanted Danglow to help in the fund-raising effort, pointing out that the NSW Jewish Advisory Board had offered to be involved.[48] Alas, we have no information on whether the required amount was raised, and if so, whether the chaplain did purchase the said vehicle. The only reference to the issue of transport in situ occurs on 3 October 1941 where a directive stated:

> 1. Transport will be made available for Chaplain Goldman at Dept Bn, Beit Jirja, 0830 hours every Tuesday commencing 7 Oct.
>
> 2. To be only within Mughazi-Julis Area, and returned by 1700 hrs.
>
> 3. Special arrangements will be made for visits outside the above area.[49]

On 5-6 January 1941, Australia's 6th Division engaged in their country's first major land battle of World War Two at Bardia, where it helped to defeat the Italians.[50] On the eve of the battle, an unidentified soldier wrote home:

> Darling mother, I wish to tell you what we handful of Jewish boys feel to-night. Whatever tomorrow may bring, there is much pride in our heart, that we Jewish men, first generation from Poland and Eastern Europe, should God will it, have the privilege to give our lives for our country. Australia has become so much my country now that I am fighting for it.[51]

Goldman's name is not mentioned, which suggest he was not present.

Almost three weeks later on 21-22 January 1940, Australia's 8th Division was in action against the Italians at Tobruk, and after the successes there it became a garrison for Australian and British troops. Erwin Rommel with his Africa Korps, intervened not just to help the floundering Italians, but also with designs on Egypt and across the Sinai Desert to Palestine.[52] After eight months, Rommel took Tobruk. The Jewish High Holydays fell during these the battles, and a Rosh Hashanah service was held, as recalled by an unknown participant on 22 September 1941:

> We held Rosh HaShano service today and I am pleased to say that we had a good gathering, considering the difficulties of notification, transport, and locating the spot, apart from the 'exigencies of the service'. We used a long concrete cave belonging to a British Tank Regiment. Their Major kindly cleared it of troops and loaned it to us. It had been used to house Mussolini's ammunition. Today it was our house of prayer.
>
> By the time we finished, we had thirty members in our congregation. The Church of England Senior Chaplain had kindly circulated his Chaplains to notify any Jews in their units that the service would be held. Captain Benjamin arranged the order of the service and he, Captain Bob Rose, Sgt. Rupert Michaelis, Sgt. Colin Pura and Sgt Sherwood helped conduct it.
>
> Others present included Captain Fryberg, Captain Goulston, Lieuts. Ross, Joseph, Gertner, Moor and Pick: Sgt. Goselich: and Privates Brahm, Picovoski, Josephs, Cohen, Wilkes, Melkado, Kissman, Green, Goldstone, Grainer, Aaron, Zandle, Benjamin, Mickleman and Lewis.
>
> There were some I knew who couldn't come. Unless one had been here, it is impossible to understand the difficulties of getting from place to place and especially without infringing security, of pointing out in routine orders a particular spot.
>
> Great credit goes to Capart Benjamin for the way he arranged the service and to Sgt. Sherwood for acting as Chazan. There was no Shofa, we had no Talithim, our raiment were dirty and dusty. But we were a happy gathering, both officers and ranks.

> Everyone seemed to be glad to have been able to meet for Rosh Hashano and several said to me how affected they were by the thought of Jews meeting in the middle of the desert to celebrate New Year.[53]

Seemingly, Goldman was not present here.

With the battles in North Africa along the Libyan coast progressing, the Allies also moved against the Vichy French in Syria and Lebanon from 7 June and 11 July 1941 respectively, to prevent the formation of a Nazi bridgehead from which to threaten British bases in Palestine and the eastern Mediterranean. They triumphed, with Australia's 7th Division in the vanguard.[54] Goldman is said to have visited this theatre, but when? The Lapin note indicates that after the High Holydays in 1941 the chaplain went north from Palestine to Syria 'to care for the boys there who were unable to come to Palestine for services'.[55] If the dates are correct, the trip would have had to have occurred after the Allied victory in Lebanon/Syria.

German success at Tobruk pushed the Allies back to El Alamein in Egypt, and fighting continued from August to the end of October 1942. This ended in the Germans' defeat and their leaving North Africa. Australia's 8th Division played a pivotal role in the Allied success.[56] In the midst of the fray a Yom Kippur service was held just behind the front line in a tent usually used for court martials. A 'hardy bunch' of 50 'Australians, Brits, and Palestinians' attended this service, which was conducted by Goldman. Though his sermon is unavailable, apparently when he referred to their current environment being so apt for the 'Day of Atonement', the men smiled in collective agreement.[57] It is said he never expected saintly qualities in his men.[58] The chaplain was to be awarded the 8th Army Clasp for his ministerial work in this theatre.

In the wake of the Japanese blistering demolition of Pearl Harbour, in Hawaii, on 7 December 1941, the United States of America (USA) entered World War Two on the side of the Allies against Germany, and now its AXIS partner Japan. An hour later (local time) on 8 December, Australia followed suit against Japan. The enemy's downward thrust through South East Asia to the Dutch East Indies led to the 'Fall of Singapore' on 15 February 1942, with British and Australian troops and nurses taken prisoner-of-war of the Japanese. This loss of Singapore finally ended the long-held Australian belief that the British Navy could provide her with a security safety net in its time of need. On 19 February 1942, Japan's air force attacked Darwin, followed with an assault on Australia's northern hinterland, and capped all

this off with a mini-submarine hostilities in Sydney Harbour on 31 May.[59]

Whatever recent historians may argue about Japan's intentions and prime minister John Curtin's local political manipulation of a fear of invasion,[60] fear of Japan was very real.[61] The Australian leader looked to the Americans for help to prosecute the war against their mutual enemy in the South Pacific. Under their supreme commander General Douglas MacArthur, thousands of his troops arrived to bivouac Down Under. Curtin's intention was to call the majority of Australia's forces in the Middle East home from the Middle East,[62] and among them came Hebrew Chaplain, Captain Rabbi L.M. Goldman, who arrived back on 1 March 1943.

With these events came three other inter-linked consequences. The first was a transformed and expanded AIF in 1942, aided by military conscription. There was also the ending of the previous separation of the Australian armed forces into a Citizen Military Force (CMF) for home defence, and an AIF for overseas duties. Many in the CMF were transferred to the AIF or served alongside it. All this was made legally amenable when the geographic definition of Australia was changed to include Papua New Guinea.[63] In order to increase military manpower, many Jews classed as 'stateless' or 'enemy alien', including the interned human cargo of infamous ship HMT *Dunera*, were, for the first time, permitted to join CMF Labour Employment Companies.[64]

Also the AIF Chaplains' Department was recast. The new military mobilisation meant that the exceedingly tiny Hebrew chaplaincy would now have to meet the religious and pastoral care needs of many more Jewish soldiers spread thinly across the continent of Australia, Papua-New Guinea, and nearby islands in the. South Pacific.

As part of the AIF Chaplaincy restructure, on 17 December 1942 Rabbi Jacob Danglow, aged 62, was appointed Senior Chaplain (Hebrew) 1st Class with the honorary rank of lieutenant-colonel. His brief was to anchor and supervise the Hebrew chaplaincy for the Commonwealth of Australia.[65] Goldman, at the time still in the Middle East, sent his congratulations, wryly observing the position would provide Danglow with a more independent hand. The Senior Chaplain had questioned his man in the Middle East over his future plans after returning to Australia. Goldman's response was that he would have to wait for that decision until he was on home soil.[66]

Earlier, on 3 April 1941, as the result of an agreement between the

RAAF and the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board, Rabbi Danglow had replaced Rabbi Gurewicz of the Carlton Hebrew Congregation, as its Hebrew Chaplain. He was required to wear military uniform whenever he visited its units, implying that perhaps his more Orthodox predecessor had not always done so. It was now the case, presumably in Victoria, that all matters Jewish pertaining to the RAAF had first to pass through Danglow's hands.[67]

On the local front, part-time Hebrew chaplains based in the capital cities made outreach attempts to Jewish soldiers – Australian and American – who were camped in their state or just passing through. Rabbi Porush also used the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) to relay religious programs to Jewish troops wherever they might be. The first of these was on the eve of Pesach in 1942, with music provided by his congregation's choir led by its *chazan*, Reverend Aaron Kezelman.[68]

In January 1943, Danglow convened a meeting of his military chaplains and all agreed to publish a pocket *siddur* (prayer book) for the armed services. Among those present were Rabbi L.A. Falk (Sydney), Reverend L. Rubin-Zacks (Perth) Reverend J. Wolman (Brisbane), and Rabbi Dr H. Freedman (Melbourne).[69] Goldman was still to return to Australia, though having done so, he might well have cooperated in the venture. Printed probably in August 1943, it was prefaced by a statement from Danglow in which he praised his fellow chaplains for their input, and thanked the Great Synagogue in Sydney for the use of its material, and the 'Victorian Jewish Services Committee for defraying cost.'[70] The Senior Chaplain also composed a Jewish burial service to be used by Christian chaplains in the field.[71]

Owing to his role of Senior Chaplain, Danglow was often contacted by members of the Jewish community over personal cases where their loved ones overseas had been declared missing in action. Flight Sergeant Gerald Isaacs's father wanted more information about his son, lost on an air force bombing mission over Europe. Danglow agonised in such cases as to whether he should convey hope or just sympathy to the anxious families.[72] In another situation, he was asked to ensure that the correct Hebrew inscription be placed over the grave of Flight Sergeant Maurice Green, killed in an air training accident at Jervis Bay, and interred in the Nowra Cemetery.[73] Then there was the married sister and next-of-kin of Private H. Goldberg, who wanted the Senior Chaplain to pressure the AIF to return her under-age brother from service in Papua-New Guinea despite the fact

that he had been in uniform for a whole year. She was not opposed to his serving per se, as her husband and other brothers were all on active duty, but wanted the young soldier back until he reached the legal recruitment age of 18, when he could decide to do whatever he wished.[74]

In September 1942 Danglow wrote to the AIF seeking to ensure that Jews enlisted in the CMF's Employment Companies were granted special leave to attend religious services on the High Holydays. The army responded:

> The personnel are engaged on work connected with the vital supplies to units in the field, and cessation of this work, even for a period of 24 hours, would cause serious disruption to a pre-arranged timetable. Leave will be granted to the maximum number in conformity with the operational requirements and will be a percentage basis: the percentage granted leave will be the number in excess of the minimum personnel by the units concerned with the urgency of the work on the days in question. Sympathetic consideration will be given to the requests received from Jews to attend religious services during the High Holidays.[75]

Before interned members from the HMT *Dunera* were allowed to enter the Employment Companies, this Anglophile rabbi had tended to keep his distance from these 'foreigners', arguing that they may have Nazi spies in their ranks. However, with the 'Dunera Boys' entering the military, his attitude softened somewhat, and in December 1942, on Hanukkah, he visited the Jews of 6th Employment Company near Albury.[76]

One member of the 4th Employment Company, also in Albury, advised Danglow that the Passover food parcels sent to them had arrived and that special leave had now been granted to Jewish soldiers to enable them to attend a religious service, but that only six had turned up. This correspondent reported that some of his comrades had refused the food parcels and were not interested in the religious service. The reason given was that they did not want 'their sacred religion exploited for political ends'. However, the real explanation, according to this scribe, was that they were anti-religious, and only identified as Jewish when it suited their purpose.[77]

One piece of correspondence passed on to Danglow was full of sad prescience. Composed by Flight Sergeant Simon Stanley Solomons to his mother, it read: 'Should I be unlucky never to return, don't spend money on useless memorials, but rather give it to help reclaim some wasteland

in Palestine or some collective settlement, for it's our people most in the crisis.'[78]

The flight sergeant was shot down over Europe in 1944, and, after being declared 'missing in action' for eight months, his decomposed body was washed up at Brakne Hoby in Sweden. Identified by his tag, he was buried in Malmo Cemetery.[79] The rest of the flight crew was never found. Much later, a garden was planted in Solomons' honour in a desolate area in Israel.[80]

The increase in the Australian Jewish military presence in Papua New Guinea had occurred without an AIF Hebrew chaplain to care for troops' religious requirements. That Reverend Louis Rubin-Zacks was chosen for the posting indicated the lack of suitable candidates for it. Presumably, he had convinced the AIF and the Senior Hebrew Chaplain that he had been purged of the ailment that led to him being excluded from overseas military duties in January 1940. Mobilised on 1 May 1943, he arrived at New Guinea Force HQ in Port Moresby on 29 December 1943 from Perth via Townsville. From here he was to ply his ministry in such places as Milne Bay, Lae, and Finschlating.[81] As in Goldman's case, we have no inkling about his philosophical approach to this work, of the substance of his sermons, and approach to pastoral care. One communiqué of his own that has survived iterated:

> I am glad to be back at Headquarters for a spell for this tour had been strenuous, involving six separate plane trips, in and beyond New Guinea. The weather I encountered in the Pacific islands was atrocious, and because of constant exposure I became ill, but happily I am "fighting fit" again and am ready for my next excursion in the battle area, which I am planning at the end of the month. During my tour I contacted a Jewish lad at an isolated gun site. To reach him I had to travel in a small craft along the coast for over five hours. In view of the fact that boats so rarely call at this point, I had to stay overnight. They woke me up at half past four in the morning to catch a returning boat, a fact that that I did not appreciate at the time … I covered over a thousand miles by jeep mainly, mostly over kunai grass, when jungle tracks were passable. There was a new term coined in New Guinea called "Jeepitis". This refers to the soreness of the body one develops after constant driving around in a jeep over terrain.

> While up North there were constant air raids, invariable Jap bombers would come over at set times at night, and when peacefully asleep, we would be awakened by heavy anti-aircraft fire. The language of some of our boys, on occasions, as such, it often took one quite a time to interpret its significance.
>
> I gather the Jap airman were not interested in Chaplains, so found no reason to be anxious. Nevertheless I did not like to hear one of their "Daisy Cutters", unless I were at least a few inches below the ground
>
> I had just attended a service held by an American Jewish group, and being deep in the jungle we were given instruction to follow tracks going past the airfields. We must have driven in circles. And I got into what we imagined was the main road, not realizing it was for planes. There was a thundering dust storm blowing and before we knew what was happening, we heard the noise of the airplane, and realized it was bearing down on us. Fortunately the propellers and fuselage narrowly missed us. When we got out my driver heaved a sigh of relief and said to me, "that was a narrow squeak, Sir, at one time I was going to ask you to say a few prayers for me".[82]

Rubin-Zacks did keep a tiny diary record of around 400 Jewish contacts in his travels, the names of whom had most likely been supplied by Danglow from attestation papers. Dates of the meetings are recorded, but places are missing.[83] Only two among the cohort were women: Private Marge Grouse of the 2/1 Australian General Hospital, and Sister Enid Himmelhoch of 2/5 Australian General Hospital. Alongside the names he contacted was registered information such as age, next-of-kin, marital status, and sometimes personal snippets. Hence, we learn that Sub-Lieutenant Jack Crawcour of the Royal Australian Navy at Milne Bay was married to a refugee from Nazism, the parents of Private Benjamin Moszkowicz of the Australian Butchery Company were still in Poland, Lieutenant Corporal Joseph Reichlin's wife resided in Palestine, and another serviceman was still waiting for his divorce papers.[84] Only one on the chaplain's list turned out to be not of the faith, though how many Jews were missed, especially owing to geographical difficulties or religious subterfuge, is an unsolvable mystery.

Unfortunately, while it is shown when and to whom soldiers' letters

with help of the chaplain were dispatched to loved ones in Australia, not one as yet has appeared on the public record. And so, from this source, no insights can be gained about his counsel or practice. Many years later Leo Glick, who according to his account was the only Jew in the 10th Tank Regiment, remembered being visited by Chaplain Rubin-Zacks, who asked what he could do for him.[85] Les Pahoff, a driver attached to Australian military hospitals in Port Moresby and Oyster Bay also has recalled, decades later, having attended Friday night religious services conducted by Rubin-Zacks or an American Hebrew chaplain, but mentions nothing else about them.[86]

Late in 1943, Cecil Luber addressing the NCJW in Sydney on the subject of the Jewish Welfare Board's war work, divulged that his organization had sent Passover supplies for six *sederim* celebrated in the 'wilds of Papua/New Guinea'. His organization had provided and funded for these events, along with some 600 bottles of wine, 2000 *haggadot*, *kiddush* cups, *machzorim*, and *yahrzeit* lamps. Though he referred to Australian and American chaplains as working in co-operation[87], Rubin-Zacks's name was not cited.

There is a report of Rubin-Zacks having taken five hours to reach a single soldier along a treacherous coastal stretch, and that owing to a lack of shipping, he had been forced to stay overnight in extremely hostile environment.[88] However, he must have replicated this dedication on a number of occasions. Indeed, the arduous tasks he undertook in the jungle of New Guinea and nearby islands eventually undermined his mental health. On 11 August 1944, he was transported in a delicate condition from Port Moresby to a hospital in Townsville, and then transferred back to Australia to Claremont Hospital in Perth. The diagnosis was paranoia and schizophrenia. It led to his discharge from the AIF on 15 September 1944, after sixteen months of active duty.[89] He was to return to his pulpit at the Perth Hebrew Congregation, which had been ministered to in his absence by Reverends H. Grochowsky and I.L. Zouf, as best they could.[90]

Early 1943. Senior Chaplain Danglow advised the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation that he would be absent from synagogue duties during the 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot, in order to visit military camps in central and northern Australia, and possibly even in Papua New Guinea. The board of the congregation sought to dissuade the now almost 63-year-old rabbi, fearing the trip would severely tax his health especially if it included Papua New Guinea. The AIF was in agreement and restricted his

full-time service to four days per week. Despite these concerns, Danglow set off on this onerous journey, one which, according to his his biographer Rabbi John Levi, nearly killed him.[91] An AIF movement order of July 1943 records he was to visit camps in Alice Springs, Katherine, Larrimah, and Adelaide[92], but with no mention of Papua New Guinea. However, his being awarded the Pacific Star medal in 1946 confirms he travelled to this theatre.[93] Unfortunately, there is no information on the detail of these perambulations In July 1943 he visited camps in Adelaide, where he also delivered a Sabbath sermon at the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation[94], and later preached on consecutive Sabbaths at the Perth Hebrew Congregation, where he informed the congregation that Reverend Rubin-Zacks was doing good work in New Guinea.[95]

When Goldman returned to Australia in March 1943, he took three weeks' leave before resuming duty with treks to camps in New South Wales, Queensland, central Australia, and the Northern Territory.[96] His presence in New South Wales obviously ruffled feathers there, since this was considered the patch of local chaplain Rabbi L.A. Falk, who, it was felt, was doing a fine job. In fact, Danglow was forced to pen an abrasive communiqué to the secretary of the Great Synagogue in Sydney, H.I. Wolff, on 29 April 1943:

> Your Board expressed particularities on the question of visitation of Australian camps and hospitals in your state strikes me as particularly ill-timed in view of the fact that for several weeks prior to the date of your letter, Captain L.M. Goldman AIF has been performing duties in New South Wales, at my request, to supplement Chaplain Rabbi Falk's work therein. I am satisfied with Chaplain Goldman's report of his activities that covered the ground and did excellent work while he was in New South Wales. I do greatly regret to learn that you, notwithstanding his efforts, your Board is still dissatisfied. There are some important facts with the recent establishment of the functions of the Australian Hebrew Chaplain's department of which your Board is unaware. To obviate the necessity of explaining these in full in this letter, as I expect to be in Sydney about the 23rd of May on my way to the Northern areas, I shall be pleased to communicate the information personally to your Board, if they give me the opportunity of doing so during my short stay in your city.[97]

From northern Queensland Goldman contacted Danglow on 27 August 1943:

> It is almost certain that the formation on which I am presently attached will not be in the present area during the High Holidays. I will probably move to Rubin-Zacks' area -if you do not need me to go abroad with this unit, it would be advisable to transfer me to another function. The position is that there are now only 50 Jewish men in the whole area including Cairns. By the Holidays, unless other units come meanwhile, I will have only 5 to 6 to look after. I have invited all the units in the area and contacted all the men except those who were away when I called. They are all well and happy. Services are out of the question at the moment due to training duties and the distances that have to be covered. Although transport difficulties are better than when they were when I first went out to the Middle East they are not entirely satisfactory and the idea of hiring one's car and driver seem the only option. I trust that you are more fully rested after your strenuous trip around Australia.[98]

Initially, Danglow had Goldman in mind for visiting Port Moresby to arrange and participate in the High Holydays services, but then decided that he should rather oversee

> them at Adelaide River. This was the last spot the Japanese had bombed in the Northern Territory in 1942, but it had subsequently become a resting place for troops stationed in the Darwin area. It was therefore the logical place where celebrations of the High Holidays might draw a sizable congregation. Prayer books were to be sent to the Chaplain by Rabbi Falk.[99]

This proposition, however, became doubtful when Goldman informed Danglow:

> I am anxiously awaiting the movement order permitting me to move to a new district. I hope it will grant me car travel, or I doubt I will be able to reach Adelaide River in time to conduct the New Year Services. I presume that after the Holidays you will desire to contact all men in the Northern Territory, a task I will endeavour to carry out thoroughly with the prayer that no transport

difficulties arise while I am in the area. If possible I would like to know if it is your intention to keep me in the Northern Territory after the middle of December 1943 since I would like leave to coincide with my children's school holidays during which I will be able to take them in the country or to the sea side. Sympathetic considerations will be given to requests for leave for Jews to attend services during the High Holidays.[100]

Alas, there is no reference to Goldman's being at Adelaide River for the High Holydays at this time. He is, however, mentioned later as being in the Northern Territory conducting Hanukah celebrations.[101]

With Rubin-Zacks back in mufti, Danglow did prevail on Goldman to take the posting in New Guinea. The Melbourne Hebrew Congregation even loaned him a *Sefer Torah* for the High Holydays.[102] His recorded beat has him

May 10-June 10, 1945, in New Guinea, taking in Lae, and Finchafen: June 11-29 the Solomon Islands, Bougainville, then back to Lae July 8-21: from Lae to New Britain, returning back there: July 27 –August 12 from Lae to Motong, Wewak, Artape, Maprick, and back: after a break, beginning September 6, from Lae to Morates, Borea, Ballikpapei, and and back to Lae where hospitalized.[103]

Leading Aircraftsman David Neistat wrote from New Guinea: 'Saturday was our New Year… as they were holding a service in Ballikpapua [Balikpapua] I went along and met quite a few boys from Melbourne … and a lot of other boys I knew…after the service we went along to a Yank camp. Leo is a good friend with one, we all had lunch at the camp.'[104]

Nothing is said of the service itself or who conducted it.

Not all Jewish servicemen were of a mind to attend religious services. One of them, stationed near Darwin, confided:

You know I forgot about our big festivals. Anyway, even if I did, it wouldn't have made much difference. They got a Yankee rabbi here. And they held services once a week somewhere. He came down a few weeks ago to look me up and had to walk a mile into the swamps to find me. I was chasing mozzies so he was in a bad temper, and when I told him not to worry me with religious trash, his temper got worse…so it was a bad day for soldiers of the Lord.[105]

Of course non-attendance at religious services may have been from unawareness of when and where they were being held, even though such information was usually registered at the various camp sites. David Neistat revealed:

> I was given off yesterday for Passover. I decided I would go to Darwin and try to find a place where they were holding the service but I wasn't successful…I wandered around and made enquiries for a couple of hours, then gave up. I had the day off for Good Friday.[106]

In New Guinea – as also during the North African campaign – in the absence of Hebrew chaplains someone from the ranks with the requisite knowledge led services. Staff Sergeant Richard Diamond wrote from 'somewhere' in New Guinea: 'At a native hut situated in an American hospital a group of Jewish soldiers met and declared to form a synagogue … attending these services usually means walking along a jungle track and on roads often deep in mud. On a recent Sabbath service men attended though they had to walk through a tropical downpour.'[107] He was struck by how well Staff Sergeant David Falk had conducted proceedings. David was one of Rabbi L. A. Falk's three sons, all on active service.[108]

Lieutenant R.H. Gordon, of Headquarters, Movement Control AIF at Milne Bay, in a piece which he called 'The Gateway to the Lord,' wrote: 'So it came to be in the darkness of the New Guinea jungle that Israel called his brethren together that they might worship … a tiny hut of split sago palm was the Shul. The rain beat down on the roof of thatched leaves … cold mountain winds blew, but inside there was warmth, the warmth of a faith carrying on the stream of spiritual effort that flowed through the ages, ever since Israel became conscious of itself.'[109] Unfortunately, he failed to say who arranged the gathering or led the prayers.

Of the many letter Goldman must have written to the loved ones of the Jewish personnel with whom he came into contact, only the one on the public record is that to the parents of Marge Grouse to whom he recounted:

> It was a great personal delight to meet Marge while I was on a visit to her unit yesterday afternoon. It was a great delight to meet as she is the only girl that I have met in an overseas unit for some years who is a member of our faith. In the Middle East, we had three Jewish nurses. It is good to know that some of our Jewish women are aware of their duty. You can be rightly be proud of her. I shall be in your daughter's area

for a short period, but you can be assures that everything I can do for her welfare during the time I am in the islands will be done gladly and regarded a privilege.[110]

Chaplain Goldman, with the help of Captain John Isidore Einfield, conducted High Holyday prayers in 1944 for a congregation of 350 Australian and American soldiers crammed into a native hut. An American nurse lit candles, and traditional prayers were sung.[111] In the following year the duo repeated the effort but with a dwindling audience, as Einfied reported to Danglow on 25 September 1945:

> Held services on Rosh HaShannah and Yom Kippur, the latter in the morning and afternoon seemed to go successfully: attendances rather disappointing not more than 24 on any occasion while I have a list of 80 lads on this island. Whether they were told by their COs or did not care to attend, I don't know and have not been able to find out.
>
> With the departure of nearly all the Americans from here on Saturday morning services have decreased considerably. In fact we had not a minion for the last 4 or 5 weeks. However, most of us will be home before very long and I trust is not worth worrying about this. Here quite a number of prayer books and Holy Scriptures (mostly American) left here and have arranged for them to be sent down in your care and the Chaplain.
>
> I feel that before I finish this letter I should add in the final words about Chaplain Goldman. I have no doubt you are well aware of the outstanding work to be done. I have met very many chaplains in the army, but I have never met one so well respected, highly regarded, and welcome at all times as Chaplain Goldman. More particularly of course our own Jewish boys yet also with non-Jews. In my opinion, an outstanding, honest, and sincere job throughout his long service and his doing his utmost to reach the most forward troops often under very difficult conditions.[112]

Responding, Danglow thanked Einfeld for his help in providing for the spiritual welfare of the Australian Jewish personnel, noting that his work was truly appreciated by Goldman and the men. The Senior Chaplain agreed the Goldman was doing a magnificent job and well deserved of the highest compliments.[113] This tribute would also have had the approbation

of E.L. Friedman (RAAF Pacific) who reported that as a result of attending one of Goldman's services, his religious consciousness and feelings were rekindled.[114]

Bernard Morris, in-charge of the YMCA in New Guinea, indicated in May 1945 that there were 3600 Jews, American and Australian, in the region of Port Moresby.[115] However, with the Japanese surrender looming, and occurring on 5 August 1945 though not sealed until 2 September of that year, the Jewish numbers in New Guinea, initially in particular those who were American, dwindled greatly. On 23 October 1945, just before the signing of the Japanese surrender, Joe Rosenberg from Bougainville advised that Captain John Isidore Einfeld had left the area, and that he had taken up the mantle of running religious services. However, because of evacuations not enough men were around to hold them and they would cease on 3 November 1945. Rosenberg said that he himself was off to Rabaul, taking 50 prayer books with him.[116]

In October 1945 Chaplain Goldman was evacuated ill from New Guinea to Melbourne's Heidelberg Hospital, and eventually demobilized from the AIF on 2 May 1946 after more than six years of continuous military service. He was diagnosed as having a heart condition.

Postscript

The official record of the AIF Hebrew chaplaincy of World War Two is exceedingly bare. Except for a few references, there has also been little information by these military rabbis and ministers about how they reacted personally to the circumstances they faced daily during their years of service. Neither can much information be gleaned from letters home, of soldiers' responses to these chaplains' conduct of religious services, preaching, and in particular, pastoral care.

What is clear about these non-combatant officer spiritual leaders, in. particular about the two who served on the battle lines, is that their basically one-man operations severely taxed their health. Of course, they were helped from time to time by men from the ranks, and – especially in Papua New Guinea – by their brother American Hebrew chaplains. However, the constant travel in difficult terrain and circumstances, often with inadequate transport, took its toll.

With the war over, the ageing senior Hebrew chaplain, Lieutenant-Colonel Rabbi Jacob Danglow, continued his rabbinical reign at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. In 1948 he was invited to travel to Japan by

the Australian Military Board to the British Commonwealth Occupational Force on 'morals, morality and morale' in the face of stories about the sexual behavior of troops there.[117] Captain Reverend Louis Rubin-Zacks, once discharged from the AIF in 1943, returned to his post as religious leader at the Perth Hebrew Congregation, but poor health continued to dog his ministry.[118] Though Captain Rabbi Lazarus Morris Goldman resumed his role as assistant minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in 1946, the tensions of the battlefield, particularly those in North Africa, marked his future.[119] Diagnosed with a heart condition, one can only speculate that this was instrumental in his death in 1960 when as still a relatively young, only 52, he collapsed and died on the *bimah* of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation on Yom Kippur.

Endnotes

1.   Rodney Gouttman, *In Their Merit: Australian Jewry and WW1*, n.p., Xlibris, 2015, p. 94.

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3.   ibid.

4.   ibid., p. 99 .

5.   ibid., p. 97 .

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7.   National Archives of Australia (NAA), A. I. F. Service Record World War Two, Service No.(SR) WX1544.

8.   Rodney Gouttman, 'The Adelaide Hebrew Congregation and its Community 1929-1945,' *Australia Jewish Historical Society Journal* (henceforth cited *AJHSJ*), vol. XX11, part 4 (2016), pp. 125-27.

9.   Perth Hebrew Congregation, Minute Book, 1939-40, pp. 497-505 .

10.   ibid.

11.   NAA, Louis Rubin-Zacks, A.I.F Service Record World War Two, SN WX1544 .

12.   ibid.

13.   Fabian, op.cit., p. 130.

14.   Gouttman, *In Their Merit*, p. 100 .

15.   Joseph Aron and Judy Arndt, *The Enduring Remnant: The First 150 Years of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, 1841-1991* (Parkville: Melbourne University Press, 1992), p. 122 .

16.   ibid.

17.   ibid., p. 121.

18.   ibid., p. 122 .

19.   NAA, L.M. Goldman, AIF Service Record World War Two, SN VX354 .

20.   State Library of Victoria, Manuscript Collection, Danglow Papers, Box 15.

21.   John S. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow: The uncrowned monarch of Australian Jews,* (Parkville, Melbourne University Press, 1995), p. 225.

22.   Gouttman, *In their Merit*, pp. 34-39; Russell Stern, 'Finding the Jewish Diggers of World War One', *AJHSJ*, vol.XX1, 2014, part2, pp. 573-93, and idem., 'Finding the Jewish Diggers of World War One (Part II): Challenges of Identifying who is Jewish just by Name,' *AJHSJ*, vol. XX11, part 2 (2015), pp. 211-83.

23.   Russell Stern, 'The Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902: An Australian Jewish Perspective,' *AJHSJ*, vol. XV1, part 4 (2003), pp. 449-52.

24.   Isidor Solomon, 'Rabbi Lazarus Morris Goldman: An Appreciation,' *AJHSJ*, vol. X11, part 2, (1994), p. 355.

25.   Aron and Arndt, op.cit., p. 122 .

26.   Levi, op.cit., p. 225 .

27.   Solomon, op.cit., p. 355 .

28.   *Monthly Bulletin*, 1 September 1941, Australian Jewish Council of Jewish Women (AJCJW) Archives, Melbourne.

29.   Gouttman, op.cit., pp. 81-82 .

30.   *Monthly Bulletin*, 1 September 1941.

31.   ibid.

32.   *Australian Jewish News* (henceforth cited *AJN*), 7 November 1941, letter from Corporal M. Lapin.

33.   ibid.

34.   ibid.

35.   NAA, L.M. Goldman, SN VX354, AWN 63, Control Symbol 122/500/149, DPI;300, 15 August, 24 August 1941.

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42.   Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* (Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 151.

43. ibid.

44. Solomon, op.cit., p. 356.

45. Danglow Papers, Box 15.

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48. ibid., no date.

49. NAA, L.M. Goldman, Service No. VX 354, AWM63, Control Symbol: 560/100/131, DPI:300, 3 October 1941.

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105. ibid.

106. ibid.

107. SJM, World War Two War Archive.

108. NAA, David Falk, SN: NX120815, Gerald Falk SN NX: 70784, Balfour Falk SN: S4785 .

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'AN EXCELLENT DUMPING GROUND FOR THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN REJECTS'[1]: REFUGEE TEACHERS AT THE MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY CONSERVATORIUM IN THE 1930S

Albrecht Dümling

From January to November 1938, the University of Melbourne's Ormond Professor of Music Bernard Heinze undertook an extensive concert tour of the USA and Europe in order to broaden his knowledge and make a name for himself as a conductor outside Australia. In Los Angeles he heard Otto Klemperer, but was unimpressed. In New York he went to a concert featuring the conductor Maurice Abravanel that only confirmed his negative opinion.[2] In contrast, Heinze proudly reported the positive reaction to his own concerts in Europe, where he had clearly flaunted his British nationality: 'Every night, with my prayers, I repeat fervently, "Long Live England and God Save the King", and thank you for making me a Britisher.'[3]

In Europe, Heinze was exposed to political discussion, which kept returning to the German occupation of Austria and the threat of war. When they heard of his influential position in Australia, many Jewish musicians approached him, but he saw no way to help them. In June 1938, he wrote to his Conservatorium secretary Sutton Crow:

> I am being absolutely plagued by refugees from Germany and Central Europe, who think that I have unlimited positions to offer them in Australia. The enclosure is just another one of hundreds of applications.…Would you be so good as to place her application before the Faculty and write to her at the address on her card explaining that there is not a vacancy at present.[4]

Time and again, Bernard Heinze warned interested parties of the difficulties involved in emigrating to Australia. In another letter he told one prospective immigrant that if he did not bring enough money to last for a year, he should not even consider emigrating.[5] He was evidently unaware of how desperate the situation was for these applicants, for whom it was often a matter of life and death.

Earlier, Heinze had already established that Australia had no permanent positions for professional musicians on offer: 'Have your visiting conductors and artists by all means but let it be understood they are visitors.'[6] He cited the USA as a warning: there, according to him the 'invasion' of European musicians had caused many complaints from local artists.[7] In another letter from Europe, Heinze mentioned a 'Jewish invasion in Australia', for which a solution was urgently needed. With the exception of Switzerland, he had experienced antisemitic campaigns all over Europe in response to this wave of refugees. As Britain and France could no longer take in any more Jews, hopes rested on the USA. 'Elsewhere, notably Scotland, Australia has been named as an excellent dumping ground for the Central European rejects.' Germany had unleashed 82 opera conductors and 76 concert conductors on the world, all of them experienced in their profession. As nowhere were there as many opera houses or symphony orchestras as in Germany, these Jewish conductors were now being 'poured over the face of the globe like treacle over a bread roll'. It was particularly awkward that these Jews did not want to understand that there were not enough jobs in this field. An impresario in New York had shown him a list of 28 qualified conductors, 'all of whom were willing to take the next boat for anywhere in Australia. They all appeared to have great credentials'.[8] Some months previously, in an official letter to the head of the ABC, Heinze had already warned of 'the coming deluge of refugee conductors'.[9] As the very best artists had already found work, he said, many desperate provincial conductors were now crowding the market. Although they often had glowing references, one should be extremely careful. After all, the limited number of positions in Australia were already filled. Overseas guests could be unwelcome competition or even a threat – not least to Heinze himself.

In his official reports for the ABC, Heinze assumed that there would be hardly any first-rate musicians among the refugees by then entering into the country. In June, however, in a letter to the composer Percy Grainger, he mentioned that during his stay in England he had been approached by first-class conductors of top orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Milan's La Scala and the Berlin State Opera.[10] In September, he asked the violinist Bronislaw Huberman for advice as the enquiries were piling up. Huberman replied that there was no central register for musicians who were out of work. He recommended that Heinze travel to Vienna himself to contact former members of the Vienna

Philharmonic who had lost their positions on account of being Jewish or married to a Jew and had to leave Vienna as a matter of urgency.[11]

That said, Heinze's willingness to help was limited not only by the job situation. He also feared that the influx of Germans and Austrians would jeopardise the so far distinctly British character of Australian musical life. In the above-mentioned letter to Percy Grainger, of whose racist views he was well aware[12], he wrote: 'This exodus from Germany seems to me to indicate the replacement of British musicians by others throughout the world.'[13] At that time, even the otherwise tolerant British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams warned of a 'Little Europe' in England, which he saw not as an opportunity, but as a threat.[14] From the point of view of cultural dominance, the 'infiltration' of outstanding musicians was regarded as even more dangerous than the influx of second-rate provincial conductors.

Professor Bernard Heinze had patrilineal connections to Germany: his father, a German watchmaker, had emigrated to Australia and married a British-born woman. Although Heinze fought with the British during the First World War, he later studied violin with Willy Hess at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. He was now Head of the University Conservatorium in Melbourne, an institution that also represented German traditions, since it was originally founded by George Marshall-Hall and William Laver along the lines of Dr Hoch's Conservatory in Frankfurt am Main.[15] Upon his return from Frankfurt Laver recommended Percy Grainger to study there as well.

According to his biographer Thérèse Radic, Heinze had in Germany just been 'another better-than-average fiddler jostling for a first desk. In Australia he was to become a legend …'[16] In view of the strong anti-German feelings after World War One, which also isolated George Marshall-Hall and his largely German-born staff, Heinze tended to downplay his German background. In interviews he now uttered scepticism about the future of German music. Better chances were given by him to French composers like Maurice Ravel.[17] But Heinze was not strictly anti-German. When in 1930 the soprano Alice Orff-Solscher, the composer Carl Orff's first wife, came to Melbourne on a health trip as guest of the piano-manufacturing Wertheim family,[18] he put her in charge of the opera department of the University Conservatorium, and together they staged Carmen, Faust and Tosca.[19]

Also, he greatly admired the pianist Jascha Spivakovsky. This Russian pianist had been educated in Berlin and already toured Australia in

1921–22, giving no less than 75 concerts in seven months. Several London reviews had helped him to secure this engagement. 'We have seldom heard a more brilliant performance', praised the *Daily Telegraph*, while the *Daily Chronicle* wrote about his 'overwhelming passion'.[20] The Australian press reacted in a similar way. One of the Melbourne papers said Jascha Spivakovsky was 'probably the most satisfying all-round performer this generation has heard'.[21] After his first appearance in Melbourne, Nellie Melba sent the pianist a letter in which she confessed: 'I consider you one of the greatest pianists in the world.'[22]

Jascha Spivakovsky returned to Australia for a second tour in 1929, now accompanied by his young wife, Leonore. The millionaire's daughter from Adelaide had got to know the artist on his first tour, and had fallen in love with him. A few years later, at the age of 17, she had travelled to Berlin with her parents and married the pianist there. On his second tour, he gave the first Australian performances of several works, including Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition' and Max Reger's monumental 'Variations on a Theme of Johann Sebastian Bach'. The Sydney *Bulletin* wrote: 'He comes like rain to the Never Never.'

On 27 January 1933, Jascha Spivakovsky set out from Berlin on his third Australian tour, this time together with his youngest brother Tossy and the cellist Edmund Kurtz; in 1930 they had formed the Spivakovsky-Kurtz Trio. In January 1926, at the age of 18, Tossy Spivakovsky had been appointed concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The brothers were heard regularly in the Beethovensaal of the Philharmonie, either individually or together. When they boarded the Oronsay with Edmund Kurtz in Naples on 12 March 1933, the situation in Germany had drastically deteriorated. For Russian Jews like the Spivakovskys, Hitler's Germany no longer offered a professional future. Jascha and Tossy were travelling on Soviet passports, whereas Edmund Kurtz and Jascha's wife Leonore had German papers; but they all decided not to return to Berlin.

By January 1933, the *Australian Musical News* was advertising the Spivakovsky-Kurtz Trio as the best instrumental trio ever to have visited the southern hemisphere.[23] As the pianist had been a member of the Australian Musicians' Union since 1929, and therefore had no need to be afraid of the organisation that otherwise treated overseas artists with utter scepticism, the tour started under favourable conditions. In April, the six-month residence permit issued on their arrival had already been extended to 12 months. The newcomers received substantial assistance from

Fig. 3: The Spivakovsky-Kurtz Trio (Michael Spivakovsky, Melbourne)

Bernard Heinze, who knew and appreciated the pianist. In the minutes of the Faculty of Music of this Conservatorium one finds the following entry:

> 1934 Meeting No. 2, 23rd March, 1934
>
> The Dean [Heinze] reported that he had been approached by the brothers, Jascha and Tossie Spivakowski [sic]24, with a statement that they desired to remain in Australia, and a suggestion that they should be appointed on the Conservatorium staff.
>
> After discussion, it was resolved to recommend that they be appointed Chief and Special Study teachers of Pianoforte and the Violin respectively in the Degree and Diploma and the Master Schools.[25]

Following this, Jascha Spivakovsky gained entry permits also for his parents and for his brothers, Adolf and Issy.[26] After three months in South Australia, they moved on to Melbourne, where Adolf was soon appointed to a position at the Conservatorium.[27] Edmund Kurtz received a position there in 1935.

In August 1934, the Australian Musical News announced that the three members of the famous piano trio wanted to settle in Melbourne, at least for the next few years.28 The Spivakovskys did in fact prepare themselves for a longer stay. With the help of Jascha's parents-in-law they acquired a splendid mansion in Toorak, Melbourne's prestigious suburb. From 1935 onwards, Jascha Spivakovsky dwelt high above the Yarra River in Edzell House, 76 St Georges Road, with his wife, her parents and his own parents. At the centre of the house was an enormous music room with two grand pianos, one of them the Blüthner Prize won in Berlin. Exile began for the pianist in fairytale luxury; but it was not to remain that way.

When the Spivakovsky-Kurtz Trio arrived in 1933 they were promoted as a unique opportunity for Australia to hear 'Three Master Musicians on the one Programme … Time will permit only a very limited number of recitals in each city'. The programme had been printed at a stage when all the parties assumed that this would be a regular concert tour. Following their settlement in Australia they were no longer limited, but were in principle available all the time. What was limited, though, was the demand, especially for a specialist ensemble such as a piano trio. Moreover, Australia was not the ideal starting point for more extensive concert tours. Edmund Kurtz recognised this quickly and was the first to draw the consequences. On 10 July 1936, he informed the chairman of the ABC about his decision to leave: 'I think America will offer bigger opportunities for my future'.29 In spite of his marriage with an Australian girl and his lectureship at the Melbourne Conservatorium, Kurtz moved to the USA. There he was immediately engaged as principal cellist for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a prestigious position that Australia would never have been able to offer.

For Jascha and his brother Tossy, such a decision was impossible, as they had already encouraged other family members to come to their new country. Naturally they made an effort to arrange regular performances in Australia, which at the time was also in the ABC's interests. When in 1936 the Broadcasting Commission started a series of Celebrity Concerts, Jascha Spivakovsky was the first star soloist.

In August 1936 Charles Moses offered the members of the Trio 'a regu-lar engagement as long as all members of your Trio remain in Australia'. This deal formed the basis for Jascha's decision to stay permanently in Australia and, since it was to be a long-ranging contract, he accepted lower fees than usual. But evidently the Australian public was not ready for such

a solution. In December 1936, in his capacity as Director of Music for the ABC, Heinze was already warning Charles Moses of the changed circumstances in a memorandum:

There is no doubt about the fickle nature of the Australian musical public. When Jascha Spivakowsky [sic] came to Australia in his first solo tour his success was a furore. The press could not find sufficient superlatives to accommodate it in its approval of his work, and the public flocked to hear him. The moment he signified his intention to stay in Australia he was labelled 'local', a foul term guaranteed to sink even one of the heavenly muses in the fickle sea of public opinion.[30]

It is possible that, during his studies in Berlin, Heinze had come across the pianist who was now his friend and neighbour in Toorak. He knew only too well that the Australian public wanted something 'sensational'. The pianist himself was aware of this, which is why he tried hard to present a great variety of programmes. From 1935 onwards, he and his brother Tossy gave a concert every Sunday evening on ABC radio, and in the process they performed almost their entire repertoire. Unfortunately, only very few of these recordings survive.[31] Jascha then offered the ABC some interesting programmes intended to demonstrate the historical development of the piano concerto. However, the ABC had problems integrating such ideas into its programming. Because of the public's attitude described by Heinze, it became increasingly difficult for the broadcaster to use the brothers' weekly recordings.

From 1935, Jascha Spivakovsky gave group tuition (a method new to Australia) in Room 1 of Melbourne's University Conservatorium. Finding the level of performance to be well below European standards, he set high standards and was considered a very strict teacher. His older brother Adolf started here at the same time as Chief Study Teacher of Singing. Already in 1936 two of his students, Sylvia Fisher and Charles Lomas, carried off first and second prizes at the 'Sun Aria' competition. Both appeared at a students' concert in December 1936 with arias by Ruggero Leoncavallo and Richard Wagner. On the same programme figured the violinist Paul McDermott as a pupil of Tossy and the 13-year old Anna Jackobovitch[32] as a pupil of Jascha Spivakovsky.

The Spivakovsky brothers did not have to suffer from anti-German feelings, as they had arrived as Russian citizens. Otherwise in Australia the understanding for Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria was limited. While Thorold Waters, editor of the *Australian Musical News*, considered

Adolf Hitler to be far more dangerous than Bismarck or Wilhelm II[33], other members of the Australian musical public regarded these views as exaggerated. The music theorist from Melbourne's Conservatorium, James Arthur Steele, found himself in Vienna just as the German troops invaded in March 1938. In the *Australian Musical News* Steele reported on the large squadrons of warplanes that he had already observed in Munich. In Vienna, he happened to be staying at the same hotel as the German High Command and, according to him, the German officers had behaved as gentlemen.[34] Steele had evidently not noticed any persecution of Jews, as he made no mention of it. Rather, he reported the deep musical impressions he experienced in Vienna, following those in Mozart's birthplace in Salzburg, the Bach House in Eisenach, the Leipzig Thomaskirche and the masterly performances at the Berlin State Opera.

The Musicians' Union of Australia strongly opposed the influx of foreign musicians, claiming that there were already enough talented musicians in Australia.[35] Percy Grainger supported this view. Although he had studied at Dr Hoch's Conservatory in Frankfurt am Main, he found Germany an uncomfortable nation because of its racial bifurcation.[36] Thus he had some understanding for Hitler's argument for racial cleaning and even saw the Führer as a gifted man of 'pure goodness'.[37] Grainger was convinced that British composers were superior to those from the European mainland. He was therefore very keen to propagate the Nordic–British musical tradition in Australia. Thus, in August 1938, he wrote to Sir James Barrett, the chancellor of Melbourne University: 'Continental Europe today has few composers that can be compared with such British geniuses as Elgar, Delius, Scott, Vaughan Williams, Roger Quilter, Arnold Bax, Holst, Balfour Gardiner and many others. I happened to be the close associate of these men just at the time when English music was resuming its old supremacy.'[38]

According to Grainger, through the aforementioned composers, England was now the leader of the musical world. Since he thought this development was also of interest to Australians, Grainger had been collecting letters, concert programmes and other documents. He wanted to put them at the disposal of the music museum that he was establishing at the University of Melbourne and which was opened in December 1938.

In his attitude to foreign conductors, especially Maurice Abravanel[39], Heinze agreed with Percy Grainger. The more applications from German-Jewish musicians he received, the more repellent he became as the

following examples will show.

Ellen Cohn-Byk[40] from Berlin had been a very successful violin teacher. But as a Jew she from 1936 was no longer authorised 'to engage in any teaching activity for Aryan youth.'[41] As she stated herself, from 1933 onwards she had already lost all of her non-Jewish students, so her income was effectively halved.[42] Her older brother had supported her intermittently, but this was no longer possible after he lost his position as a director of the big electrical industry company AEG in 1937.[43] Desperately trying to leave Germany Ellen Byk contacted Robert Marshall Allan, a medical professor from Melbourne University, who in return recommended her to write to Bernard Heinze. In April 1938 she sent him the following letter from Berlin:

> Dear Professor Heinze!
>
> […] I am a violinist, always lived in Berlin, where I had a very good repute as a violin player and teacher. I used to give Concerts and to play also for the Broadcasting Station.
>
> The way things are going now, it is quite impossible for me, to get on with my profession. So I would like to be able to come to Australia and I would be very grateful to you, if you would see any chance for me to come over. The Woburn House in London, where I called last summer, sent my papers and certificates to Australia, but they informed me, that it
>
> would be very difficult for me to get the 'permit'. I would be very much obliged, if you would try to give me a chance, I would be able to supply a position as violin teacher on a music-school or in the Broadcasting Station. […]
>
> Yours sincerely
> Ellen Cohn-Byk[44]

Although the violinist had attached concert reviews from the main Berlin papers, like the *Berliner Tageblatt*, *Vossische Zeitung* and *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, the conservatorium director replied telling her that there was no position available:

> I regret to have to inform you that for the moment I could not possibly take the responsibility of encouraging you to migrate to Australia in a permanent capacity. Were you willing to go there and slowly work up a teaching connection, I feel your experience in Europe would stand you in good stead, but as far as offering you a position on the staff of the University

Conservatorium is concerned, I'm afraid that this is quite impossible.[45]

Heinze had already asked Sutton Crow to write a similar letter and mentioned the case in the next meeting of the Faculty of Music. In the minutes of 20 July 1938, one finds the following entry: 'An application was received from Miss Ellen Cohn for appointment to the staff as a teacher of violin. The application was not recommended'.[46]

In spite of this, the violinist endeavoured to migrate to Australia. Again she was supported by Professor Allan. Regardless of how he had made contact with Ellen Cohn-Byk, in view of the antisemitic riots after the November pogrom in Germany, and despite her failed application for a position at the Conservatorium, the doctor was prepared to bring the violinist to Australia, now as his domestic servant. At the end of November 1938, he sent his government an 'Application for Admission of Relatives or Friends to Australia' in which he declared himself willing to invite the 51-year-old woman to Australia.[47] She was currently a violinist, he said, but wanted to work as a housemaid in Melbourne. He stated that as a university professor he had sufficient funds. The application succeeded, and Ellen Cohn-Byk proceeded to organise a German passport, which she received on 10 February 1939. She then disposed of her household assets, completed the necessary formalities and travelled to England, where a week later she boarded the Orient Line's SS *Ormonde*. In the passenger list, the violinist's occupation is given as 'Domestic', commensurate with Marshall Allan's application. And she entered the same in her Personal Statement and Declaration.[48] At first, Ellen Byk did indeed live in the professor's home. From here, a few days after her arrival, she again asked Bernard Heinze for a teaching position, as she had never really wanted to work as a domestic. Heinze invited the violinist to the Conservatorium on 18 May 1939.[49] But he still could not offer her any position.

Ellen Byk now had to try and survive under extremely difficult circumstances, as can be seen from her frequent changes of address. Looking back at her start in Australia much later, she stated:

> During the first years that I was here, it was simply impossible (for immigrants) to eke out a living as a musician or music teacher and it was very hard for me. I was then already 52 years old, had no assets (I emigrated with 10 Marks) and was completely alone. To eke out an existence I had to work as a housemaid, then later in factories, etc.[50]

She left Professor Allan's house after seven weeks, lived in Melbourne's city centre for two months, in St Kilda for a week, in South Yarra two years, in Toorak five months, in both Glen Iris and Camberwell a month, in Auburn four months and in Hawksburn 18 months – a restless and unsettled life.[51] Ellen Byk was only rarely heard as a violinist in little concerts, accompanied by the ever helpful pianist Mary Baillie, a former pupil of Artur Schnabel.[52] It definitely was not a comfortable life. But she survived.

Another application for a teaching position at the Melbourne Conservatorium came from the violinist Lisbeth Cohn, who once had studied with the great Joseph Joachim in Berlin and now was called Elizabeth Colin.[53] She had contacted the university chancellor Sir James Barrett. He wanted to support the German-Jewish violinist and therefore wrote to Bernard Heinze. The Ormond Professor answered in the following letter:

> Dear Sir James,
>
> …The whole matter of refugee musicians was discussed at length by Faculty this week. There were some ten applications for appointment to the staff of the Conservatorium. After serious deliberation it was decided to write to all of them stating that, while we were quite sympathetic with the desire to find employment for refugee musicians, unfortunately it would be wrong to encourage them to come to Australia on an appointment to the Conservatorium, which would carry no monetary advantages until such time as they were able to attract students.…
>
> The position of the Spivakovskys was discussed, and it was pointed out that here the Conservatorium was actually engaging musicians of world repute, yet not enough students attended the classes of these teachers to warrant the appointment of still more foreign musicians to our staff. The case of Tossy Spivakovsky is lamentable: he has three students; this after being long with us and playing to Melbourne audiences for five years.
>
> I met Mrs. Colin. She was brought to the Conservatorium by Mrs. Kenny. I found her a charming, elderly woman, who apparently had been a student of Joachim. However, the Faculty felt that no good purpose would be served by appointing any of the applicants to the staff until we had reached a period in the development of music where we might

reasonably expect that such teachers would be sought after by prospective students.

With kindest regards,

Bernard Heinze, Ormond Professor[54]

When I showed this letter to Michael Spivakovsky he supposed that Bernard Heinze himself might be responsible for the small number of Tossy Spivakovsky's students. According to him Heinze actively discouraged talented students from studying with Tossy and Jascha, a practice which was carried on by his successors. Diana Weekes was one of the few to fight against this practice.

In the Heinze Collection, held at the State Library of Victoria, I found more applications of German-Jewish musicians who tried to get a teaching position at the Melbourne University Conservatorium. There is for example the pianist Gertrude Hacker who had entered the Vienna Academy of Music already as an eight-year-old girl and arrived in Australia with her husband in January 1939.[55] Six months later she wrote the following letter:

To the Dean of the Conservatorium of Music of the University of Melbourne

Hereby I apply for a position as a piano teacher in your Conservatorium. I am 24 years of age and have studied in the State Conservatorium of Music in Vienna. From this school I hold the highest degree, the certificate of maturity and I enclose a copy of that degree in English translation.

During my study in Vienna I had many pupils and after the leaving-examination in the State Conservatorium of Music I held a position as a piano and theory teacher in the same school, till I was forced by political circumstances to leave this position. In my free time I taught my private pupils, adults as well as children with best success. Many of these have played in private and public concerts and some have also given a performance by broadcasting.

I feel confident that if I am given the opportunity to teach in the Conservatorium I shall be able to carry out my duties to your satisfaction and would certainly at all times give you my best service.[56]

Gertrude Hacker's application was placed before the Faculty of Music at its next meeting and refused. Thus this pianist had to work in various jobs, including in a milk bar. She and her husband could only afford a

small flat, so her Ehrbar baby grand which they had brought from Vienna remained in storage for a long time.[57]

A year later, considering the under-developed musical life in Australia, Tossy Spivakovsky decided to move to the USA, as had the cellist Edmund Kurtz before him.[58] If such highly qualified musicians were giving up their lectureships and leaving Australia, it could hardly be expected that less eminent newcomers would find satisfactory jobs in this field. Jascha Spivakovsky did not want to abandon his parents, his Australian parents-in-law and his other brothers. Thus he continued to teach at the Melbourne Conservatorium. In the discussion after my talk we will be able to get first-hand information from experts who are here today: Michael Spivakovsky, the son of the pianist, and Diana Weekes, a former pupil of Jascha Spivakovsky.

In the Heinze Collection there are more applications. One came from the pianist Leo Rosenek, a pupil of Ferruccio Busoni, assistant of Bruno Walter and accompanist of the famous singers Lotte Lehmann, Elisabeth Schumann and Julia Culp. Shortly after the German invasion of Austria, this musician wrote from London: 'Very much acquainted in all questions of style and tradition and with regard to my many years experience I feel entitled to offer myself to you for the famous Melbourne Conservatory.'[59] Heinze promised that he would meet the Austrian professor, who however three weeks later expressed his disappointment that this meeting did not take place. Luckily Rosenek got a visa for the United States and became a very successful teacher at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.[60]

The violinist Kurt Oppenheimer (1890-1945), a pupil of Henri Marteau and concert master at the Municipal Opera Berlin, wrote to Heinze in February 1939 from Berlin, enclosing recommendations from Willy Hess and Bruno Walter.[61] Heinze answered much later, in August, that he could not offer a position. He added: 'I sincerely hope that you will be able to find a suitable appointment elsewhere.' Shortly before the transports to the death camps started, this Jewish musician luckily managed to escape with his wife to Uruguay. There Oppenheimer gave several concerts, before he died in 1945, just 55 years old.[62]

In May 1939 Heinze received a letter from the violinist Max Starkmann (1880-1942), a longstanding member of the Vienna Philharmonic who as a Jew had to leave this orchestra without getting a pension.[63] Heinze answered: 'Unfortunately I have to tell you that there is no post available on the staff of my University. I have made inquiries in the other states,

but can find no vacancy on the staff of any other Conservatorium. The position with regard to orchestral playing in Australia is a difficult one, for the Musician's Union will not admit to membership foreign musicians under three years' residence in Australia.'[64] In contrast to his colleague Oppenheimer, Max Starkmann did not find any other opportunity to leave the country. On 5 October 1942 he and his wife were deported from Vienna to the extermination camp of Maly Trostinec, on the outskirts of Minsk.[65]

Applications were sent to Heinze also by the Hungarian pianist Lajos Heimlich (1906-86), a pupil of Schnabel and Dohnanyi, the composer Dr Hans Ewald Heller (1894-1966), the Viennese opera-singer Max Klein, the violinist Fritz Kramer (1902-?)[66], the cellist Johann Kraus (1883-1971)[67], the Austrian conductor Kurt Pahlen (1907-2003)[68], the Hungarian conductor George Sebestyen (1903-89)[69] and the Viennese pianist Herbert Winkler (1899-?). Perhaps the last appeal for help that Bernard Heinze received at that time was a letter from the research palaeontologist Curt Teichert. This man, who had left Germany because of his Jewish wife and in 1937 took up an appointment at the University of Western Australia[70], had been contacted by the music critic and director Kurt Singer, the former president of the Jewish Cultural League in Germany.[71] Since 1938 Singer lived in Amsterdam. As he had no chance of getting a non-quota visa for the USA, he had asked Artur Schnabel for help. Apparently in their communication the idea of a musical career in Australia emerged. Schnabel was just visiting Australia on a concert-tour. In August 1939 he played in Perth, where he may have met Teichert. Thus, referring to Schnabel, on 21 August 1939 Singer sent a letter to Teichert, enclosing written recommendations from such eminent figures as Leo Blech, Egon Wellesz, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Carl Flesch. Teichert immediately contacted Charles Moses, the head of the ABC, who then forwarded Singer's letter to Heinze.[72] The Ormond Professor noted that the Singer case should be discussed, but no result is recorded. After the beginning of the war it was already too late. Kurt Singer was sent to Westerbork concentration camp in Holland in 1943 and died of exhaustion the following year in the Jewish ghetto of Theresienstadt.[73]

Whether Bernard Heinze should have invited more of those applicants as teachers to the Melbourne University Conservatorium is a difficult and painful question. Today we know that even a very small position could have saved a life, as the example of the New School for Social Research in New York shows. This school set up the University in Exile in 1933 as a graduate division to serve as an academic haven for scholars escaping from

Nazi Germany and other anti-intellectual regimes in Europe. Its professors included the composers Hanns Eisler and Ernst Toch and the conductor George Szell, who arrived in New York as refugees from Germany.[74]

Australia was less hospitable to musicians than was the United States. But at least some applications of refugee musicians from Germany and Austria were successful. Among the refugee teachers who did in fact contribute significantly to the quality of the Melbourne University Conservatorium was Adolf Spivakovsky. He continued to teach vocal studies until 1958, the year of his death; Glenda Raymond, Kathleen Goodall, Sylvia Fisher and Stefan Haag were his pupils. His brother Jascha Spivakovsky taught at the Conservatorium until 1962, only interrupted by three leaves of absence for international concert tours. Mention should also be made of Henry Portnoj (1895-1984), a singing teacher from Vienna, who had been deported to Australia from Singapore and taught at the Conservatorium from 1956 to 1959.[75] Among his many pupils was the bass baritone Neil Warren-Smith. Another refugee teacher was Otti Veit (1914-2000), who served as chief study teacher of cello for more than three decades (1952-

84). After her death, her husband sold her valuable cello and put $250,000 from the proceeds towards an Otti Veit scholarship at the University of Melbourne for gifted young cellists.[76] The composer and music-critic Felix Werder (1922-2012), who had been deported to Australia aboard HMT *Dunera*, served as lecturer in musical aesthetics at the Conservatorium from 1966 to 1970.[77] Although Werder in his reviews for *The Age* never denied his artistic ideals from central Europe, Bernard Heinze actively supported him.[78] In the meantime, he had learned to accept the replacement of British musicians by others.

Fig. 8: Otti Veit (1914-2000), teacher of violoncello at the Melbourne University Conservatorium 1952-1984 (Kurt R. Eisner, Melbourne)

Endnotes

1. This lecture, held by the author at the Melbourne University Conservatorium on 1 September 2016, is based on his book *The Vanished Musicians. Jewish Refugees in Australia*, translated from the German by Diana K. Weekes (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2016).

2. Thérèse Radic, *Bernard Heinze. A Biography* (South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1986), p. 75.

3. Heinze to 'Jessie', 7 May 1938, ibid, p. 91.

4. Heinze to Sutton Crow, 13 June 1938, ibid, p. 91. Enclosed is an application from the violinist Ellen Cohn-Byk.

5. Heinze to Dr H.E. Heller, 28 June 1938, ibid, p. 93.

6. ibid, p. 60.

7. ibid, pp. 91f.

8. Heinze to Leo Doyle, 26 August 1938, ibid., p. 92.

9. Heinze to Charles Moses, 11 May 1938, ibid., pp. 94f.

10. Heinze to Percy Grainger, 28 June 1938, ibid., p. 93.

11. Huberman to Heinze, 11 September 1938, ibid.

12. See Albrecht Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 84f.

13. Heinze to Grainger, 28 June 1938, ibid., pp. 92f.

14. Jutta Raab Hansen, *NS-verfolgte Musiker in England. Spuren deutscher und österreichischer Flüchtlinge in der britischen Musikkultur* (Hamburg: von Bockel, 1996), pp. 92-95.

15. Radic, op.cit., pp. 17f. William Laver had studied in Frankfurt 1883-89.

16. ibid., p. 3.

17. ibid., p. 32.

18. 'Madame Orff-Solscher. Life in Germany', *Argus* (15 November 1930).

19. John Whiteoak and Aline Scott-Maxwell, eds., *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia* (Sydney: Currency House, 2003), p. 475. See also *Argus* (2 December 1930).

20. Tait concert agency's promotional material, Prompt Collection, National Library of Australia (ID 3531277).

21. *Table Talk* (Melbourne), quoted in Michael Spivakovsky, 'Jascha Spivakovsky', *Music and the Teacher*, vol. 11/2 (June 1985), p. 11.

22. Michael Spivakovsky, 'Jascha Spivakovsky', p. 10.

23. *Australian Musical News* (21 January 1933).

24. In Europe the Russian name had been spelled Spiwakowsky (see Fig. 2).

25. Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne. Minute Book 1926-1956, p. 65.

26. National Archives of Australia (NAA): A433 (Jascha Spivakovsky), 1943/2/1139.

27. Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, p. 63.

28. 'Spivakovsky–Kurtz Trio: to settle in Melbourne', *Australian Musical News* (August 1934), p. 18.

29. National Archives of Australia (NAA): SP1558/2 (Jascha Spivakovsky), p. 166.

30. Heinze to Moses, 7 December 1936, ibid.

31. A few CDs, based on private recordings, have in the meantime been released by the Pristine Classical label.

32. See 'Girl Pianist's Power', *Australian Musical News* (January 1938), p. 6.

33. Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 165f.

34. James Steele, 'On the Fringe of History. There was also Music in Austria', *Australian Musical News* (June 1938), p. 23.

35. Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 191-95.

36. *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger 1914-1961*, Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 7.

37. Grainger to Lewis Slavit, 4 September 1938, ibid, p. 6.

38. Grainger to Sir James Barrett, 24 August 1938, ibid, p. 149. Incidentally, Barrett was well-disposed towards Jews: see Hilary L. Rubinstein, 'Sir James Barrett (1862-1945): Australian philosemite', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol. 12, part 1 (1993), pp. 91-100.

39. Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, p. 85.

40. Ellen Byk was Ellen Cohn's performing name, taken from her mother's maiden name.

41. Dümling, op.cit., p. 92.

42. Correspondence between Ellen Cohn-Byk and the Berlin Compensation Office, Register no 56322.

43. Information by Rosemary Pattenden, Cambridge. See also Albrecht Dümling, 'Ellen Byk', in *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit*, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen, eds., (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2012; https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00001746) accessed 31 May 2017.

44. Ellen Cohn-Byk to Heinze, April 1938. State Library of Victoria, Heinze Collection, Box 1.

45. ibid.

46. Minutes, Faculty of Music: Byk, Ellen Cohn, 107: 1938 'Meeting No. 2. 20th July 1938.' .

47. NAA: A261 (Robert Marshall ALLAN), 1938/44.

48. NAA: A12508 (Ellen COHN), 21/741.

49. Heinze to Ellen Cohn-Byk, 12 May 1939, Heinze Collection, Box 12.

50. CV, Melbourne 10 May 1952. Entschädigungsamt Berlin, Entschädigungsakte [compensation file] Ellen Byk, no 56322.

51. Statutory Declaration, 4 May 1944. NAA: A435 (Byk, Ellen), 1944/4/4170.

52.   Information from Mary-Clare Adam, Tel Aviv, Mary Baillie's daughter. See also Marion Poynter, *Nobody's Valentine: Letters in the Life of Valentine Alexa Leeper, 1900-2001* (Melbourne: The Miegunyal Press, 2008), pp. 183f.

53.   See Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 19, 44, 493f.

54.   Heinze to Sir James William Barrett, 8 June 1939, Heinze Collection, Box 44.

55.   Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 137-38, 184.

56.   Gertrude Hacker to Heinze, 6 June 1939, Heinze Collection, Box 44.

57.   Information from Sandra Hacker, Melbourne, the pianist's daughter.

58.   According to the Minutes of the Faculty: 'Dec. 5th, 1939: The Dean (Heinze) reported that Mr. Tossy Spivakovsky had resigned from the staff, and suggested the appointment of Mr. Llewellyn to replace him.' .

59.   Leo Rosenek to Heinze, 1 April 1938, Heinze Collection, Box 1.

60.   Rosenek also accompanied the outstanding black American tenor Roland Hayes.

61.   Kurt Oppenheimer to Heinze, 8 February 1939, Heinze Collection, Box 44.

62.   Sophie Fetthauer, 'Kurt Oppenheimer', *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen*. eds., (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2007; https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00002111) accessed 31 May 2017.

63.   Max Starkmann an Heinze, 6 May 1939, Heinze Collection, Box 44.

64.   Heinze to Starkmann, 25 May 1939, ibid.

65.   Bernadette Mayrhofer and Fritz Trümpi, *Orchestrierte Vertreibung. Unerwünschte Wiener Philharmoniker. Verfolgung, Ermordung und Exil* (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2014), and website of the Vienna Philharmonic.

66.   Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 508f.

67.   After settling in Shanghai, Kraus survived in the United States.

68.   Pahlen fled to Argentina in 1939.

69.   He fled to San Francisco.

70.   'Geological Research. Arrival of Dr. Teichert', *West Australian*, 20 October 1937, p. 18.

71.   Lily E. Hirsch, *A Jewish Orchestra in Nazi Germany: Musical Politics and the Berlin Jewish Culture League* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010).

72.   Curt Teichert to Charles Moses, 21 August 1939 (copy), Heinze Collection, Box 71.

73.   See Sophie Fetthauer, 'Kurt Singer', *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit*, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen, eds., (Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2006; https://www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00001059) accessed 31 May 2017.

74.   See http://thenewschoolhistory.org/?page_id=280, accessed 31 May 2017.

75.   Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 392, 516.

76.   Miriam Henry, Otti Veit's daughter, was attending the lecture. Also present were Michael Spivakovsky, Diana K. Weekes and Sandra Hacker, Gertrude Hacker's daughter.

77.   Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, pp. 397, 529f. See also idem., 'Felix Werder', *Lexikon verfolgter Musiker und Musikerinnen der NS-Zeit*, Claudia Maurer Zenck, Peter Petersen, Sophie Fetthauer, eds., Hamburg: Universität Hamburg, 2014; https://www.lexm.unihamburg.de/object/lexm_lexmperson_00003714) accessed 31 May 2017.

78.   In 1973, when Werder applied for a lectureship in composition, Heinze wrote a recommendation. Dümling, *The Vanished Musicians*, p. 398.

'AN OLD FEUD OFT-TIMES RENEWED': THE EMERGENCE OF ORTHODOX-LIBERAL RELATIONS IN SYDNEY

Mark Rapaport

(This article has been peer reviewed)

Working as a journalist in Sydney after fleeing the Anschluss, Viennese barrister Dr Hans Kimmel wrote a weekly column for the Sydney Jewish press. In one such column, titled 'An Old Feud Oft-Times Renewed',[1] he reported on Orthodox criticisms levelled against Liberal congregations for purportedly marrying Jews who had not been divorced according to Jewish law. Being from Vienna, Kimmel had lived near the epicentre of the century-old debate between the Orthodox and Liberal movements, and upon arriving in Australia, he discovered that such interdenominational disagreements had not yet subsided. The title of his article indicated that conflict typically arose as a result of interaction between the Orthodox and Liberal movements, and that seemingly eternal disputes also transcended geographical boundaries. As will be discussed in this article, the relationship between the two movements, at least in Australia, was soured by the ideological belief that one stream was more 'authentic' than the other. Arguments presented to attempt to justify these claims relied heavily on tailored historical narratives that read the past through the lens of modern-day ideological positions. If presented convincingly, these narratives could hold significant weight as 'evidence' of the movement's 'truth', and could be utilised to convince both themselves and their adherents of this purported authenticity.

In religious contexts, to be seen as possessing the 'truth' grants the bearer a divinely ordained legitimacy. Within Judaism, demonstrating a link between one's particular movement and Sinai indicates a direct interface with God and ownership over the Torah. From the nineteenth century onwards, contested claims to this 'truth' saw a modern schism emerge within Judaism, with the emergent denominations claiming that their respective ideologies and associated practices comprised an 'authentic' Judaism. This was often paired with a proclivity to deny the legitimacy of concurrent claims of other Jewish streams. For Orthodoxy, the relevant

Jewish past consisted of an adherence to *Halachah*, while for Liberal Judaism, ethical values lay at the core of Judaism and constant reformation throughout history had apparently ensured its continuity in a variety of settings. Modern positions were often superimposed onto the past in self-serving reconstructions of Jewish history, thereby allowing each movement to allege its inheritance of Judaism and claim the right to determine its future. As will be discussed, even in distant Australia arguments over authenticity have engendered a hierarchy of religious expression which can possess potency in both religious and communal settings. Gaining power in the present is and was contingent on explicating and harnessing the power of the past.

In-depth research of the Orthodox-Liberal relationship in the Australian context has also not been previously conducted, with existing surveys of the relationship being broad in scope and not adequately addressing the causes of religious conflict. The focus of this article pertains to the Modern Orthodox and Reform/Liberal movement as the Conservative/Masorti stream developed in Australia only after the period discussed in the case study. Furthermore, the terms 'Orthodox' and 'Reform' emerged only as the movements crystallised in the twentieth century. By necessity, they are used here anachronistically. This analysis of Australian Orthodox-Liberal debates over authenticity draws upon a range of sermons, annual reports, minutes of various meetings, memoirs, private correspondence, synagogue publications, and interviews, statements and articles published in the Jewish press. The sources were predominantly published during, or discuss the years 1938-53, the period of significant migration before and after the Shoah, when the Reform movement developed rapidly in Melbourne and Sydney. While Melbourne-based Rabbi Herman Sanger's ideas are drawn on, this article focuses on the situation in Sydney. In particular, it focuses on the dynamics between two of the protagonists, Orthodox Rabbi Dr Israel Porush and Liberal Rabbi Max Schenk. Interviews with the protagonists' successors were also conducted, which not only underscore many of the conclusions reached, but furthermore demonstrate that these debates are ongoing and continue until the present day. The majority of these sources have never before been analysed, and those that have been have not been assessed as 'appeals to history' that aimed to facilitate claims to authenticity. This analysis reveals the centrality of historical utilisation in an attempt to control the present, an undertaking which was not unique to the Australian setting.

Historical precedents of modern Jewish movements

The emergence of historical consciousness in modern Judaism has been an ongoing area of research, intensifying in the mid-to-late 1980s. Scholars have identified how, from their beginnings in nineteenth century Prussia, both the Modern Orthodox and Reform/Liberal movements engaged in the selective use of history in separate attempts to link themselves with the deep past of Judaism. Historians of the Reform movement point to its intellectual founder, Abraham Geiger (1810-74), and his utilisation of Wissenschaft des Judentums (academic study of Judaism) to undertake this task. In a similar vein, historians of Orthodoxy refer to its 'optical illusion' of timelessness and refute the movement's claims that it has remained unchanged since the reception of the Torah at Sinai.[2] In dissecting the various historical claims put forward by the Jewish movements, a range of modern historians revealed that these movements were modern innovations rather than unbroken continuations of the past, and exposed how they had selectively utilised history for their own benefit.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's seminal work *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* highlighted the emergence of modern historical consciousness as a relatively new phenomenon.[3] Whereas the previous Jewish understanding of the past had been teleological and eschatological, the modern age allowed for a mode of thought which recognised change over time. Yet Yerushalmi also recognised that despite this entry into a new age and new mode of thought, memory and selective reconstructions of the past, rather than history, remained the dominant factor in governing the Jewish psyche.[4] In so doing, Yerushalmi highlighted the proclivity for Jewish movements to privilege the past's contemporaneity over its historicity: 'Virtually all nineteenth-century Jewish ideologies, from Reform to Zionism, would feel a need to appeal to history for validation'.[5] Leaders who justified the founding of their particular modern Jewish movements by appealing to history revealed the vast and often disparate ways that the past could be constructed as they filtered it through their respective ideological lenses and suited it to their needs.

In analysing the centrality of historical consciousness for the Reform movement, scholarly consensus has emerged regarding the movement's utilisation of the past in its attempt to deny its modernity. Leading historian of the Reform movement Michael A. Meyer, in *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism*, places the movement's desire for historical justification as central to its attempt to appear as contiguous

with an imagined, monolithic past.[6]

It is a characteristic of reforming movements that they seek precedents. Unlike revolutions, they tend to stress continuity, links with the past rather than radical departure from it. From its beginnings, the Reform movement in modern Judaism was accused of sectarianism, of removing itself from the chain of tradition. Not surprisingly, its exponents were therefore perpetually concerned to show that they were merely elaborating elements found within Jewish history.[7]

While Meyer highlights historic precedents of reform and progressivism within pre-modern Judaism, such as the reinterpretation of seemingly cruel biblical laws and emphases on prophetic values, he points to other elements that signify the Reform movement's clear break with the Judaism of the past. Meyer points to the movement's conscious attempt to update Jewish law according to a recognised dialectic relationship with its environment, which sat in contrast to a previous understanding of Jewish law 'unfolding' from its original Sinaitic revelation. Furthermore, the questioning of the unity of the Written and Oral Law as equal components of revelation and a historicisation of the process of halachic development proved to be a 'real break with the Jewish legal tradition'.[8] Meyer questions the honesty of Reform involvement in Wissenschaft des Judentums, an intellectual movement which aimed to study Judaism by subjecting it to critical, academically rigorous methods of research. Wissenschaft entered into spheres such as Biblical criticism, religious philosophy, history, archaeology and Jewish literature.

Meyer highlights the Reform movement's intentional selectivity within Wissenschaft, noting that it took examples of progressive precedents out of their traditional context of internal development within halachic interpretation.[9] For example, Meyer points to the Reform Rabbi Samuel Holdheim in 1854 sermonising on Johanan ben Zakkai, who, upon witnessing the destruction of the Second Temple, introduced a litany of changes which reconstituted Judaism to fit the new circumstances of Jewish existence. Claiming him as a reformist figure, Holdheim pointed to ben Zakkai's introduction of the notions that prayer and good deeds could replace animal sacrifices and that the centre of Judaism could be moved from Jerusalem to Yavneh, with these changes allowing the tradition to survive well into the future. Meyer points to Holdheim's use of history as a prescriptive tool as common throughout the Reform movement of the nineteenth century. He reconstructs their argument in suggesting that just as ancient Judaism once

required radical adaptation due to the destruction of the Temple, 'so did contemporary Judaism now require an equally radical response to unprecedented cultural and social integration'. Meyer concludes that 'the Reform movement was not an internal Jewish development. It came into existence out of confrontation with a changed political and cultural environment', utilising a selective history to obscure this process.[10]

This selective history was constructed to portray the Reform movement as simultaneously inheriting the past and determining the future of Judaism. Leora Batnitzky points to the ideological underpinnings of Abraham Geiger's division of Jewish history into four phases; revelation, tradition, legalism and liberation:

> Legalism is 'characterised by the toilsome pre-occupation with the heritage as it stood' and lasts, Geiger argues, [from the completion of the Babylonian Talmud] until the middle of the eighteenth century. Finally, liberation begins just as legalism ends. This is Geiger's own era, in which the 'bond with the past has not been severed' and 'what is being attempted is solely to revitalise Judaism and to cause the stream of history to flow forth once again'.[11]

Batnitzky demonstrates that Geiger's construction of history contained the convenient conclusion that Reform was the sole movement that could access this purported essence of Judaism, as Orthodoxy's fixation on Jewish law was portrayed as a continuation of a rigid and stagnant 'legalism'. Similarly, historians note that Geiger historicised any aspect of the past which 'appeared to be a liability', thereby presenting a case for Reform which 'simply bristled with relevance'.[12]

Modern historians ultimately conclude that Geiger and the Reform movement engaged with history not as an end within itself, but as a means to 'demonstrate' its authenticity. Put simply, there was interest not in 'an open-ended, independent history, but only a past'.[13] History was used by the Reform movement for its contemporaneity and utility, and historians view Geiger's construction of the past as conveniently bolstering the movement's ideological positions. In portraying Jewish history as a past of ethical monotheism, the Reform movement could claim that it was the 'true' inheritor of Judaism and that it continued to promote Judaism's eternal message. The Reform movement was not alone in this pursuit, however, and historians have been similarly critical of Modern Orthodoxy for engaging in similar practices.

The assertions made by Geiger and the reformers about the nature of Judaism provoked a response from Jewish traditionalists, who proceeded to formulate and articulate an ideology that became known as Orthodoxy. Like the Reform movement, Orthodoxy similarly rejected its modernity in an attempt to claim legitimacy. Its portrayal of itself as an uninterrupted continuation of a past Judaism is referred to by Jacob Katz as an 'optical illusion'.[14] Scholars' attempts to deconstruct this illusion historicises a movement which explicitly rejects this very process, creating an unavoidable tension between academic histories of Orthodoxy and the movement's self-understanding. Academic historians have overwhelmingly rejected the Orthodox assumption that it is a direct continuation of the past, with titles such as Leora Batnitzky's chapter *Religious History: Religious Reform and the Invention of Modern Orthodoxy*,[15] Natan Slifkin's *The Novelty of Orthodoxy* or in reference to the more conservative strain of Orthodoxy, Michael K. Silber's *The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition*.[16]

Moshe Samet in his article 'The Beginnings of Orthodoxy' identifies a number of characteristics that identify Orthodoxy as a modern movement, challenging the Orthodox claims of being an unchanging movement since Sinai. He notes its reactionary nature to changes brought by modernity and the Reform movement, and highlights Orthodoxy's attempt to concentrate the religious community into a group of devout believers rather than maintain its previous 'broad tent' approach.[17] A striking example of previous inclusivity comes from pre-Orthodox halachic sage Rabbi Yaakov Reischer (1661-1733):

> He was asked about a move to reject the kosher status of meat that was slaughtered in outlying villages by Jews that were insufficiently learned or pious. R. Reischer strongly condemned this approach. Drawing upon the Talmud, he argued that one must not cause resentment, that one must also be considerate of the needs of travellers, and most of all that the Jewish community must be united and not splinter into groups with different halachic standards. Needless to say, such splintering was not only acceptable to Orthodoxy, but was even a hallmark of it, exercised to a great degree. For the Orthodox, halachic rulings were based on the needs of the immediate community, not the larger Jewish community.[18]

Samet also points to Orthodoxy's canonisation of prevailing custom,

which was an ideological commitment to the preservation of traditional Judaism – a deliberate reactionary conservatism–which inherently resulted in a departure from the very entity it attempted to perpetuate. In Middle Eastern communities where modernity had made little impact on traditional Judaism and therefore had not inspired a reactionary Orthodox approach, lenient rulings were more apparent than in European Orthodox communities.[19] Orthodox communities intentionally erred on the side of caution, perceiving 'spiritual laxity' in their generation. In response to German Reform communities permitting the consumption of legumes on Passover, the Chatam Sofer (1762-1839) issued a decree expressly banning them, later writing:

> I understood from our Sages that it is necessary to be one who preserves the Torah.

They warned against those who provide an opening and seek leniencies for the radicals of our people who desire them. If these radicals find a minute crack, they will greatly expand it into a breach … Therefore, it is best to elevate and exaggerate the nature of the prohibition … [20]

No doubt, with its traditionalist aesthetic and self-perception as historically contiguous, Orthodoxy's claims may be convincing to the untrained eye, but when subjected to historical analysis, this perspective on the past is indeed revealed to be no more than an 'optical illusion'.

In his historiographical work *The Jewish Search for a Useable Past*, David Roskies commented on the various interpretations of the past, suggesting that each movement had equally engaged in their dissection of history in order to justify their ideological contentions:

> [A]ll of Jewry is now divided along ideological lines, and each ideology has carved out a different piece of the past. Reform Judaism lays claim to the biblical, archaeological past, the seat of Judeo-Christian heritage. Conservative Judaism lays claim to the early rabbinic period, when the rabbis replaced the prophets and priests … Modern Orthodoxy lays claim to the Middle Ages when Halacha [Jewish law] reigned supreme … and right wing Orthodoxy lay claim to Jewish Eastern Europe.[21]

While Roskies is here referencing a more contemporary landscape, as this review has demonstrated, contests over defining this 'useable Jewish past' find their origins in nineteenth century Europe. An analysis of both

Orthodoxy and Reform from a critical historical perspective reveals that despite their vastly disparate views of the past, they shared a common strategy; both intentionally constructed their histories to rationalise their ideologies. The work of academic historians reveals that the two movements were united in their rejection of the notion of an integrated history, devoid of ideological ends.

The scholars discussed reveal the mutual tendency of both denominations to downplay their modernity by portraying themselves as contiguous with the Jewish past, in attempts to claim legitimacy. Perhaps this awareness of the movements' shared culpability in formulating narrow accounts of a heterogeneous past can assist in diffusing the tensions created when the past is wielded in an attempt to claim exclusive authenticity. Lacking a prescriptive element, a critical historical approach disavows the paradigm which has been established by the respective movements. In a similar spirit, this article attempts to inject into what can be quite a divisive debate an element of humility and a recognition that what is presented as 'truth' by various ideologues does not necessarily survive a critical assessment.

While historical consciousness came to the fore in nineteenth -century Europe, this endeavour was not limited to a particular setting. As this article will demonstrate, a century later and geographically distant from where these debates had initially transpired, a similar utilisation of the past is identifiable in Australia. There, the past remained a significant wellspring from which the modern Jewish movements could draw to establish their legitimacy in the present.

Anglo-Jewish denominationalism

Nineteenth-century relations between the various modern Jewish denominations in the Anglo-Jewish landscape were, as in Prussia, governed by the issue of authenticity. With Modern Orthodoxy succeeding in becoming the dominant stream of the British Jewish community, it stymied the growth of the Reform movement by allowing religious latitude. In turn, the British Reform movement's failure to adapt saw the emergence of the more radical Liberal movement, which had more success in gaining traction. These trends were replicated in the Australian Jewish community through immigration, as historian Suzanne Rutland notes, 'the early Australian Jews were fearful of any change and their pattern of religious life remained frozen in the Anglo-Jewish mould' due to their small size and lack of Jewish learning.[22] Only with the pre-World War Two European immigration of the

late 1930s did this situation change, as Reform/Liberal Judaism began to slowly emerge on Australia's shores.

During the nineteenth century, Orthodoxy became the dominant stream of Judaism in the Anglo-Jewish community. Orthodoxy gained official status through the Chief Rabbinate, and its congregational union, the United Synagogue, became recognised in 1870 by an Act of Parliament. British Jewry has characteristically conformed to the established synagogal system, leading sociologist Stephen Sharot to note that this had a 'prohibitive effect' on the growth of Reform Judaism, that movement struggling to attract a significant following.[23] With Orthodoxy's official recognition, Michael A. Meyer noted that 'in Britain it was the Reform Jews who had to justify their deviance from an Orthodoxy that was widely deemed the Jewish equivalent of the Church of England'.[24] This situation differed from Germany where the Reform movement was more dominant.

The Chief Rabbinate took a strongly critical stance of non-Orthodox movements, and used its authority to isolate reformers from the Jewish community. Chief Rabbi Nathan Marcus Adler (1803-90) was successful in 'taking much of the wind out of the reformers' sails'.[25] By accommodating those with only a vague acceptance of Orthodoxy's principles and allowing religious latitude, such as the introduction of a choir and sermons in the vernacular, Adler managed to retain the bulk of British Jewry.[26] The relatively moderate British Reform movement offered only minor differences in practice, and adding to this a failure to address the emerging issue of biblical criticism, British Jews dissatisfied with Orthodoxy had nowhere to turn.[27]

The more radical Liberal Judaism, founded by Claude Montefiore (1858-1938) at the turn of the twentieth century, was effective in rejuvenating the elements of the Anglo-Jewish community not catered for by Orthodoxy.[28] The movement sent out its first circular in 1902, which proposed measures such having mixed genders in the synagogue, shortened services and instrumental accompaniment.[29] Liberal Judaism also addressed the theological concerns of the non-Orthodox, noting that 'modern science and philosophy' made traditional Jewish belief impossible for progressive Jews.[30] By the 1920s, the movement had spread throughout London, and the Liberal Jewish Synagogue's membership exceeded that of London's Reform synagogue.[31] While undoubtedly Liberal Judaism had succeeded in gaining support for the progressive elements of the Anglo-Jewish community, Orthodoxy remained both the dominant and state-recognised

form of Judaism, with Reform/Liberal adherents only ever representing a maximum of one fifth of British Jewry.[32]

With an imported British cultural homogeneity in Australia extending into its Jewish community, trends similar to those in Britain defined the contours of Australian Jewish life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As in Britain, Reform/Liberal Judaism in Australia failed to make serious gains, and was unsuccessful in establishing itself until the 1930s. Prior to this, Orthodox Anglo-Jews largely remained in positions of power and succeeded in dictating the parameters of Jewish communal life.[33] Mirroring the situation in Britain, Sydney's Anglo-Jewish Great Synagogue strove to accommodate the religious laxity of its members by allowing latitude; the Shabbat morning service was read unaltered to a smaller gather of stricter Orthodox adherents, while in the latter part of the service, minor variations were introduced such as the reading of the *Haftorah* in English, the exclusion of the repetition of additional prayers and the introduction of a mixed choir.[34] Rampant assimilation during the 1920s, combined with pre-World War Two European immigration eventually provided the impetus for the founding of the Liberal movement in Australia.[35] Assimilation can refer to the adoption by immigrants of their host culture, also known as a process of acculturation. Here, however, it is used in the sense of refers the breaking down of the distinctiveness of a group, leading to its dilution and eventual disappearance through conversion, intermarriage, or non-identification.

Observers of the Australian Jewish community have concluded that the Jewish communities of the 1920s were doomed to extinction due high assimilation rates, and likely would have disappeared if not for the influx of pre-war refugees.[36] Attempts to combat assimilation were largely unsuccessful in both Sydney and Melbourne, and in 1928, with her son preparing to marry a non-Jewish woman, Ada Phillips (1862-1967) of Melbourne began establishing Australia's first successful Liberal congregation, Temple Beth Israel (TBI).[37] Phillips' daughter Belle later stated this central value of the new movement:

> Without in any way desiring to deny the fact that to a large section of our people the old Orthodox practices and customs mean a great deal, we must insist that to a section quite as large, if not larger, they have no meaning whatsoever … The Liberal Synagogue came into being as an attempt to stem the tide [of assimilation].[38]

Though the move drew a mixed response from the Jewish press, the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* noted that the movement's supporters 'are at least not indifferent to Judaism'.[39] While Anglo-Australian Jews had begun the task of establishing Liberal Judaism in Australia, they would soon find their pews filled by European Jewish refugees, and these new arrivals would help the movement's spread to Sydney.

Seeing the early signs of Hitler's rise to power on the Jewish populations of Europe, approximately 8,000 Jewish refugees, mostly German, arrived in Australia between 1933 and 1939, a sizeable impact on the existing community of 23,553 in 1933.[40] While not all German Jews gravitated towards the Liberal movement, demographer Charles Price suggests that they were extremely prominent in both Sydney and Melbourne's Liberal movements.[41] Melbourne's Temple Beth Israel was placed on a firm footing with the German-trained Rabbi Herman Sanger (1909-80), who hybridised his tradition with Anglo varieties of Liberal Judaism. Sanger was born in Germany, completing his rabbinical and academic study there during the fateful 1930s. Despite Hitler's rise to power, Sanger remained in Germany to provide pastoral care and to lobby overseas Jewish communities for assistance until he was threatened by the Gestapo for criticising Nazism and eulogising the death of German culture.

Sanger arrived in Melbourne in August 1936, and accepted a role at Temple Beth Israel.[42] Historian and Liberal rabbi Dr John Levi notes:

> As the Nazi regime lost all credibility and all semblance to civilisation, Sanger refused to speak German and so the English-speaking founding families were neither alienated nor lost. Hats returned to the heads of the men. Prayer shawls were worn. Sanger did not revert to the European Liberal custom of separate seating for women. Instead he brought out to Australia the musical director of the very untraditional, radical Berlin Reform Congregation. English hymns were abandoned.[43]

As in Melbourne, Sydney's Liberal congregation was established by Anglo-Australian Jews leaving its major synagogues, whilst also attracting a large German and Austrian membership.[44] John Levi noted that from the appointment of Sydney's first Liberal rabbi, Rabbi Max Schenk (1905-1974), Temple Emanuel grew 'like a bushfire',[45] attracting approximately 1,000 families. Rabbi Schenk was brought to Australia from Washington Heights, New York and inducted in 1939.[46] While the American Reform

movement was typically more radical in comparison to Liberal Judaism elsewhere, Schenk's traditionalist style had much in common with Sanger's approach.

Even with this rapid growth, the proportion of Liberal affiliation plateaued at an estimated one-fifth of the Australian Jewish community, similar to the proportion in Britain.[47] The majority of affiliated Australian Jews continued to identify with Orthodoxy, and the Orthodox establishment viewed the establishment of Liberal Judaism in Australia negatively and began to formulate a response.

The emergence of Orthodox-Liberal relations in Sydney

An examination of the sources regarding the Orthodox-Liberal debates in mid-twentieth century Sydney demonstrate that while a century had passed since the founding of the respective movements in nineteenth-century Prussia, the battle over the ownership of the Jewish past continued to play a central role in the debates over authenticity. Taking place at the 'edge of the Diaspora',[48] in a relatively small yet active Jewish community, these documents reveal that the leaders of both movements continued to draw upon selective readings of history to profess their authenticity and lay claim to the authority that it provided them. Furthermore, the source material shows that while both movements were engaged in ideologically-driven reconstructions of the past, they differed widely in determining whether theirs was an exclusive interpretation of the past, as was typically the case for Modern Orthodoxy, or whether multiple historical interpretations and legitimacies could coexist, as was typically the case for the Liberal movement. These positions had significant ramifications in determining to what extent the movements would cooperate with each other. With the formal establishment of the Liberal movement in Sydney both movements were forced to formulate a position regarding how they would navigate their relationship.

The Liberal movement in Sydney began in 1938 during the absence of a senior rabbi at the Orthodox Great Synagogue. At its outset, therefore, the relationship between the two movements was governed by the lay leadership of both congregations.[49] The president of the Great Synagogue, Sir Samuel Cohen (1869=1948), saw Liberal Judaism as an inevitable aspect of modern Jewish life, noting its emergence in other communities overseas.[50] He believed that the new movement was looking chiefly to unaffiliated Jews for its membership, and urged interdenominational cooperation,

seeing a boon for Sydney Jewry as a whole.[51] His son, Paul Cohen (later Major-General Paul Cullen) was a found member of the Temple and its first honorary secretary. Temple Emanuel's president Cecil Luber (1894-1969) confirmed its desire to engage the unaffiliated segments of the Jewish community, declaring at the synagogue's first AGM that 'Temple Emanuel had brought back to Judaism hundreds of men and women who had been completely lost … '[52] Temple Emanuel's Rabbi Max Schenk similarly described how the synagogue 'has brought back a wandering Israel into the fold'.[53] Orthodox-Liberal relations were largely devoid of the ideological battles that would later emerge, and their respective synagogue boards generally approached the relationship with a desire to cooperate.

The two synagogues had no issue with collaboration on simple logistical matters. For example, Temple Emanuel's first wedding in 1939 used the Great Synagogue's *chuppah* (wedding canopy), and borrowed its *sukkah* for the festival of Sukkot soon afterwards.[54] In relation to more complicated matters such as conversion, Luber declared that 'There should be full cooperation with the Great Synagogue, and that the guiding motive for proselytisation be one of sincerity', with a view to establishing a joint committee to consider conversion applications.[55] The two synagogues had a 'very courteous and satisfactory meeting'[56] to discuss Luber's plan. However, it was tinged with an anxiety as to how it would be perceived by the larger Jewish community. Responding to a Temple Emanuel board member's comment that 'The Great Synagogue has every desire to work together with us, all as Jews', Luber related that the Great Synagogue's leadership had requested that their meeting be kept a secret.[57] Documenting this experience, Temple Emanuel congregant Lee Simmons noted that 'It was hardly a satisfactory start, and one that would not get any better',[58] an observation which was particularly relevant once ideological disputes between the movements emerged and consolidated.

The conflict between Orthodoxy and Liberal Judaism in Australia entered a new era as a result of the appointment of the German-trained Rabbi Dr Israel Porush (1907-91) to the post of Senior Rabbi of the Great Synagogue in 1940.[59] Porush, known as the 'uncrowned chief rabbi of Australia',[60] brought debates over the past to the fore, leading to a decline in interdenominational cooperation. Porush had been raised in a deeply religious home in Jerusalem, and completed his academic and rabbinic training at Orthodox institutions in Palestine, Germany and London.[61] Whilst in London, Porush tutored at Jews' College, the main training

ground for the Commonwealth's ministry, and became a major figure in Anglo-Jewry before moving to Sydney in 1940 to avoid the mounting tensions in Europe.[62] The London Orthodox establishment typically instilled in its followers an antagonistic attitude to the Liberal movement. Dr Levi recounted its impact on the Orthodox Rabbi Israel Brodie (1895-1979), who had previously been on good terms with Liberal Rabbi Herman Sanger in Melbourne in the 1930s before becoming Britain's Chief Rabbi:

> Sanger's first post-war visit to London had occurred in 1948 and one of the first things he did was to telephone Brodie, who had just been appointed Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of Great Britain and Ireland, in order to congratulate him and to make a time to meet. The familiar voice at the end of the phone became strained as Sanger identified himself. He heard Brodie say 'Oh yes, Dr Sanger, thank you for phoning but unfortunately I am unable to see you'. As the conversation concluded Sanger felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end. He would later say that he thought that this expression was a mere literary device but now he knew it could actually happen.[63]

Porush emerged from London with a similar attitude. At the dedication of Temple Emanuel's synagogue in 1941, president Cecil Luber noted that the only disappointment was 'the antipathetic attitude of the new Orthodox Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Rabbi Dr I. Porush'.[64] Porush had refused Temple Emanuel's invitation, and as chairman of the Beth Din, forbade the attendance of other Orthodox ministers in Sydney who otherwise may have attended. Porush's attendance at the dedication would have, in his view, granted his tacit approval of Liberal Judaism, and as he later noted in response to a different invitation to appear at the Temple: 'can the loyal traditional Jew approve – or even seem to approve – that which he believes is destructive of the very essence of Judaism as it has come down to us through the centuries?'[65]

In this appeal to 'essence', Porush portrayed Orthodoxy as a movement continuing to practise what he understood to be the fundamentals of Judaism. He later communicated what he believed this essence to be:

> Orthodox Judaism, Rabbi Porush explains, 'recognises as authentic and binding both the law of Moses and the traditions that have evolved from there with the help of rabbis'. 'The law is the law for all times … Liberal Judaism doesn't recognise the binding nature of such laws and takes the liberty to abolish

laws which are not appropriate for present conditions'.[66]

Just as S.R. Hirsch had done a century prior, Porush communicated an ahistorical past in which an unchanging *Halachah* had dictated, and continued to dictate, the parameters of 'authentic' Jewish life. Porush attempted to link this with the deep past of Judaism, noting that:

> Jewish Tradition is as old as the Torah itself … Jewish Tradition is a slow evolutionary and natural growth having its roots in the firm soil of the Divine Word adding branch to branch and leaf to leaf in the course of its three thousand years old history.[67]

Orthodoxy, according to Porush, was the recipient of this tradition, and practised 'without violation … the fundamentals passed on to us from unshakable sources'.[68] In stepping outside of these boundaries, Porush contended, Liberal Judaism could not be the recipient of this past and was, therefore, an illegitimate expression of Judaism. Porush's understanding of the past directly impacted on his willingness to cooperate with those within the Liberal movement, and continued to do so for decades to come.

The prior cooperation of the lay leadership was now overshadowed by the rabbinic refusal to accept the legitimacy of the emerging Liberal congregation. Presidents from many of Sydney's Orthodox synagogues, including the Great Synagogue, were permitted to attend Liberal services, and did so, listening to Rabbi Herman Sanger sermonise on the need for the revitalisation of religion.[69] Sanger's address revealed that he too engaged in historical thinking as a means to govern the present, speaking of Liberal Judaism as a movement particularly adaptable to the modern world 'without departing in any single fundamental from the traditional principles of the faith'.[70] At the same event, Temple Emanuel's new Rabbi Max Schenk communicated a similar message:

> Judaism finds that its message has been forgotten – that message which it received on Sinai … The message of Judaism may be expressed in the word Humanity and Justice and these in their modern interpretation embody Democracy and all that for which it stands.[71]

Schenk's conception of the Jewish past was a history of ethical values linking back to Sinai. In a similar vein, his successor, Rabbi Rudolph Brasch (1912-2004), later claimed in an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald* that:

Liberal or progressive or reformed Judaism tries to make the Jewish religion a living reality for the present age" … His philosophy is that liberal Judaism has existed since the beginning of religion, as "all through the ages there has been a progressive revelation of God and the spiritualisation of religion. "There are many laws which had meaning about 3,000 years ago, but have to be re-interpreted for the present day.[72]

Though Sanger, Schenk and Brasch constructed an alternative Jewish history to the one put forward by the Orthodox movement, the Liberal movement accepted the notion of multiple legitimacies. According to the rabbis, Orthodoxy and Liberal Judaism, though different in both theology and practice, could coexist as 'authentic' Jewish expressions. Their different readings of the past did not attempt to undermine the fundamental authenticity of Orthodoxy. However, the Liberal movement occasionally strayed into criticism of its practices. Though a Temple Emanuel pamphlet stated 'Progressive Judaism needs neither to defend nor to attack', it went on to claim: '[Liberal Judaism] is not a new thing – it is Judaism pure and undefiled; or rather, purified and freed from some of the mediaeval adulteration that has tended to overlie and conceal the pure and beautiful simplicity of our ancient faith.'[73]

Despite this veiled criticism of Orthodoxy, the pamphlet went on to state: 'I am not altogether prepared to admit that there are two distinctive 'movements'. Ours might be regarded as [a] congregation whose views differ from an Orthodox congregation on certain minor matters of form … it follows naturally that not only are we fully 'compatible' with all other Jewish congregations, but also that we endeavour to work in the closest possible harmony with all who, like ourselves, labour to advance the cause of Judaism.' [74]

For the Liberal movement, that the two movements possessed a different appreciation of the past – whether it was comprised of Halacha or ethical values – little bearing on their legitimacy, only the style in which they would communicate their Judaism.[75] For Porush, however, legitimacy existed as a binary, as he would later communicate in his memoirs:

Either you believe in the divine character of the Torah – Torah min Hashamayim – given to Israel, binding and eternal, or not. It is not a question of whether the choir is mixed, or one wears a kippah during the service, or one reads the prayers in

> English, or not. The very foundation of Judaism is mutilated,
> the very structure of our faith is broken.[76]

In a sentiment which differed strongly from the Liberal movement, the past for Porush consisted of a singular strand; that of Halachah, given at Sinai and unchanging over the course of history. In his view, other interpretations could not be considered as valid. Porush's arrival in Sydney in 1940 set a new course for Orthodox-Liberal relations, ending the collegial cooperation which had preceded him. With this divisive ideological approach, Porush began to implement a policy which sought to communicate his understanding of the sole legitimacy of the Orthodox movement.

In refusing to condone Liberal Judaism, Porush rejected interdenominational cooperation on religious platforms, portraying the movement as a breakaway from 'authentic' Judaism. Porush determined that cooperation was only possible in the secular realm where religious differences were not considered germane.[77] He noted:

> My personal attitude to Liberal Judaism was made clear from the
> beginning. I followed the established practice in London based
> on the ruling of the Chief Rabbi, that Achdut Israel, the unity
> of the community, should be maintained wherever possible, but
> in purely religious matters we have to go our separate ways. We
> cannot attend or participate in Liberal services and we cannot
> allow Liberal rabbis to participate in Orthodox services. In
> secular, communal, Zionist or institutional affairs Orthodox and
> Liberal rabbis can share the same platform.[78]

Though the movements shared a range of concerns including assimilation, the centrality of the synagogue in Jewish life and the religious observance of the entire community, this policy rejected any Liberal contribution to religious life. In refuting charges of Orthodox intolerance, Porush stated his belief that Liberal Judaism was a departure from 'historic Judaism': 'The accusation of intolerance and divisiveness was sometimes levelled against the Orthodox ministry – this was a favourite plank as if the Orthodox had broken away to create the schism – because they refused to recognise liberal Judaism as an equally legitimate interpretation of the Torah with Orthodoxy, but rather as a detraction of historic Judaism … one cannot accept the Torah as eternal and true and at the same time declare its abolition in essentials as legitimate.'[79]

For Porush, the Liberals were not propagating a legitimate, alternative vision of Judaism, but instead denigrating traditional Judaism.[80] On

non-religious issues, Porush had little issue with Orthodox-Liberal coop-
eration, particularly on the issue of Zionism where he and Schenk found
parity. At a tribute to Schenk after a six-month visit to the US, Porush
declared: 'Every one of us is tolerant enough to respect the other's views
and to base our cooperation on this fact and to seek all those opportunities
where complete harmony and cooperation can be established.'[81]

For Porush, where religious differences were not pertinent, Jewish unity
could be maintained. Porush and Schenk spoke on non-religious platforms
together, for example delivering lectures on the need for a Jewish national
home in Palestine and working side by side on communal issues such as
combatting antisemitism through the Public Relations Committee of the
Jewish Board of Deputies. At Schenk's farewell in 1949, Porush declared:

> I see in Rabbi and Mrs Schenk great lovers of 'Am Israel' (the
> people of Israel) and that is what matters above everything
> else. The Rabbi is to be admired in his desire to be a 'builder in
> Israel'. We might not have always seen eye to eye in religious
> matters, but on communal matters we have always been in
> closest harmony.[82]

Significantly, the farewell was held in the neutral space of Paddington
Town Hall, a move that avoided the possibility of an Orthodox objection
to visiting Temple Emanuel.

Porush's approach to governing Orthodox-Liberal relations aimed to
distinguish between religious and secular events, but a close examination
of its implementation reveals that these demarcations were often indeter-
minable, and there were numerous exceptions to the rule. For example,
Rabbis Porush and Schenk jointly represented the Jewish community
on issues of interfaith relations on the NSW Council of Christians and
Jews, not viewing this as religious cooperation. Porush's successor, Rabbi
Raymond Apple, who similarly claimed to govern relations through the
secular-religious lens, gave an example of this policy's grey areas. In the
mid-1980s, a public Passover Seder (ritual meal) was held near Sydney's
Town Hall to protest the plight of Soviet Jewry, conducted by himself and
Temple Emanuel's cantor Michael Deutsch (d. 2010). Apple determined
that the policy did not explicitly prohibit this: 'We were doing something
for Soviet Jewry. So if Michael Deutsch sang *Dayenu* or *Chad Gadya*, I
didn't see that there was any particular halachic problem, or that we were
having a joint service, but not everyone agreed with me.'[83]

As to whether joint participation was allowed at other quasi-religious

occasions such as the religious aspects of *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day) or *Yom Ha-Atzmaut* (Israeli Independence Day), Apple deferred to the then Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits (1921-99), who made allowances for individual rabbinic discretion[84] 'so long as the event has no specifically religious significance and/or the non-Orthodox participant does not perform any essentially ministerial function (i.e. could just as well be replaced by a lay representative of his congregation)'.[85] Although this specific ruling came after Porush's time, it formalised what was already in practice during the 1940s and 1950s. This stipulation symbolised the Orthodox approach in dealing with the Liberal movement. Liberal rabbis were barred from contributing to events in meaningful ways due to their conflicting religious affiliation.

The next example demonstrated how linked this approach was with Orthodox conceptions of history. As Orthodoxy became increasingly hard-line in its insistence that Liberal Judaism lacked legitimacy, some of Sydney Jewry's last joint religious services took place. At the behest of the government, World War Two intercession services were held between 1940-1942. These 'United Services' took place at the Great Synagogue where Schenk would read a psalm, while Orthodox ministers delivered sermons and recited more central prayers. In an attempt to ameliorate his diminished status and challenge the emerging hierarchy, Schenk requested to deliver the sermon in March 1942. Porush wrote, 'this I had to turn down. I felt the pulpit of an Orthodox synagogue is dedicated to the propagation of Torah-true Judaism'.[86] The Hirschian terminology of 'Torah-true Judaism' was analogous to the notion of authenticity; a Liberal rabbi was not allowed to preach at the pulpit of the Great Synagogue because his brand of Judaism did not hold true to the Orthodox interpretation of Torah. 'Torah-true' implied that the Orthodox interpretation was the only legitimate interpretation, which reinforced the Orthodox notion of an unchanging past with Torah at its epicentre. Other streams that were perhaps more inspired than bound by the Torah therefore had no legitimate connection to it, since, by definition, they negated the Orthodox version of Jewish history. By rejecting that the Liberal movement was 'Torah-true', Orthodox rabbis could imply heresy or mendaciousness on behalf of the Liberals. The terminology denied the Liberals ownership of Judaism's most central text, and questioned their legitimacy as an 'authentic' Jewish movement. Temple Emanuel's Board noted that 'subsequent United Services proved abortive'.[87] Compromise for the Liberal movement had its limits and they

would not participate in services which reinforced a religious hierarchy and denied their legitimacy.

Further examples indicated that the religious-secular policy did not govern all aspects of religious cooperation or division. One such instance was an annual memorial service for Czech victims of Nazism, conducted by Newcastle's Orthodox Rabbi Benjamin Gottschall (1907-78), himself a Holocaust survivor.[88] The services began in Sydney in 1950, and Gottschall regularly invited the Liberal cantors Max Warse and Michael Deutsch to recite the central mourning prayer, *El Ma'ale Rachamim*, participating in the service alongside the Great Synagogue's choir.[89] The services were held in a communal space, the Maccabean Hall, in an attempt to maintain religious neutrality.[90] At similar services such as the Commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1951, Deutsch, himself a Holocaust survivor, recited the memorial prayer and Porush addressed the service.[91] Jewish unity was the underlying message of these early Holocaust commemorations, and when cooperation was quite publicly rejected by the Orthodox rabbinate in later years, an *Australian Jewish Times* editorial drew upon the precedent that Gottschall had set:[92]

> [T]he services for the Czech martyrs have been made an exception and this was largely due to the brave insistence of the late Rabbi Gottshall, who felt that in the concentration camp with him were Jews whose families today belong to Liberal congregations. He did not want to exclude them. It is to the credit of the Orthodox rabbinate that this exception was accepted.[93]

If this example demonstrated how religious settings did not always entail separation, the next shows how largely non-religious matters did not necessarily facilitate cooperation, particularly once divisions had become entrenched. In 1950 the Sydney Beth Din – headed at the time by Porush – banned Rabbi Dr Maurice Perlzweig (1895-1985) from speaking from the pulpit of Sydney's Orthodox Central Synagogue. Though ordained as a Liberal minister, Perlzwieg was in Australia on behalf of the World Jewish Congress which addressed political rather than religious issues. Evoking quite extreme imagery, Schenk's successor Rabbi Rudolph Brasch described this move as 'Jewish anti-Semitism', referring to a history of discrimination: '… we Jews who have always suffered from narrow-minded persecution should not imitate such unholy actions'.[94] Significantly, Assistant Minister at the Great Synagogue Rabbi Leib

Aisack Falk (1889-1957) described the Beth Din's decision as 'shameful', describing how it had failed to differentiate between religious and communal issues.[95] In reality, some religious considerations applied to the speech, which took place on a Sabbath morning alongside – or in place of – the rabbi's sermon. Regardless, the scenario revealed that goodwill had largely eroded, and that denominational affiliation pervaded even predominantly communal events.

The secular-religious demarcation introduced by Porush reinforced notions of denominational authenticity. In religious settings, Porush deemed that the Liberal movement was not a legitimate or equal counterpart to Orthodoxy, and forbade cooperation between the two. Porush noted how 'on a number of occasions Orthodox Rabbis, not without provocation, felt compelled to acquaint the Community of their deep conviction that liberal Judaism was in the long run harmful and dangerous to Jewish survival'.[96] A closer examination of the policy's implementation reveals, however, that entrenched antagonism meant that even non-religious affairs could be overshadowed by religious conflict, as in the case of Perlzweig, and goodwill could overcome religious divisions, as in the case of Gottschall. While they did not determine the outcome of every situation, the notion of cooperation in secular matters and separation in religious matters established the contours that would govern the Orthodox-Liberal relationship in the decades to follow.

Attitudes to assimilation

With the emergence of Liberal Judaism in Sydney, a debate over which stream had the capacity to limit assimilation was ignited, and as ever, was governed by historical claims regarding authenticity. Though assimilation ostensibly refers to potential future threats for Judaism, advocates for both of the movements largely couched their arguments in terms of the past. They claimed that only an 'authentic' movement—that which held a legitimate connection to the Jewish past—had the capacity to sustain Judaism for the future. Both movements placed responsibility on the other for high rates of assimilation, and both called for a return to 'authentic' Judaism, whichever form that may have taken.

After his arrival in 1940, Porush became aware that some of his congregants were leaving to join the Liberal ranks. He noted that 'Reform has made serious inroads in our midst and has attracted not only newcomers who were followers of the movement in the countries of their origin, but

also many of the indigenous community …'[97]

Rather than reflecting practical concerns about losing members, Porush's fears were ideologically based. He became concerned for the spiritual wellbeing of those who were leaving, and he portrayed Liberal Judaism as the first step on a path to spiritual erosion and assimilation. Rather than having genuine differences of religious conscience, the congregants leaving the Great Synagogue 'by estrangement from Jewish learning and observance' had 'broken away from law and tradition, thus denying the very vitals of Judaism. A division in Jewry has thus been created which cannot be bridged'.[98] Porush maintained that this was harmful to the wider Jewish community, stating that Liberal Jews were a 'marginal minority that [destroyed] the protective fence of our life'.[99] Porush's portrayal of Liberal Judaism was entirely synonymous with assimilation, as he linked it with 'the downhill trend in Jewish observance and purity of family among the masses'.[100] Porush suggested a remedy to combat this menacing force: 'Our long-range conviction that the survival of Jewry will come not from a mutilation of Torah and a weakening of our distinctive way of life, but, on the contrary, from a return to authentic Judaism, still holds good.'

Porush called for a return to 'centripetal elements which labour for a better education, more observance, and deeper loyalty to Torah and tradition',[101] with Liberal Judaism portrayed as antipathetic to this goal. For Porush, halachic Judaism was the only Judaism, a hypothesis justified by the highlighting of its practise throughout history:

> To postulate that "Reform Judaism does not dissent from halachic tradition" is sheer double-talk. Can an honest person say that eating trefa, re-marrying divorced people with a get, desecrating the Sabbath, and the violation of a hundred other laws practised for millennia by Jews can be accommodated within the compass of halachah?[102]

He stated 'I am intolerant of any movement that … tries to rear a youth upon the idea that Jewry can survive without Torah and without our sanctifying Mitzvoth [commandments].'[103] As Liberal Judaism in Sydney began rapidly to attract new members, the Orthodox movement began to organise, calling for the first ever nationwide meeting of its clergy through the Conference of the Australian Jewish Ministry in 1946. Despite fears about intermarriage, assimilation and antisemitism in prior years, never before had the entire Orthodox rabbinate assembled. The Conference

resolved that it 'be confined to the Traditional Ministry',[104] and its name implied that no other form of Judaism existed. While other major issues were discussed, significant proportions of the Conference were devoted to developing an organised response to the growth of the Liberal movement. In the eight years since its inception, Temple Emanuel's congregation had built a synagogue, attracted a significant membership, operated a religion school, conducted numerous marriages and was frequently in need of larger premises.[105]

Discussions at the Conference demonstrated a recognition that Orthodox practice required renewal in order to present a viable alternative to Liberal Judaism and halt assimilation, while still remaining within the bounds of *Halachah*. Proponents of the strengthening of Orthodoxy in this manner understood that to do so entailed recognising the shortfalls of current Orthodox activities and practices. One congregant, a Mr Roseman, blamed the Orthodox clergy for 'allowing youth to drift away'[106] and called upon the ministers to rectify their mistakes and those of their predecessors. Another, a Mr Allen, declared that although his sons had attended Hebrew school for many years they were unable to read the *siddur* (prayer book), and asked the Conference to consider introducing more English into the synagogue service.[107] Blame was also placed on the Jewish community for its religious laxity. The Conference's concluding session was entitled 'Religious Reconstruction', where Porush stressed the 'necessity to enlighten the public on vital religious laws' and was alarmed that 'there was little understanding' in the community of the 'great need' for Jewish scholars and *yeshivot*.[108]

In order strengthen the community's religious observance, the Conference resolved in part to convene more regularly, to support the emerging Jewish Day School movement, and to commit itself to providing regular adult education. The Conference ultimately decided to issue a call to Australian Jewry 'for more Torah and observance',[109] undoubtedly along Orthodox lines. Within this approach, the Orthodox movement's proposal to combat assimilation was not to condone religious diversification to allow for a greater plurality of expression, but instead an attempt to intensify the observance of adherents in a return to 'authentic' Orthodox practice, an optimistic suggestion in a largely unobservant community. For Orthodoxy, a commitment to its 'truth' alone would see a revitalisation of Jewish life.

The Liberal movement approached the issue of assimilation with a

similar hypothesis that a return to 'authentic' Judaism would stave off assimilation. While somewhat critical of Orthodox practice, the Liberal movement argued in favour of diversity and largely refrained from denying the legitimacy of Orthodoxy. The movement responded to Orthodoxy's charge that Liberal Judaism was causing assimilation by highlighting the fact that assimilation was rife prior to Liberal Judaism's arrival on Australia's shores.[110] Rabbi Max Schenk noted how '…in Melbourne, the three main synagogues of that day [1901] had set up a joint Board to deal with the problem of mixed marriage. The Commonwealth Census of 1921 had revealed that 20.6 per cent of Jewish marriages were mixed'.[111] In 1921, nine years before the establishment of Temple Emanuel, the intermarriage rate in Sydney sat at 16 per cent for females and 30 per cent for males.[112] As discussed above, assimilation had been the impetus for the founding of the Liberal movement in Australia. Melbourne's Temple Beth Israel drew its membership from both those unaffiliated with Judaism and those 'bored to tears' by Orthodox services.[113] Liberal Judaism viewed itself as an antidote to the assimilation that it claimed Orthodoxy had caused. While it desired peaceful coexistence, occasionally this was coupled with a critique of Orthodox practice. Speaking at Sydney's first Liberal Service in 1938 at the Maccabean Hall on the 'Aims and Ideals of Progressive Judaism, Sanger stated:

> A Liberal Jewish Movement in Sydney would be in no sense in opposition to any existing synagogue; rather it will be in addition to what is already provided. It is based on reviving the Jewish religion and not on extraneous issues, such as dietary laws, second-day Yom Tovim, easy conversion, etc. Its emphasis must be on things that were positive rather than on those that were negative.[114]

In a sermon in 1940, Schenk stated that two main motives had been behind the founding of the Temple. The first was to provide outreach for those who had 'drifted away':

> The second factor was the need to offer enlightenment to the younger generation which remained nominally indifferent to Judaism but to whom the practise of the Faith was something mechanical and meaningless. Traditional Judaism cannot be blamed for that; its truth and beauty are eternal and remain ready always for all who can comprehend the language of their presentation. Equally, however, the blame cannot be

attributed to young people so largely preoccupied with the struggle for economic security. The obvious compromise was presentation of the religion that preserved its fundamentals whilst translating these into a form comprehensible to the minds for which it was intended.[115]

For Schenk, an equally 'authentic' Liberal Judaism alongside Orthodoxy was vital in combatting assimilation. According to him, Liberal Judaism would be more receptive to the needs of the community while presenting the 'eternal' fundamentals of Judaism, and would reach the Jews that Orthodoxy had failed to engage. A later sermon titled 'What Is A Jew?' by Sanger took on a more critical tone in which he described common Orthodox practices as 'Mediaeval Judaism':

There are quite a few who have replaced the wide sweep of the Judaism of the Bible, the vision of [the] prophet and the wisdom of the teacher, by the narrowness of the Ghetto. In their lives, the multitude of little things, all the minutiae of observance, threaten to obscure the greatness of a wonderful faith. If you were to ask a person in this group how he would define a Jew, he would tell you: One who keeps all the laws … one who eats kosher and does not shave … who puts his wife into purdah [female seclusion] by making her wear a wig – a sheitel. In short, one who returns to mediaeval Judaism … [116]

In his criticism, Sanger did not reject the validity of Orthodoxy, preceding his comments above by stating: 'The late Rabbi Leo Baeck once said that to him Liberal and Orthodox were only adjectives, and Judaism was the noun, and it is that noun that mattered more than all the adjectives'.[117] Despite this disclaimer, Sanger's statements strayed closer to the denial of the legitimacy of Orthodoxy than any other Australian Liberal rabbi's to date; he continued:

It has always been the conviction of Liberal Jews that in every age Judaism decided to go forward. This was the case after the first destruction of the ancient Temple, when the synagogue was created, and after its second destruction when Judaism became a world community … And now, faced with the problems and perils of the atomic age, is this all the Jew can say? 'Let us drown in the sea of anonymity?' Or perhaps 'let us go back to medievalism?'… [118]

Much like the Orthodox movement, the Liberals' solution for staving off the threat of future assimilation was a return to their concept of 'authentic' Judaism.[119] Schenk maintained that the revitalisation of Judaism, whether through Orthodoxy or Liberal Judaism, was necessary in order to counter the threat of assimilation, while Sanger's more critical message was cast in historical terms: Orthodoxy had failed because it had corrupted the historically 'authentic', progressive message of Judaism.[120] Predominantly, this 'revitalisation' was proposed along Liberal conceptions of what constituted Judaism based on their understanding of its progressive past.[121] Unlike the Orthodox, however, neither Schenk nor Sanger denied Orthodoxy its right to practise freely alongside Liberal Judaism.

The responses of both the Orthodox and Liberal movements to the threat of assimilation demonstrates the pervasiveness of historical thinking in the religious debates. What started as an issue of high intermarriage rates ended as a contest over which movement was historically legitimate and an authentic continuation of the past. The two did not differ significantly in engaging a process of reading history selectively, with both convinced that they were practising a Judaism that 'always was'. Furthermore, both attempted to place the blame on the other for widespread assimilation and non-observance. Their conclusions, however, were quite disparate. Orthodoxy sought to use its understanding of authenticity to deny Liberal Judaism's place in the Sydney Jewish community, while the Liberal movement perceived the capacity for pluralism, calling for a commitment to religious renewal on both sides.

As the title of this article suggests, Orthodox-Liberal debates over the Jewish past which had begun in nineteenth-century Prussia continued to play a central role in mid-twentieth century Australia. While the lay leadership of both the Great Synagogue and Temple Emanuel initially welcomed interdenominational cooperation, once Rabbi Porush arrived divisive ideology was infused into the debate. Claims of authenticity, which prompted a consideration of what constituted 'true' Judaism, caused the movements to interpret the Jewish past in order to identify historical precedents for their respective movements. As a result, Orthodoxy portrayed the past as one defined by the practice of *Halachah*, while the Liberal movement promoted a past defined by ethical values. However, while the Liberal movement, despite occasional critiques, accepted the concurrent legitimacy of Orthodoxy, Orthodoxy rejected the notion that Liberal Judaism was a legitimate expression of Judaism. This was demonstrated in the

debate over assimilation; both movements called for a return to 'authentic' Judaism as a remedy, but while the Liberal movement typically promoted a return to Judaism regardless of the stream, Orthodoxy promoted only a return to more halachic practice, and rejected Liberal Judaism as a valid solution.

Conclusion

Rabbi Dr John Levi compared the various interdenominational debates over history and the authenticity that it purportedly bestowed to Gotthold Lessing's 'Parable of the Three Rings' from his 1779 play, *Nathan the Wise*:

> In the days of old there lived in the East a worthy man. He was possessed of a costly ring he valued higher for the dearest hands that gave it. It was an opal of the finest water, which played off a hundred noble pleasing colours. It had the secret power of endearing him to God and men, who wore it, trusting in its magick [sic] charms. No wonder that the Eastern man was never seen without it, nor ever left it from his finger; no wonder that he should attempt to keep this jewel in his family.[122]

After many generations of patrilineal inheritance of the ring, it passed to a father with three sons, representing each of the three Abrahamic faiths. On his deathbed, the father was unable to decide which son would inherit the ring:

> Unknown to them he sends an order to a skilful artist, and wants him not to spare expense or trouble, in making to the pattern of his ring two others – to do his best in making them exactly alike. The artist far surpassed his expectations. He brings the rings, and lo! not he himself can pitch upon the pattern. With gladness he calls in his sons; to each apart he gives his blessing and his ring – and dies … 'Tis here, for what now follows, follows of itself – The father was scarce gone, when every holder of a ring pretended to the lordship of the house. They wonder, disagree, debate, examine, scold, and go to law. In vain. They cannot ascertain the authentic ring – as little as we the authentic faith.[123]

Much as an onerous study of the rings cannot resolve the argument in the play, the debate over authenticity between the Orthodox and Liberal movements cannot ultimately be resolved through a critical study of Jewish

history, as modern historical methods disavow a prescriptive element. Only an ideological – therefore selective – interpretation of history can hope to 'prove' a movement's authenticity, though its selectivity means that its findings only gain legitimacy in the subjective eye of the beholder. In this scenario, the task of a critical historical account is not to determine the authenticity – or indeed, inauthenticity – of any given movement.

Furthermore, unlike with an authentic bank note, or an authentic Picasso, no central body or single factor exists that can definitively determine Jewish authenticity. Since Judaism comprises a multifaceted, ethno-religious culture which spans millennia and the globe while rejecting a central creed, isolating a singular essential element becomes almost impossible. A critical history of Judaism cannot derive prescriptive claims from the past without corrupting its inquiry. Instead, the interest of a critical historical account is to examine the utility of historically-based claims of authenticity, identifying the how the concept influenced interdenominational relations.

Although claims of authenticity in the context of Orthodox-Liberal relations are renounced by a critical historical approach, the examination of the role of historical claims of authenticity within the interdenominational relationship undertaken in this article has revealed their immense influence over the leaders of both movements. Significance was bestowed on the actions and beliefs of those who made these selective historical claims. Such claims connected those who made them to a mythic chain of tradition shared by their Jewish ancestors, and additionally tied those living in the present to Sinai, thereby granting their actions divine authority. Figures in both denominations repeatedly and decisively viewed selective historical claims as legitimate arguments for their movements' validity. Self-serving as it was, this interpretation and shaping of the Jewish past held immense power with those who embarked on such a pursuit.

In bestowing divine significance on the beliefs and actions of the respective movements, historical claims of authenticity were used as currency to govern the interdenominational relationship. For Orthodoxy, religious cooperation with the Liberal movement was largely forbidden as it would have sanctioned what was seen as a 'perversion of Judaism',[124] and would have undermined its understanding of a sole claim to legitimacy. Conversely, the Liberal movement, while possessing a similarly essentialist understanding of the past, rejected a singular claim to Jewish history and promoted the acceptance of multiple, 'authentic' expressions

of Judaism. The Orthodox policy of non-cooperation, which had become entrenched by the 1940s, saw an uneasy status-quo prevail which continues to the present day. This situation has resulted in minimal partnership between the various streams in religious settings, with an occasional flaring up of tensions.[125] Understandings of authenticity were thus paramount in determining how the movements would relate to one another, though, as demonstrated, antagonism could be overcome for reasons of pragmatism or goodwill.

As a result of the ongoing relevancy of the past to the various movements, a paradox remains. This paradox ultimately relegates history secondary to ideology, yet indispensable to the latter's triumph.

Endnotes

1. Joseph Staedter and Hans Kimmel, *Sydney's Jewish Community: Materials for a Post-War (II) History* (Pennant Hills: First Impression, 1953), p. 148.

2. See Jacob Katz, 'Sources of Orthodox Trends', in The *Role of Religion in Modern Jewish History: Proceedings of Regional Conferences of the Association for Jewish Studies*, ed. Jacob Katz (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Association for Jewish Studies, 1975), pp. 29-68.

3. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Zakhor: *Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1982).

4. ibid., p. 96.

5. ibid., p. 85.

6. Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

7. ibid., p. 3.

8. ibid., p. 6.

9. ibid., p. 4.

10. ibid., p. 9.

11. Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became A Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press*, 2011), p. 37.

12. Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism (Hanover and London: University Press of New England*, 1994), p. 271.

13. Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), p. 256.

14. Jacob Katz, 'Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective', in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. P. Y. Medding, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 4.

15. See Batnitzky, op.cit., pp. 32–51.

16. Natan Slifkin, 'The Novelty of Orthodoxy' (2011; http://www.zootorah.

com/RationalistJudaism/NoveltyOfOrthodoxy.pdf); Michael K. Silber, 'The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: The Invention of a Tradition', in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The Uses of Tradition; Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), pp. 23-84.

17. Moshe Samet, 'The Beginnings of Orthodoxy', *Modern Judaism*, vol. 8, no. 3 (October 1988), p. 265.

18. Slifkin, 'The Novelty of Orthodoxy', p. 8.

19. See Natan Slifkin, 'North African Rabbis and Electric Lights' (Paper submitted to the Lander Institute, Jerusalem, 2010).

20. Chatam Sofer, 'Kovetz Teshuvot #58', in Slifkin, 'The Novelty of Orthodoxy', p. 10.

21. David Roskies, *The Jewish Search For A Usable Past* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 14-15.

22. Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Brandl & Schlesinger, 1997), p. 6.

23. Stephen Sharot, 'Reform and Liberal Judaism in London: 1840-1940', *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 41. no. 3/4 (Summer-Autumn, 1979), p. 224.

24. Michael A. Meyer, 'Jewish Religious Reform in Germany and Britain', in *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective,* ed. Michael Brenner, Liedtke Rainer, and David Rechter (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 74-75.

25. ibid., pp. 73-74.

26. Michael Hilton, *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life* (London: SCM Press, 1994), pp. 141-60.

27. Meyer, op.cit., p. 76. For further reading on the development of Reform Judaism in Britain, see Eugene C. Black, *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry: 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 1989); Anne J. Kershen and Jonathan A. Romain, *Tradition and Change: A History of Reform Judaism in Britain, 1840-1995* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1995); Dov Marmur, ed., *Reform Judaism: Essays on Reform Judaism in Britain* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1973).

28. The founding in 1902 of the Jewish Religious Union as the institution of Liberal Judaism had been preceded by Claude Montefiore's failed efforts to effect change from within the Reform movement.

29. Additionally, Liberal Judaism allowed women to preach (1918) and to read prayers from the pulpit (1920), and Sunday services became a regular feature.

30. 'Letter from C.G. Montefiore to Lily Montagu, formally a letter to apologise for missing the meeting of the Governing Body of the World Union in Holland,' July 14, 1935, Microfilm No. 2718, Lily H. Montagu Correspondence, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio; D. Langton, 'A Question of Backbone: Contrasting Christian Influences upon the Origins of Reform and Liberal Judaism in England,' *Melilah; Manchester Journal for Jewish Studies*, vol. 3, 2004, p. 35.

31. Membership numbers – Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St John's Wood: 784 (1921), 1491 (1928), 1622 (1939). West London Reform Synagogue: 1197 (1924), 1266 (1930), 1386 (1936). See Sharot, op.cit., pp. 221–22.

32. ibid., p. 225.

33. Charles Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol. V, part 8 (1964), p. 370.

34. Suzanne Rutland, 'The Jewish Community in New South Wales: 1914-1939' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Sydney, 1978), p. 15.

35. Previous attempts at establishing Liberal Judaism in Australia had been unsuccessful. In Melbourne, Abraham Michael Samuell of the Orthodox Melbourne Hebrew Congregation (MHC) failed to attract support to establish a Liberal synagogue in 1882. Liberal services were eventually organised in 1885 by a committee primarily comprised of MHC members, and were conducted on a Sunday evening in July 1885, but the congregation had dissolved by November. Werner Graff, Malcolm J. Turnbull, and Eliot Joel Baskin, *A Time To Keep: The Story of Temple Beth Israel, 1930-2005* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2005), pp. 7-8. For attempts to establish the movement in Melbourne and Sydney, see Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), pp. 57–68; Suzanne Rutland, 'The New South Wales Jewish Community: 1880-1914' (unpublished BA hons. thesis, University of Sydney, 1968), pp. 17-21.

36. See Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, p. 269; Jens Lyng in Paul R. Bartrop, "'Good Jews' and 'Bad Jews': Australian Perceptions of Jewish Migrants and Refugees, 1919-1939', in W. D. Rubinstein, ed., *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 172.

37. See Hilary L. Rubinstein, 'From Jewish Non-Distinctiveness to Group Invisibility: Australian Jewish Identity and Responses', in *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, p. 44; Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, chapter 7.

38. *Jewish Herald*, 3 May 1930; John S. Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow: The Uncrowned Monarch of Australian Jews* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995), p. 170.

39. *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, 21 August 1930; Graff et al., op.cit., pp. 15-16.

40. Price, op.cit., Appendix 1; Suzanne Rutland, 'A Changing Community – the Impact of the Refugees on Australian Jewry: New South Wales – a Case Study,' *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, (volume 31, issue 1, April 1985), p. 91.

41. See Price, op.cit., p. 374.

42. John S. Levi, *My Dear Friends*: *The Life of Rabbi Dr Herman Sanger* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2009).

43. John S. Levi, 'To Stem the Tide: Liberal Judaism in the Land of Oz', *Australian Jewish News New Year Magazine*, 22 September 1995, p. 23.

44. See Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, p. 204.

45. Rabbi John S. Levi, interview by Mark Rapaport, Melbourne, 19 May 2016.

46. Rutland, 'The Jewish Community in New South Wales: 1914-1939', p. 237.

47. While a question on religious affiliation has existed on every Australia census since Federation, the response of 'Jewish' has never been further subdivided. The first survey of Sydney's Jewish community was conducted in 1971 by Encel and Buckley, after the years examined in the case study.
The survey showed that 17.7 per cent of respondents affiliated with the Liberal synagogue: S. Encel and B. Buckley, *The New South Wales Jewish Community: A Survey* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1972), p. 70. Rabbi Porush, meanwhile, estimated that, Australia-wide, 20 per cent of Jews belong to Liberal congregations: Israel Porush, *Today's Challenge to Judaism* (Sydney: Currawong, 1972), p. 35. Two decades later Professor W.D. Rubinstein, in his *The Jews In Australia: A Thematic History. Volume Two: 1945 to the Present* (Port Melbourne, Vic.: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), p. 184, estimated the component of synagogue-affiliated Jews in Australia belonging to non-Orthodox congregations as 15-20 per cent.

48. This term, coined by Suzanne Rutland, denotes a community geographically distant from the major centres of Jewish life, once Europe, now the US and Israel, yet one possessing active and unique elements which allow for the continuation of Jewish life. Suzanne Rutland, 'Why Does Australian Jewish History Matter?', in *New Under the Sun: Jewish Australians on Religion, Politics & Culture*, Michael Fagenblat, Melanie Landau, and Nathan Wolski, eds. (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2006).

49. The Great Synagogue and Temple Emanuel were the nuclei of the Orthodox and Liberal movements respectively, and the Orthodox-Liberal relationship was therefore predominantly governed by their leadership, both religious and lay. The Provisional Committee of Temple Emanuel first met a week after the resignation of the Great's Senior Rabbi, Ephraim Moses Levy. The Great Synagogue's caretaker rabbi, Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk did not challenge his Board's decisions. Falk had very infrequently sermonised about his attitude to Liberal Judaism, though when he did, it had been negative. Falk occupied the position of Assisting Chief Minister between 1938-40, and clashed with the Board over its authority. Serious decisions regarding Liberal Judaism were deferred until the arrival of Rabbi Israel Porush in 1940. See 'Minute Book I (April 1938 to October 1946)' (Temple Emanuel, n.d.), cited in Lee Simmons, *Kehillat Emanuel*, 2003, vol. 1, p. 4; Leib Aisack Falk, 'A Lesson in Rebellion', *Hebrew Standard*, 22 June 1934; idem., 'Correspondence', *Hebrew Standard*, February 1931.

50. Samuel Cohen's son, Paul Cohen (later Major-General Paul Cullen) played a central role in the establishment of Temple Emanuel.

51. See Suzanne Rutland, 'Sydney Jewry, 1900 to 1940', in Raymond Apple, ed., *The Great Synagogue: A History of Sydney's Big Shule*, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008), p. 47.

52. Cecil Luber, 'President's Message, 1st Annual Report of the Congregation of Temple Emanuel,' November 17, 1940 in Simmons, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 52.

53. Max Schenk, 'Rabbi's Message' (Temple Emanuel First Annual Report, 1938).

54. Simmons, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 36, 48-49.

55.   'Minute Book I (April 1938 to October 1946), p. 47, cited in Simmons, op.cit., p. 35.

56.   ibid.

57.   An editorial in the *Jewish Herald*, 30 June 1938, noted: 'The Sydney Great Synagogue, having lost its rabbi recently, has not yet found a successor. Anxiety is felt, particularly when men closely associated with the Great Synagogue indicate their sympathy with and their support for the Sydney Liberal Movement, at a time when their own synagogue is without a chief minister'.

58.   Simmons, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 35.

59.   Porush's successor at the Great Synagogue, Rabbi Raymond Apple, noted that 'Prior to 1940 the first steps had been taken to establish a Liberal congregation and some of the lay leaders and members of the Great Synagogue thought it was a good idea. At that stage no-one was certain how viable the Liberal movement would be in Sydney but once it became stabilized it aroused the antagonism of Rabbi Porush, who attacked it from the pulpit and other platforms whilst generally remaining on good personal terms with the Liberal ministers.' Rabbi Raymond Apple to Mark Rapaport, 23 October 2016.

60.   Raymond Apple, 'Israel Porush', in Apple, ed., *The Great Synagogue*, p. 96.

61.   Suzanne Rutland, 'Porush, Israel (1907-1991)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2014, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/porush-israel-15194.

62.   Apple, 'Israel Porush', p. 98.

63.   Levi, *My Dear Friends*, pp. 115–16.

64.   'Cecil A. Luber to the Hon. Lily Montagu OBE, JP', 10 September 1941; Levi, *My Dear Friends*, pp. 63-64.

65.   Israel Porush, 'Answer to Rabbi Brasch', *GSY News*, August 1961, p. 14.

66.   Porush, quoted in Judy Young, 'The Jews in 5731', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 September 1970. At Porush's inauguration in 1940, the Great Synagogue's assistant minister Rabbi Falk communicated a similar message which spoke of the 'true' Jew '… whose raison d'être lies so much in his past, in his task, which tradition has passed on to us through a hundred generations, to live and to teach the sublime ideals of our ancient religion, to keep the Jew to his natural religious roots …': *Hebrew Standard*, 13 June 1940.

67.   Israel Porush, 'Jewish Tradition', *Hebrew Standard*, 17 July 1941.

68.   ibid.

69   'Temple Emanuel Foundation Stone: Over 100 Attended Ceremonies – Representative Gatherings', *Hebrew Standard*, 20 March 1941.

70.   ibid.

71.   ibid.

72.   Young, 'The Jews in 5731'. Temple Emanuel president Cecil Luber similarly communicated the idea that 'true' Judaism was driven by ethics, noting that 'It is only when when religion becomes dynamic, when it is informed by the moral

insight of its prophets … that it begins to exercise some meaningful function in the world': Luber, 'Dedication of Temple Emanuel', 29 August 1941, Archive of the Australian Jewish Historical Society. In a similar vein, Melbourne's Liberal Rabbi Herman Sanger declared in 1941: 'An intelligible Judaism endowed with all of its original beauty and greatness, which our rabbis of the last hundred years had endeavoured to revive and restore was the only possibility for Jews living under modern conditions as members of a free and civilised society'. He continued, 'Our only claim to glory is Judaism. The great inheritance of the ages. The mighty tree that has borne the previous fruit of humanism, democracy and religion'. Herman Sanger (Jewish New Year Sermon, 1941) in Levi, *My Dear Friends*, pp. 69-72.

73. 'What Is Progressive Judaism? A Dialogue' (Provisional Committee of the Temple Emanuel, Sydney, 1938).

74. ibid. Additionally, Luber declared '… because we are going from strength to strength, we want all groups to be strong with us. We need a strong Orthodoxy to work side by side with our liberalism': 'Minutes of Third Annual General Meeting of Temple Emanuel', 3 December 1942.

75. For example, in 1941 Luber promoted the activities of the interdenominational Synagogue Council of America which had launched a campaign to enlist unaffiliated Jews to any of its constituent congregations, regardless of their denomination. Luber recounted that 'it was a most inspiring spectacle … to see Orthodox, liberal and reform rabbis speaking from the same platform, exalting their listeners to become affiliated with a congregation in defence of their ancient faith': 'Temple Emanuel Weekly Bulletin', *Hebrew Standard*, 1 May 1941.

76. Israel Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi, Or, 'And Thou Shalt Tell Thy Grandchildren'*, ed. Hilary L. Rubinstein (Melbourne: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1992), p. 79.

77. The religious-secular demarcation was derived from the semi-official policy of the Chief Rabbinate in London. Documents from the 1980s reveal that the ongoing decision to implement this policy was not mandated, but instead suggested. Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits wrote '… I can only state formally that I have never issued any instructions to my colleagues on joint appearances with non-Orthodox ministers … I hope these guidelines as we widely observe them here will be of some help to you, both in preserving the respect for our Orthodox traditions and their authentic teachers, and in promoting Jewish causes on which we are all united'. Raymond Apple, 'Letter to Chief Rabbi Sir Immanuel Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi' (The Great Synagogue, 22 June 1982), copied with the permission of Raymond Apple. Similar principles were established in the US by leading Orthodox Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. See Joseph B. Soloveitchik, 'On Orthodoxy and Non-Orthodox Movements (1954)', in *Community, Covenant, and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*, ed. Nathanel Helfgot (New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 2005), pp. 143-49.

78. Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, p. 79.

79.   Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1977), pp. 135-36.

80.   An article in 1950 noted that 'The attitude of Orthodoxy to Reform, Dr Porush said, was dictated by the conception that Reform was not a parallel and equally valid interpretation of Judaism, but the very negation thereof in its most vital essentials. For this reason, cooperation in the religious field was not possible, though communally such cooperation is quite general. 'Orthodoxy and Reform', *Hebrew Standard*, 23 November 1950.

81.   'Community Unites in Striking Tribute to Rabbi Schenk', *Hebrew Standard*, 19 August 1943.

82.   'Tribute to Popular Communal Figures', *Hebrew Standard*, 17 February 1949.

83.   Rabbi Raymond Apple, interview by Mark Rapaport, Jerusalem, 15 June 2016.

84.   Apple,'Letter to Chief Rabbi Sir Immanuel Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi'.

85.   Immanuel Jakobovits, 'Letter to Rabbi Raymond Apple' (Office of the Chief Rabbi, 2 July 1982), copied with the permission of Raymond Apple.

86.   Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, p. 79.

87.   'Minute Book I (April 1938 to October 1946)', p. 199, cited in Simmons, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 93.

88.   Sophie Caplan, 'Gottshall, Benjamin Béla Vojtech (1907-1978)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1996), http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gottshall-benjamin-bela-vojtech-10680/text18985.

89.   See 'Memorial Service for Czech Victims of Nazism', *Hebrew Standard*, 9 March 1950; 'The Congregation of Temple Emanuel: Annual Report', 1948, p. 6.

90.   For more about the considerations of Australian Holocaust memorial services, including the religious elements, see Judith Berman, 'Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Day) Commemorations in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, 1945-96: Debates Concerning the Date, Scope, Location, Nature and Rituals', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol. XV, no. 1 (1999), pp. 80-94.

91.   'Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Meeting', *Hebrew Standard*, 27 April 1951; 'Commemorative Meeting', *Hebrew Standard*, 6 April 1951.

92.   'Holocaust commemoration' is here used anachronistically. As Rutland notes, there was little focus on Holocaust remembrance until the late 1970s. See Suzanne Rutland and Sophie Caplan, *With One Voice: A History of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies* (Sydney: AJHS, 1998), pp. 317–43.

93.   Editorial Staff, 'Reverence to Our Martyrs', *Australian Jewish Times*, 18 May 1978.

94.   'Sydney Stir Over Intervention By Beth Din' (clipping from scrapbook of Rudolph Brasch, 1950), p. 142, AB286, Archive of the Australian Jewish Historical Society.

95.   ibid.

96.   Porush, *House of Israel*, p. 135.

97.   Porush, *Today's Challenge to Judaism*, p. 35.

98.   ibid.

99.   ibid.

100. Porush, *Today's Challenge to Judaism*.

101. ibid., p. 35.

102. Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, p. 80.

103. 'Call To Remain Steadfast on Religious Convictions', *Hebrew Standard*, 8 August 1952.

104. 'Invitation to Minister's Conference' (Great Synagogue Chambers, 20 December 1945), Vertical File 272, Archive of the Australian Jewish Historical Society.

105. 'Temple That Grew From £85', *Australian Jewish Times*, 24 July 1959.

106. 'Minutes of the Conference of the Australian Jewish Ministry', 4 March 1946, p. 7, Vertical File 272, Archive of the Australian Jewish Historical Society.

107. The conference resolved that it would allow each local minister to decide whether to introduce more English into the service in each particular synagogue. ibid., pp. 7-8.

108. ibid, p. 9.

109. 'Minutes of the Conference of the Australian Jewish Ministry'.

110. This fact was not lost on the editor of the *Jewish Herald*, Newman Rosenthal, writing that 'The older synagogues have been in the field long before any Liberal Temples were thought of. For years they monopolised the stage of Jewish communal life. How do they explain the inability to hold their adherents?' *Jewish Herald*, 29 August 1940.

111. 'Australian Jewry – Present State and Future Survival: Address by Rabbi Max Schenk', *Hebrew Standard*, 7 March 1946.

112. Historical census data can be found in Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia', and in Encel and Buckley, *The New South Wales Jewish Community: A Survey*, p. 38.

113. Congregants, particularly women, who were excluded from participation in services, described Orthodox services as 'uninspiring and meaningless'. Another congregant commented 'The Orthodox prayers had no meaning anymore; people just sat around, bored to tears'. Another stated 'I wanted to be a conscious rather than an unconscious Jewess'. Graff, Turnbull, and Baskin, *A Time To Keep: The Story of Temple Beth* Israel, 1930-2005, p. 19.

114. *Jewish Herald*, 26 May 1938.

115. 'Temple Emanuel Weekly Bulletin', *Hebrew Standard*, 19 December 1940.

116. Sanger continued, 'In Israel a group of such people assembled with the rabbis beside a swimming pool recently and solemnly put a curse on the place and on all who would use it. Is it surprising that there are plenty of people in Israel who say 'I don't want to have anything to do with religion at all?': Sanger, 'What Is A Jew?' in Levi, *My Dear Friends*, p. 210.

117. ibid.

118.   ibid, pp. 211–12.

119.   Additionally, Schenk called for an 'a genuine rekindling of the old Jewish spirit, of loyalty to the Jewish people, to Jewish history that begins with the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt … ': Max Schenk, 'Rabbi's Column, *The Guild Gazette'* (Temple Emanuel, September 1947), Archive of the Australian Jewish Historical Society.

120.   Schenk stated in his inaugural sermon 'We must save Judaism, as the present generation is being lost … by unifying the Jewish masses. We must preserve peace among all members of the community in which we live': *Hebrew Standard*, 14 September 1939.

121.   Schenk's successor, Rabbi Brasch, stated that 'Judaism to survive must of necessity develop towards progressive Judaism', and that '[Liberal Judaism] affirms that it is the right interpretation of Judaism for our time, and the way to preserve it for the future. By combining Jewish tradition with modern thought it maintains the essential tenets of Judaism and strengthens them. By maintaining a relation between Jewish traditions and modern life it enhances the power of Judaism'. Rudolph Brasch, 'State and Religion', *The Australian Jewish Review*, November 1949, p. 6; 'What Is Liberal Judaism' (North London Liberal Synagogue, 1944).

122.   Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise; A Philosophical Drama* (1781), trans. R.E. Raspe (London: Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, 2004), p. 52.

123.   ibid, p. 53. Rabbi Levi noted how, at this point, audiences in German productions would burst into chaos, outraged that the playwright could suggest that Judaism was an authentic religion.

124.   Israel Porush, *Jewish Herald*, 17 June 1949; Levi, *My Dear Friends*, p. 100.

125.   Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio provided one example of how the situation remains unresolved: 'When … at the beginning of events, they'll say "Rabbonim", and I include myself in, [Orthodox rabbis] are probably including me out, we're all very happy … They just say "Rabbis" and leave it at that, and that makes it easy for everyone.' Rabbi Ninio, interview by Mark Rapaport, Sydney, 3 May 2016.

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BOOK REVIEWS

JEWISH ANZACS: JEWS IN THE AUSTRALIAN MILITARY

By Mark Dapin

Sydney: New South Publishing, 2017. xvii + 435 pp. plates, appendices.

ISBN9781742235356 (hardback); 9781742242705 (e-book)

Jews fought, often heroically, sometimes fatally, in all of Australia's wars. While this fact is generally known to those interested in Australian Jewish history, a full account of the participation of Jews in all of Australia's wars has never before been told. Mark Dapin's genuinely outstanding and important new work, *Jewish Anzacs*, at last tells their story in full. While at all times paying tribute to their patriotism and sacrifice, this work is not in any sense a hagiographical or two-dimensional history such as might have been written many years ago, but a multi-dimensional and human picture of Australia's Jewish soldiers, which spares nothing of the suffering they and their families underwent, the privations they bore, or of the (thankfully rare and unofficial) incidents of antisemitism they experienced in the military. Mark Dapin is an excellent writer, and the book is gripping from beginning to end.

Jewish Anzacs begins with Jewish participation in the colonial militias of the nineteenth century (in which, among others, Sir John Monash got his start) and with the very early campaigns in which Australian troops participated – in the Sudan in 1885 and in the Boer War. The bulk of the work naturally concerns the two World Wars, and here we have probably the best account of the Australian Jewish experience in these conflicts. Certainly the extraordinary career of Monash, and his unique place in Australian history, are recounted in full, and placed in the military context of the First World War, but the experiences of dozens of other Australian Jewish soldiers, gathered from dozens of sources – especially interviews with their relatives and accounts in the Australian Jewish press – are also told in full. Dapin's account of the Second World War includes the belated participation of the *Dunera* refugees, as well as Australian citizens, in North Africa, Europe, and in the tragic conflict against the Japanese. It

also tells of the participation of Jewish women in this and later wars.

In a highly original manner, the author then tells the story of Australian Jews who fought in Korea and other Cold War conflicts, and devotes a chapter to the hitherto obscure history of Australia's Jewish soldiers who fought in Vietnam. As he notes, young radical Jews of the time were highly visible in the anti-Vietnam War movement, and it is certainly right that the other side of the coin, the experiences of Jews who actually served in Vietnam, also be told, especially as most are still alive and are able to give personal accounts. Hostility to the Vietnam War became so widespread among middle class young men wherever they were subject to conscription, that the other side of the coin has been overlooked. (It might be noted that in the United States, which had military conscription until 1973, three future American presidents – Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Donald Trump – were 'draft dodgers' of the Vietnam era. If Mitt Romney had been elected in 2012, he would have been a fourth. Remarkably, no one who actually served in Vietnam has been elected a US president. In contrast, seven future American presidents served in the Second World War.) Mark Dapin then breaks even more original ground in examining the careers of Australian Jews who fought in more recent wars, down to Afghanistan between 2009 and 2014. The book's Prologue highlights the career of Greg Sher of Melbourne, who was tragically killed in Afghanistan as recently as 2009. *Jewish Anzacs* also includes extremely useful and well-researched lists of the names of all 6798 Jewish men and women who fought in any of Australia's wars, and also the names of 340 Australian Jews who died fighting for their country. This is an outstanding contribution to Australian Jewish history, and deserves to be widely known.

Jewish Anzacs was published in collaboration with the Sydney Jewish Museum.

William D. Rubinstein

FALLING STARS: THE STORY OF ANZACS FROM UKRAINE

By Elena Govor

Canberra: Alcheringa Publishing, 2017. 239 pp., illus., appendix.

ISBN: 978-0-9580800-5-7 (paperback)

This is a very unusual book – unusually well-researched and produced, and unusual in its subject matter. Dr Govor says little about herself in the book,

but it should be noted that she is a Ukrainian-born and educated researcher who now teaches at the Australian National University in Canberra. She previously (2005) wrote a somewhat similar work, Russian Anzacs in Australian History.

In *Falling Stars* she has traced every Australian soldier born in the Ukraine who fought with the ANZACs in the First World War – a total of 134 men. Of these, 51 were ethnic Ukrainians, 51 Jews, 26 of other Slavic, German, or Greek backgrounds, and six Western Europeans whose parents had lived in the Ukraine; in other words, the book treats the Jews as a subset of a wider group of persons born in a specific geographical area, a very unusual approach. The difficulties encountered in this research were formidable, not least in defining what is meant by the Ukraine, which, before 1914-18 had no legal existence, but consisted of parts of eight provinces (*gubernias*) in Tsarist Russia.

Although the two group had many commonalities, set out by Dr Govor, they also had many differences. These are also set out by the author, but arguably not to a sufficient extent. Obviously, Jewish Ukrainians and ethnic Ukrainians had different religions and different languages, but also, in many cases, a long history of mutual dislike engendered by the endemic, sometimes murderous, antisemitism so often found in the Ukraine. In many cases they had very different perspectives on the Tsarist regime and on the First World War, with many Jews deploring the fact that Australia was, until February 1917, allied to the hated Tsarist government.

In Australia, both groups developed a network of communal institutions, but, it might be argued, the Jews were more readily absorbed into a wider Jewish community with an already well-established network of synagogues and other bodies than were their non-Jewish counterparts into a Ukrainian community. The fact that Jewish Ukrainians were Jews determined their identity and the identity of their descendants, not, usually, the fact that they had migrated from the Ukraine.

Today, the descendants of the non-Jews in Dr Govor's study almost certainly regard themselves as Ukrainians, but the descendants of the Ukrainian Jews regard themselves as Jews. During the First World War, both groups experienced some hostility as non-Anglo-Celtic Australians, and afterwards as likely Bolsheviks. Among the most valuable parts of the book are the biographies, compiled by the author, of many of these ANZACs and their families, carefully pieced together by her in a sophisticated way. This book extends the notion of ethnic and geographical

identity among migrants to Australia and will be particularly valuable for that reason.

William D. Rubinstein

THE VANISHED MUSICIANS: JEWISH REFUGEES IN AUSTRALIA

By Albrecht Dümling
Translated from the German by Diana K. Weekes.

Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2016. xxviii, 572 pp.

ISBN: 978-3-0343-1951-5 (paperback) 978-3-0353-0816-7 (eBook)

In 2011, Böhlau Verlag published *Die Verschwundenen Musiker: Jüdischer Flüchtlinge in Australien* by Albrecht Dümling, a German musicologist and critic. After many requests for an English translation (from such luminaries, we are told, as Barry Humphries), Dümling engaged Diana Weekes as translator, and the English language version, *The Vanished Musicians: Jewish Refugees in Australia*, is now available. *The Vanished Musicians* is an important work of research, filling a lacuna in the history of Central European Jewish musicians in Australia. Although many historians have worked to expose the prejudices and biases in Australia's migration policies up to and including the 1960s, Dümling's book is the first to deal with the consequences of such policies in the development of concert musical life in Australia, including the intentional disruption and cessation of promising careers of those fleeing persecution.

Forgoing a methodological or theoretical introduction, Dümling's first chapter accounts for the genesis of the research. In 1989 he curated a highly successful exhibition on the Nazi vilification of Jewish and other artists ('Entartete Musik: A critical reconstruction'). The following year, he established musica reanimata (sic), an organisation devoted to the promotion of composers persecuted by the Nazis. A chance encounter with the composer George Dreyfus in 1992 (pp. 1-2) sparked interest in the migration of German-speaking Jewish artists to Australia, and Dümling organized a conference in 1996 ('Exiled Musicians in Australia') at the Dresden Centre for Contemporary Music, leading to a research project at the Centre for Research on Antisemitism, trips to Australia, a residency at the National Library and finally, the publication of the 2011 volume.

Following mention of the serendipitous contacts in Germany and abroad, the author moves to discuss the role of music in bourgeois Jewish

households in Germany and Austria from the late nineteenth century onwards, as a way of introducing the musical training of Walter Dullo, Alphons Silbermann, Kurt Kaiser (later Sydney John Kay) and others. This pattern of grouping biographical material according to perceived commonalities, simultaneously placing these stories in the socio-historical contexts of the time, continues throughout the work. By doing this, Dümling introduces the reader to the importance of musical experience, musical education and musical participation for post-emancipation Jews in the German-speaking lands. When a more detailed biography of one of the subject matters is available to the author, larger excerpts are inserted into the narrative. This approach evokes the pattern of the process of assemblage in an exhibition, where availability of material objects from one source may govern curatorial decisions in the presentation of wider, more general visual narratives. In the context of a written text, however, such a technique can at times cause the reader to lose sight of a larger narrative arc.

An example of this can be seen in Chapter Four (p. 53), which begins with an examination of the notions of 'exiled' and 'emigrant' German musicians in the historical development of the Australian colonies and early Federation. Evoking Roger Covell's concept of 'exile' as a feeling of exclusion from the culture left behind in Europe (p. 55), Dümling accounts for German-speaking migrants to Australia such as Old Lutherans and political exiles from the 1848 Revolutions, the former remaining deliberately separate from the British colonial culture, the latter more willing to assimilate and integrate. Dümling also mentions the significant respect afforded to the training of Australian musicians in Germany right up to the start of World War One. These disparate and often contradictory elements build up a portrait of the complexity of German-Australian cultural relations at the turn of the twentieth century. However, the interspersed stories of migration and racial laws (Spivakovsky family, Walter A Dullo and wife Annemarie, Jewish refugees in Britain, the Royal Grand Opera Tour in 1934) do not sit comfortably in this context. Chapter Five (p. 81) brings more clarity to the factors behind the antipathy towards these German-Jewish refugees in Australia: a strong residual of British-led hostility to Germans from the beginning of the Great War, combined with widespread unemployment (30 per cent during the height of the Great Depression) and consequent protectionism, professional rivalry (as in the case of Maurice Abravanel versus Bernard Heinze), and the rarer explicit antisemitism of

individuals such as Percy Grainger.

Dümling's account of the unique problems facing Jewish refugees begins on page 110 (and continues in Chapter Eight) with the ignominious statements of Colonel Thomas White, Australia's delegate at the infamous Evian Conference of July 1938, the support received from the gutter press and the Labor Party, and the resonance of these positions found in the continued White Australia Policy at that time. Although Jews were not strictly excluded on these grounds, they were marked as 'undesirable' on immigration quotas, preference being for British and northern European migrants, evidenced by horrific statements from the assistant secretary to the Minister for the Interior, T.H. Garrett (p. 178). The author's confusing the Ha'avara Agreement with German-Jewish Zionists in the 1930s and Eichmann's so-called Madagascar Plan of 1940 perpetuates the myth that the Nazis were supportive of Jewish emigration to Palestine, while the citing of Mossad negotiating with Reinhard Heydrich in 1938 is unfortunate, especially considering Mossad did not exist until 1949.

Despite this momentary error, the author provides an important survey of Australian reactions to the rising refugee crisis, with supportive comments (p. 166) articulated by Thorold Waters in the *Australian Musical News*, a seemingly lone voice in the press. Damned with faint praise is Sir Bernard Heinze, at the time head of the Melbourne University Conservatorium and music advisor to the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). Although Heinze's suspicion of Jewish artists did not restrict invitations to Jewish guest soloists during his watch at the ABC, his indifference to the desperation of European Jewish artists wishing to escape reflected the general ignorance and reluctance of the greater Australian polity to deal with the Jewish refugee crisis in Europe. Details of stonewalling emerge regarding non-German officials such as the British passport control officer in Vienna, Mr Berry (p. 179-80), who ranked Jews according to 'types' depending on their country of origin, and expressed mistrust in the Viennese Kultusgemeinde (official body of the Jewish community). Yet despite all these hurdles, obstructions and obfuscations, over 9,000 Jews managed to migrate to Australia between 1933 and 1943, a number greater in proportion than most other Western nations.

For most of the book, Dümling's narrative follows a normative historical structure. Chapters proceed from the account of the importance of music in Jewish families in Germany and Austria, to the rise of Nazism, and its immediate effect on Jewish Germans. Dümling provides extensive

details of arduous and difficult flights from Germany to Britain and Australia (Chapter Four), the societal ghettoisation of remaining Jewish communities, and the manifestation of Jewish cultural life under the Nazis (Chapters Six and Seven). The *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 1938 mark the end of the narrative for German-Jewish musical life in Dümling's focus, as the author shifts attention to the places and modes of escape, ports of transition and attitudes of local agencies. Fleeting coverage is given to the plight of the few German-speaking Jews such as Robert Kolben, Wolfgang Wagner, Lily Kolos and Endre Hoffmann, all of whom had escaped to Australia from Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Vilification and discrimination haunted musical refugees, even those who had gained a foothold and popular standing in their country of refuge. In Chapter Nine the official exclusion policy of the Australian Musicians' Union is introduced. The devastating effect this had on refugee musicians is a subject explored in an earlier study by Kay Dreyfus[1]. Dümling gives critical attention to the personal vendetta waged by Frank Kitson against foreign (often Jewish) musicians, and, in particular, members of Weintraubs Syncopators. The latter, Weimar Germany's most successful jazz band of the day, arrived in 1937 after touring the Far East and established themselves as a feature of the Sydney music scene, playing a residency at Prince's Nightclub and broadcasting on radio. With the outbreak of war, despite overt declarations of loyalty to their new country (demonstrated by their performance at a war-effort fundraising ball in Canberra hosted by Lady Gowrie, wife of the governor-general), the group were subjected to vicious, unsubstantiated slander by suspicious neighbours, and heavy-handed scrutiny by the aforementioned Kitson, W.J. Mackay (New South Wales chief of police) and Major W.J.R. Scott (director of military operations and intelligence, Ministry for the Army). Kay Dreyfus explores this history in far greater detail in her book *Silences and Secrets: The Australian Experience of the Weintraubs Syncopators*,[2] obtaining access to hitherto undiscovered papers in the National Archives, revealing the level and detail of malice and obstruction directed against the group.

With the declaration of war, hostility to any former German or Austrian citizens was ramped up to a new level, with internment and deportation enshrined in official policy. The story of deported 'hostile enemy aliens' on HMT *Dunera* is more well-known in the Australian psyche, having been the subject of an Australian Film Institute award-winning mini-series

in 1985, as well as books by Patkin[3] and Bartrop,[4] and a much-anticipated forthcoming book by Ken Inglis, Seumas Spark and Jay Winter.[5] However, the connection of the *Arandora Star* survivors to the *Dunera* is less known, and the removal of German-Jewish refugees (men, women and children) from Singapore to Australia on the *Queen Mary* is usually folded into the larger *Dunera* narrative. Dümling examines the cultural life of these refugees (German/Austrian Jews, people with Jewish heritage, and anti-Nazis) in the Hay and Tatura detention camps in welcome detail, and this is a real highlight of the study. Those unjustly imprisoned turned to cultural expression as an outlet for their emotional well-being – a phenomenon that also occurred in British and American internment camps of the war years. By mid-1941 some internees were successful in appealing against detention; the change of government in October and attack on Pearl Harbor in December saw the eventual release of all by February 1942.

For Jewish refugees in Australia (both voluntary and forced), the end of the war presented an entirely new set of challenges: disastrous news of lost families in Europe combined with considerations of where to settle permanently, with such decisions informed by the attitudes and experiences encountered before and during wartime. While some '*Dunera* Boys' returned to the United Kingdom or sought greater opportunities in the United States (with a very small coterie returning to Europe), many decided to stay and build new lives, contributing to existing culture, and in the case of Richard Goldner, inventing an entirely new organisation dedicated to chamber music promotion, Musica Viva Australia. Unlike earlier chapters, Dümling's process of assemblage shapes a more cogent narrative here, with the reader left wanting to know more about the various individuals mentioned. Thankfully the 98 short biographies that appear as an appendix provide bonus information. Interviews with living composers (Felix Werder, George Dreyfus) and the children of prominent performers (Tony Kay, Michael Fisher) provide the closing material.

The Vanished Musicians is a work that provides scholars and the general music-loving public with a fascinating glimpse into the lives of what was and what might have been. Albrecht Dümling has done an important service for Australian culture, and his story only touches the surface of some fascinating and complex histories. The work contributes a nuanced complexity in relation to identity in the culture of Australian concert music. An extensive amount of material from 39 musicians, composers and cultural figures is informed by interviews around the world with over

30 individuals (including friends and family), complemented by research gleaned from 15 Australian archives and 28 overseas institutions. Forty-two unique images and eight musical examples enhance this substantial tome. On a personal note, Dümling's work has inspired my own further research into this subject area: I hope it will also open up more conversations on the development of concert life in Australia and the cultural legacy of these women and men.

Joseph Toltz

Notes

1. Kay Dreyfus. 'The Foreigner, the Musicians' Union and the State in 1920s Australia: A Nexus of Conflict', *Music and Politics*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2009.

2. Idem., Silence and Secrets: *The Australian Experience of the Weintraubs Syncopators* (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2013).

3. Benzion Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, Stanmore NSW: Cassell Australia, 1979.

4. Paul R. Bartrop, and Gabrielle Eisen, *The Dunera Affair : A Documentary Resource Book* (South Yarra, Vic: Schwartz & Wilkinson /Jewish Museum of Australia, 1990).

THEIR LIVES BEFORE US

By Dagmar Strauss Yaari

Monterey, Ca.: Samuel Wachtman's Sons Inc.; Tel Aviv: Dekel, 2017. 258 pp.

ISBN-13: 978-1941905142

Their Lives Before Us complements Dagmar Strauss Yaari's earlier exploration of her life as the daughter of German-Jewish refugees from Nazism who settled in Australia following their wartime exile in Shanghai. Whereas in *A Late Journey: A Memoir*[1] Strauss Yaari's focus is autobiographical, with her parents' – Irene and Gottfried Strauss's – story almost incidental to her personal struggles with relationships and identity, the subsequent volume is devoted to unravelling the often painful and puzzling events that engulfed her parents in the first years of their marriage. This is the book Strauss Yaari originally set out to write, before, in response to her publisher's advice to insert more of herself into her writing, her attention shifted away from her parents' travails in the latter part of the 1930s to the long-term impact on Strauss Yaari's subsequent life of their apparently dysfunctional relationship.

The impetus for both books was Strauss Yaari's discovery of a cache of letters, mostly between her parents (but also including letters from her paternal grandfather), and mainly dating between 1935 and 1939. A shocking and unexpected picture emerged in the wake of the translation of these letters from German into English. *While A Late Journey* outlines the story of how, within days of Strauss Yaari's parents' marriage, her father was arrested by the Gestapo and incarcerated in a combination of prisons and concentration camps for just over three years before his sudden release and escape with Irene to Shanghai, coverage of these events constitutes a relatively small portion of the book. By contrast, *Their Lives Before Us* expands the narrative of the incarceration, with an emphasis on the process followed by Strauss Yaari (with the help of her sister Noemi) to establish and interpret the factual details of her father's arrest through a forensic analysis of primary sources. To this end the book reproduces in chronological order extensive excerpts from the correspondence between her parents, and then the translated court proceedings relating not only to her father but, surprisingly, also to her mother. The final mystery of why her paternal grandfather was also arrested and imprisoned, and was therefore unable to leave Germany with his son, is also documented. Thus, Strauss Yaari takes the reader through the process of piecing together the meaning behind the necessarily cryptic exchanges between her parents. The strict censorship imposed on prisoners' correspondence interacted with her parents' reluctance to upset each other by showing their true emotions during such a stressful period and this served to obscure what was actually happening. The subsequent juxtaposition of trial documents with the letters clarifies events touched on in the letters, although some technical details behind the legal process remain a mystery.

What is most revealing for Yaari Strauss is the picture that emerges of her mother as a loving, supportive wife, whose resourcefulness ultimately facilitated her husband's release and the couple's escape from Nazi Germany. This contrasts to Yaari Strauss's memories of a cold and resentful woman, trapped in a loveless relationship. Details of her father's failures of judgment that undoubtedly led to his initial imprisonment, destroying her parents' early (and probably later) married life, are slowly uncovered. As her father's plight becomes more and more desperate following his final imprisonment in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp, he acknowledges to his wife for the first time that he made foolish decisions imperilling them both. (I leave it to the reader to discover the background

to these disclosures!).

To what extent does the book have a wider historical significance? A large proportion is devoted to reproducing primary documents, mainly in the form of letter excerpts which, while certainly giving a flavour of how individuals corresponded with each other at the time, are, en masse, somewhat prosaic and, as important as they are to the writer, do not necessarily contribute proportionately to the narrative. On the other hand, as an example of what in Germany is referred to as *Alltagsgeschichte*, the history of everyday life, *Their Lives Before Us* highlights some complex and frequently unacknowledged issues. Grand policies are not simply abstract constructions on paper for future historians to debate, they have profound consequences for individuals caught up in their implementation. Irene and Gottfried Strauss married at a difficult period in German history and found themselves enmeshed in a Kafkaesque web of legal processes. Anti-abortion laws, laws restricting the transfer of money outside Germany, anti-Communist laws, not to mention the increasing legal formalisation of antisemitism, interacted viciously almost to destroy their lives. Tiny details, such as Irene sending ironed collars to her husband in prison, illustrate the persistence of love in the face of bureaucratic madness.

That Irene and Gottfried had a life before them, no matter how problematic, is a testament to the capacity of 'ordinary', even naïve and foolish, individuals to transcend persecution. This is the ultimate message of this book.

Pam Maclean

Note

1.   Dagmar Strauss, *A Late Journey: A Memoir* (Amherst, Ma.:White Poppy Press, 1914). My review of this volume was published in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, vol. XXII, part 1 (2014), pp. 132-34.

SURVIVOR: A PORTRAIT OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST

By Harry Borden

London: Cassell Illustrated, 2017. 276 pp., illus.

ISBN 10: 1844039064/ISBN 13: 9781844039067 (hardcover)

Harry Borden is a celebrated portrait photographer in the United Kingdom who has over 100 of his images in the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery in London. He has photographed famous politicians

including prime ministers and heads of state, eminent people in business, publishing, finance, sports and the media, and in all branches of the arts – painters, actors, dancers, musicians, and other photographers. His work has been featured on and within the covers of some of the most prestigious magazines and publications around the world including *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *Das Magazin*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Stern* and *Vogue*. He has won prizes at the World Press Photo Awards, and last year was awarded an honorary fellowship by the Royal Photographic Society.

After spending 25 years photographing famous people, he decided to focus on several projects that were of special meaning for himself. The genesis of one such project was his childhood memory of being shocked when told by his secular Jewish father, who had joined the US Marines to fight Hitler, that had the Nazis won the war their family would have been marked for extermination.

During a talk at the London Jewish Cultural Centre about his celebrity photography in May 2008, Harry asked if there were any in his audience who might be prepared to be photographed by him for his 'Survivor' project. Several persons came forward and that was the beginning of what turned into a nine-year odyssey that took him across the world.

Over that period Harry photographed over 200 survivors, first in the United Kingdom, then in Australia, and was later joined in the project by Sydney-based writer and producer Miriam Hechtman whose grandparents were all survivors. She helped to arrange for him to photograph survivors in Israel and the USA, accompanied him on those legs of the journey, and wrote blogs about the experience as well as shooting short film clips of some of the photo sessions.

His first London subject, eminent medical scientist and author Peter Lantos, was photographed in his home, with Harry leaving behind his usual complex lighting kit and camera gear, his assistants and technicians, choosing instead to work alone with just his camera on a tripod, using a standard 50mm lens (approximating the field of vision of the human eye) and available light. After taking his images, Harry gave Peter a blank sheet of paper and asked him to write a few words to accompany his portrait. This became the pattern for each and every subject in the 'Survivor' project.

He progressively posted a selection of his survivor images on his website, but that's where things sat for a number of years. In 2014 he entered a mock-up of his book into the prestigious 'European Publishing Award for Photography' book prize competition, where it was shortlisted

and attracted the attention of publishers. After a few false starts, Cassell Illustrated (a division of Hachette/Octopus Publications) took the project on, with Harry retaining full control of editorial, design and production aspects of the book. In addition to the portraits and personal notes, for every survivor there is a factual statement documenting their biographical details – place and date of birth, family, and what happened before, during and after the Shoah. As part of his contract with the publishers, Harry arranged that complimentary copies of books be gifted to all who had been included, or their families for those no longer with us.

After the book's UK launch in London on International Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2017, the Melbourne Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre was the venue for the Australian book launch by local author Arnold Zable on the afternoon of 23 April 2017 (Erev Yom Ha-Shoah). Harry flew to Australia to be here for the occasion, which was very well attended, including by twelve of his original Melbourne-based subjects.

Survivor: a portrait of the survivors of the Holocaust is truly a magnificent book in every respect. In the thought provoking and deeply meaningful foreword, eminent writer Howard Jacobson says: 'The nobility of these photographs resides in the something indefinable Harry Borden sees, and the unblinking steadiness with which he sees it – call it an indomitability of spirit, neither bitter nor disillusioned, neither ferocious nor reconciled. In the face of so much to be appalled by, his subjects give a degree of hope, if only by the quiet, unanswerable quality of their endurance.'

Harry's introduction tells the story of his personal journey, and in it he states: 'I set out to do something with meaning. Being fortunate enough to have met and photographed these remarkable people has certainly felt meaningful to me.'

The survivor portraits, accompanied by their subjects' thoughts ranging across the spectrum of human emotion and philosophy and written by each in their own hand, make a deep and emotional connection with the reader, creating a strong sense of intimacy with each of the subjects. Apart from their common experience of having survived the horrors of this cataclysmic event, the book personalises and emphasises the individuality of every one of its subjects. It is a remarkable book that captivates and deeply touches the reader with its honesty and human impact.

The book has garnered numerous excellent reviews, has been listed as the number one seller by Amazon in Military History Pictorials from

the time it was published, and has been selected to be featured in the Athens Photo Festival 2017. An exhibition of Harry's survivor portraits will be mounted at the London Jewish Museum in Camden commencing 27 January 2018, and the Melbourne Jewish Holocaust Centre is greatly interested in bringing that exhibition to Australia sometime afterwards. For anyone interested in seeing something of Harry's most impressive broader body of work, view his website http://harryborden.co.uk.

<div style="text-align:right">Joe Lewit</div>

MY VICE-REGAL LIFE: DIARIES 1978 TO 1982

By Lady Anna Cowen[1]

Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2017. 362 pages, plates, index.

ISBN 9780522871272

This book reads like an amazing fairy tale set in Australia It contains a Jewish family saga. It is a crisp account of unremitting, astonishing accomplishment and is a significant, hitherto unspoken, story of national reconciliation.

The book begins with a poignant dedication to Lady Cowen's husband and to her youngest son. 'To Zelman, with whom I shared a wonderful journey. And to Ben, never to be forgotten'.

Of course the journey did not end with the four years at Yarralumla, nor did it begin in Canberra. We are left to pick up the clues of a distinguished scholarly life and an extended Jewish family that makes its presence felt during those years in Government House.

We read about the first Vice-Regal barmitzvah in Jewish history when young Ben Cowen is called to the Torah at Canberra's Jewish Centre. Later, Simon, the oldest son, marries Miriam under the chuppah and the first grandchild is born in 1982. High Holydays and Passover celebrations are duly celebrated. And when the Governor-General turns 60 on 7 October 1979, Lady Cowen notes in true Jewish style 'Z reaches the mid point – of 120 years!' The bestowal of an honorary doctorate at Temple Beth Israel is described as 'the best disorganised function we have attended'. I remember it well.

The diary is by no means a story of sweetness and light. From time to time there are whispers of war. On 10 June 1982 we read:

[T]he Diplomatic Corps dinner tonight is a highlight of our term of

office. All in all this could hardly have taken place at a worse time. Britain and Argentina are fighting and Israel invaded Lebanon last Sunday and is fighting the PLO and Syria. It takes every ounce of diplomatic skill all around to preserve cordiality and civility… But it is a wonderful night.

Not all speeches and public events go well. The physical strain of speaking and greeting is frequently exhausting. Whispers of public unrest surface from time to time as the result of political turbulence that preceded the Canberra appointment.

The sheer hard work and charm that characterised those vital four years 'saved' Yarralumla and the role of the Governor-General. The distinguished artist Fred Williams is quoted: 'Zelman has set back the cause of Republicanism in this country twenty-five years'. With the one notable exception, the Cowens were everything that most of their predecessors were not. And the public collective memory of that time persists. Now in her nineties, Lady Cowen accurately recalls that they 'trailed traces of a successful governor-generalship' long after their official time of service was over.

Function follows formal function and the Cowens conscientiously fly from one end of the Australian continent to the other time and again. They visit Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island and Christmas Island and Arnhem Land. They fly back and forth to Sydney, staying at Admiralty House. After arriving in Port Lincoln on a hot February day visit complete with thousands of cheering schoolchildren, a tour of a busy harbour, a civic luncheon, a garden party and a visit to a National Trust cottage before flying back to Canberra via a brief official visit to Adelaide, Lady Cowen writes in her diary: 'What a day: nine engagements plus three flights.' Month follows month with very little respite. There are ships to launch, brass bands, medals to distribute, ambassadors to greet, military salutes and a formidable number of Church Services to attend. No doubt there were occasions when the representatives of certain regimes and churches must have been a little surprised to discover that Australia's Governor-General was Jewish. And that he was Australia's second Jewish Governor-General. And moreover, this dignified and eloquent man had written the authoritative biography of Sir Isaac Isaacs, our first Jewish Governor-General. But then, as we know, Australian Jewish history is filled with surprises.

At the Sydney Opera House in February 1980 Joan Sutherland opens the Opera Season. 'The house is packed and everyone is standing as we enter to the drum roll. Then we find some people in our seats – some

amusement as it is all sorted out, and the poor little usherette who made the mistake faints.' Later that same year in the same place an Appelate Judges' Conference is held.

This quite a spectacle. An ABC announcer on stage names each Chief Justice as he ascends the stage, robed. There are about eighty, and it sounds like a Queen Competition. The robing seems to my irreverent eyes a mite ridiculous.

Official engagements include the ill-fated royal wedding of Prince Charles to the 'breathtakingly beautiful' Diana. Who could have guessed how that grand occasion would end? And there are the frequent visits to Canberra of noble members of sundry royal families. Little wonder that, in his latter years, Sir Zelman favoured the constitutional change to a republic.

We know that the diary of those four amazing years is but an abridged edited version of 'the real stuff'. The material has obviously been edited with care and the book's production is a credit to the Miegunyah Press. There is a very helpful index which is a necessary addition to a book that includes so many names and events. Lady Cowen writes as she speaks with elegance and humour. All that is missing on the printed page is her beautiful smile.

<div align="right">John S. Levi</div>

Note

1.   This is how Lady Cowen's name appears on the book's title page, although strictly speaking that form of address denotes the daughter of a duke, marquis or earl, not the wife or widow of a knight – Eds.

100 YEARS AGO: VICTORIA 1917

Compiled by Lorraine Freeman

From the pages of **The Australian Jewish Herald**

The progress of the war in Europe continued to be a major focus during 1917, and the first edition for 1917 contained an interesting interview with Captain Reverend David Isaac Freedman of Perth. Rev Freedman had been appointed Jewish Chaplain to the Australian Forces not long after the war had broken out. The interview was conducted whilst Freedman was on leave in London, by which time he had seen two years of action at Gallipoli, Lemnos, Egypt, France and Belgium. He pointedly referred to the exceptional response by Australian Jewish volunteers in readily enlisting for service, however the response of British recruits 'could have been far greater'.

Freedman spoke highly of the number of Russian-born ANZACS who had come to Australia before the war and who had 'decided without hesitation to fight for the new Motherland'. In an interesting comment on war brides, he said a number of his diggers had fallen in love with English girls whilst on leave, and become engaged, but he had been struck with their partiality for the Jewish girls of Egypt, and he knew of many engagements – he also referred to a non-Jewish major who had converted to marry a Cairene girl in a Cairo synagogue. Freedman made special reference to his disappointment over the disbandment of the Zion Mule Corps, which he had come across at Mudros and Alexandria.

Nearly every edition of the paper expressed concern for the plight of the Russian and Alexandrian war refugees, exhorting readers to provide food and clothing, as well as money for fresh milk for the large numbers of children who had suffered so badly. The funds were to be forwarded to the Jewish Relief Fund in London.

The issue of 23 March had a long article on the Russian monk Grigori Rasputin who had been assassinated at the end of December 1916. It described in some detail his evil influence on Tsar Nicholas II, and the murderous encouragement he had given to Russian antisemitism.

The edition of 20 April reported in full the moving speech given by

former President William Howard Taft, in which he pleaded for the emancipation of the Jews of Eastern Europe and decried the religious intolerance of Christians, He demanded that after the war the world must rally to the support of the persecuted Jews. The same issue contained a report by the Russian ambassador to London stating that the Provisional Government in Petrograd had 'removed all religious disabilities contained in the laws of Russia', including those applying to foreigners.

The Russian Revolution of March 1917 had seen the abdication of Nicholas II, and was praised in the *Jewish Herald* of 1 June as 'the greatest event in history since the French Revolution'. Yet the paper editorialised that whilst rejoicing over the revolution and the emancipation of the Jews, we must not ignore the plight of those in Romania, Poland, Galicia and Lithuania, all still in a state of bondage.

That issue of 1 June also broached the question of why Zionism should be preferred over emancipation and the acquisition of human rights, which would now allow Jews to live safely in the various countries of their birth. A British author was quoted as saying that the demand for autonomous self-government was 'nothing short of extravagant madness'. He went further, to hope that the 'wealthy Jews of America would help Russian Jewry to become adapted to new conditions of life outside of the ghetto'. The clear implication was that the new liberty in Russia would destroy the Zionist cause.

Local news in the same edition announced an intention to erect an obelisk to honour Victorian Jewish soldiers who lost their lives in action, and reported the eulogy by Rev Danglow for 'our best and bravest, the late Sgt Frank Michaelis'.

In contrast, the edition of 15 June reported on Arthur Balfour's mission to America and also the possibility of a Jewish State in light of the success of British forces in Palestine. The hope was expressed that there be a proposed republic created under the protectorate of the United States government, and it was claimed to have governmental approval. On 29 June the *Jewish Herald* contained President Wilson's address (of 15 April) that America had now declared war to support Britain, France and Russia.

The same issue contained a warning by the Sephardic Chief Rabbi in London. He had concerns about the dangers inherent in the burden created by a Jewish State, and warned of inevitable inter-racial strife. He stated that the only way it could be successful would be if it were under the political control of Great Britain.

In August the Melbourne synagogues were reported to have 'celebrated' the third anniversary of the declaration of war with sermons and special prayers. Also by late August, the paper was soberly recording American reports that the Russian Revolution had failed to destroy the 'reactionaries' and that they had only gone undercover to continue their Jew-baiting propaganda.

In October attention was shifting to reports of Victorian Jewish deaths in the war in German New Guinea and in Flanders. Reports were coming through of the Gaza Operations, and looked forward to the 'possible capture of Jerusalem and the release of Palestine from the oppression of the Turk … with hopes of Palestine being eventually converted into a Jewish State'. On 31 October the paper described the Battle of Beersheba and the involvement of the Australian Light Horse, noting that seven Australian Jewish soldiers were to be buried at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery there. In the terrible third battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) also in October, almost 11,000 Australians died in one week, of whom 36 were Jewish.

In November the *Jewish Herald* announced that the final draft of the Balfour Declaration, dated 2 November, in which was pledged 'British support for a Jewish National Home in Palestine', had been sent to Lord Rothschild,. There was little excitement in Melbourne, where, the paper stated, many feared that they would be expected to leave Australia and settle in Palestine. However, the paper and the spiritual leaders were in favour of Zionism, and on 15 December Rev Jacob Lenzer declared that 'we know … that our claims will be recognised and our hopes realised'. Even Rev Danglow was sympathetic at this time.

The issue of 14 December announced that General Allenby had entered Jerusalem on 9 December and 'raised the British flag of freedom over the heights of Zion'. It was the anniversary of the day 2,082 years earlier when Judas Maccabeus and his brothers finally 'purged Jerusalem of heathen thraldom'. Many photographs of Jerusalem followed, and the paper described Chanukah 1917 as being more meaningful.

The last issue of the *Jewish Herald*, on 28 December, published remarkable reports that Germany and Austria had also planned a Jewish republic for Palestine, to circumvent the intention of America and its allies to give the Holy Land to the Jewish people. The paper stated that the capture of Jerusalem, Beersheba and Gaza by the British completely upset the German and Austrian 'crafty scheming'.

REPORT TO MEMBERS 2017

I am pleased to provide this report in my capacity as the new Honorary Secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Victoria Inc. in succession to Liz James. The Society has had another successful year, with well-attended talks and a well-received annual *Journal*.

At the meeting in November 2016, award-winning author and journalist Sam Lipski spoke about the distinctive contribution that Australian Jews made to the international campaign on behalf of Soviet Jewry. In doing so, he referred to the book *Let My People Go: The Untold Story of Australia and the Soviet Jews, 1959-1989*, which he co-authored with Professor Suzanne Rutland.

At our Annual General Meeting in March 2017 two additional members, Shelley Cohney and Russell Stern, were confirmed as members of the Society's Committee. The meeting heard child sexual abuse advocate Manny Waks speak about his personal and professional journey, and the issues for the Jewish Community in the aftermath of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Manny successfully advocated for a Royal Commission public hearing into Australian Jewish institutions.

In April 2017, retired engineer and freelance journalist Michael Komesaroff gave an entertaining presentation about the seven members of his family who were the subject of files kept by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and its predecessors. He spoke about the contents of the files and the manner in which the information was collected.

At our meeting in June 2017 historian Professor Joy Damousi spoke about Jewish refugee children in Australia. She discussed efforts within the Jewish community in Australia and abroad to support and assist such children, beginning in the nineteenth century.

All of our meetings, which were held at Temple Beth Israel, were well attended by members and visitors. As the warmer months approach we again intend to conduct heritage walks and boat trips along the Maribyrnong River for members and friends.

Phil Lipshut
Honorary Secretary, AJHS Vic Inc.

NEW MEMBERS JOINED AJHS VICTORIA INC

since November 2011

Nerrida Blashki POHL
Russell STERN

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Albrecht Dümling is a musicologist and music critic in Berlin. His exhibition on Nazi music policies, 'Degenerate Music: A Critical Reconstruction', travelled to venues all over the world. He was the first recipient of the European Cultural Prize KAIROS. Following a research project on German-speaking refugee musicians in Australia he published his book *The Vanished Musicians. Jewish Refugees in Australia* (German 2011, English 2016).

Dr Howard Freeman OAM is the co-editor of this Victorian *Journal* and a long-standing member of the Victorian AJHS committee, serving also as Victorian co-president of the Society.

Lorraine Freeman, a graduate of the University of Melbourne, is the compiler of '100 Years Ago', an annual review of a series of abstracts from the pages of the Melbourne Jewish press.

Dr Rodney Gouttman is a former senior academic at the University of South Australia, having written many articles in the areas of Australian Jewish history and the Australian-Israel relationship. He is a former editor of this *Journal* and of the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*. His mot recent book was *In Their Merit: Australian Jewry and WW1* (2015).

Michael Komesaroff is a semi-retired engineer and freelance journalist who recently returned to Melbourne. For the past 40 years he has lived and worked in Asia where he has been involved in the mining industry. Despite a working life of regular visits to the Soviet Union and China and what he thought was a radical youth, he is surprised and disappointed that ASIO consider he has not satisfied the criteria for them to open a file on him.

Rabbi Dr John S. Levi AM was senior rabbi of Temple Beth Israel for 37 years and is a noted historian, having authored a number of significant books and articles on Australian Jewish history. The books include the groundbreaking *Australian Genesis* (new ed., 2002) and *These Are the Names*: *Jewish Lives in Australia*, *1788-1850* (2013).

Joe Lewit is a retired architect. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects, a past Victorian Chapter councillor of the Institute, a past examiner with the Architects Registration Board of Victoria, and a past-president of Temple Beth Israel.

Dr Serge Liberman OAM, a retired Melbourne medical practitioner, is the author of six acclaimed collections of short stories, and compiler of *The Bibliography of Australasian Judaica*. A reviewer, translator, and essayist, he is a former literary editor of the *Melbourne Chronicle* and the *Australian Jewish News*.

Phil Lipshut is honorary secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Vic Inc. He has had a varied career with periods in local government, TAFE and university administration, disability employment and tourism. As the father of a son with autism spectrum disorder, for more than 25 years Phil has been active in family support associations for families with a child with a disability. Phil's interest in Australian Jewish history stems from his own family history, having on one side a convict ancestor who arrived in Hobart in 1841, and on the other a free settler who arrived in Launceston that same year.

Pam Maclean is an honorary fellow in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Australia, where she taught for many years. She has published extensively on Holocaust video testimony, as well as Australian Jewish culural history, most notably on Pinchas Goldhar. Her most recent publications include Nigel Eltringham and Pam Maclean, eds., *Remembering Genocide* (2014). She has also contributed to *The Collected Stories of Pinchas Goldhar: A Pioneer Yiddish Writer in Australia* (2016).

Mark Rapaport graduated from the University of Sydney in 2016 with first class honours after completing his thesis on Orthodox-Liberal relations in Sydney. His research interests include the history of religion, Australian politics, and religion in the public sphere. He is currently completing a master's degree in history at the University of Oxford.

Dr Hilary L. Rubinstein is an adjunct research fellow in the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University. She co-edited this *Journal* from 2003-13, and returned to the role this year. Widely published

in the field of Australian Jewish history, she is (with Bill Rubinstein) co-author of *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (1999), *The Jews in the Modern World: A history since 1750* (2002) and *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* (2011).

Emeritus Professor William D. (Bill) Rubinstein taught at Deakin University and at the University of Wales, and is currently an adjunct professor at Monash University. A well-known historian of modern Britain, he has published widely on modern Jewish history. He is a former president of the Jewish Historical Society of England, and was editor of the Victorian issues of this *Journal* between 1988 and 1995.

Dr Joseph Toltz is research fellow at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and co-investigator for 'Performing the Jewish Archive', a three-year large grant project. A former fellow at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, he is co-authoring a book on the earliest collection of Holocaust songs. In 2014 he staged the first Sydney performances of the children's opera *Brundibár*, and this year curated 'Out of the Shadows: rediscovering Jewish music and theatre', a week-long festival at the Sydney Conservatorium.