

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL



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AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOURNAL

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was founded in Sydney in August 1938. A Victorian branch of the Society, founded in August 1954, was incorporated in 1989 as AJHS-Vic. A Branch also exists in Canberra and Western Australia has its own Jewish Historical Society.

The *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* has been published since 1939. From 1988 the production of the Journal has been shared by New South Wales (June edition) and Victoria (November edition).

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Front cover: Hungarian migrants Tom Beer (b.1947) and his mother Annemarie in a rickshaw at Colombo, Ceylon en route for Sydney (Photo: George Beer).

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official position of the Society.

* Indicates a peer-reviewed article

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Yet again, our November *Journal* carries a fine range of articles, for which hearty thanks are due to the contributors. The items' variety and scope is self-evident, enabling me, conscious of rising production costs, to be brief. Our miscellany begins with an important study, involving new research, by Professor Emeritus Andrew Markus and Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland of post-war Australian immigration policy affecting Jews. Next are excerpts most relevant to the *Journal's* remit from eminent Budapest-born scientist Dr Tom Beer's engrossing, educative, and enjoyable newly completed autobiographical work. After that, surgeon Dr Michael Henderson takes an expert look at the life and activities in Melbourne of distinguished refugee from Nazism Professor Arthur Schüller, who settled here with his wife. Rabbi Emeritus Dr John Levi shares with us cuttings from his boyhood scrapbooks relating to the birth of Israel. Professor Philip Mendes examines yet another aspect of the Australian Jewish Left's not-too-distant past. Dr Paul Gardner describes the sleuthing that has discovered the actual founder of renowned tobacco firm Kronheimer and Co. I explore a little-known quasi-*landsmanshaft* established by post-war British newcomers to Victoria. And then Dr Tanya Warms takes us to Geelong.

Multifaceted Hamburg-born Queenslander Professor Edgar Gold, who, by chance, discovered last November's *Journal* on a cruise ship and kindly got in touch, gives us a book review that, in a sense, helps to complement the *Dunera* story. Professor Emeritus Bill Rubinstein reviews recent works by, respectively, UK-based Dr Daniel Tabor, our member Dr Henry Lew, and far-left activist Sam Goldbloom's eldest daughter. Our hon. secretary David Marlow contributes his annual report. As usual, I acknowledge here the collegiality of Sydney *Journal* editor Suzanne Rutland and her team as well as of the always helpful Louis de Vries and Anna Rosner Blay of Hybrid Publishers. And I welcome submissions for next year's *Journal*; if you have an article in mind, please inform me, the earlier the better so I can plan the issue.

The leading item in this year's 'Fast Fact File' concerns physician



Table Talk, 25 April 1929

Dr William Maloney MHR (1854-1940), ex-MLA, affectionately known as 'The Little Doctor', an Australian whose philosemitism was so intense that it led some to speculate that that he had Jewish ancestry. His English-born mother Jane, who married Irish Catholic Denis Maloney, and Eliza, mother of land-owner William John Turner ('Big') Clarke (1805-74) were sisters, daughters of a Somerset rector named Dowling. During Jane's widowhood Clarke paid for

her son William's education

and provided for the young man in his will. In a letter to *The Age* (27 March 1889) Maloney wrote: 'I am a Roman Catholic, was born one and will remain so, as I would have remained in any religion I was by chance of birth raised in; but my mother was an Englishwoman and my grandfather a minister in the Church of England, and in consequence thereof I have always held the most liberal views towards any religion.' Nevertheless, he had a particular and profound affinity for Jews, as his many interactions with them and his ceaseless devotion to their interests attested. In 1891 he advocated the purchase by Britain of land in Eretz Israel where Jewish refugees from the Tsarist Empire could settle. He contributed to Palestine Relief Appeals. Jewish artist Percy White's pencil drawing of him was featured in the Archibald Prize exhibition of 1929, and his other Jewish friends and admirers were legion. He attended Jewish functions secular and religious, public and private, acted on his own initiative as Australian Jewry's representative in the House of Representatives at a time when there was no Jewish member, donated in the 1920s to the Ukrainian Jewish Relief Fund and in the 1930s to the German Jewish Relief Fund, faithfully boycotting German goods. He attended synagogue services here and overseas. 'True to his

usual custom, Dr. Maloney, M.H.R., was in Synagogue on Yom Kippur,' noted columnist 'Hamabit' in the *Australian Jewish Herald* (28 Sept. 1938). 'He came by 'plane from Canberra to keep his yearly appointment. He was at East Melbourne and Toorak Road during the day and received real welcome at both places.' And in the issue of 5 September 1940 'Hamabit' recalled: 'He was a constant visitor to the Toorak Road Synagogue, and never failed to be present at any communal function to which he was invited.'

Sadly, Maloney's deep philosemitism remains largely unknown, as I witnessed during the discussion following Professor Paul Bartrop's talk at our Society's AGM this year, which included a reminiscence regarding Viennese-born clothing manufacturer Robert Salter's desperate (and fruitful) appeal to Maloney for help in acquiring requisite documentation for his parents, his fiancée, and his friend and business partner Rudolph Brill, who having fled Nazi Europe were in immigration limbo. That information, including the fact that Dr Maloney's watch chain bore a *chai* amulet, caused such delighted surprise to most people present that I've included parts of his illuminating speech in the House of Representatives on 2 December 1938 (during a debate focusing on a possible Jewish refugee settlement in north-west Australia) in the 'Fast Fact File'. Please note that Rae Lever (1897-1967), featured in the speech, had been born Rose Morris in Manchester, where in 1915 she married fellow Mancunian John Levien (later Lever; 1893-1951). In 1939 the couple moved to the United States with their son Ernest Merton Lever (1919-94) and one of their two daughters, whose married sister remained in Britain. Settling in Los Angeles, where Rae opened a linen and lingerie shop and John was an import merchant, the Levers duly became US citizens. How John Lever had become 'a good friend' of Maloney is unclear. Perhaps Victorian politician Jonas Felix Levien (1840-1906) was somehow involved, for it is not unlikely that Jonas's paternal family, described in *Burke's Colonial Gentry* as 'of French origin', was in truth related to Lever's Leviens, from Russian Poland. Since Maloney was quite often overseas, he may have met Lever on his travels.

Incidentally, to view a pen and pastel depiction of Rabbi Levi that his lifelong friend the late Barry Humphries sketched at Puckapunyal army base in 1953 when both were doing national service see <https://www.portrait.gov.au/portraits/2003.89/john-levi-at-puckapunyal> (1953)

Hilary L. Rubinstein

A ‘WHOLLY UNWARRANTED PENALISATION’: THE INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANISATION AND THE FUNDING OF POST-WAR JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA*

Andrew Markus and Suzanne D. Rutland

ABSTRACT

Jewish immigration to Australia in the aftermath of the Holocaust has been much studied. This article adds to knowledge of the period by examining one aspect which to the present has not received sufficient consideration, that pertaining to the funding of Jewish survivor immigration from Europe. After the war, the cost of travel to Australia was substantial, the equivalent of male average weekly earnings over 20 or more weeks. Australian Jewish organisations lacked the capacity to assist at the level required by thousands of Jewish survivors who wished to migrate to Australia and they turned to American Jewish welfare organisations, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, but even their resources were stretched. The International Refugee Organisation stepped into the breach and provided subsidies for travel of Jewish refugees in the first year of its operation, but in August 1948 it was required to cease this funding assistance by Australia’s minister for immigration, Arthur Calwell. This article examines the reasons for Calwell’s action, and the failed attempts to secure its reversal during Calwell’s ministry and that of his successor, Harold Holt. It reveals political judgements and prejudices that overrode humanitarian concerns.

KEYWORDS: Jewish immigration 1946-52, Refugees and welfare, Arthur Calwell, International Refugee Organisation, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

Australia's first minister for immigration, Arthur Calwell, was a controversial political leader. He came to be regarded by some as the father of multicultural Australia, but he was also renowned as a fierce and uncompromising defender of the White Australia Policy. The post-war immigration program which he oversaw marked the fundamental break with the country's reliance on Anglo-Celtic immigration. Calwell was personally sympathetic to the plight of Holocaust survivors, many of whom he counted as personal friends. In response to appeals in 1945, he approved a humanitarian programme to provide 2000 Landing Permits for those with close relatives in Australia. In the following year, he agreed to additional 5000 permits.

Calwell was highly regarded in the Jewish community – particularly amongst survivors who gained admission during his time as minister. After he left office, he was a keynote speaker at a number of Jewish community events and was the guest of honour at the SS *Johann de Witt* Twenty Year Reunion Banquet. The reunion was organised by those who came on this ship which in 1947 brought 702 Jewish passengers, the largest number to reach Australia.¹

Not publicly discussed in later years, in the context of stridently negative coverage of Jewish refugee arrivals and before the 1946 election Calwell had ordered that no more than 25 per cent of passengers on a ship could be Jewish. After Labor was re-elected, he insisted on the maintenance of the quota. Indeed, the *Johann de Witt* was the only ship from Europe where the 25 per cent quota was waived. In January 1947, he publicly announced termination of the humanitarian program: in future, Landing Permits would only be granted to those who were sponsored and met economic criteria. The quota restriction caused major problems for the Jewish organisations seeking to arrange passage for survivors desperate to leave Europe. Ironically, the guest of honour at the *Johann de Witt* celebration had attempted to stop the ship's departure with passengers in excess of the quota. It sailed because the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (henceforth HIAS) defied Calwell, with the approval of Leo Fink, the Polish-born Melbourne president of the United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund (UJORF). This defiance led to

heated correspondence between the minister and Fink, together with a warning that in future there would be more stringent enforcement, to the possible 'exclusion of your people from particular ships'.² It also intensified the division between the Melbourne and Sydney communal leadership. The European director of HIAS, Lewis Neikrug, publicly criticised the Australian policy, without gain. There was to be no further defiance of Calwell's restrictions.³

Jewish immigration to Australia in the aftermath of the Holocaust has been much studied since the early 1980s, with the publication of more than 20 academic articles, general histories and monographs.⁴ It continues to attract the interest of researchers, with varying interpretations. At one extreme, W.D. Rubinstein, in a 1989 article in the journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and in his 1991 major study, *The Jews in Australia, A Thematic History, Volume Two: 1945 to the Present*, points to the large number of Jewish arrivals, with at least 17,600 Jewish survivors reaching Australia between 1945 and 1954. Rubinstein questions whether Jewish leaders wanted larger numbers than were permitted under Calwell's administration, argues that the community struggled to provide even for the numbers that reached Australia, and presents evidence that after the establishment of Israel, Zionist leaders urged that, except for those with close relatives in Australia, survivors should be directed to Israel. Rubinstein concludes unequivocally that 'there is not the slightest evidence that the leadership of the Jewish community was essentially dissatisfied with Government policy'.⁵

Mary Elizabeth Calwell, Arthur Calwell's daughter, has been a staunch defender of her father's reputation. She undertook postgraduate research and authored the biography *I Am Bound To Be True: The Life and Legacy of Arthur A. Calwell*. Her short commentaries include 'Arthur Calwell and Jewish refugees', published in the *Melbourne Holocaust Centre News*.⁶ She asserts that Calwell's critics 'seriously misrepresented values, demonstrated inadequate research and drew unjustified conclusions'.⁷

The scholarship critical of Calwell, including the publications of the present authors, is based on a rich archival record. The most recent study, by renowned scholar Sheila Fitzpatrick, supplements Australian government sources with those of the International Refugee Organisation held in Paris. An article co-authored by Fitzpatrick and Justine Greenwood concluded that judged by the efforts of bureaucrats

to achieve the aim of restricting the entry of the three “undesirable types” of migrant the authorities most wished to exclude: Communists, Nazis, or Jews ... restriction of entry of Jews came first, with Communists in second place and Nazis in third.⁸

The challenge for historians is to reach a balanced understanding that gives due weight to contending factors, including the difficult political context in which Calwell operated in a country characterised by its insularity and xenophobia. This article adds to studies of the period by examining one aspect which to the present has not received sufficient consideration: the funding of Jewish immigration. As a micro-history, it enables detailed examination of one aspect of policy and its implementation, with attention to the constraints – and freedom – under which minister Calwell and his successor Harold Holt operated.

Funding travel

In the immediate post-war years, Holocaust survivors wanting to enter Australia required the sponsorship of a close relative to obtain a Landing Permit (LP), which were generously provided. Thus, I. Feiglin, secretary of the Melbourne-based United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund, advised that by February 1946 ‘between two and three thousand immigration permits had already been granted.’⁹ There were, however, a number of obstacles in securing travel, including the shortage of shipping and the government-imposed quota on Jewish passengers, as well as travel costs. While the first two issues have been extensively researched, there has been little attention to the financing of travel.

After the war, the cost of a basic (‘tourist class’) ocean fare to Australia was in the range US\$400-\$500, although there was variation over time and costs could be substantially higher as some people travelled by air to overcome the shipping shortage. With the exchange rate at US\$3.2 to the Australian £, the cost for a basic fare was the equivalent of AU£125-£156. In addition to the fare, money was required for taking the Jewish DPs to the port of embarkation, accommodation and meals, transport of luggage, and shipboard expenses. The indication from JDC records is that these expenses could add an additional 30 per cent to the cost of the ticket, bringing the total to the range to £160-£200.¹⁰ In 1947 the average weekly earnings of men were close to £8,¹¹ so it would take between 20 and 25 weeks’ work to fund a single fare – in today’s terms, when the average weekly earnings in Australia are \$1800, the cost of travel by sea was in the range \$36,000-\$45,000. Very few survivors had

the means to pay or even to make a substantial contribution to their costs, and while many sponsors had greater capacity, most could only contribute part of the fare.

Insight into the organising and funding of travel in Melbourne is provided by the UJORF 1946 Annual Report. UJORF, which was established in 1943, was initially primarily concerned with raising funds for the dispatch of goods (including clothing, food, blankets and soap) to survivors in Europe. The organisation established an Immigration Committee early in 1946 and by November had received applications for assistance covering 400 people, whose costs amounted to approximately £75,000, representing more than £180 per person.¹² The numbers applying for assistance continued to increase, so that in the following twelve months (November 1946–October 1947) the committee had over 1,100 applications and granted assistance to 960 survivors.¹³ For the period September 1946–September 1949, a report presented to the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society (AJW&RS) indicated that over the three years there had been 7390 arrivals, 4317 (58 per cent) of whom had settled in Melbourne. Of these, close to 80 per cent had received some financial support.¹⁴

During the war years UJORF appeals had obtained significant community funding, and appeals continued after 1945. In 1946, through its Relief Fund, UJORF was able to contribute £20,000 to travel expenses, leaving £55,000, less deposits, to be found.¹⁵ It was evident that the community lacked the resources to fund the required scale of immigration. A further problem was that after the establishment of Israel, it became more difficult to raise funds for immigration and local welfare needs, as the Zionist appeals won greater community support. UJORF and the Jewish Welfare Society turned to American organisations operating in Europe, which were willing to provide support. The Immigration Committee's 1946 report noted that:

From the very outset of our work we saw that we should not be able to fulfil the many demands for help, and we consequently contacted the H.I.A.S. ... and the Immigration Department of Joint Distribution Committee. By a mutual agreement we co-operate and coordinate our activities on all matters of Immigration as far as transportation and maintenance en route is concerned.¹⁶

Arranging travel

LPs were obtained in Australia, with most applications submitted on behalf of sponsors through Walter Brand, the Sydney-based executive secretary of the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies (FAJWS). Contact with government was also maintained by the president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), with the position held by the Sydney-based Saul Symonds from 1946-48 and Maurice Ashkanasy KC from 1948-50 in Melbourne. At a personal level, there was contact through the minister's Melbourne friends and acquaintances, including Alec Masel, Leo Fink, Jacob Waks and Paul Morawetz. Brand and Symonds maintained amicable relations with Calwell and his department, although relations with Melbourne were at times more fractious because Leo Fink challenged government requirements.¹⁷

While in the first years LPs were sponsored by relatives and friends, from 1948 onwards the primary means was organisational sponsorship by Jewish Welfare and UJORF, which in Melbourne amalgamated in May 1947 to form the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society (AJW&RS), and *landsmanshaften*. Many sponsorships were on the basis of details forwarded from Europe by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and HIAS. The LPs were provided on the proviso that the sponsoring individuals and organisation guaranteed financial support for the first five years, accommodation for a minimum of six months, and assistance to secure employment. Once obtained, the LP forms were sent to JDC and HIAS to make arrangement for travel.

After 1946, the major contribution to travel costs was provided by the American agencies operating in Europe, with JDC regularly transferring sums of \$30,000 and \$40,000 to shipping agents in New York and Switzerland to pay for passages.¹⁸ JDC and HIAS were funded by appeals conducted in the American Jewish communities. JDC records indicate that by 1949, US\$150 million had been collected by the United Jewish Appeal, a very large amount, but with over 200,000 survivors to be assisted the organisations faced financial constraints.¹⁹

Assistance with fares was provided as a loan, not a gift. For sponsors applying in Melbourne, UJORF required completion of a four-page application, which included statement of assets and annual income, amount of deposit to be submitted, schedule for repayment, and the

signing of a promissory note. For applicants in Europe, promissory notes were to be signed before departure. The agreements to repay were mailed to Jewish Welfare in Australia, which assumed responsibility for the collection of the amounts owing. Documents for Melbourne residents survive in the Jewish Care Archives. The HIAS form, which was in four languages (English, French, German, and Yiddish), provided that:

I hereby take the engagement for myself (ourselves) and my (our) heirs to reimburse HIAS ... or any organisation or person designated by HIAS either in one lump sum or by instalments, as may be agreed upon with HIAS, after three months from my (our) arrival in the country of destination, of the amount to be submitted in the final statement by HIAS ... I (we) have read (a French, Yiddish, German translation of) the foregoing statement and fully understand the meaning.

The JDC agreement, in simpler terms than the HIAS, provided:

I (we) hereby declare that I (we) take upon myself (ourselves), my (our) heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, the obligation to reimburse the American Joint Distribution Committee for the amount mentioned above ...²⁰

The process involved in collection of payments was described by Jacob Waks, the Honorary Secretary of Jewish Welfare in Melbourne, in 1953 correspondence with the New York office of HIAS. For a number of years 'a highly salaried officer' and two secretaries were employed to collect moneys owing. The collection proved difficult: 'thousands of letters, admonitions etc. had to be sent. Even this was not enough and in hundreds of cases members of the Board had to intervene personally'. In correspondence with sponsors, it was stressed that repayments were 'urgently needed to transport further Jewish immigrants.'²¹

In 1950, Walter Brand wrote to the JDC with the suggestion that payment for accounts still outstanding should be enforced through the courts. In his view, while many of the early arrivals lacked capacity to pay, more recently there were those with hidden assets who should not be allowed to evade their obligations. He urged that a binding legal document should be prepared so people would be in no doubt as to the requirement to repay costs: 'One has to be realistic in this matter

because there are millions of pounds involved in transportation costs which, if only a quarter were reimbursed and made available to the JOINT, would solve many headaches'.²²

The tough approach suggested was not favoured by the JDC in the years that Jewish migration to Australia was at its peak. It was feared that legal action involving Holocaust survivors would have a negative effect on public standing of the organisation; it was also feared that if courts ruled against a claim on a legal technicality all of the promissory notes could be invalidated, making it impossible to collect any repayment. Later, there was doubt over the enforceability of many agreements that had not been signed and stamped.²³

Brand's claim that there were 'millions of pounds involved in transportation costs' may have been a general observation, although evidence considered below indicates the possibility more than \$2,000,000 were advanced between 1946 and 1950 for travel to Australia, of which well less than half was repaid. To the end of 1948, £63,691 (approximately US\$200,000) had been collected in Sydney; in Melbourne, Jacob Waks calculated that up to 1953, £107,232 (US\$340,000) was collected.²⁴

One reason for the difficulty in collecting debts from sponsors was the view that the International Refugee Organisation met the cost of travel. Waks reported: 'Many sponsors complained that we, i.e. the United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund and the Australian J.W. & R. Society had extorted money from them which was not due, as according to information given them by their proteges, the travelling expenses were refunded to you by UNRRA'.²⁵ Was there truth in this view? The answer is a partial yes – from July 1947 some funding (not full cost) was provided by the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), but only for seventeen months.

The International Refugee Organisation

The IRO was established in December 1946 by the United Nations to replace UNRRA (UN Relief and Rehabilitation Association) and began operations in July 1947. It worked to resettle the more than one million Displaced Persons (DPs) who were living in camps, unwilling or unable to return to their former homelands. The major part of the IRO's work was to assist the movement of DPs from Europe, assisting both individuals who had obtained LPs, and those recruited by governments to meet their labour needs in a program known as Mass Resettlement.

Issuing of entry visas was not the business of the IRO, but once

countries had provided visas to those who were eligible for IRO assistance, the organisation's mandate enabled it to assist travel. To this end, the IRO entered into agreements with voluntary agencies, including JDC and HIAS, and in its initial period of operation most of its work concerned support of individuals. In 1948, an internal IRO memorandum explained the organisation's agreement with Jewish agencies:

PCIRO [Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organisation] reimburses the Jewish Organisations a flat rate for the transportation of Jewish refugees to their final destination on the condition that the refugees have been found eligible under the mandate of IRO ... and that Jewish Organisations provide proof of the completed movement. During the fiscal year 47/48 the flat rate of reimbursement ... was \$160 per eligible refugee. Compared with the actual cost of such movements (approximately \$550 per capita including rail fares, baggage and other expenses) this is a very low rate of reimbursement, which has been agreed upon on account of the fact that the Organisations obtain a comparatively high percentage of reimbursement from individual sponsors of the refugees.²⁶

The JDC records for departures to Australia in the period July 1948–November 1948, which was in the second year of the IRO's operations, indicate that reimbursement for travel from Europe was at a flat rate of \$500 per person, and a similar rate for the movement of the small numbers from Shanghai who managed to gain admission to Australia.²⁷

Australia's mass resettlement program

In July 1947, on behalf of the Australian government, minister Calwell entered into an agreement with the IRO for Mass Resettlement. At the time there was a desperate labour shortage and Australia was unable to recruit workers from its preferred source countries, the United Kingdom, and in Northern and Western Europe. In contrast, the IRO had labour supply in excess and promised that it had access to shipping. Calwell obtained a bargain in the agreement with the IRO. Australia was not required to pay for shipping, beyond an *ex gratia* payment of £10 per adult in recognition of the extra transportation costs given

Australia's distance; it was enabled to make its own selection from the pool of DPs, with the proviso that it would not discriminate on the basis of race or religion; and it would have control over those admitted, who were required to sign an agreement to work where directed, initially for at least one year, later changed to two years.²⁸ Australia's obligation was to make work available at trade union rates, provide unemployment benefits if no work was available, provide accommodation, and assessment for permanent residence after two years.

At first Calwell was tentative about the numbers that Australia would accept. He agreed with the IRO on an intake of 4,000 in 1947, with the number projected to increase to 12,000 in 1948. Even before arrival of the first boatload, the government indicated an increase to 20,000. At its peak, with some notable exceptions, Australia was close to accepting all who met health requirements and could be shipped, with close to 90,000 arrivals in 1949 and 182,000 by the time the IRO ceased in 1952. It seems that Calwell did not initially understand that the IRO, independent of the Mass Resettlement program, was assisting individuals and families who had obtained permits to resettle outside Europe. Calwell and his Department first raised the issue of IRO assistance to LPs in October 1947. In that month, Calwell wrote in a secret cablegram to the IRO, without reference to Jews, to specify that with regard to the first shipment he 'cannot agree to inclusion of permit holders.'²⁹ Calwell received a response six weeks later from William Tuck, director-general of the IRO. Tuck sought to appeal to Calwell's sympathy by pointing to the difficult situation faced by LP holders who were unable to arrange their own transport. Tuck seemed unaware, or failed to acknowledge, the assistance provided by HIAS and JDC. He wrote:

D.P.s who already hold landing permits issued by your officials, ... in some instances, have been ready to move for as long as six months ... For a refugee to make his own way [underlined in original] is very difficult. He has not the required travel documents, passports, etc. to enable him to travel to, say, Belgium and board the first boat which may be going to Australia. He is thus compelled to wait in Germany until, in fact, there is a general world improvement in the shipping situation.

Tuck asked Calwell if it might not be possible to provide travel in 'small numbers (50 at a time, for instance) on our chartered ships.' IRO

officials were faced with 'a most difficult and distressing situation' dealing with those desperate to leave the camps.³⁰ Calwell, occupied with other issues, took more than three months to reply, at which time he conveyed a flat refusal to Tuck's proposal. Again, without specific reference to Jews, he gave as his reason his concern that public opinion in Australia could be adversely affected if it became known that LPs were arriving on IRO ships. Calwell's refusal seems to have been ignored.³¹

As the IRO's access to shipping improved in 1948, a successful relationship was forged with the JDC and HIAS. In July 1948 senior JDC official in Paris Charles Jordan advised that 'we have been negotiating with the IRO on shipping space to Australia. Our arrangements have now been confirmed. Altogether we will have 270 spaces on the S.S. *Napoli* and the S.S. *Derna*.'³² Not having been listened to, Calwell now telegraphed in unequivocal terms: 'no, repeat no, IRO funds are to be used for the immigration into Australia of individual landing permit holders.' The instruction was couched in general terms, as before, although Walter Brand formed the impression that the policy was applied only to Jewish landing permit holders.³³

The rationale of Calwell's position

Why did Calwell require the IRO to stop subsidising Jewish LP holders? This decision was of major concern for the Jewish agencies, and it was raised on a number of occasions. Calwell gave five reasons, at various times. First, there was risk of adverse public reaction which had the potential to endanger the IRO Mass Resettlement program. Thus, he explained to William Tuck: 'The political situation in Australia demands that the benefits of the scheme agreed upon with your Commission should be available only to selected displaced persons. The present public reaction to the new settlers who have already arrived here is entirely favourable and it would be extremely unwise from every viewpoint to influence this present favourable attitude adversely by inclusion of permit holders.'³⁴ A second reason, provided to the IRO, was that Jewish organisations had told Calwell that they did not need IRO funding, as they had sufficient finances. In similar terms, a meeting of IRO field officers was told that 'NO [capitals in original] Jewish cases are to be submitted to H.Q. Geneva for special consideration as the Australian Jewry has agreed with the Commonwealth Government to provide full transportation costs.'³⁵ Third, he gave the reason that LPs had been issued on the understanding that the 'grantee is responsible for making

his own arrangements for travel at his own expense or his nominator's.' The department had not given any indication that this requirement could be changed.³⁶ Fourth, Calwell stated in correspondence with the IRO and Jewish agencies that the funding that Australia was providing to the IRO was specifically for Mass Resettlement, not for LP holders. Thus, in a letter to the ECAJ, he wrote:

The Government does, however, strongly object to funds of organizations such as the International Refugee Organization being used to pay the whole or part of the fares of holders of landing permits. The Australian Government's contribution to the International Refugee Organization is made for the purpose of bringing to this country only such displaced persons, regardless of race or creed, who are resident in displaced persons camps in occupied Europe and who are introduced into Australia under the terms of the IRO-Australian Agreement. Holders of landing permits are not regarded by the Australian Government as displaced persons for purposes of the IRO schemes.³⁷

Finally, there was an argument that it was inequitable that Jews should receive funding from the IRO when they were free to reside in Melbourne or Sydney and obtain work of their own choosing while those who came on the Mass Resettlement program were directable labour for two years, required to work in regional areas. If the advantage enjoyed by Jews became known it could cause unrest among those on contracts, some of whom were displeased with the treatment they received.

These arguments were not seen as valid within the Jewish community, nor by JDC and HIAS, who continued to protest Australian policy. The argument that Calwell had been assured by the Jewish agencies that they had no need of funding was firmly denied. Walter Brand wrote to the JDC on 4 May 1949, which asked if Calwell's claim was true:

You can take it as authentic that neither Saul Symonds or I have ever made such a statement that Jewish organisations have plenty of money and can look after the transportation of their own people. The whole suggestion that we here should have made such a statement is ridiculous. How could it be said that such a

statement emanated from Saul or myself when we have been pressing the Government that Federation cases should be catered for, if not wholly, then partly by IRO.³⁸

The argument that Australian funding to the IRO was to be used only for the Mass Resettlement also did not match the reality: as discussed below, Australia contributed very little to the IRO. As to the proposition that Jewish arrivals were advantaged by not having to work as directable labour, Jewish agencies responded that they were helping to build workforce capacity while relieving the Australian government of the financial burdens it assumed under its Mass Migration program. A JDC report argued that 'the provision of housing and guarantee against public burdens substantially relieve the Australian Government of financial burdens which it ordinarily assumes under its mass migration scheme'.³⁹

Jewish agencies and the IRO

Hope was raised that with the defeat of the Labor government in December 1949 by the Liberal-Country Party led by Robert Menzies, Calwell's embargo on IRO funding would be removed. Moses Beckelman, director general of the JDC's European operations, commissioned the organisation's general counsel, Jerome Jacobson, to advise on the legality of Australia's position. The report was submitted on 6 January 1950, less than a month after the election of the Menzies government. Titled 'Summary of questions pertaining to IRO's failure to exercise its proper responsibilities for Jewish DPs migrating to Australia', the report argued that the Australian government's position and the IRO response were legally untenable on multiple grounds. First, Australia's position may have had validity if the Jewish DPs did not hold valid permits, or if Australia was unable to receive them, but neither position was contended by the government. Hence 'Australia does not stand on valid grounds under any provision of the IRO Constitution or any resolution of the IRO governing bodies'. Second, while Australia was focused on Mass Resettlement, that focus did not invalidate IRO's role to assist individual. Calwell's statement that holders of LPs were not regarded as displaced persons for the purpose of the IRO scheme 'is a view entirely without binding force on IRO and should have been corrected by IRO'. The IRO has 'consistently and clearly understood that the distinction of landing permits as against mass settlement constituted no real distinction on the question of entry eligibility into Australia'.

If these rebuttals on their own were not sufficient, Jacobson went on to document that Australia's claim that it could determine how its funding to the IRO was to be used was contradicted by the organisation's charter, which had been acceded to by Australia. The charter specified that 'in the performance of their duties, the Director General and Staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any Government or from any other authority external to the organization'. Jacobson concluded his tightly argued ten-page report with the observation that 'IRO has been juggling the problem rather than dealing with it on its own merits': 'Analysis of the entire question indicates that an arbitrary and discriminatory decision has been recommended by the Minister ... which IRO has accepted and put into practice. In our opinion IRO has been unreasonably hesitant in facing its responsibility for bringing this problem to the attention of the appropriate policy making bodies in the face of frequent protest on the part of JDC.'⁴⁰

From the beginning of the Mass Resettlement program in 1947 the IRO had failed to protest Australia's conduct. Australia's agreement with the IRO had stipulated that 'the Commonwealth agrees that selection of immigrants will be carried out without discrimination as to race or religion.'⁴¹ Within weeks of signing the agreement, the first Australian selection teams were instructed to discriminate on the basis of race, with Calwell giving instructions that no Jews were to be included in the initial selections. The IRO was aware of this development and did nothing. The organisation's field notes concerning the first shipments to Australia, dated 10 September 1947, noted that 'the Australians mentioned that they could not accept any Jewish applicants, ex-enemy aliens or ex-Wehrmacht.'⁴² In 1948 Australia lifted the exclusion, but continued to discriminate against Jewish DPs.

Australian policy was known to the IRO, as it was responsible for preliminary vetting of applicants. Brigadier Frederick Gallegan, a distinguished Australia Army officer and head of the Military Mission in Berlin, under whom the immigration selection teams operated, provided advice on a regular basis to IRO officials in Germany and Austria on categories acceptable. In a memorandum to IRO headquarters, dated 23 December 1948 and headed 'Australian Emigration – Restricted Groups', it was specified that limits in the categories of Jews accepted 'would remain in force until further notice.'⁴³ On 26 May 1949, he advised that DPs of all European nationalities would now be

considered with the proviso that 'No Displaced Person ... who is not of pure European race will be selected' and Jewish applicants would continue to be selected on a discriminatory basis.⁴⁴ Throughout 1948-49 selection teams were instructed to view Jews as a race – while both Calwell and Heyes, his departmental secretary, continued to deny this reality.⁴⁵ Under the heading 'Recruitment of Jews', dated June 1949, the instructions provided to selection teams stated: 'There appears to be some doubt as to the meaning of the term Jew in relation to the Displaced Persons Scheme: – The term refers to race and not to religion and the fact that some D.P.s who are Jewish by race have become Christian by religion is not relevant.' This approach was also enforced by the senior immigration official in London, Noel Lamidey, with reference to the 25 per cent quota.⁴⁶

In the context of acceptance of Australia's flouting of its agreement with the IRO not to discriminate on the basis of 'race or religion' it is of no surprise that the IRO accepted, without protest, the demand from Calwell in August 1948 to stop the financing of LP holders. The IRO made a stand on one issue only: it did not agree to halting the subsidy immediately; those DPs who had already been approved and advised of IRO funding and who could leave in the next four months, an arbitrary determination, would be funded. This led to what became known in subsequent correspondence at the '30 November rule'. Calwell accepted the IRO decision without demur. The IRO's prime concern was for the movement of DPs from the European camps. There seems to have been a fear that if Australia's embargo on IRO funding to Jewish LP holders continued to be disregarded, as it had been for nearly a year, then Australia would pull out of the Mass Resettlement program.⁴⁷ In total, Australia received 182,000 DPs over the period from July 1947-1952 and was the second largest receiving country. The number admitted was exceeded only by the United States, with Australia taking a larger number than Israel, Canada, United Kingdom and Argentina. The IRO failed to understand that Australia was in no position to halt or even reduce its DP intake – rather, in the context of desperate labour shortages, its interest was to take all who met the ever-diluted selection criteria and could be shipped.⁴⁸

Australia was obtaining its cheapest labour supply from Europe in the post-war years and one that, as directable labour, best met its immediate needs. The per capita cost for each DP shipped to Australia

calculated on the basis of Australia's financial contribution to the IRO was US\$50. This compared to the average for all receiving countries of US\$384. Australia's additional *ex gratia* payment to the IRO of £10 (US\$32) in recognition of the extra cost of shipping from Europe was minimal – and even then, Australia argued about the amount owing.⁴⁹ The extra cost to the IRO for shipping to Australia, compared to the cost of shipping to Boston or New York was US\$228 per capita when military transports were used, and it was even higher for other shipping and travel by air.⁵⁰ Over the course of its less than six-year history, the United States provided 59 per cent of the IRO's budget, the UK 19 per cent, a combined 78 per cent, while Australia, which took 18 per cent of the DPs resettled, contributed just 2 per cent of the IRO's budget, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: International Refugee Organisation 1947-52, DPs resettled and costs, selected countries

	DPs departed for resettlement 1 July 1947 – 31 December 1952	DPs resettled – proportion of total	Contribution to the IRO to 7 February 1952 (US\$)	Percentage of the IRO budget	Cost to receiving country per DP resettled (US\$)
US	328,851	32%	\$237,116,355	59%	\$721
Australia	182,159	18%	\$9,194,156	2%	\$50
Israel	132,109	13%	---		
Canada	123,479	12%	\$18,164,674	5%	\$147
UK	86,346	8%	\$76,218,086	19%	\$883
TOTAL (all countries)	1,038,750		\$398,596,802		\$384

Source: Holborn, *The International Refugee Organisation*, pp. 122, 437.

However, not everyone within the IRO agreed with the decision to accept without protest the Australian demand to deny funding to Jewish LP holders. One mid-level official, with reference to the 'clear violation of IRO's resettlement policy', observed in September 1949 that 'it seems surprising to me that a country which supposedly as a member of the IRO should adhere to its constitution can place special conditions upon its contribution to IRO. IRO's position is clear: we are supposed to assist

all eligible refugees in their resettlement irrespective of destination, as long as they have proper documents and we feel reasonably sure that they will be well received ...⁵¹

Attempts to reverse Australian policy

The Jewish response to the denial of IRO funding can be tracked through the JDC archives, the organisation that was the main provider of transport to Australia and funding to Jewish Welfare for the settlement of survivors. Initially JDC officials based in Paris endeavoured to win concessions at the margins. First, as noted, the IRO decided that it would not immediately implement the August 1948 demand to halt funding and the JDC won a sympathetic response in attempting to extend eligible categories. Late in 1948, with regard to the '30 November rule', it was argued that there were LP holders who had obtained funding approval but had not been able to book travel. In response, the IRO agreed to the funding of an additional 800 LP holders in February 1949 and discussions continued through 1949, with the outcome unresolved in files located.⁵² In 1950, the IRO agreed to fund the small number of LP holders gaining entry from Shanghai, accepting the argument that it was inequitable to fund 'White Russian' but not Jewish DPs. The Australian government seems not to have been advised.

The organisational record is incomplete, with indication in some correspondence that only oral agreements were provided, to avoid the risk of the government finding that concessions were made. In one memo, it was noted that the IRO was considering hiding Australian funding in invoices that related to other countries. Indeed, the whole issue of American Jewish funding for survivor migration to Australia, known as 'The Australian Immigration Project', was kept secret because of government concerns. The IRO representative in Australia, Major-General C.E.M. Lloyd, supported by visits from senior IRO officials, notably the organisation's deputy director Sir Arthur Rucker, sought to win concessions. One concession related to 'Hardship Cases', those who were 'indigent' or with sponsors unable to pay their fares.⁵³ General Lloyd advised his head office in March 1950 that 'you may continue to pay the passages of Hardship Cases' provided arrivals were 'not concentrated'.⁵⁴ However, later correspondence indicates that this approval was likely confined to a few hundred individuals.⁵⁵

At the urging of top-level JDC officials, in the first half of 1949 ECAJ president Saul Symonds and Walter Brand held meetings in Canberra

with Calwell and Heyes. Symonds reported in June to the AJWS conference that 'The Minister, however, refused to permit that the cost of transportation of permit holders should be met from IRO funds.' He was of the view that while Calwell blocked IRO funding of Jewish LPs, 'non-Jewish transport holders are receiving either the whole or part of their transportation costs'.⁵⁶ In the course of 1949, the JDC leadership debated its options. In one meeting it was argued that the organisation could no longer support migration to Australia, which was the most expensive given the distance. This view was not endorsed, with the majority position that survivors needed to be assisted to travel to their destination of choice, a position reaffirmed in support of Leo Fink and in opposition to Zionist calls for limiting movement to Australia.⁵⁷ Other options considered included submission to the United States Department of State, the IRO General Council and the IRO Executive Committee. These options were viewed as last resorts, with advice that 'we have made some progress and hope we shall finally be able to reach an at least partial satisfactory arrangement'.⁵⁸ In the interim, an itemised record was kept of every person supported, in the expectation that retrospective funding would be approved. For example, in 1951 the JDC accounting department was still pursuing a claim of US\$2,000 for four people who departed on 10 November 1948 and were eligible for IRO funding.⁵⁹

During 1950 and 1951 there were negotiations between the IRO, JDC leadership, and the Australian government. In October 1950, JDC in New York obtained a ten-minute meeting with Australia's foreign minister, Percy Spender, who was attending a session of the United Nations. Spender agreed to accept a written submission to be forwarded to Harold Holt, Calwell's successor. This submission, which was dispatched in October 1950, argued that:

Inasmuch as the IRO pays for the transportation incident to the individual resettlement of eligible refugees to Canada, the United States and to all countries receiving IRO eligibles, we respectfully submit that IRO should be permitted to do so in the case of all individuals resettled in Australia. The IRO has advised us that they are very sympathetic to our position and that the only obstacle in the way of their paying for this transportation is the present attitude of the Australian Government and that

until the position of the Australian Government has been changed, IRO will not find it possible to pay for such transportation.⁶⁰

In mid-December, the senior JDC official Moses Leavitt informed Symonds that he was 'anxiously ... awaiting' the Australian response:

Have you had any indication of the discussions that have gone on in the Department and what the outcome seems to be? The situation is really very difficult for us because with the reduction in the income that we have received this year and probably will get in 1951, we will not be in a position to meet the transportation needs of all people who will get visas to Australia.⁶¹

The Immigration Department was well aware of the urgency of the situation. In February 1951, Secretary Heyes informed General Lloyd that:

He was currently under renewed pressure from A.J.D.C. on the question of I.R.O. assumption of passage costs for Jewish Landing Permit Holders and that the local Jewish agencies had stated, that if the Commonwealth Government would abandon its policy in this connection I.R.O. would make an immediate payment of \$2,000,000 to A.J.D.C. I said I was unaware of these matters and they were not within the jurisdiction of my office.⁶²

The available evidence indicates that late in 1950 the IRO gave up negotiating with the Australian government and unilaterally resumed funding. In February 1951 JDC and HIAS were informed that future shipping costs for Jewish LPs would be paid at the rate of US\$350 per person. As a result, the JDC received payment of \$151,550 for 433 persons.⁶³ From June onwards, places were found for Jewish LP holders on IRO chartered ships. It was not until November 1951 that Heyes learned of the IRO's actions. Brand wrote to Jordan in November that the 'Department of Immigration Canberra have lately woken up to find that landing permit holders' transportation is being financed through IRO.'⁶⁴ Heyes was more than annoyed. After obtaining Holt's approval, he instructed the IRO that there had been no change of policy, but in the last days of the organisation there was not much that he could have

achieved.⁶⁵ While funding and shipping was resumed in 1951, the issue of back payment remained. On 12 July 1951, a memo from the JDC Accounting Department indicated that the organisation had funded the movement of 5205 persons to Australia between 1 December 1948 and 28 February 1951. Of these, 75.1 per cent or 3911 persons were IRO eligible, at a cost of \$1,458,236.⁶⁶ In addition, there were the costs of HIAS, which have not been located. Ongoing correspondence and meetings between the director-general of the IRO, J. Donald Kingsley, and Moses Beckelman, indicates the difficulty of reaching an agreement. Kingsley maintained that he was not obliged to recognise the legitimacy of the JDC claim. However, as an act of grace, he offered a payment to JDC for outstanding claims, including movement to Australia, of \$245,000. The JDC files also include the copy of an agreement with HIAS for the payment of \$180,000 in settlement of a number of claims, not all of which related to Australia.⁶⁷ The IRO's position was further clarified in March 1952 when Kingsley provided testimony to the IRO History Unit. Kingsley indicated that the amount lost by the JDC was \$5 million, a sum in excess of JDC accounting. It was recorded that:

Mr. Kingsley had unsuccessfully endeavoured to cancel the IRO/Australia Agreement under which IRO agreed not to pay AJDC for the movement of landing-permit holders going to Australia. The policy was relaxed but IRO had been unable to reimburse five million dollars of expenditure for people moved by AJDC ... In his view there was no doubt that IRO discriminated against the Jewish Agencies.⁶⁸

Significance of the amounts lost to Jewish organisations

While there are different estimates, it is likely that the Australian government embargo led to the combined loss by JDC and HIAS after 1948 in excess of US\$1.5 million (close to AU£500,000), and there were further losses to individual sponsors who paid deposits and instalments. One indication of the magnitude of this sum is the affiliation fees received by the ECAJ from the Australian states for administration and expenses; in 1950, this amounted to £233, with approval for it to be raised to £400 for the following year. This sum was a little more than the cost of travel to Australia for two LP holders. With only a fraction of the IRO funding that was lost, the JDC and HIAS would have been in a much

stronger position to support Australian Jewish welfare organisations who were in desperate need of funding for the purchase of hostels and their upkeep.

At the peak of Jewish migration in 1949, most arrivals were sponsored by organisations. The AJW&RS 1949-50 annual report observed that 'We are certain that at least 90 per cent of all permits ... have been obtained through the AJW&RS'.⁶⁹ To obtain a LP, however, it was necessary to guarantee accommodation, and this was possible only with the purchase of large properties requiring American support. By 1950, eleven hostels had been established in Melbourne, maintained by Jewish Welfare and several *landsmanshaften* – Bialystoker, Radomer, Warsaw – plus an orphanage which could house 30 children aged five to 15; in Sydney there were five hostels and one in Brisbane.⁷⁰

Significant funding was required for this accommodation. In February 1949, Walter Brand indicated that for the purchases 'the minimum amount required would be US\$250,000'.⁷¹ Eventually, more than \$200,000 was provided: \$120,000 by JDC, \$40,000 by HIAS, \$40,000 by the Refugee Economic Corporation, and \$12,500 by the Jewish Labor Committee in New York.⁷² This funding was not easily obtained, as the American organisations were themselves in budgetary difficulty and were not convinced of the inability to raise the required amounts in Australia. On several occasions relations were strained, as Jewish Welfare in Melbourne used money from trust accounts, established with the deposits and instalment payments of sponsors, without authorisation.⁷³ There was also confusion as Fink sent requests for funding to several of the American organisations, without co-ordinating correspondence with Walter Brand in Sydney. Jordan, the senior JDC official in Paris, commented that 'Melbourne has always been stepping out of line'.⁷⁴

One indication of conflict occasioned by shortage of funds, and the relatively small amounts contested, was a dispute over the upkeep of two hostels that had been purchased in Melbourne with funding from HIAS. In 1955, Jewish Welfare wrote to HIAS in New York requesting approval of £1,200 for urgent maintenance. HIAS responded that 'UNITED HIAS SERVICE at the present time has a substantial budgetary deficit which would make it difficult for us to participate in such repairs'. Correspondence continued for several months during which Jewish Welfare made unauthorised withdrawals from the trust account before approval was obtained with the caution that 'in making this

decision the Board wished to have it clearly understood that this is a one-time grant.⁷⁵

What did Australian governments gain by blocking IRO funding?

Calwell's main reason for blocking IRO funding was possibly the concern that if it became known it could discredit the Mass Resettlement program, whose success was vital for the government. But by the time that he acted – August 1948 – the level of concern over Jewish immigration had passed. Sensationalist newspaper coverage was much in evidence in 1946 and 1947, but not thereafter.⁷⁶ In 1948, there is no evidence that newspapers were at all concerned or aware that the IRO was funding Jewish LP holders.

By 1949, the immigration program was running at an unprecedented level. Between 1945-47 and 1949-50 permanent and long term arrivals in Australia increased from 34,284 to 184,889,⁷⁷ by which time Jewish arrivals were less than 3 per cent of the total. In April 1949, Saul Symonds observed that twelve to eighteen months earlier there was negative press coverage of Jewish arrivals, 'but of recent times the whole attitude of the press has changed, partly from the fact that large numbers of British migrants are arriving and partly because it is realised that immigration to Australia is absolutely essential for the country's well-being'. There was presently 'no hostility against new arrivals' and 'no reference in the papers as to whether the newcomers are Jews or non-Jews'.⁷⁸

Emery Komlos, sent to Australia in 1949 by the Jewish Refugee Economic Corporation, JDC, and HIAS, to evaluate capacity to absorb further immigration, reached the same conclusion as Symonds. Komlos consulted widely and wrote several detailed, well-informed reports, working with Jordan in Paris to where he travelled after Australia. He was tragically killed in an airplane crash during his return flight to America. Such was the positive impression that he made that when his death became known hostels were named in his honour in both Sydney and Melbourne. In his appraisal of Australian attitudes, Komlos wrote that:

The days of the anti-Semitic reports in the tabloid press are ended. I examined the file of *Smith's Weekly* since 1 January, 1949 and found nothing of that character. The S.S. *Cyrenia*, which arrived at Perth on September 13th carried 362 Jewish migrants, more than half of

the total passenger list. This caused no comment by the very same press which only two years ago had been decrying the fact that as much as one-quarter of a ship's accommodation was being taken up by Jews. The country has come a long way since 1947 ... Anti-Semitism is a point of no concern to Australian Jewish community leaders. They just don't see it – or feel it. Because it barely exists. The Australian people may be a bit xenophobic and slightly intolerant of foreign ways and customs. They are at the antipodes and far removed from contact with other peoples. But they are not anti-Semitic. Sport is the national 'religion' in Australia, and its first tenet is fair play. I know of no nation, even the United States, where the people are more ready to accept a man on merit. I never saw 'Gentile only' in a want ad column or 'churches nearby' in a hotel advertisement during my travels throughout Australia. There are in fact no 'restricted' hotels.⁷⁹

To explore the reliability of these assessments, a content analysis was undertaken of *Smith's Weekly*, one of the tabloid newspapers noted for negative coverage of Jewish arrivals in 1946. This analysis, as indicated in Table 2, found that in 1946 there were seven negative items on Jewish refugees, six negative items dealing with the conflict in Palestine between Jewish and British forces, and one article on divided loyalties of Jews, a total of 14 negative items. In 1947, there were 20 negative items, followed by a sharp reduction in the following years, with just one item in 1948 and four items in 1949. *Smith's Weekly* also found space for positive, empathetic coverage of Jewish migrants in the columns of the civil libertarian Brian Fitzpatrick, with at least one article a year in the period examined, including five articles in 1947.

Table 2: *Smith's Weekly* 1946-49, content analysis

Year	Negative coverage of refugees/ Displaced Persons – with reference to Jews	Negative references to Jewish terrorists in Palestine	Alleged Jewish divided loyalties, departures for Palestine
1946	7	6	1
1947	8	8	4
1948	1		
1949	1	1	2

Source: Smith's Weekly, digital copy accessed at Trove, Australian National Library

The view that there was no longer concern with, or focus on, Jewish migration is all the stronger in 1950 and 1951, when the Mass Migration program was coming to an end and appeals were made to minister Holt to end the embargo on IRO funding. As well, following the creation of Israel in May 1948, Jewish survivors who were not accepted elsewhere migrated to the newly created Jewish state, so that by 1951 the number of Jewish survivors coming to Australia had declined. The lack of attention to Jewish arrivals was powerfully illustrated in 1951, when it took secretary Heyes, with his network of officials overseas and in Australia, ten months to find out that the IRO had resumed subsidies and then provision of shipping to Jewish refugees.

So, what was achieved by blocking IRO funding? The evidence presented indicates that there was no basis for concern that the funding would have become a political issue once the focus on Jewish immigration had ended. Even if it had been raised, there were strong arguments to rebut criticism, for example the positive impact on the Australian economy of the Mass Resettlement program. Australian funding to the IRO was not an issue, as Australia's intake was made possible in large part by the United States and the United Kingdom. It was the American Jewish organisations that were disadvantaged with their capacity to assist Holocaust survivors diminished.

In March 1951, Ben Green, president of the ECAJ having succeeded Maurice Ashkanasy, requested minister Holt to end the 'wholly unwarranted penalisation' of the JDC and advise the IRO that Australia:

withdraws its objections to I.R.O. honouring its obligations to the American Joint Distribution Committee in respect of fares advanced for I.R.O.

eligible migrants resettled in Australia with the assistance of the A.J.D.C. We specifically emphasise that such a decision would not involve the spending of any funds of the Australian Government but would merely enable the International Refugee Organisation to reimburse, from I.R.O. funds, the A.J.D.C. for fares advanced in respect of Jewish refugees to Australia.

We would add that I.R.O. authorities have indicated that they are most willing to make such reimbursement and are only prevented from doing so by the embargo created in 1948 by the Australian Government through its then Minister for Immigration. It is confidently anticipated that you will recognise the justification of our request ... Thanking you in anticipation of your sympathetic co-operation in this matter.⁸⁰

The government did not accede to Green's request.

Conclusion

Calwell's prohibition of IRO funding for Jewish LP holders in 1948 raises questions for historians and adds to the academic debate about Calwell's policies towards Jewish migration. Calwell's initial concern that news of the arrival of Jews funded by the IRO would discredit the Mass Resettlement program may have been politically justified, given the reaction to Jewish arrivals in 1946 and 1947. Yet, by the time the funding embargo was secretly implemented, anti-Jewish refugee hysteria was decreasing and IRO funding of Jewish arrivals had been maintained for seventeen months without controversy. The effect seems only to have been the imposition of a very significant financial burden that detracted from the ability of American Jewish welfare organisations to undertake their work with Holocaust survivors, including their support of survivors in Australia.

In her research dealing with non-Jewish German migration after 1945, Gisela Kaplan points to the close connection between community attitudes to the different migrant groups and the extent of government funding of assisted passages. Her conclusion was 'the swarthier the skin colour, the darker the hair and eyes, the lower the rate of assistance' given to immigrants, although this was in part a matter of perception.⁸¹ Her findings reflect those of researchers Oscar A. Oser and Samuel B. Hammond. In their 1948 study, they showed that the

general Australian public perceived a clear racial hierarchy regarding post-war immigration. Within this hierarchy of race, Germans ranked third in desirability after English and Irish immigrants, while Jews were ranked seventh just above Blacks, who were excluded along with other non-whites from immigration to Australia under the White Australia policy.⁸² This hierarchy was reflected in the discriminatory decisions made by Calwell, Holt and the department officials, headed by Heyes.

There was a dichotomy between Calwell's public policy towards the Jewish citizens in his electorate, when he was always willing to be of assistance regarding individual requests, and the secret and confidential restrictions which he imposed on Jewish survivor immigration to Australia. His public approach to the Jews in his electorate led him to be venerated by Melbourne Jewry, but few were aware of his ministerial decisions behind the scenes. Calwell entitled his autobiography *Be Just and Fear Not*, but when it came to Jewish survivor migration, political considerations – some possibly well-grounded, some not – overrode humanitarian concerns. Thus, as this article has demonstrated, his record is complex. It also brings to notice the continuation of a policy by his successor Harold Holt that achieved nothing beyond disadvantaging the Jewish community and its organisations.

Endnotes

Acknowledgments

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- 1 The invitation card was accessed in the Jewish Care Archive (Melbourne, henceforth JC), Box Z00198.
- 2 Ibid, Arthur Calwell to Leo Fink, 27 January 1947; for difficulties in organising travel to Australia, see, for example, Lewis Neikrug to Leo Fink, 23 Oct. 1946.
- 3 Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, Sydney, Collins, 1988, pp. 233-5; Margaret Taft, *Leo and Mina Fink: For the Greater Good*, Clayton, Vic., Monash University Publishing, 2022, pp. 5-10.
- 4 Sheila Fitzpatrick lists a number of key works in her article 'Migration of Jewish "Displaced Persons" from Europe to Australia after the Second World War: Revisiting the Question of Discrimination and Numbers', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 67 (2), 2021, p. 226.

- 5 W.D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia. A Thematic History: Vol. 2*, Melbourne, Heinemann, 1991, p. 63.
- 6 See vol. 28, no. 3 (Dec. 2006), pp. 29-30.
- 7 Mary Elizabeth Calwell, *I Am Bound To Be True: The Life and Legacy of Arthur A. Calwell*, Preston, Vic., Mosaic Press, 2012, p. 60.
- 8 Sheila Fitzpatrick and Justine Greenwood, 'Anti-Communism in Australian Immigration Policies 1947-1954: The Case of Russian/Soviet Displaced Persons from Europe and White Russians from China', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 50:1 (2019), p. 61.
- 9 JDC, Item ID: 658920, I. Feiglin to American Joint Distribution Committee, 7 February 1946.
- 10 The JC archive retains individual statements of expenses forwarded by JDC in New York, calculated in US\$ and converted to AU£; see Box Z00165. For the period 1 July 1947-31 January 1948, the average cost to JDC for 473 departures from France to Australia was \$491, JDC, Item ID: 742508, Charles Jordan to M.W. Beckelman, 1 June 1948; in the period October-December 1949, JDC supported the travel of 782 people on six ships, at an average cost of approximately US\$400: JDC, Item ID: 742444, Emanuel Rosen to Dr J. Schwartz, 24 Oct. 1949.
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- 12 JDC, Item ID: 658835, 'Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund', 1946, p. 18.
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 - 24 JC, Correspondence file, HIAS 1946-1957, J. Waks to M. Eigen, Executive Director, HIAS, New York, 25 June 1953; JDC, Item ID: 742495, AJDC New York Accounting Department to ACDC European Headquarters, 24 December 1948. Throughout the 1950s, there was ongoing tension between the JDC and Jewish Welfare in both Sydney and Melbourne in terms of repayment of loans by the Australians. This was further exacerbated with the Hungarian escapees in 1956-7. See, for example, JDC, Geneva 1, Box 29A, File 12, 'Australian Loan Kassas, 1956/7'.
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- 42 IRO, AJ/43/793, 'Australian Scheme, Report on meeting held At Emigration Transit Section Camp', p. 4, 10 Sept. 1947.
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- 46 Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, p. 401; Suzanne Rutland, 'Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria: A Case of Racial or Religious Bigotry?', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 77 (2003), pp. 77-78; idem., 'Subtle Exclusions', pp. 50-66.
- 47 The risk of Australia withdrawing from the Mass Resettlement program is discussed in Australian Military Mission [signature illegible] to Sir Arthur Rucker, Deputy Executive Secretary, IRO, 4 Sept. 1948, IRO, AJ/43/639.

- 48 See, for example, the attempts to obtain extra shipping by prime minister Chifley. Draft cablegram, from prime minister to [Norman] Makin, ambassador, Washington: 'our needs of additional labour are so great and urgent ... to have the matter [of shipping] reopened with the United States Government...', NAA, 19 August 1948, A6980, S250105, Displaced Persons Part 3.
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EXCERPTS FROM A MIGRANT'S MEMOIRS

Tom Beer

ABSTRACT

These excerpts from the enthralling memoirs of Australian scientist Dr Tom Beer, born in Budapest in 1947, begin in 1948 with his parents' escape, with him, from that newly Soviet-controlled city to Vienna, from the American zone of which they in 1951 travelled to Genoa, where they embarked on the voyage that brought them, via Port Said and Colombo, to Australia. In the excerpts we also glimpse details of his childhood, schooling and involvement in the scouting movement in Sydney, where his father opened a menswear store, and of the emigration to Sydney of his paternal aunt and uncle following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and later of his maternal grandmother, who had been living in Teheran.

KEYWORDS: Biography, Holocaust survivors in Australia, Hungarian Jews in Australia, Jewish scientists in Australia

'Hand over the keys! Your shop is being nationalised and now belongs to the State', said the commissar. My father could not believe what he was hearing in Budapest in 1948. As a Holocaust survivor he was expecting preferential treatment from the Communists but was now discovering that it was not forthcoming to members of the bourgeoisie, even those such as my father who had spent three years painfully rebuilding their life and their livelihood. My father complied, went home and told his wife of three years: 'Pack up, we're leaving Hungary ... A year earlier it would have been possible to leave legally. By 1948, to use the words of Winston Churchill: 'From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the continent ...' A year later the

Iron Curtain would be made more real by installing barbed wire and guarded watch towers on the border so that illegal movement from Hungary to Austria became virtually impossible. But in 1948 the border was still navigable with the main impediment being patrols of border guards ... My parents took a train to Sopron, hired guides, and then, during the dark night, crossed the nearby border on foot. I was carried in a rucksack and given sedatives that did not work as intended. My mother told me that as they were illegally crossing the border, a rooster crowed in one of the nearby farms. My parents panicked when I decided to imitate the rooster. Either my imitation was very good, or there were no border guards in the vicinity, for they arrived safely in Austria minus their suitcase, which one of the people smugglers decided would be a suitable gratuity. Unfortunately for the guide it consisted of nappies, diapers, and toiletries for young Tom.

... The family's highest priority was to get out of the Soviet zone. This they eventually did by settling in an American-controlled part of the central district of Vienna. Other priorities, some higher priority than others, included registering with refugee relief organisations; for one of them, George or Annemarie, to travel to Switzerland to retrieve whatever Sparber treasures had been stored in the family's Swiss bank account and safe-deposit box; and the final high priority item was to arrange to get as far away from Europe as possible by emigrating to Australia. Each of these priorities was beset with difficulties ... Using the same ingenuity that had enabled him to survive in fascist Hungary, my father obtained a false passport to enable him to travel to Switzerland. As he explained many years later, the trick with a brand-new passport is to get the first custom or immigration stamp into it. It helps to legitimize the passport ... He entered Switzerland with no difficulty. Though he managed to retrieve cash from the numbered Swiss bank account, he discovered that all of the contents of the Sparber family safe-deposit box had been plundered by the Swiss lawyer that the family used. The cash from Switzerland enabled them not only to rent a very nice apartment, but also to hire a nanny, an Austrian girl called Irma. The nanny was needed because while George was trying to earn a living and to emigrate to Australia, the 24-year-old Annemarie was enrolled in training courses run by the ORT [Organisation for Rehabilitation through Training] organisation that taught her useful skills that included cooking, sewing, and being a beautician. Many young girls learn such useful skills from their mother but Annemarie who grew up in a very wealthy

household had servants to cook and sew for her. Registering themselves in 1948 with the International Committee for Jewish Concentration Camp Inmates and Refugees enabled my mother to qualify for the ORT training courses. The committee also helped my father to navigate the labyrinthine processes of the Australian bureaucracy to enable him to qualify for immigration to Australia ...

My father once told me that he had wanted to emigrate to Australia before the war but had never got around to doing so. Knowing what I now know about the pre-war Australian attitude to non-British migration, I doubt whether he would have been successful had he indeed got around to doing so. What I should have asked, but never did, was why he lived in Vienna for three years, from 1948 to 1951, rather than immediately departing for Australia.

Of course, immediately would never have been feasible, but it is still unclear to me whether the rather long three year stay in Austria was a result of my father's late application; a result of my father having to persuade my mother to leave Vienna – a city that she seemed to love even more than Budapest; a result of the understaffing and bureaucratic delays in the newly formed Australian Department of Immigration; or a result of the need to have his funding arranged.

At that time non-British migrants to Australia had to fund their own passage, unlike British migrants who were eligible for the Australian Government's assisted passage scheme. These British people were known as 'Ten Pound Poms', because they were only required to pay £10, with the Australian Government paying the rest. Though my parents had managed to retrieve some money from Switzerland, this was just enough to tide them over and nowhere near enough to pay for a passage to Australia. Once my parents had declared an intention to emigrate from Austria, preferably to Australia, the International Committee for Jewish Concentration Camp Inmates and Refugees passed their file over to HIAS – the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society ... [We] left Genoa on 13 December 1951 under the sponsorship of Mr H. Eichel of HIAS ... Nowadays, to enter Australia a person needs a visa. In 1951 the document was called a landing permit ... To get a landing permit one needed not only the appropriate finances to guarantee passage to Australia, but one also needed a sponsor. Fortunately, in 1951 guaranteed employment was not a mandatory requirement although this requirement was introduced in mid-1952. The sponsor had to be an individual and in addition to lending my father the money for the

passage, AJWS arranged for a sponsor: Mr F. Epstein of 51 Towns Rd., Vaucluse, NSW. I have no idea who Mr Eichel or Mr Epstein were. I have no recollection of my parents ever mentioning them ... Nevertheless, I am grateful to them, to HIAS and to the AJWS. I think that my father would have been more grateful had he not continually felt the burden of having to pay off the money that HIAS and AJWS had lent him to pay for the passage to Australia. He did not manage to pay it off until just before his retirement in the mid-1970s.

By 1951 all hurdles had been cleared and the family was provided with tickets to travel to Sydney, departing Genoa on 13 December 1951, on the Flotta Lauro vessel, the TN *Sydney*¹ as well as with documentation permitting them to leave Austria and a landing permit to enable them to disembark and settle in Australia. This landing permit consisted of a rubber stamp from the British Legation (Visa Section) in Vienna dated 12 November 1951 that confirmed that they were permitted to journey to Australia, provided that they did so within six months. It cost them £1 and 4 shillings to get that rubber stamp. Though the family did not know it, this was only the second voyage of the *Sydney*, which ran the service to and from Australia until 1966². This is not to imply that the vessel was brand new, it just means that only recently had she been refitted by the Flotta Lauro line as a passenger ship – with her maiden voyage leaving Genoa in September 1951. Both the *Sydney* and her sister ship *Roma* entered the Italy/Australia service in 1951 ...

As a four-year-old I would have taken all of this for granted and there is very little of either the ship or the voyage that I genuinely remember. I mean by this that most of the memories are there because of the photographs that my father took. The photograph itself rekindles the memory of the event, or if it fails to ignite a memory at the very least provides proof of the event. Photography was one of the special skills that my father possessed. The other one was being able to drive a

motor vehicle. Nowadays such skills are ubiquitous, but in the 1940s both were rare skills possessed by only a few because of the cost involved. Owning a motor vehicle was a luxury that only the very wealthy could afford but the very wealthy could also afford to keep a chauffeur so that they did not need to learn to



drive themselves. Cameras were also expensive, as was the film to put in them, and the costs involved with developing the film and printing the negatives ...

TN *Sydney* was originally launched with the name HMS *Fencer* in April 1942. The ship was built ... in San Francisco, as a cargo ship. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the United States allied with Great Britain and entered into World War Two. This occurred during the ship's construction so that she, along with other ships, was transferred to the British Royal Navy under the 'Lend Lease Agreement', and completely redesigned from being a merchant ship to being a military ship. It was then built to escort aircraft carriers. After the war, HMS *Fencer* was purchased by Flotta Lauro to be rebuilt as a modern, high-class passenger liner. According to Flotta Lauro publicity, which boasted about the 'Italian flair', first class occupied two of the superstructure decks, whilst tourist class had three decks below. Both classes had a large range of public rooms featuring décor and furnishings with, of course, that touch of Italian flair and style. Each had their own pool and open-air cinemas. First class accommodation had single and two berth cabins, some with private facilities. Tourist had mostly two, three or four berth cabins, a few having six to eight berths. In fact, as is apparent when one inspects the arrival records held by the National Archives of Australia, passengers travelled in three classes with the six and eight berth cabins designated as third class. My parents travelled third class. My mother and father were separated, with my mother sharing a cabin with myself and six other women, and my father sharing a cabin with seven other men. During sailings southward, tourist class on TN *Sydney* was mostly filled with assisted migrants travelling to Australia, but there were also some full-fare paying holidaymakers in both first and tourist classes. Whilst sailing northward these ships were popular as tourist liners filled with Italian and other nationalities heading home visiting their families or Australians visiting the 'Mother Country' ... It is hard nowadays to recall how small the TN *Sydney* was in comparison to modern vessels ...

My father loved to take photographs. He acquired a camera sometime during our stay in Vienna and he continued to take pictures in Vienna and then during the voyage to Sydney. My father's camera had to be manually adjusted and my mother and I had to stand in casual poses for the excessively long time that it took him to make the necessary adjustments. Because I was too impatient and thus hated to sit

still or stand still, over the course of time I developed an aversion to my father's photography, and to photography in general ... I am now grateful that my father persevered, despite his sulky son, because I realise that many of my memories of the voyage are not memories of the incidents themselves, but either memories of the photographs that he took and that my mother lovingly stored in our family photo albums, or memories of the events associated with the photograph; the memories of the events being triggered by the photographs themselves ...

Getting from Vienna to Genoa in 1951 was not as straightforward as it is today. 'Google Maps' claims that one can drive from Vienna to Genoa in about 10 hours, via Graz, Villach and Verona. Trains take slightly longer, 13½ hours and travel via Munich and Milan. The problem in 1951 was that both routes took one through the Soviet zone of Austria and there was no guarantee that the Soviets would not imprison illegal refugees from Communist countries upon entry into a Soviet zone. It was a risk neither my parents nor HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] were willing to take. Consequently, HIAS arranged for the family to fly to Munich, from where they took a train to Genoa. There is even a fuzzy photo among my father's stored negatives of my mother and myself getting on the plane. I am wearing a cap and a sailor suit. My mother is wearing a hat and, because it is December and thus winter in Austria, her fur coat. This photograph, and the many photographs of my mother in Vienna wearing that fur coat reminded me that my mother was always very proud of her fur coat. One of my mother's friends from post-war Budapest who arrived in Australia after the 1956 Hungarian revolution loved to tell the story that during the time of the Soviet occupation of Hungary my mother would wear her fur coat, but then so as not to look too plutocratic instead of a belt she would wear a rope around her waist in the hope that the rope-belt would make her look like a member of the proletariat, the workers' group favoured by the Communists.

I have a vivid memory of walking the streets of Munich with my father and being fascinated by a toy shop whose window display consisted of a curved wooden chute down which a metal ball-bearing ran, was mechanically transported to the top, and then curled and curved its way down the chute again. My fascination as a four-year-old with the mechanical device was equal to the fascination that I had earlier evinced in Vienna when marvelling at the workings of a movie ticket-seller's dispenser of change, in the form of coins, that slid down a metal chute

to the customer when the ticket vendor operated the cash register.

Prior to their departure from Europe, my parents somehow found out that Australians drank tea rather than coffee. They may also have discovered that Australians drank beer rather than wine, but this would not have mattered much to them because my father was a teetotaler. The potential lack of coffee was far more serious. Thus, during the stay in Genoa while awaiting the ship's departure on Thursday 13 December 1951 my father purchased a Moka Express coffee percolator ... This percolator served my father well and he was still using it to make his breakfast coffee in 1975 ... The only genuine memory that I have of Genoa is that of my parents sitting in a café while I marvelled at a funicular³ railway that I was seeing for the first time ... Three of the four funicular railways existed in 1951 so that it looks as if the memory is genuine, though not sufficiently detailed as to be able to work out which of the three is lodged in my memory. I am certain that this would have been the first time in their lives that my parents had seen an ocean. I have no record of their impressions, but I presume that it would have been similar to those of Anna Marks's grandmother who migrated to Australia from Trieste, after escaping from Hungary in 1956, and wrote: 'I couldn't stop looking at it. This was an impressive sight too, but it was very calm, so much like Lake Balaton, especially as you could see the seashore.'⁴ ... Hungarians use Lake Balaton, the largest lake in Hungary, as their unit of comparison...

I know that TN *Sydney* stopped at Port Said in Egypt on the western side of the Suez Canal, and Colombo, the capital of what was then called Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on the way to Sydney because my father took photographs during those stops [including the cover photo of Tom and



his mother, that above of Tom on the TN *Sydney*, and this one of fez-wearing hawkers alongside the ship at Port Said selling items to passengers – Ed.] I also know that she stopped at Fremantle and Melbourne on her way to Sydney because the National Archives holds the Quarantine Service passenger list⁵ issued on 5 January 1952 upon the ship's first arrival into Australia at Fremantle. The passenger destinations in that list indicate that the ship was to stop in Melbourne and Sydney and then continue

to Brisbane whereas the list of embarkation locations suggests that the ship also stopped at Naples, the home port for the Flotta Lauro line, and at Messina on the Italian island of Sicily. There is no evidence that TN *Sydney* stopped at Aden, in Yemen, to the east of the Suez Canal even though many other migrant ships used to berth there on their way to and from Australia in the 1950s and 1960s when Aden was still controlled by the British. My parents must have purchased trinkets in both Port Said and Colombo. We had a packet of black and white photographs of Tutankhamen's treasures that they would have obtained in Port Said, and there was a very intricately carved ivory egg, most probably from Colombo, that stood on our mantelpiece for decades.

The ship carried so many Italian migrants that the immigration attaché from the Australian embassy in Rome was on board to help them out. My parents would have quickly found any Hungarians on the ship and welcomed the opportunity to speak to them in Hungarian. During my childhood we would visit the Engels who lived in Bondi. They were Hungarians and very observant Jews. Not so observant that they wore unusual clothes or looked different, but observant enough that they had to eat kosher food and to teach their boy Gabi (short for Gabor, the Hungarian form of Gabriel) to read Hebrew at an early age. My mother had told me that she met the Engels on the way to Australia and, assuming they came on the same ship, I searched for their names on the passenger list but could not find them. In fact, they arrived in Australia a year earlier on a ship called the *Napoli* that carried far more Jewish Hungarians than did the *Sydney*. My parents must have met the Engels in Vienna while arranging immigration to Australia. It again raises the question in my mind – why did it take my parents a whole year longer to get to Australia than it took the Engels?

I know little, and remember little, of how life at sea progressed on that voyage in 1951 ... Swimming pools were rarities in the 1950s both on land and on sea, which is why the pools figured prominently in the Flotta Lauro publicity. Once my family had settled in Sydney they wisely decided that I needed to learn how to swim. There was only one public freshwater swimming pool on the northern side of Sydney Harbour and my mother had to travel the 12 km to the North Sydney Olympic Pool situated at the foot of the Harbour Bridge. We did it by train from Roseville station to Milsons Point station. It would have taken about an hour each way – a testament to her devotion to my safety and well-being. [B]y 1956 the Australian Immigration Department

had organised itself sufficiently to place English language teachers on the migrant ships, and they ran serious English language classes for migrants ... Whether such classes were up and running in 1951 I have no idea and even if they were I am not sure whether my parents would have attended, though when I think about it my father may have, as his English was non-existent. My mother would have felt that she had no need because she had had English tuition, as well as French tuition and, of course, fluency in German as well as her native Hungarian. She used to boast that she could make herself understood in Italian because it was so like French. As she discovered when she arrived in Australia, what passed as perfect English in Budapest was not adequate for daily living in Sydney. On a shopping trip at Central Station, not long after our arrival in Sydney, my mother came to me on the verge of tears because she could not make herself understood to the female shop assistant who had got quite rude about the 'bloody foreigner who can't talk English'. Would I go in and buy whatever it was for her? I did and the same shop assistant was charming and helpful – either because I could speak English properly, or because I was a cute little boy.

Another thing that I do know about the journey is that Santa Claus visited the ship on Christmas Day 1951. I know this for two reasons. There is a photograph of the event that shows me receiving a wrapped box from Santa Claus. But I also remember the surprise and delight when I opened the present that Santa Claus had brought for me and I found in it the wooden chute paraphernalia that I had so admired in Munich. This event also indicates that there must have been sufficient young children on board that not only was it worthwhile for Santa Claus to visit, but that I probably had youngsters with whom I could play during the one-month voyage. The family arrived in Fremantle on 5 January 1952. The *TN Sydney* would then have reached its namesake port about a week later. One assumes that the AJWS [Australian Jewish Welfare Society] would have met us and arranged some form of temporary accommodation, and some vestigial memory makes me think that it was in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. It did not take my parents long to realise that Hungarian Jews preferred to live in the eastern suburbs, mainly in Bondi, at that time. It took some time for these Bondi-dwelling immigrants to acquire sufficient wealth and resources to move up in both altitude and snobbery by relocating to the more desirable suburbs of Vaucluse and Bellevue Hill. My mother had other ideas. Both of my parents wanted to assimilate as quickly as

possible, so that they were determined to spend as little time as possible around other Hungarians. To become real Australians they felt that the key was to move to an area socially desirable to Australians but not to Hungarians, the area of Sydney known as the North Shore. To assist speedy assimilation, the family was fortunate in its choice of name so that there was no need to anglicise the surname, though from this time forth my father standardised on the name George (rather than Gyorgy, Georg, Giorgio or Goroge), easy to remember because it was the name of King George VI, who was to reign for yet another year before his daughter, Elizabeth, became Queen. My mother decided to use the single first name Annemarie, rather than the two-name form of Anne Marie or the Hungarian form of Anna Maria.

The year 1956 was an important year in world history, Hungarian history, Australia sporting history and thus an important year for the Beer family. It began with the Suez crisis, in which the supremely self-confident, regionally ambitious and anti-imperialist Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser announced his intention to nationalise the French-built Suez Canal in late July 1956. An invasion by Israel, France and Britain had early military successes, but political failure and public humiliation for Britain, who had failed to consult the United States. Caught by surprise, the US refused to provide Britain with a much-needed loan unless all forces immediately withdrew from Egypt. The invasion ended on 7 November 1956. Australia played a controversial supporting role to Britain throughout the dispute, driven largely by its fervently anglophile prime minister, who allowed his heart to rule his head on this issue. Robert Menzies' mission to Cairo in September 1956, requesting international supervision of the canal via the United Nations, was doomed from the start, especially given his previous public anti-Nasser sentiments. The flow-on effects of the Suez adventure were serious and numerous. It consolidated the United States' leadership of Western interests in the Middle East, especially its patronage of Israel. Most importantly to the Beer family, it distracted world attention from the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary following the anti-Soviet revolution there in November 1956.

The Suez crisis did not attract much attention in class 4S of Lindfield Public School. Most schools in Sydney used letters to rank class abilities, with A being the most prestigious class. The fact that I was in 4S did not indicate that it was a class of dummies. Lindfield had decided to use the letter of the class teacher's surname, and 4S

was run by Mrs Sopp. I had also been in 3F run by Miss McFarlane. There were just too many teachers with Scottish surnames to use the ambiguous 3M. The Melbourne Olympic Games was another matter. That was real news as far as Mrs. Sopp was concerned. They ran from 22 November to 8 December, but the newspapers had carried stories all year about them so that anticipation and pride ran high. It was the first time that Australia had hosted the Olympic Games leading to the usual Sydney-Melbourne parochialism being buried in a rush of national enthusiasm. It was compulsory for all in the class to have an Olympic Games scrapbook, with the best of these on display for us all to admire during the games themselves. Mine, I think, was classed as one of the worst. To confirm my lack of artistic ability, my scrapbook did not have intricately drawn hand-coloured pictures of athletic prowess that so many of the girls in the class could effortlessly achieve. Having been misled by the word scrap, as in scrap metal, my scrap book consisted solely of clippings about the Olympics from the Sydney newspapers. To further ensure that it looked scrappy, I used a cheap liquid glue that produced dark splotches on the front of the clippings when pasted in the scrapbook.

The Hungarian Revolution of October-November 1956, when the students and workers demanded that Hungary secede from the Soviet orbit, succeeded for a short while, and then on 4 November 1956, the USSR ordered the Red Army, with its tanks and troops, to quell the uprising, which they did and it took them until 10 November to do so. According to Wikipedia, repression of the Hungarian Revolution killed 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Red Army soldiers. There was a period of about two weeks in late October 1956 when the Hungarian borders were not guarded and people could easily flee the country. That is also what Victor Sebestyen in his *Twelve Days: Revolution 1956* (2007) claims. The real situation was more complex, as illustrated by the 1 January 1958 report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees that notes:

On 28 October 1956, the first considerable number of refugees from Hungary arrived in Austria. On 4 November, the rate of influx increased sharply and it is estimated that, by the following day, 10,000 Hungarian refugees had crossed the frontier. The peak of the influx was reached during the week of 20 to 26 November, during which more than 46,000 Hungarian refugees arrived in Austria. By 1 May 1957, the total influx

into Austria had amounted to approximately 174,000. Hungarian refugees also entered Yugoslavia from the end of October 1956, but the influx only assumed large proportions in the second week in January 1957.

Even though the revolution was crushed by November, people continued to escape across the by now guarded border. I have a friend who fled with her parents in December 1956. They were all caught and turned back, but having suffered no penalty as a result they tried again and successfully crossed into Austria in January 1957. Altogether about a fifth of a million Hungarians sought political refuge abroad. Marching across the frontier was easy for those living near the border. I am reliably informed that the forestry department of Sopron University fled *en masse*, emigrated to Canada *en masse*, and started a new forestry department in a Canadian university *en masse* ...

As far as the Beer family was concerned only three of those 200,000 refugees mattered: my father's brother, Oscar, his wife Elisabeth, and my mother's mother Erzsi-omami, all of whom eventually arrived in Australia. Oscar was a manager at the autoworks on Csepel Island, an industrial complex on an island in the middle of the Danube in the southern part of Budapest. It was one of the first places where the uprising took hold, much to the surprise of the Communist hierarchy who believed in the Marxist-Leninist dogma that the workers would always remain staunch Communists. Oscar's decision to flee was hastened by some graffiti on the walls of the autoworks that said: 'We got the Russians, the Jews are next'. Of course, the Communists had suppressed organised religion, so that 'Jews' referred more to those of Jewish descent than to someone who was a regular synagogue attendee. Being the only person of Jewish descent working at Csepel, he took it personally.

The Soviet handling of the Hungarian uprising made the Russians very unpopular during the Melbourne Olympics. On 6 December, Hungary was scheduled to compete against the USSR in the water polo semi-final. The match was extremely violent and was halted in the final minute to quell fighting among spectators. This match, now known as the 'blood in the water match', has become the subject of several films. The Hungarian team won the game 4-0 and later was awarded the Olympic gold medal. The USSR won the bronze. Most Australians do not realise that the violence in this match may not have been that extraordinary. Hungary holds a domineering position in water polo

akin to New Zealand's domineering position in rugby union and Canada's domineering position in ice hockey ... To quote the Wikipedia entry which I suspect, based on the fractured English, was probably written by a Hungarian: 'Men's water polo has been part of the Summer Olympics program since 1900. Hungary men's national water polo team has won sixteen Olympic medals, becoming the most successful country in men's tournament.' Torberg, an Austrian, describes ordinary water polo competitions against Hungary thus:

... [T]he Hungarians were not satisfied with their overpowering skills alone but – to intimidate their opponents from the start – played with excessive roughness ... they continued with a skintight defense that assigned each player to an opponent ... The Hungarian players received 'their' man immediately as the teams swam into formation with a combined above- and below-water attack, known as the 'Hungarian Hello': right elbow into the opponent's chest, left fist into the pit of the stomach, and a kick from below with the right knee against the male genitals.

Torberg summarises all this with the apothegm⁶ that 'Water polo is not a shalom game'⁷.

Before 1956 Australia had no television. It started in 1956, with the Olympic Games being the big impetus for its introduction. All three networks – the ABC, HSV-7 and GTV-9 – were there to record the match, but only GTV-9 had compelling footage of what was happening under the water. GTV-9 producers had discovered glass portholes on the sides of the Olympic swimming pool, secretly put a camera lens to one of the portholes, and corroborated Torberg's description that the Hungarians worked hard to provoke their Soviet opponents. 'Those parts of the body the Hungarians worked on were well below the surface of the water', said one executive. Few would have seen any of this because in 1956 the cost of a television made it a luxury item that few could afford.

I recall the arrival of my Uncle Oscar [Oszi] and his wife Elisabeth [Erzsi]⁸. We were waiting on one of the interstate platforms of Sydney's Central Station when the train pulled in. We got ever more excited as the passengers alighted, and then we saw them. My father embraced and kissed his brother on the cheek. My mother burst into tears. Then

introductions all around because my parents had never met Uncle Oszi's wife. Even though it was Sunday I was dressed in standard schoolboy attire of the time because my school uniform comprised my Sunday best. Many years later Oszi told me how curious and strange he had found the Australian fashion of putting schoolboys and boy scouts in long baggy shorts – something he first saw when he got off the train and greeted me ...

I can remember Oszi's arrival. I cannot remember the date. Usually this is easily remedied. The National Archives has a record of every passenger arrival into Australia from 1898-1972 and it is easily searchable on a computer at home. I got excited when I found an Oskar Beer who arrived in June 1957, but he was German, only 32 years old (Uncle Oszi was 43) and came by plane. I originally assumed that Oszi and Erzsi's 1957 arrival card remains undigitised, either because it was lost, overlooked, illegible, or misclassified. What I did manage to find was the index card for them when they registered with the AJDC, the American Joint Distribution Committee, one of the Jewish charities that helped refugees. The Joint, as it is commonly known, still exists, has a web site at <https://www.jdc.org/> that notes, with justification, that 'JDC is the leading global Jewish humanitarian organization'. The card states that they departed for Australia on 1 April 1957.

The 1 April 1957 departure struck a chord when I mentioned it to my friend, the one who crossed the border in January 1957 with her family, because they were also helped by the Joint so that she and her family also departed on 1 April 1957 on board the MV *Fairsea* that left from Bremen⁹ and arrived in Melbourne on 10 May, whereupon my friend and her family took a train to Sydney arriving at Central Station on Sunday 12 May 1957. Her reminiscence led me to re-examine the National Archives' passenger arrival records. She and her family are missing as, indeed, is any official record of the May 1957 arrival of the *Fairsea*. Arrive she most certainly did. The Melbourne newspaper *The Age* noted the arrival and commented that of the 1400 people on board, 1300 were Hungarian refugees. It seems almost certain that that was the ship on which Oszi and Erzsi travelled and not only does their arrival card remain undigitised, so apparently do the other 1398 arrival cards for the other passengers on that particular ship.

When Oszi and his wife arrived, my father was between business ventures. He had sold out of the Corso Delicatessen in Lindfield, leaving

his business partner Mr Lawner to run it. If then my father had secret dreams of emulating his father-in-law and setting up in business with his brother he would have been disappointed. I do not think that the wives got on. Both wives were 11 years younger than their husbands, approximately the same age, and they both grew up in Pest. In theory they should have got on well together, but it was not to be. Had they got on then Oszi and Erzsi would no doubt have continued to board with us. Instead, they rented their own place as quickly as they could and with each subsequent rental moved further and further away from us until they ended up living in Strathfield and running a very successful café in Burwood, a suburb of Sydney. Nowadays there is nothing unusual about a café in an Australian city that serves coffee and European-style meals. In the tea-drinking Sydney of the late 1950s such cafés were unknown, except possibly one or two in the Kings Cross area. The Burwood espresso café was a success, made all the more surprising by its being at the far northern edge of the shopping centre because rents there were cheaper. In the 1950s and 1960s the most desirable shops with the highest rents were close to the railway station. In fact, the Burwood shops radiated north and south with the railway station in the middle. The café was sufficiently successful that they purchased the property just before they obtained Australian citizenship which, in those days, required five years of residence. It was a brilliant decision. Either by luck, foresight, or inside knowledge through the Hungarian Jewish community, what had been a shop at the neglected end of Burwood became a shop in the centre of the Burwood shopping district when Westfield opened their Burwood shopping plaza on the opposite side of the road to their property. Oszi always maintained that it was sheer luck, which always then reminded me of the apothegm attributed to the golfer, Arnold Palmer: 'The more I practice, the luckier I get'. Oszi was a likeable man who enjoyed the company of others who, in turn, enjoyed his company. I suspect that in Oszi's case the more he networked, the luckier he got.

Eventually my father decided to open a menswear shop. I presume that he used his contacts in the 'rag trade' as his suppliers. I can attest that I owned a blue cardigan from his shop that was manufactured by Kipen Knitwear of Melbourne. Fifty years later I met Rabbi Aviva Kipen, the daughter of the cardigan manufacturer, who was amused at the thought of me wearing cardigans because by then cardigans had

long gone out of fashion. So had knitwear factories. My father found a suitable location at 126 Willoughby Road, Crows Nest. Getting there by public transport was slow and inconvenient, so he acquired a car. His shop was officially called Beer's Mercery but my father soon realised that the word mercer was sufficiently arcane that most people did not know what it meant, so he always spoke of it as Beer's Menswear. The word 'mercery' may have been forced upon him by some bureaucrat in charge of licensing new businesses, or he may have found it using a Hungarian-English dictionary. He was to run it as a one-man business until ill-health forced his retirement in the 1970s. My father developed high blood pressure and had his first heart attack in the early 1960s. The combination of lack of exercise, financial worry, and a daily diet of *wiener schnitzel* would have been responsible. He survived numerous heart attacks before finally succumbing in 1984.

My father's life and livelihood were tied up in the shop. My lack of interest in the business must have keenly disappointed him. He had strict rules to follow, most of which made little sense to me, and we would argue over them when I would help during school holidays. He would sweep the footpath in front of the shop every morning. At the time it seemed pointless though I would nowadays be willing to concede that a dirty shopfront discourages customers. He would insist that one should not sit and read a book while waiting for customers but be upstanding and alert. This particularly irked and many was the time that I got into trouble because I was trying to finish my latest thrilling adventure yarn when I should have been eagerly scanning the doorway, ready to pounce on any customers. Finally, the addition of the day's takings had to be summed from top to bottom. This made no sense then,

and still does not, but I gather that it was then a common foible. Those good at arithmetic can add up just as well from bottom to top but presumably those not so adept need to be given one way, and one way only, to do addition.



Not that addition was that easy in those pre-calculator days. The money was in pounds, shillings and pence¹⁰, so that each column's total needed to be divided by 12, and then 20 respectively to determine the amount to be carried over into the adjacent left-hand column. Arguments on any of these points were generally met with the Latin reply *Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi*, translating it as 'what is permitted to the gods is not permitted to the devil'. The word *bovi* actually means oxen, rather than devil, but my father may have been afraid that I would get insulted if called an ox. My father, on the other hand, was easily insulted – or more accurately his feelings were easily hurt. He was very conscious that he spoke English with a strange accent, and no doubt his first five years in Australia as a stateless non-citizen made him especially sensitive to insults – real or perceived. It also encouraged his desire to assimilate so that not long after Beer's Mercery was established in Crows Nest he became a founding member of the local Lions Club¹¹. It was good for him to have a regular group to which he belonged, and it was good for them to have a loyal hard-working member. Nevertheless, it still took a long time for him to realise that being called an 'old bastard' by a fellow club member was a term of endearment rather than an insult ...

Naturalisation and citizenship

My parents applied for Australian citizenship as soon as they were eligible, which would have been in 1957, five years after arrival. They would often tell me how grateful they were not living in Switzerland, where the minimum period for citizenship was 10 years. The wheels of Australian government bureaucracy moved slowly, and still move slowly, so that the application was not approved until 1958 and they then had to wait until the next citizenship ceremony before it could commence. This was at the Kuring-Gai municipality council chambers in the suburb of Gordon on 8 July 1958. We lived at the southern extremity of the Kuring-Gai municipality, and Gordon was close to the centre of the municipality. The mayor conducted the ceremony and the certificate itself was signed by Sir Alexander Downer the minister for immigration, the father of the Alexander Downer who was leader of the Liberal Party until John Howard took over. I am a small footnote on the back of my father's naturalisation certificate under the heading 'Children included in Certificate'. The certificate itself has been tightly rolled up in a paper canister ever since it was issued, so that it quickly springs back into a roll when I try to open it up to read it and photograph it. The paper,

even though of high quality, is turning brown with age. Nevertheless, my parents were very proud of what it signified: the end of statelessness. During the 1940s and 1950s the Hungarian government revoked the citizenship of those that fled illegally. This meant that for many years the members of my family were considered to be traitors and class enemies of the Hungarian people. Fortunately, those days have long gone in the case of Hungary whose government now see the Hungarian diaspora as a resource as evidenced by my own election to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At some point in the 1970s the Hungarian Government examined the financial implications of the Hungarian diaspora and did a *volte-face*. Hungarian citizenship was automatically restored to those born in Hungary, and their descendants.¹² As Uncle Oszi pointed out to me: 'You are a Hungarian citizen unless you pay the Hungarian Government to have your citizenship revoked. I have paid and am no longer a Hungarian citizen.' This means that my children and grandchildren all have a right to Hungarian citizenship should they wish to go through the administrative hurdles either to confirm it or to renounce it. It also means that they are not eligible to stand for the Australian Parliament unless they do indeed take the trouble to renounce it.

In 2017 Australia managed to turn a constitutional crisis into a comedy farce. Members of Parliament had to resign and a minority government ensued for a while. The Australian constitution prohibits anyone with dual citizenship being a member of Parliament. During that year our politicians became amateur genealogists and discovered that many of them have dual nationalities – at which point, being politicians, they first denied it, then claimed that it was not important, then tried to get the High Court to agree with them, and only when the High Court disagreed did they finally resign. The High Court declared the deputy prime minister to be deemed a New Zealander (his father was born in New Zealand) so he had to resign, renounce his New Zealand citizenship, and fight a by-election to get back into Parliament. The federal treasurer at that time, Josh Frydenberg, was also under some pressure. His parents were born in Hungary, fled and gave birth to him when they finally arrived in Australia. He vehemently denied being a Hungarian citizen by pointing out that his parents were stateless when he was born. The issue was laid to rest only when the Federal Court agreed with his interpretation. In this respect the major difference between Josh Frydenberg and myself is that I was actually born in

Hungary. This should have made it easier when I decided formally to apply for Hungarian citizenship in 2011. My daughter and grandchildren were living in England at the time. Once Hungary entered the European Union in 2004, Hungarians could live and work in England; thus a Hungarian passport became a desirable commodity.

The Hungarian embassy in Canberra wanted to see my birth certificate and my marriage certificate. Not only did I have to provide the original, I had to provide a translation into Hungarian of the Ghanaian marriage certificate. Not good enough. The embassy wanted the marriage certificate certified with an apostille. I had never heard of an apostille and was informed that it is a formal certification of the document. Off I went to the Ghanaian embassy, marriage certificate in hand, to seek an apostille. Ghana does not issue apostilles, but they very kindly provided an official letter confirming the authenticity of the marriage certificate. The Hungarian embassy accepted the letter, and the accompanying payment, and transmitted the documents to Budapest for processing. Much to my delight, not only did I receive a Hungarian passport (valid for only one year, presumably so that I can get the thrill and joy of paying again for a longer-term passport) but I received a second wedding certificate from Budapest confirming that my marriage was now registered in Budapest ...

Wolf Cubs and Boy Scouts, 1955-65

The Beer family has always done its bit to advance the vision of Lord Baden-Powell. My father was very proud that he had been a boy scout¹³ in Budapest ... As a 20-year-old in 1933 he had attended the world boy scout jamboree held in the Royal Castle Park of Gödöllő, just outside Budapest, met the English Boy Scouts and ever thereafter sang a very mangled version of 'Ging gang gooley', if it is possible to mangle a campfire song that has nonsense words to begin with. The *UK Scouting Magazine* report of the 1933 Jamboree¹⁴ has a paragraph that appears naive in hindsight, considering that 1933 was the year that Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany:

I have been to all but one of the International Jamborees, and each seems more splendid, more awe-inspiring more thrilling – twenty thousand boys, white, black, tan, Catholic, Protestant, Mahommedan, Jew, marching along together towards a new world of hope and peace. As the van passed into the distance I felt that they were

marching into the generation that is more priceless than greed of gold or lust for power, and that national pride is useless without international understanding.

... I was therefore given every encouragement to join the Wolf Cubs as soon as I turned 8 years old in 1955. I turned up at the same hall, known as the Kraal¹⁵, where my Class 3F of Lindfield Public School had had classes six months previously because of the overcrowding due to the baby boomers. There were two cub packs that met on different nights known as 2nd Lindfield and 3rd Lindfield. They were feeders to the one scout group 2/3rd Lindfield. I was a member for about 10 years. Nowadays the scouting movement in Australia has developed practices that differ from the original UK movement. Australia has Joey Scouts for 5-year-olds who then progress to Cub Scouts, rather than Wolf Cubs. My children worked to earn a bronze, silver and gold boomerang badge rather than the first star, second star and leaping wolf badge of my time. The Wolf Cubs followed a self-consistent narrative based around the stories of Rudyard Kipling in which the adult cub leaders took names from the stories in the *Jungle Book*. The main leader was known as Akela, and the high point of the weekly cub meeting was the grand howl in which Akela would intone 'dyb, dyb, dyb, dyb' to which the cubs, squatted on their haunches supposedly like young wolves, would respond 'We'll dob, dob, dob, dob'.¹⁶

I loved the glamour of the uniform, itchy though the blue woollen long-sleeve jersey was. I also loved the mystery of it all and my self-esteem rose every time that I solved one of the mysteries. Some, such as the meaning of dyb and dob were easy. The most mysterious was one in the list of test items for the second star. It was 'recite the first and third verses of the national anthem'. In those days the national anthem was *God Save the Queen*, which continues as the national anthem of the United Kingdom with the substitution of 'King' for 'Queen'. The first verse was easy enough. It was regularly sung at school assemblies. The third verse was more troublesome as I, along with most other Australians, was totally unaware of it. Upon request, Akela produced a copy of the third verse and told me to go away, learn it and recite it back. I did so with an extra twist. I asked for a copy of the second verse. Apparently in the whole history of the 2/3rd Lindfield scout troop such a thing had never happened. It turned out that Akela did not know it, nor did any of the other scouters and I was told to forget

about it. It remained a mystery in that pre-Google era until I eventually found it hidden in the pages of the Anglican hymn book – *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, generally known as ‘Hymns A&M’. The second verse, sung only in wartime, invokes curses on the Queen’s enemies by asking God to confound their politics and to frustrate their knavish tricks. Completely unsuitable for the innocent ears of Wolf Cubs or Boy Scouts. Wolf Cubs lasted only until the age of 11. One then quickly went from being a highly decorated Leaping Wolf sixer, the leader of five other cubs, to being a tenderfoot in the scout troop, and having to replace a navy-blue cub uniform festooned with stars and stripes and badges, for a khaki badgeless uniform. The first badge is bestowed at the investiture ceremony. The shock is great and many leave at this point, hence the need for a scout troop serviced by two cub packs. Any thoughts that I may have had about leaving were quickly vetoed by my scout-loving father.

Erzsi Omami

Erzsi-omami arrived from Karachi on 2 May 1959. Like my uncle, Oscar, and his wife she had left Hungary during that brief period in 1956 when the borders were open. Instead of coming straight to Australia, she went to live with her other daughter, Gabriella, in Teheran the capital of what was then still called Persia. Gaby, as she was always called, escaped from Hungary shortly after my parents. Unlike my mother, Gaby was comfortable with her Jewish identity so that it was natural for her to head to the newly-created State of Israel, which provided a sanctuary for displaced Jews. There she met a wealthy Persian businessman 20 years older than herself, Khanbaba Mizrachi, whom she married and then lived with in Teheran. While my parents were helping Oscar and his wife, also named Elisabeth, in Sydney, Gaby was looking after Erzsi-omami in Teheran. Khanbaba was exceedingly charming, a trait that attracted Gaby and no doubt, greatly assisted him in business. He was also very competent and went to work obtaining restitution from the Swiss legal fraternity for the illegal confiscation of the Sparber assets by the family lawyer – Herr Dukert. He was partly successful. Some money was repaid but not all of it.

Erzsi-omami lived with us and her bedroom doubled as our dining room. She found it easy to win my favour. She soon discovered that I greatly enjoyed one of the dishes that she had learnt how to cook – Steak Diane. I always think of her if I find it on a restaurant menu,

though I no longer order any meat dishes. I also think of her whenever I go to a Chinese restaurant. There were a few Chinese restaurants in Sydney's North Shore and the family would occasionally go to one of them as a treat and for a treat. Erzsi-omami, who was a sophisticated and well-travelled woman even though she was now in reduced circumstances, would invariably ask whether they had 'Peking Duck' on the menu. The answer was invariably no. This happened so often that it became a family joke and we started to think that Peking Duck was a myth that Erzsi-omami had made up. Not so, as I discovered on my first trip to Peking – by then known as Beijing – in the early 1980s. It was the signature dish in the restaurants and hotels of Beijing. The paradox, as I realised much later, was that all the Chinese in Australia were from the British colony of Hong Kong and thus the Australian Chinese restaurants all served Cantonese cooking. It was to be many decades before Peking Duck appeared on the menus of Chinese restaurants in Australia.

Erzsi-omami had to learn English and duly went to classes organised by the local chapter of the Good Neighbour Council. She did very well but had a few stumbles along the way. One day she went into a pharmacy and declared 'I want death.' This declaration of suicide by an elderly and obviously unwell lady, whose swollen ankles were indicative of very high blood pressure, was met with considerable consternation. The senior pharmacist sat her down for a long, serious chat during the course of which it emerged that she did not wish to die, what she actually wished to do was to purchase dye ...

Endnotes

- 1 TN means TurboNave, and is the Italian designation for vessels. In English it would be SS *Sydney*.
- 2 ssmaritime.com/roma-sydney.htm accessed 27 December 2021
- 3 A railway, especially one on a mountainside, operating by cable with ascending and descending cars counterbalanced.
- 4 Anna Marks, 'The Story of our Adventures from Budapest to Sydney on the SS *Toscana* in 1958: My grandmother's diary', *AJHSJ*, vol.25, pt.2, 2021, 204-28.
- 5 NAA K269 6 JAN 1952 SYDNEY. There is a discrepancy in dates. Page 1 clearly states 5 January 1952. There is an extra list of passengers towards the end of the 38-page document that is dated 6 January 1952. My assumption is that the ship arrived on the 5th but the master only completed and submitted the paperwork on the 6th.

- 6 I fell in love with this word, a synonym for aphorism, when I read it as a student. I then mispronounced it for the next two decades. In the same way that paradigm is pronounced para-dime, apothegm is pronounced apo-theme. It can also be written as apophthegm with no change in pronunciation.
- 7 Friedrich Torberg, *Tante Jolesch or The Decline of the West in Anecdotes*, Riverside, Ca., Ariadne Press, 2008.
- 8 Oszi, pronounced Ossie, and Erzsi, pronounced Air-zsi (the zs like the s in treasure or the j in the French jour) are Hungarian nicknames for Oscar and Elisabeth.
- 9 https://books.google.com.au/books/about/The_SITMAR_Liners.html?id=PhGMcJw9THgC has a response that also confirms the Bremen departure and notes that the Suez Canal was still closed so the ship went via South Africa. It appears that official SITMAR histories and Australian arrival records have all overlooked this trip.
- 10 12 pennies made one shilling; 20 shillings made one £.
- 11 I think it was the Lions Club of Naremburn but I can find nothing about it and it may no longer exist. The presently extant Lions Club of Crows Nest was founded after my father retired.
- 12 My parents were terrified when I visited Hungary in 1969 that I would be treated as a Hungarian citizen and drafted for military service. My uncle reassured them, and indeed, I was not drafted into the Hungarian military.
- 13 Given the state of Hungarian society at the time I assume that this would have been a purely Jewish scout troop but can neither verify nor deny the assumption.
- 14 <https://www.whitestag.org/history/jamboree.html> accessed 16 January 2022.
- 15 Apparently an Afrikaans word to describe a Zulu settlement. Baden-Powell served in both the Zulu and Ashanti wars in South Africa and Ghana respectively.
- 16 These are acronyms for 'do your best', and 'do our best'.

ARTHUR SCHÜLLER IN AUSTRALIA

Michael A. Henderson

ABSTRACT

In August 1938 the eminent Austrian radiologist Arthur Schüller landed in Australia. For a man who had travelled extensively, this was his last major trip and he was to stay in Australia for the remaining 18 years of his life, which is described in this article. The author's father [John] Keith Henderson (1923-2017) came to Melbourne from Perth in 1940 to study medicine and graduated in 1945. He was aware of Schüller during his medical student years at St Vincent's Hospital and in his second postgraduate year as a resident medical officer rotated onto the neurosurgical unit of Frank Morgan. He decided to train in neurosurgery and spent the following two years on the unit, where he was in almost daily contact with Schüller. Undoubtedly a close bond developed between the two, and Schüller attended Keith's wedding. In retrospect Schüller clearly had a profound impact on Keith's career. This article is based on the book *Arthur Schüller: Founder of Neuroradiology. A Liife on Two Continents* (Ormond, Vic., Hybrid Publishers, 2021) by Keith with son Michael's assistance.

KEYWORDS: Refugees, Jewish refugees from the Reich, Refugee doctors in Australia, Neurologists, Neuroradiology, Psychiatrists, Violinists, Jews in the Habsburg Empire

Arthur Schüller was born on the 28 December 1874 in Brunn /Brno in what was then known as Moravia, subsequently Sudetenland and now the second largest city in the Czech Republic. By all accounts it was an unremarkable childhood, his father was an ear, nose



and throat surgeon and the family, which would be regarded as well off, but not overly so lived within the large Jewish community in Brno. What was remarkable was Arthur's academic prowess, particularly in the humanities field reflected in his lifelong love of the classics and the violin. His final high school marks were sufficient to guarantee him entry to any university in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He chose to study medicine at the University of Vienna, then regarded as one of the premier medical schools in the world. He graduated in 1899 and did so as the top of the class, winning the Emperor Franz Joseph Prize which was said to be an ebony bar mounted with precious stones. In addition he was allowed to choose both the career pathway he wished to take in medicine and the training institution. He chose to study neurology and psychiatry in the Second Psychiatric Clinic at the Allgemeine Krankenhaus, Vienna's main hospital. His chosen career pathway, although an unusual combination by today's standards, was unremarkable in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Indeed, the presence of such notables in this area, including, of course, Sigmund Freud, Manfred Sakel who popularised shock treatment for depression (the only effective treatment for the next 50 years), Richard Kraft-Ebbing, who developed an understanding of sexual perversion, and Julius Wagner-Jauregg, who won the Nobel Prize for his development of treatment for cerebral syphilis, supported his decision.

The latter two were to be his teachers and mentors. The trajectory of Schüller's career in these early years indicated that much was expected of him in the future. He was encouraged to pursue a year in Berlin undertaking research in neurophysiology and on completing his post graduate training was immediately appointed to the General Hospital as well as the Children's Hospital and the Institute of Neurology where he continued his neurology research. His early research interest in the brain continued but it was clearly clinical work that captured his imagination. On the advice of Wagner-Jauregg early in his training Schüller was tasked with exploring the role of the recently described X-rays in neurological conditions. He developed a relationship with Guido Holzknecht, one of the foremost authorities on the new discipline of Diagnostic Radiology that was to endure during his time in Vienna. The task he was set was a daunting one. For, since normal brain tissue is not directly imaged by X-ray techniques diagnosis had to depend, first, on the effects of the pathological process on the surrounding bone structures and, secondly, upon the complexity of the normal X-ray

appearances of the skull. Over the next 40 years he published over 130 scientific papers, mostly on radiology of the skull, along with his two major books, the first in 1907 on the normal X-ray appearances of the skull and the second his major work on the X-ray appearances of diseases affecting the skull (1914). Schüller had a prodigious teaching load with clinicians coming from all around the world to learn about the nascent discipline of radiology of the central nervous system now formally designated as Neuroradiology, the term Schüller introduced. In 1967 at the Eighth International Symposium Neuroradiologicum, the participants were treated to a monograph and presentation on the history of neuroradiology which clearly identified Schüller as the founder of the discipline.

In 1907 Schüller was awarded his *Habilitiert*, a formal recognition of his research excellence and equivalent to defending a PhD thesis and was then granted the *Venia Docendi*, the formal authorisation to teach within the University of Vienna. In 1914 he was appointed professor in the University, becoming the youngest person to be awarded the rank. Schüller's personal life was marked by his wedding in 1906 to Margrete (known as Grete) Stiassni and the birth of their two sons Hans and Franz over the next three years. The First World War was a disaster for Schüller, his meagre savings were wiped out by the failure of his bank (among many) and rampant inflation.

Probably owing to effects related to radiation on his feet suffered as a consequence of his research he served in the Austrian army as a doctor in Vienna, a major treatment centre, particularly for troops injured on the eastern front. Post-war Vienna was a shadow of its former self, the country and particularly its capital had suffered grievously as a consequence of the war and the deepening depression led to not just severe food shortages but financial restrictions including university salaries and an unprecedented period of political instability finished off by the rise of national socialism in the years running up to the Second World War. The consequences were for Schüller significant: there was little or no money to undertake research, and the hospital system was impoverished, leading to a reduction in wages even at a time of rampant inflation. But he made his way on the strength of his international reputation and private teaching.

By the late 1930s Schüller should by rights have been winding down as he approached his 65th birthday but his financial status and the effects of the rise of National Socialism kept him working. The Anschluss or

annexation of Austria on 12 March 1938 bought another set of difficulties. Eduard Pernkopf of anatomical infamy was appointed dean of the faculty of medicine and set about dismissing 'undesirables', including Schüller.¹ The University 'lost' 153 of its professors and approximately half of the more junior staff and medical students. Dismissal from the main hospital and the Children's Hospital was quickly to follow, and even though the Nuremberg Laws even more severely curtailed his practice (he was only able to treat Jewish patients), Schüller and his wife decided to remain in Vienna even as many of his colleagues, family and friends departed.

Schüller was assaulted at the time of Kristallnacht – though not grievously – and shortly afterwards decided to leave Austria. He was in correspondence with his great friend the eminent American neurosurgeon Walter Dandy, head of the Unit at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, who was prepared to find him a position at his institution. But Schüller decided on Melbourne, a decision that has never been satisfactorily explained. He and his wife were robbed by the Nazi exit taxes and they departed with little in the way of financial or other resources. The first stop was Oxford, where he spent a prolonged 'sabbatical' in the Institute attached to the Department of Surgery, invited by his colleague and friend the Australian neurosurgeon and Regius professor of surgery Hugh Cairns.

Schüller left Europe in late July 1939 by plane for Australia. Why he chose Australia much less Melbourne can never be known but there are a number of facts which may have influenced his decision making, not the least of which is that Melbourne was as far away from Europe as he could get. There were rumours of a new medical school in Brisbane and maybe he considered himself for a position but there were also distant relatives possibly in Brisbane but definitely in Sydney who were to have only limited contact with him in the years to come. While in Oxford he met Sydney Sunderland who, while undertaking a research program there, had just been appointed the new professor of anatomy at the University of Melbourne.² Cairns, who had originally invited Schüller to Oxford, had trained the young Australian neurosurgeon Frank Morgan, who had recently returned to St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne to set up one of the first neurosurgical units in the country. Cairns and Morgan were still in regular contact as were Thomas Barclay, one of the senior radiologists in Oxford, who had a professional and personal connection with another Melbourne trainee, John O'Sullivan, who by that stage was

head of radiology at St Vincent's Hospital. Cairns and Barclay probably had the most influence on Schüller but there is no doubt that Johnny O'Sullivan was able to lay the foundations in Melbourne. Frank Morgan was very junior whilst O'Sullivan was a senior and respected member of the senior medical staff. O'Sullivan knew of Schüller as he had attended two of his courses in neuroradiology in Vienna but had not kept up contact with him. However it came about, Schüller appeared in the hospital within two weeks of his arrival in Australia. The scene is this: he was past the normal retirement age, his qualifications were not recognised and he could not be registered in the state of Victoria nor practice as a doctor, he needed to be paid in an era when medical staff were all honorary and he was a citizen of a country with which Australia was at war. On the other hand, the expertise and prestige that Schüller brought to St Vincent's was significant. It was however wartime, money was tight, and both paranoia and xenophobia were rampant.

But a Catholic hospital under the direction of the religious Sisters of Charity came to the rescue of this elderly Jewish man and his wife. There was a rumour around St Vincent's for many years that the mother rectress (and ultimately head of the hospital) who was directly involved in employing Schüller, supplemented his income from an undisclosed 'discretionary' fund. No definite evidence of this exists; however, O'Sullivan and the mother rectress were able to pay him a small stipend from the grant the hospital had received from the government for X-ray technicians. Not only was O'Sullivan primarily responsible for getting Schüller to St Vincent's, but once he arrived was a constant source of support and friendship. A genuine friendship between both of the Schüllers and a number of the nuns endured over the years. Both Arthur and his wife Grete were to remain intensely grateful to the Sisters for the rest of their days. Not a lot is known about the relationship between Johnny O'Sullivan and Schüller but it appears to have been more than cordial. There were also strong rumours that O'Sullivan helped the Schüllers financially, particularly in their early years in Melbourne. In time Grete's brothers, who had escaped to the United States before the war, provided regular financial support.

Schüller was given an office in the X-ray department, which became his base. The door was always open and he welcomed young and senior clinicians and was happy to digress about any number of topics. He was the world's pre-eminent authority on X-rays of the skull and not only supervised the X-ray technicians in performing the X-rays



Schüller checking an X-ray

but then reported on the films. His reports, brief and to the point, were written in a school exercise book which was collected at the end of the day for the typists, who returned the reports for his signature the next day. Before 1946, when he finally resolved his medical registration, the reports were countersigned by

one of the senior radiologists. The X-ray department, although small was well provided with the most modern equipment, predominantly sourced from Europe and North America. Schüller would have felt at home with this equipment. He was warmly welcomed into the department and in fact there were interesting and difficult cases awaiting him. The first case was of a patient with a bone mass on the forehead which Schüller immediately recognised as a cephalohaematoma or the long-term effects of a bleed into the lining of the skull at an early age. He had previously been the first person to describe this condition, and immediately wrote the Melbourne case up for the literature. News of his arrival spread throughout Melbourne and he gave a number of lectures and visits to other radiology departments around the city. Particularly difficult cases were brought to him from outside the hospital for an opinion which he willingly provided. Schüller quickly became a part of the hospital and Melbourne radiology environment.

To a large extent Schüller's academic output stalled with the onset of the First World War. There was a small increase in the number of papers published during the 1930s but by the time he reached Melbourne he had published all but 13 of the at least 130 journal articles he produced over his lifetime. Most of the papers he wrote in Australia were reviews or small case reports but nothing substantive. It is easy to reflect that he produced little of significance after the onset of the First World War but in truth it is remarkable he produced anything at all given the parlous state of Vienna's hospitals and university and Austria's financial state. Apart from his two books which basically set the stage for the development of imaging of the brain, Schüller worked out the basis for the surgical procedure of cordotomy, which, initially developed to control the 'lightning pains' of advanced syphilis, subsequently became commonly used to control severe pain due to advanced cancer. He also described

a surgical approach to the pituitary gland now regarded as the standard approach as well as a number of clinical conditions. Perhaps the most famous condition he described based on his description of the X-ray appearances was the eponymous Hand Schüller Christian disease, a rare condition of childhood. Regardless of the fact he was no longer in the vanguard of neuroradiology development, his reputation guaranteed his move to Australia was of enormous importance. Morgan only just back from post graduate training in the UK was quick to realise Schüller's value to his developing unit. Plans were afoot to give Schüller a substantive role in a proposed post-graduate medical school but the combined effects of parochialism and the war meant this proposal was stillborn. For reasons not entirely clear Schüller was not accepted as a member of the College of Radiologists at first. Morgan did however get him membership of the Neurosurgical Association of Australia in 1947 after initial hesitation.

Those who remembered him describe as a reserved but courteous and interested conversationalist. He had his own office but the door was always open encouraging those brave enough to approach the great man. He was known to all as the 'professor'. No one is sure why, but he insisted on wearing a grey lab coat as worn by staff in old hardware shops. White coats in the hospitals at this time were ubiquitous and were worn by X-ray and other technicians as well as the medical staff, it certainly made him stand apart. He joined the other radiologists for morning and afternoon tea in their designated tea room but usually sat with the medical students or other young people for lunch. The senior medical staff who were all part time and honorary had a separate dining area but Schüller chose not to join them unless invited. A skull X-ray from the casualty or emergency department was an excuse to leave the X-ray department to deliver the report to the young doctors often accompanied by a short tutorial. To the casual observer Schüller rapidly fitted into the X-ray department but there remained other differences which set him apart. These differences which potentially could have caused disquiet included his age; he was past retirement age, he was being paid for professional medical services in era when no one was paid, he could not be registered as a medical practitioner and of course there was the issue of his Jewish background. None of this seemed to make the slightest difference and there was never any questioning of his presence. In fact with the passage of time his presence became

unremarkable, particularly as nowhere in the hospital records is there any evidence that Arthur Schüller was ever formally appointed to the medical staff of the hospital! This was not wilful neglect but rather the pervasive assumption that he belonged in the hospital.

It was not long after Schüller's arrival that his virtuosity on the violin was discovered by the junior medical staff and he participated in many of their concerts for a number of years. Schüller maintained that he met his wife at the Vienna Opera, which at that time was led by Gustav Mahler who mixed in the same social circles as both Arthur and his wife. The story goes that Mahler actually advised Schüller on his violin playing.

Schüller had trained as a neurologist (and psychiatrist) and in Vienna his practice, although focused on radiology was combined with a clinical neurology practice. At the invitation of the senior neurosurgeon Frank Morgan he visited the neurosurgical ward on a daily basis and attended the ward rounds as well as the neurosurgical outpatients where he acted as the clinic neurologist. He would often accompany Morgan in the operating room and scrub as his assistant. The relationship between them was a private but clearly close one. On the one hand Morgan, who put a high price on his own importance, insisted on due deference as head of the neurosurgical unit but acknowledged the seniority and authority of his colleague. For his part Schüller accepted this *modus operandi* but was never shy in holding forth on matters he considered of clinical or other importance which occasionally lead to temporary difficulties. Morgan was clearly affected by Schüller's death in 1957 and wrote a most heartfelt eulogy for his old friend published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*. Schüller always understood Morgan in particular had provided him with more than just a place to live out the rest of his life.

It was not until 1946 that Schüller was able to be registered to practice medicine in the state of Victoria once the necessary legislative changes had been made. An amusing anecdote which Schüller recounted on occasions was when he presented for his interview before the Medical Board to assess his competency and fitness to practice medicine. The board president started by asking him if he would like a cup of coffee. After an increasingly uncomfortable period of small talk, Schüller enquired when the investigation would start, to which the president replied that he had satisfied the Board when he had accepted the cup

of coffee. He commenced a small private neurology practice located in rooms at the top of Collins Street provided without charge by one of his colleagues at St Vincent's. His referral basis was small, most of the cases were second opinions, often cases where nothing could be done but both patient and doctor were searching for a glimmer of hope. He was now well over the age of 70 and slowing down. The practice brought in a small amount of money but would not have been regarded as a successful venture. Elsewhere Schüller spent a day a week in the anatomy department at the University of Melbourne organised by Sydney Sunderland, an unofficial appointment until an honorary appointment was eventually formalised in 1947.

Late in 1944, when Schüller had been resident in Australia for the mandatory five years, he applied for Australian citizenship and in 1945 this was duly granted. He took himself to the local police station in St Kilda, swore allegiance to the king and signed the forms (for both him and his wife). There was probably no financial or other reason why he would seek Australian citizenship other than to demonstrate his connection to his newly adopted country. In 1947 he was invited to the World Neuroradiological Conference in Antwerp but declined the invitation, although he did send a talk to be read on his behalf. The conference organisers, who included several of his old friends and colleagues, voted him president of the meeting and sent their best wishes. Privately he remarked that Europe had failed him again and he had no wish to return; perhaps it was the remembrance of the obliteration of his family in Europe that was too much to bear. Schüller never spoke about it but among his books were found several letters suggesting that a position could be found for him back in Vienna if he wished to return. Clearly he had made his life in Melbourne by this stage and was content to remain.

In 1946 came long-anticipated news from the Red Cross confirming the fate of his family. His two sons Hans and Franz, Hans's wife Gerda and their baby daughter Eva had all been transported and murdered by the Nazis. Shortly before he had received a letter from his nephew Lieut. Charles Stiassni, the son of Grete's brother Alfred. The Schüllers' two sons had spent much of their school years living with their maternal grandmother and uncles in Brno and were well known to Charles. Two of Grete's brothers with their families had migrated to America immediately prior to the war as it was becoming obvious what was to come.

Charles graduated from Columbia University before joining the US Armed Forces and seeing action in Italy. He was seconded to the intelligence service (OSS) and the Army Committee for the Investigation of War Crimes. He persuaded his seniors to send him from Prague to Brno where he was able first hand to interview a number of survivors of the camps and friends of the families. Brno was under the control of the Russian forces at the time and Charles believed he was the first American soldier allowed into the Russian zone.

Charles sent a letter back home to his parents with instructions to pass it on to amongst others Arthur and was the result of his investigations in Brno. A copy of this letter was given to my father by Alfred's daughter Susanne who had kept it for more than 50 years. It details the experiences of Schüller's mother-in-law Fredericke, their two sons, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Although addressed to the family this letter could easily pass as an intelligence report, the writing is sparse and there was no embellishment or personal opinion, it contained only the facts he was able to establish. Even many years later it is a devastating document as it follows the increasing repression of the family members followed by transport to the camps. All five were taken from Brno to Theresienstadt, where Fredericke, who was in her 85th year lasted only a few days before dying of pneumonia no doubt related to her transport there during winter. After a short period the remaining four family members were transported to Auschwitz and their inevitable fate.

Schüller was never the same after 1946. A number of his colleagues were aware of a significant deterioration in his general appearance, for which there was a tendency to blame his advancing age: he was well into his 70s. He did not discuss the terrible fate of his family with anyone except possibly O'Sullivan and Morgan. The latter recollected years later that at the time Schüller had discussed with him the role of the then recently described procedure of frontal lobotomy for control of significant depression, Morgan wisely ended that discussion. Schüller started a slow withdrawal from the hospital, reducing the number of days he attended and stopped visiting the outpatients clinic when a specialist neurologist was appointed. His days increasingly were spent at home listening to classical music and reading books his wife borrowed from the local library. There were a succession of international visitors to Melbourne who took the opportunity to visit the great man, and

old colleagues from around Melbourne brought difficult cases for an opinion.

In 1950 the Schüllers were in a position to buy a house and moved from St Kilda to Heidelberg. The property in Mortimer Street was purchased from the Coombs family who lived over the road and who were to become a great support to the Schüllers over the subsequent years. Schüller never learnt to drive and for many years his neighbour Arthur Coombs drove him to the hospital on his way to the school in Collingwood where he was head of the science department. Local families including the Coombs and Austins took both Arthur and Greta under their wings and this was to become increasingly important, particularly after Arthur's death. They became regular attenders at St John's Catholic Church. The relationship the Schüllers had with Catholicism, or Judaism for that matter, is not well understood. His parents are buried in the Jewish cemetery in Brno and although Schüller described himself as ethnically Jewish on the papers he submitted on arriving in Australia,

There is a record of both the Schüllers' baptism after their marriage and the birth of their two children. The obvious explanation for his baptism was academic advancement, as a number of his colleagues at the University of Vienna certainly did; but the evidence in his case does not support this explanation. Around St Vincent's Hospital he was recognised as Jewish, and he was happy to accept that.

In mid-1956 Schüller finally left St Vincent's Hospital. He refused any celebration and got his wish, slipping quietly away without anyone being aware. By this time he must have been aware of his progressive Parkinson's Disease. He was admitted to St Vincent's Hospital several times over the next 12 months and in the intervening period was visited by the St Vincent's Hospital domiciliary nursing service. He was admitted to St Vincent's Hospital for the last time in early October 1957 with worsening cardiac failure and died on the 31st. His death was sufficiently noteworthy for it to be announced on the Australian Broadcasting Commission national radio news bulletin, and it was marked by obituaries in several of the major international medical journals emphasising the importance of his work in developing neuro-radiology. Two Austrian journals noted his passing, also highlighting his contributions to neuroradiology; one suggested he had emigrated and the other that he left for political reasons but neither mentioned the

real reason for his emigration or the murder of his family. It took nearly 50 years for the University of Vienna to finally acknowledge the great wrongs that had been committed.

Grete lived on for another 15 years in the house in Heidelberg. In Vienna the Schüllers were at least upper middle class and although would not be considered wealthy Grete, as the wife of a university professor, had standards to uphold. When they arrived in Melbourne in 1939 money was short and Grete, an excellent cook, took on duties at a number of households around St Kilda, where they first lived, and eventually around Heidelberg. As she came to know these families, particularly the Austins and the Coombs, she took on other duties such as child-minding and piano supervision. She was an outgoing person, unlike her husband, and the friendships she developed in the local community were to stand her in good stead. Family and friends in Vienna somewhat uncharitably described her as a spendthrift: the Schüllers were certainly careful with money in Australia, particularly as there was little in the first few years. With advancing age and the effects of cerebral vascular disease, she became increasingly frail and reclusive. Neighbours and friends rallied around, doing her shopping, getting her to appointments, and generally keeping an eye out for her. The extraordinary relationship between the Schüllers and the Sisters of Charity at St Vincent's endured. The St Vincent's Hospital domiciliary nursing service, Homecare, visited her regularly and she was admitted to St Vincent's nine times in the years leading up to her death. The significance of this connection is highlighted by the fact that the Schüllers lived very close to the Austin Hospital, another of Melbourne's public hospitals, which would have been much more convenient. One of the nuns who nursed Grete related how she was admitted on occasions essentially for a feed and a rest. Grete died in St Vincent's on 27 February 1972. In her will she dispersed modest amounts to friends, several cousins and the local Catholic church but the bulk of the estate amounting to over \$120,000 (a considerable amount in 1972) was left to the Sisters of Charity who set up an educational scholarship in the Schüllers' memory.

The Schüllers share a grave in the Heidelberg Cemetery. The date of Arthur's death on the headstone is incorrect, as is the spelling of Grete's name. There was no one left to correct the record.³

Endnotes

- 1 Eduard Pernkopf was a rabid Nazi and professor of anatomy in the University of Vienna at the time of the Anschluss. He was made acting dean of the faculty of medicine within weeks by Himmler and eventually rector or chancellor of the University of Vienna. Starting in the 1930s and continuing over the next decade, Pernkopf published a comprehensive series of volumes of human anatomy which came to be recognised as among the best ever produced. He used a small number of artists and in a number of the anatomical plates can be seen Nazi insignia. It was established after the war that some of the illustrations were based on dissection specimens from persons executed by the Nazis. Eventually the publishers withdrew the volumes from sale. At the end of the war Pernkopf fled Vienna but was captured by American troops and incarcerated for three years before he returned to Vienna and in the most ironic of scenarios was given a position in the Institute of Neurology, the same institution from which he had Schüller dismissed.
- 2 Sydney Sunderland, later Sir Sydney, returned to the University of Melbourne as professor of anatomy and eventually became dean of the faculty of medicine. His research interests centred on the nervous system, and his volume *Nerve and Nerve Injuries* (1968) was regarded as a landmark study. As dean he was more than an able administrator.
- 3 In 1956, after Schüller left the hospital, Morgan arranged for his modest library to be relocated to the neurosurgical unit. Having succeeded Morgan as head of the unit in 1972, my father designated this collection the Schüller Archive and added to it significantly over the years. The nucleus contains several of Schüller's books including his two major works further annotated by their author. There are also a number of personally inscribed volumes he obtained on exchanging his works with eminent colleagues around the world including the American neurosurgeons Walter Dandy and Harvey Cushing and as luck would have it the last of the school exercise books he used to write his X-ray reports for the typists. My father never satisfactorily explained why he wrote his biography of Schüller other than he felt the world had not treated Schüller with the acknowledgement he deserved. I do know that the terrible fate of Schüller's family and its effect on Arthur affected my father deeply even 60 years later. Schüller became aware of his family's fate around the time my father was in close contact with him, and I strongly suspect my father saw firsthand the effects of the tragedy on his mentor, teacher, colleague and eventually friend. In the years leading up to father's death in 2017 aged 94, even as he became more frail it was his great wish that his record of Arthur Schüller be completed. We spent many an hour discussing that

book, which made my task as editor along with his copious and detailed research notes an easier task than it might have been. Regarding the photographs, the first was taken in the mid-1940s by Julian Smith, a surgeon at St Vincent's Hospital who was also a renowned portrait photographer. Since Schüller had a luxurious head of hair, Smith sought to produce a portrait akin to the famous one of Einstein, but to Smith's initial chagrin, the day before the sitting Schüller had a haircut. The second was taken by the senior radiographer (X-ray technician) Patrick Sullivan, an amateur photographer who became a close friend of Schüller.

[For uniformity's sake the *umlaut* in Schüller's surname has been retained throughout despite the fact that it was not normally used in Australia – Ed.]

ISRAEL'S BIRTH PANGS IN THE ANTIPODES

John S. Levi

ABSTRACT

In this article the former senior rabbi of Melbourne's Temple Beth Israel shares excerpts from some of the newspaper cuttings from 1947-49 that he has kept since early adolescence pertaining to the incipient Jewish State, its struggle to survive the orchestrated onslaught of five Arab armies, and its inspirational triumph.

KEYWORDS: Israel, Israeli War of Independence, Zionism, Australian press and Israel, Yishuv

I was 13 years old when I understood that the future of the Jewish People was in grave danger. It was 1947 and as an omnivorous young reader I already knew a little about the Shoah. As for the Middle East, my Berlin-born rabbi, the eloquent Dr Herman Sanger, asked his congregation again and again whether a human life was worth more than a barrel of oil. I began to read the newspapers for more information about Palestine and about the survivors of the Holocaust. Following my own faltering public coming of age I found myself awash with fountain pens given to me by uncles and aunts and three books which the synagogue gave to every *bar mitzvah* boy and which I dutifully read. Those books changed my life. The first was Grayzel's *History of the Jews*, which reversed the way my Anglican school, Melbourne Grammar, regarded Jews and the Old Testament. The second was Stefan Zweig's classic novel *The Buried Candelabrum*, and the third was Edmund Fleg's *Why I am a Jew*. And then came the daily press.

I did not know that Britain's foreign minister, Ernest Bevin, was an antisemite. How could he be? He lived in London which, by definition, was the heart of the Empire and the noble defender of the weak. It was

the Empire in which I proudly lived that had defeated both Hitler and the evil Emperor Hirohito. I did not know about Dr H.V. Evatt and his complex role at the United Nations. I did not understand the geopolitical meaning of the Suez Canal that gave Britain access to India and to the oil fields of the Middle East. Thirteen-year-olds and erudite sermons from the pulpit don't really meld together very well. I did not know that the news we read came approved and pre-packaged through the London offices of Reuters and Australian Associated Press. Of course, I already knew about antisemitism from personal local experience. And I began to collect the local information about Palestine and the birth of the State of Israel. It was literally history by scissors and paste and assembled in scrap books week after week.

What did the Australian Jewish community know about Israel's struggle for independence 75 years ago? On 10 October 1947 the afternoon newspaper the *Herald* boldly reported 'Armies of five Arab nations are moving to defend Palestine from Zionism' while the respected Australian journalist Douglas Wilkie wrote that the Arab threats were as 'frothy as sherbet'. The Jewish Agency (Israel's putative government) scornfully reported that Egyptian army movements were 'a propaganda threat'. What were we to think? By 24 February 1948 we read in the *Argus* 'Deaths Mount in Jerusalem – Arabs confess to bombing'. The account of the destruction of Ben Yehuda Street in the centre of Jewish Jerusalem claimed 'dynamite commandos in Palestine police uniform and trained in Syria had stolen lorries in Jaffa'. The leader of Irgun Zvai Leumi (described as the Jewish terrorist organisation) had demanded the death of all (British) uniformed troops in 'the Jewish quarter of the city'. At least eleven Britons had been killed by 'Hysterical Jews seeking revenge'.

Seventy-five years ago the words 'Jews and hysteria', 'fanatical', 'terrorists' and 'revenge' would be printed again and again. The word 'hysteria' never seemed far away when Jews were concerned. The best (or worst) example of this came from New York and was duly reprinted in the *Sun* (17 June 1948). The British journalist Don Iddon wrote his 'Protest Against Hysterical Zionism in USA'

It's about time somebody said this to Americans:
 "Come gentlemen, behave yourselves. A tired hungry world is watching. Don't let the Palestine issue split us. Exercise restraint, give up abuse and calumny. When your Zionist newspaper, the *New York Post*, calls Britain

'a malignant cancer among nations' you are demeaning yourselves, not insulting us. When your columnist-commentator Walter Winchell with his 700 newspaper clients and 20 million radio listeners, suggests that the only Marshall Aid for Britain should be arsenic for the inhabitants of Downing Street and that the British are making Hitler look a saint, it is you who are made to appear fools, not us. When some of your cartoonists depict our Foreign Secretary, Mr Bevin, as a Nazi butcher and international blackguard YOUR hands are smeared with pitch, not ours.

Somehow or other, the Jews were also communists. 'Red-Jews in Ghetto Bond,' proclaimed Melbourne's *Herald* (16 April 1948) in a report from Rome by the sympathetic Australian journalist Douglas Brass, who was on his way to Palestine. 'Jews, reinforced and organised by Communists, prepared tonight to defend Rome's tiny, humble ghetto against the renewed raids by Fascists'. Meanwhile the *Herald* reported (24 April 1948): 'Widely circulated reports that the Jews will occupy the Arab port of Jaffa, following their capture of Haifa, has caused consternation there. Numbers of Jews have also left Jerusalem, fearing a Jewish coup there.' On the same day the British High Commissioner (Lieutenant-General Sir Alan Cunningham) sent a cable to the United Nations stating that the fighting was the 'direct consequence of continuous attacks of Jews during the past four days'. Twenty-four hours later the news in the *Herald* became even grimmer. 'Empire Airways Cut in Palestine'. We were told: 'Arabs and Jews are scrambling to occupy strategic areas in Palestine. Empire air routes were cut at Lydda airport, one of the biggest and best equipped in the Middle East. Arab forces were reported to have occupied the airport, but a later message stated that British guards were still in control there ... the Arabs, who had waited all night, moved in at one gate of the Lydda airport as the British forces left by another gate at dawn today.' The *Herald* reported on 3 May from Amman, and the London *Daily Telegraph* that 'the Arab ministers and other leaders have now attained unity and the ascendancy of King Abdullah of Transjordan seems to be assured'.

The *Sun* explained on 13 May 'the British Mandate Nearing End' while the Arabs, with four tanks and a battery of French 75s, 'today opened a full-scale battle for the hill tops commanding the Jerusalem-Tel

Aviv Road, life line for Jerusalem's 90,000 Jews, credited the Arab forces [who] are mainly those of the Arab National Liberation Army, led by Fawzi el Kawakji, and boasted "We are going to turn the tide of Jewish victories". The casual mention of 'Jewish victories' must have come as a shock to the Australian Jewish readers who had been prepared by the press for a disaster. But as the *Sun* newspaper printed in bold and inflammatory headlines 'Hysteria Sweeps Holy City, Roads Blocked, Rush for Money as British Leave', Jewish readers of the report may have perceived that behind those words and headlines about hysteria and the rush for money with the departure of the British there was a hidden message. As the article explained: 'Ninety thousand Jews in the capital are preparing to fight for their lives ... the post office is closed. Streets are unswept and deep in rubble. Arab men, women and children are streaming along roads to the frontier on foot, camel, mule, bicycle and in luxurious cars, buses and lorries.' It is a clear description of the birth and extent of the Palestinian refugee problem.

A small map of Palestine adorned with ominous cross-frontier arrows announced the birth of the new State of Israel (declared 14 May) on 15 May 1948. The day had come. Leading the report in the *Sun* was also a photograph of David Ben-Gurion, 'veteran Jewish trade union leader', who was said to 'reign in Israel'. The headlines read 'US recognises New State'. The *Sun* also declared 'Jews, Arabs Open War: Armies Strike as Jews name New Territory'. In Jerusalem the Union Jack was ceremoniously lowered to the sound of a lone bagpipe. In Haifa the British governor of Palestine took the salute for the last time. As he left, the first boats from the internment camps in Cyprus arrived in the newly proclaimed state crammed with the survivors of the Holocaust. Egyptian-piloted Spitfires dropped bombs on Tel Aviv. The Arab Legion of Transjordan was led personally by the Arab supreme commander, King Abdullah, who crossed into Palestine over the Allenby Bridge. On 17 May the *Sun* newspaper wrote ominously that the Legion was so formidable it took over two hours to cross the Jordan River bridge. Correspondents reported that a few British officers, wearing Arab headdress, were among the invaders. Apparently unaware that Jericho was an Arab town, the newspaper reported that 'Jericho is the Legion's first objective'.

By a classic example of bad timing, on 15 May, the day after the proclamation of Israel's independence, the *Herald* printed an article written by Basil L.Q. Henriques, the Anglo-Jewish grandee who

presided over the Jewish Settlement House in the East End of London and who was visiting Australia. Henriques was not pleased:

I write as chairman of the Jewish Fellowship, an organisation in England whose aim is to uphold the principle that 'The Jews are a religious community the members of which are united by their religion, a common tradition and history.' This basic principle excludes the idea that the Jews are a politico-national group. During my travels throughout Australia, I have met a very large number of Jews who feel themselves in every way to be Australian, distinctive from their fellow citizens only in their religion. To such as these, Palestine is the Holy Land, the birthplace of their religion. But they have no desire to give up their Australian nationality or to serve any other country.

Henriques concluded: 'To the religious Jews of either country, the acts of the terrorists are as abhorrent as they are to their fellow citizens of other faiths. Such acts are absolutely contrary to all the teachings of Judaism.' 'Not so' responded the Melbourne Jewish community, with the obvious exceptions of Rabbi Jacob Danglow of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation and Sir Archie Michaelis, speaker of the State House of Parliament. Rabbi Herman Sanger was given right of reply. He cautiously avoided the word 'terrorism' and promptly denied that the Jews of Palestine were anti-British. 'If the British Government had not issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the modern Jewish community of Palestine would not have arisen. This is a fundamental act which is remembered gratefully.'

In a blistering response to Israel's declaration of independence an urgent session of the UN Security Council was called to consider the 'state of war' in Palestine. Egypt told the United Nations that her troops had entered Palestine in order to suppress 'Zionist Terrorist gangs'. The future seemed ominous until suddenly my thirteen-year-old world turned upside down when the *Herald* printed its first despatch from Tel Aviv written by Douglas Brass, an Australian journalist for that newspaper who had taken the trouble to travel to Israel and see what was happening for himself. On 7 June 1948 Australians were therefore able to read the surprising headline 'Jews holding State Against Arabs' which had not been written by the British Foreign Office or Reuters

or Australian Associated Press. It was an Australian telling the truth. Brass was described as 'special correspondent of *The Herald*, [who] has arrived in Tel Aviv from London. This is his first despatch from inside the Jewish capital.' 'Israel is intact. That is the first clear fact hitting anybody coming here from an outside world which tends to believe that the Arabs have almost made a kill', Brass continued.

Israel is intact from north to south and is even slightly improving its lines. Its spirit and morale is deeply impressive, and even slightly terrifying. It can be stated from Tel Aviv – that vital capital of whose bombardment the Egyptians have made such sweeping claims – that the Jews, men, women and children, are utterly confident, truce or no truce, of the outcome of the war ... Their faith is exuberant. Their manpower is highly mobilised, and more arms, including fighter aircraft (some of them Messerschmitts) are gradually coming their way ... The Egyptians, admittedly, are just down the road, but what has not been generally recognised is that their whole advance has been through Arab territory and Arab towns and along Arab roads. When at last they hit the Jewish defenders their halt was smartly called.

Six months later, as that fateful year 1948 ended, Douglas Brass reflected on his scoop.

The Jews have practically won their war. This became increasingly clear as Arab unity dissipates, as King Abdullah of Transjordan prepares to come to terms with Israel, and Britain draws nearer to recognition of the Jewish State. The Jews have been clever, valiant and patient. They have been too clever and too valiant for the unhappy politicians and diffident soldiers of the so-called Arab League. During the successive phony truces the Jews have continued to strengthen and justify themselves. Through the ragged maze of attempted international adjustment, they have held to their aims with a patience worthy of their more noted Old Testament heroes. Now in white-washed and cosmopolitan Tel Aviv their single-minded leaders, one can be perfectly sure, are congratulating themselves on

their shrewdness and success. For Zion is very near.

The Australians did not react. Brass boasted that 'The *Herald* was among the very small minority of newspapers which had rather different information and whose man on the spot in Israel could find little evidence of defeatism – or defeat – in the Jews' ramshackle but determined forces.' Within a few hours diplomatic recognition of Israel was announced by both the United States and the USSR but thanks to the heavy-handed influence from the British Foreign Office formal Australian diplomatic recognition of Israel had to wait until 29 January 1949. It could be said that London still seems unable to forgive the Jews for winning. Seventy-five years have passed by since then and Israel would never be asked to join the British Commonwealth and, quaintly, the peripatetic Queen Elizabeth, titular head of the Church of England, would never be permitted to visit the world's only Jewish State. Exactly one month following the birth of Israel the *Herald* published (15 June 1948) a colourful explanation of the failure of the Arab assault on the Jewish community of Palestine by 'a representative of the London *Times* attached to the Arab Forces'. Writing of the 'complete collapse' and 'unrelieved disappointment and disaster for the Palestinian Arabs' the authoritative conservative British newspaper wrote:

Bombastic 'volunteer' leaders, whose reputation often owed more to publicity than to solid achievements, and who fought and won battles in the safety and comfort of Damascus and Cairo, entered the country proclaiming that they would sweep the Jews into the sea. Arab bands took the field wearing their conspicuous head dress, a gift to Jewish marksmen, and pitted their rifles against the machine guns and sturdy defences of the Jewish settlements ... When pathetically amateurish and futile operations were conducted against Jewish positions, the Arab Press poured out a stream of rodomontade, and publicity-seeking adventurers, brandishing pistols at public meetings hundreds of miles from Palestine, drowned the Zionist State in an ocean of vainglorious words.

Douglas Brass responded soberly: 'A cold hatred of British policy, which could become a cold hatred of Britain and the British permeates this whole beleaguered Jewish Palestine. It is a hatred that is personified

in the burly figure of Ernest Bevin, whom Palestine Jews call a monster, and which is evident at every turn among these passionate, single-minded people.' By 9 July 1948 Brass had returned to London. He wrote:

For the returned pilgrim from the 'Unholy Land' everyone has just one question – who will win, Arab or Jew? Chaotic Palestine offers no clear-cut result or decision, but if one had to give an answer one might be tempted to say: In the end the Jews will win. You might put it this way. The Jews cannot lose. For the Jews cannot finally retreat. They have nowhere to go. They are comparatively small in numbers... They are beset by five other States, poised with varying degrees of vindictiveness around their narrow territory. And they lack heavy arms in most categories. They are moreover their own worst enemies. As Israelis they are so one-eyed and intellectually belligerent that they antagonise even their well-wishers. They seem fatalistically to be committed into an acceptance of suffering and strife, a sort of communal masochism which, I feel, does not enhance their military efficiency ... There is strength in the Jewish "idea" – the attainment of the national home which is now practically within their grasp. There is a strength in their ruthlessness and there is strength in their dedicated young manhood, organised out of banditry and the Underground into a fighting force which has many qualities, not least of which are courage and initiative ... One's first reaction is that these roughly-clad youths with their rough songs and rougher equipment are a rabble rather than a battalion. And then one sees what they do among the trenches of such unhappy mercenaries as the Iraki [sic], and one is almost converted ... The Jews will fight on with all they have got. Even if they suffer defeats, their extremists will not allow them to slacken up or compromise.

It is 75 years since the birth of Israel and 78 years since the Second World War came to an end. I had witnessed a miracle.

HOW DID THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH LEFT RESPOND TO THE FIRST WAVE OF PRO-PALESTINIAN ACTIVISM FROM 1967-75?

Philip Mendes

ABSTRACT

During and following the 1967 Six Day War, many groups within the international Left abruptly shifted their position on the Middle East conflict from either pro-Israel or relatively neutral perspectives to overtly pro-Arab alignments. Yet, progressives remained substantively divided, particularly between those who endorsed the Palestinian demand to liquidate the State of Israel, and others who still supported the right of Israel to retain national sovereignty. Similar divisions existed within Jewish Left groups globally. This article examines the struggle by key figures within the Australian Jewish Left – particularly Norman Rothfield and Henry Zimmerman – to resist the extreme anti-Israel agenda. Attention is drawn to their key arguments and strategies, and also to alternative perspectives presented by other local Jewish Left figures.

KEYWORDS: Jewish Left, Israel, Palestinians, Norman Rothfield, Henry Zimmerman

Introduction

Prior to the 1967 Six Day War, the global Left was relatively sympathetic to the State of Israel. There were few groups or individuals – particularly amongst Western progressives – who endorsed Arab demands for the elimination of Israel. To be sure, the Soviet Bloc and their supporters in orthodox Communist parties were highly critical

of Israeli policies and politically aligned with the Arab states. But the Israeli-Arab conflict was rarely highlighted in progressive agendas, and the Palestinians were largely viewed as a refugee problem to be resolved by humanitarian means rather than as a people deserving of national self-determination.¹

However, the Six Day War fundamentally changed political alignments on the global Left. The Israelis were placed in the ‘bad’ pro-imperialist camp, whilst the Arab regimes, even though they were mostly military dictatorships that persecuted socialists, liberals and ethnic and religious minorities, were added to the ‘good’ anti-imperialist camp. The Soviet Bloc, whilst still officially supporting Israel’s existence as a nation state, increasingly provided unconditional political, military and financial support for the Arab campaign against Israel. For example, the Soviet UN Ambassador Nikolai Fedorenko, speaking on 9 June 1967, accused Israel of perpetrating unprovoked aggression against the Arab States whilst ignoring the many Arab threats against its existence. He also compared Israel’s actions to those of Nazi Germany, and demanded that its leaders be placed on trial for war crimes.² Additionally, the emerging Palestinian national movement – despite or perhaps because of its highly publicised acts of terrorism against Israeli civilians – gained support not only from the pro-Soviet Left, but also particularly from younger new Leftists within non-orthodox Marxist groups. The latter constructed the Palestinians as victims of western colonialism, and aligned their struggle against Israel with that of the Vietnamese against the USA.³ Nevertheless, progressives remained divided. Some remained largely neutral, or adopted balanced perspectives that recognised the national rights of both Israelis and Palestinians. Others continued to prioritise the security and well-being of Israel. In general, Marxists and other radical Leftists were more likely to endorse a hardline pro-Palestinian agenda, whilst social democrats and other moderates were less critical of Israeli policies. But even centre-Left support for Israel eroded to some extent after 1977 when the right-wing Likud Party ended the Israeli Labor Party’s long period of government.⁴

Jewish Left groups and individuals were no less divided on Israel-Palestine. In the USA, there were major frictions between pro-Israel Jewish Communists associated with the *Morgen Freiheit* (Yiddish-language newspaper) and *Jewish Currents* (English-language journal), and anti-Zionists who established the *Jewish Affairs* journal as a

counterweight. Leading pro-Israel Jews such as Paul Novick and Morris Schappes, who described the Six Day War as a 'war of self-defence', were expelled from the Communist Party, which actively endorsed the Palestinian nationalist agenda.⁵ Further to the left, a number of younger Jews were active in smaller Marxist groups such as the Socialist Workers Party that voiced vocal support for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).⁶ According to one author, there was a virtual 'civil war' within the American Jewish Left between supporters and opponents of Israel.⁷ Similarly in Britain, some prominent left-wing Jewish intellectuals such as Ralph Miliband and Mervyn Jones defended Israel and presented the case for respecting the national rights of both Israel and the Palestinians. Conversely, others presented an anti-Zionist perspective proposing the end of Israel as a Jewish state.⁸

Palestine: The Australian Left and Israel

The Australian Left was also divided concerning the outcomes of the Six Day War. Initially, a number of key organisations expressed views sympathetic to Israel. One example was the long-standing peace group the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD), which was often accused during the Cold War of being a Communist Front group.⁹ The CICD passed a sympathetic motion urging Arab recognition of the State of Israel, whilst also proposing that Israel withdraw captured territories, and negotiate a just solution to the 'Arab refugee problem'.¹⁰

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) was also sympathetic to Israel's position in the immediate post-war period. The Labor Party's NSW, Victorian and Federal conferences all passed pro-Israel motions which highlighted the leading role of the earlier Chifley Labor government in advancing the creation of Israel, and celebrated the state's military victory.¹¹ The Federal Labor Party leader Gough Whitlam was perceived to be a friend of Israel, and had visited the Jewish state three times: in 1964, shortly after the war in September 1967, and again in December 1968. In parliament, he accused the Australian Coalition government of being insufficiently active in encouraging travel between Australia and Israel.¹² In further public speeches, Whitlam praised Israel's free and democratic society and institutions, and declared that 'every Jew and Jewish community could and should feel proud of Israel's achievements which were an example to the world'.¹³ He applauded Israel for retaining high democratic standards despite 'fighting for survival for

two decades'.¹⁴ It was only later as Prime Minister from 1972-75 that Whitlam adopted what was termed an even-handed policy, but which many in the Jewish community felt was in practice acutely biased against Israel. Even then, many leading members of the Labor Party such as Bob Hawke, Clyde Holding, Don Dunstan, Joseph Riordan and Barry Cohen actively contested Whitlam's repositioning of Party policy.¹⁵

On the radical Left, the Communist Party of Australia (the CPA) gradually shifted from a neutral position, and adopted increasingly hostile policies towards Israel.¹⁶ To be sure, an editorial written during the war in *Tribune* was relatively balanced, censoring 'extreme nationalism on both sides', and emphasising 'the principle of equal rights for Arabs and Jews'.¹⁷ Equally, their June 1967 party resolution was even-handed, rejecting demands by 'extremist Arab nationalism' for the destruction of Israel, and endorsing the national rights of both Jews and Arabs.¹⁸ However, a 1970 motion was more explicitly anti-Zionist, highlighting the attainment of Palestinian national rights. In 1974, the Party expanded its critique of Zionism within Australia and the Middle East. Their resolution implicitly supported the PLO's call for a secular democratic state of Palestine as the preferred long-term objective, whilst conceding a two-state solution as an acceptable interim solution.¹⁹ To be sure, there were divisions between the NSW branch, which was partisan to the Palestinian nationalist agenda, and the Victorian branch, which presented a more balanced viewpoint. However, the party newspaper, *Tribune*, was published in Sydney, and increasingly reflected the Palestinian agenda in favour of the elimination of Israel.²⁰

Jewish Left resistance to the pro-Palestinian viewpoint

Prior to the Six Day War, the Australian Jewish Left included two principal organisations: the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism (JCCFAS), and the smaller Yiddish-speaking Jewish Progressive Centre (JPC). The JCCFAS had occasionally spoken out in support of Israel, particularly during the 1948 and 1956 wars, but was mostly concerned with fighting domestic antisemitism. During the Six Day War, the JCCFAS issued a joint statement with eight other Melbourne Jewish Labor organisations demanding 'full support for and solidarity with Israel ... at this crucial hour in the history of the Jewish state'.²¹ However, the Council gradually lost its influence in the Jewish community, and ceased to exist in 1970.²² The JPC was divided

into pro-Israel and anti-Israel factions. The latter group, wedded to a pro-Soviet position under the leadership of Saul Factor and Misha Frydman, withdrew in 1968 to form the Itzik Wittenberg Study Group. The JPC dissolved soon afterwards.²³

For many left-wing Jews, however, the post-Six Day War diversion of progressive sympathies from Israel to the Arabs came as a rude shock. The conventional framing of the conflict as involving a small democratic state of Israel fighting a courageous war of self-defence against a much larger group of backward chauvinist Arab leaders was suddenly superseded by an alternative interpretation. Instead, progressives increasingly labelled Israel as the aggressive Goliath, and the anti-imperialist Arab states as the oppressed victims. Additionally, the Palestinians, who had long been dismissed as a mere refugee problem to be solved via humanitarian forms of resettlement, were now parachuted to the centre of the debate, and their national aspirations granted equal if not greater precedence than those of the Israelis.

The remainder of this paper examines the struggle by key figures within the Australian Jewish Left – particularly Henry Zimmerman and Norman Rothfield – to resist the new pro-Arab orthodoxy that threatened to capture key sections of the Australian Left. In the words of Norman Rothfield, there was a ‘determined campaign’ led by an alliance of Arab nationalists and sections of the New Left, who employed a range of strategies – public forums, publications, protest rallies and media interviews – in an attempt ‘to persuade Australians that the State of Israel should be destroyed.’²⁴

Henry Zimmerman

Henry Zimmerman was a long-term CPA member from 1941-79 who became progressively dissatisfied with Communist policies towards Jews, Israel and Zionism. In 1968, he and others established the small Yiddish-speaking Jewish Progressive Group for Peace in the Middle East (JPGPME) which emerged out of the split in the pre-existing Jewish Progressive Centre. The JPGPME actively campaigned against manifestations of official antisemitism in the Soviet Bloc including particularly the large-scale expulsion of significant numbers of Jews from Poland in 1968, and the use of anti-Zionism as a cover for antisemitism.²⁵

In July 1967, Zimmerman condemned what he called ‘one-sided attacks on Israel’ in *Tribune*.²⁶ Zimmerman published a number of articles and letters in left-wing publications that defended Israel’s right

to national existence, and argued that any political solution would need to recognise the national rights of both Jews and Arabs to statehood.²⁷ He argued provocatively that ‘the time is soon coming when all decent people will have to meet the present left-wing anti-Semitism by saying we are all Zionists.’²⁸ In 1970, Zimmerman (as chair of the JGPME) translated a pamphlet authored by the leading Israeli (Maki Party) Communist, Moshe Sneh, titled ‘Arafat the adored and Lenin the ignored.’ The pamphlet censored the support offered by leftists to the PLO, asking: ‘How can a democrat – not to say a socialist or an honest communist – support a political body that seeks to murder the existing state of a living people?’ Sneh portrayed the PLO as mere terrorists seeking to eliminate the legitimate national rights of Israelis.²⁹ Zimmerman attacked the refusal of the CPA to openly condemn the 1972 massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. He emphasised that ‘all the Arab terrorist organisations have the reactionary aim of denying the national rights of one people. As a result their means both before and after 1967 were the use of terror against innocent civilians.’³⁰

Nevertheless, Zimmerman was by no means an uncritical supporter of the State of Israel. He often emphasised that Israeli policies in favour of territorial expansion were just as responsible as what he called ‘Arab intransigence’ for blocking peace negotiations. His preferred political solution was two states whereby a Palestinian Arab state was created alongside Israel.³¹

Norman Rothfield

Zimmerman actively collaborated with Norman Rothfield, a Labor Party member (but politically close to the CPA), who was a leading figure in Jewish Left groups and active in peace movement organisations such as the Australian Peace Council and the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD). Additionally, Rothfield enjoyed close links with the Israeli Peace Committee,³² and was instrumental in presenting their positions and strategies within the Australian political scene.³³ Rothfield was concerned at what he called ‘the increasingly unreasonable hostility to Israel that had emerged in the years following the Six Day War’. He was certainly not an unqualified supporter of Israeli government policies, but ‘felt the need for a more balanced view on this topic than that currently prevailing in Left circles.’³⁴

Shortly after the Six Day War, Norman and his wife Evelyn

represented the CICD at a meeting of the pro-Soviet World Peace Council where Arab and Russian delegates attempted to pass a partisan motion condemning Israel as the aggressor in the war, and demanding unconditional return of the newly captured territories. Rothfield intervened in the debate, arguing against one-sided criticisms of Israel, and urging approaches in favour of negotiations and peace.³⁵ In a subsequent report, Rothfield condemned one-sided perspectives that 'urge a solution merely by applying pressure on Israel without requiring the Arab States to do anything at all'. He emphasised that the core barrier to conflict resolution remained the Arab 'refusal to make peace with Israel or to enter into negotiations which could lead to a peace settlement'.³⁶

Rothfield similarly criticised the CPA for labelling Israel as the aggressor. He attacked *Tribune* journalist Rupert Lockwood³⁷ for presenting what he alleged were biased and partisan views aligned with a pro-Arab agenda.³⁸ He also attacked a series of articles in *Tribune* by the CPA leader Bernie Taft (himself of German Jewish background) as being unfairly critical of Israeli policies. Taft condemned hawkish tendencies within Israel, proposing annexation of some or all of the newly conquered territories. He also alleged that the Israeli ruling class knew that the Arabs posed no real threat to Israel, and denied that the Six Day War was necessary for Israel's survival.³⁹ To the contrary, Rothfield insisted that the population of Israel believed that 'not only their own lives and their families but the survival of their state was at risk'.⁴⁰

In public talks, Rothfield rejected claims from Communist groups that Israel had been the aggressor. However, he also urged Israel to display flexibility in peace negotiations including a willingness to trade territory for security and provide some form of justice for Palestinian refugees.⁴¹ For example, he argued that 'a just and lasting peace must include withdrawal of Jewish troops from occupied areas and recognition of the right to safety and existence of all states in the area'. He added that the Six Day War had been fought 'for survival'.⁴²

Rothfield visited Israel during 1968 to address a meeting of the Israeli Peace Committee. Their secretary, Jacob Majus (a member of the Left Zionist party Mapam) thanked him enthusiastically for his support for their concerns about Palestinian acts of terror in contrast to the pro-Arab bias exhibited by the World Peace Council.⁴³ In a further letter, Majus praised Rothfield for his attack on *Tribune's* anti-Israel bias. He also referred positively to their 'common cause' opposing the

pro-Arab views espoused by the World Peace Council.⁴⁴ Rothfield also attempted to encourage the declining JCCFAS to take an active position on Israel. Whilst expressing concern about the rise of Arab terrorism, he urged ‘friends and supporters of the Jewish Council and Israel’ to encourage the Jewish state to ‘implement a more flexible approach in order to create an alternative to war and destruction’ based on the land for peace formula of United Nations Security Council resolution 242.⁴⁵ Rothfield continued to urge Israel to reject annexation, and state a willingness to trade territory for peace and security. He also denounced PLO leader Yasser Arafat and his supporters as terrorists, bemoaning their increasing support in the Arab world.⁴⁶

In 1971, Rothfield and colleagues including Jacob Zemel, Jack Rezak, Max Teichmann, Max Charlesworth as well as Labor Party MPs Clyde Holding and Gordon Bryant, formed the Australian Committee for Peace in the Middle East, which published a pamphlet titled *Palestine, Israel and Zionism*. That publication framed Zionism as a pluralistic movement with both ‘positive and negative aspects’ and ‘progressive and reactionary’ followers, and strongly rejected Arab demands for the abolition of Israel. It recommended cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian socialists to advance Israeli-Palestinian mutual recognition and peace.⁴⁷ The Committee also organized the visit to Australia of Israeli-Arab journalist Ibrahim Shebat, editor of *As Mirsed* (‘On Guard’), the Arabic-language publication of the leftwing Zionist Mapam Party, and an executive member of the Histadrut. Shebat addressed a number of public forums set up under the auspices of Hashomer Hatzair and the National Union of Australian Jewish Students where he urged Israeli-Palestinian peace and reconciliation via a two state solution.⁴⁸

In late 1971, Rothfield and others including Henry Zimmerman, Simon Prokhovnik, young left-wing Zionist David Zyngier, and long-time JPC activist Jacob Semel established the Jewish Radical Association (JRA). One of the key aims of the JRA was to confront the growth in anti-Israel propaganda emanating from sections of the political Left including overt calls for the replacement of the State of Israel with an Arab State of Palestine. The JRA supported both the security and well-being of Israel, and recognition of the legitimate national rights of Palestinians.⁴⁹ In March 1973, for example, the JRA sent a friendly letter to Israeli prime minister Golda Meir, highlighting their support for ‘a sovereign Israel at peace with Arabs’ whilst urging Meir to initiate

new peace moves with the Arab countries.⁵⁰ But, the JRA attracted only limited support and dissolved after a few years.

In early 1974, Rothfield and his wife Evelyn sent a personal letter to anti-Israel campaigner (and prominent Labor Party figure) Bill Hartley emphasising the need for justice for both Israelis and Palestinians. The letter recommended that Hartley should call on Arab states to recognise Israel, and negotiate peace with Israel.⁵¹ In June 1974, Rothfield formed the Paths to Peace organisation to promote mutual recognition and peace between Israel, the Arab states and the Palestinians. Henry Zimmerman became co-editor of the associated *Paths to Peace* journal, which was published from 1974-86, and often reproduced articles from *New Outlook* and other Israeli peace movement journals.⁵² The first issue of *Paths to Peace* featured a further letter from Rothfield to Bill Hartley attacking the latter's call for the abolition of the State of Israel. Rothfield argued that such extremist agendas would only provoke war and further delay the achievement of justice for the Palestinians.⁵³

Both Rothfield and Zimmerman were highly critical of the support granted by many within the CPA to the PLO despite their active role in terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians. Rothfield denounced the terrorist actions of Arafat and the PLO which he insisted hindered prospects for peace including the advancement of Palestinian aspirations for national self-determination.⁵⁴ He denied that the PLO represented the Palestinians, and argued that their demands for the destruction of Israel were 'neither socialist, left-wing nor liberal but in line with the worst excesses of reactionary chauvinism.'⁵⁵

Rothfield actively exposed the contradictions in Arafat's famous 'gun and olive branch' speech to the UN General Assembly in November 1974, insisting that his demand for the destruction of Israel would provoke 'war not peace'. Rothfield opined that 'an olive branch in the Middle East does not mean Arafat's plan to destroy a nation and a state: an olive branch means the recognition of the rights of both Israel and the Palestinian Arabs to self-determination.'⁵⁶ Consequently, Rothfield opposed the proposed visit of a PLO delegation to Australia in early 1975 on the grounds that its rejection would 'help Palestinian moderates who realize fulfilment of their aspirations requires mutual recognition with Israel and not destruction of Israel.'⁵⁷ Rothfield demanded that the PLO 'indicate a willingness to abandon their policy of terror and the destruction of the State of Israel and adopt a more constructive posture in the affairs of the region.'⁵⁸

Norman and Evelyn Rothfield criticised the anti-Israel motion passed at the 1975 International Women's Conference aligning Zionism with racism,⁵⁹ and unsuccessfully lobbied the Australian delegate to oppose the motion. They wrote to Senator Don Willesee, the minister for foreign affairs, urging that the Australian government oppose any further international resolutions attacking Israel or Zionism.⁶⁰ The *Paths to Peace* journal denounced the motion as 'the way of bigotry and hatred. It encourages those who seek war as a solution to the problem of the Middle East. Peace requires respect for one's rights but also respect for the just rights of others.'⁶¹

In March 1975, Rothfield, Zimmerman and 36 other progressive Jews published a letter in the CPA newspaper, *Tribune*, attacking alleged anti-Israel bias in that publication. The letter responded to an earlier editorial in *Tribune* which attacked the decision of the Australian Labor Party government to refuse entry to a Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) delegation. According to the *Tribune* editorial, the PLO represented 'the two million Palestinians who were driven by terrorism out of Palestine to establish the State of Israel. Their right to land and to nationhood is an issue of principle forgotten by people who wax indignant about individual terrorism.' The editorial alleged that the Palestinian case had been 'obscured by a long and vicious campaign of misrepresentation and slander', and accused prominent pro-Israel Labor Party figures (and critics of the proposed PLO tour) Bob Hawke and Don Dunstan of acting as 'intolerant censors of the Australian people's right to hear the Arab side.' The editorial openly endorsed the PLO's preferred solution to the conflict based on eliminating the existing state of Israel, and instead advancing what they termed 'a just solution of the Palestine issue: the Arabs' right to return to their land, in a democratic, secular state, guaranteeing freedom and equal rights for Arab and Jew'.⁶²

In response, the 38 readers presented a different interpretation of the history of the conflict, referring to the fact that Israel was created as a result of the United Nations vote to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state, and emphasising that the Soviet Union and progressive groups throughout the world had supported that decision. The readers argued that the Palestinian refugee tragedy was caused primarily by the Arab states' violent opposition to Partition, and their refusal to accept the existence of Israel. They rejected the proposal for a

secular democratic state as 'clearly unrealistic and politically naïve', and denounced calls by the PLO for the destruction of Israel. Instead, they argued that Palestinian rights could best be advanced by a programme of recognition of Israel, and the establishment of a Palestinian state (possibly in partnership with Jordan) alongside Israel.⁶³ In summary, they argued in favour of what was to become known as the two-state solution encompassing both the State of Israel within roughly the pre-1967 Green Line borders, and a Palestinian state within the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The letter of the 38 readers was also reproduced in full in the *Morning Freiheit* (the Yiddish-language newspaper of the Jewish section of the American Communist Party) and in the Israeli Hebrew-language Communist paper, *Kol Ha'am*.⁶⁴

Alternate Jewish Left views on Israel

A number of other Jewish progressives supported the concerns advanced by Zimmerman and Rothfield. Sam Mane from Sydney published a number of letters in *Tribune* criticising Rupert Lockwood's one-sided attacks on Israel, and presenting Israel's actions as based on self-defence rather than aggression.⁶⁵ Similar views were presented by Mark Borman from Sydney who constructed Zionism as a Jewish national liberation movement, and demanded Arab recognition of Israel's existence.⁶⁶ Mark Lang (known beyond political circles as Mark Langsam) was a long-time Jewish progressive who strongly defended the State of Israel which he described as 'a tiny corner on this globe for shelter, for survival, for a little national dignity'.⁶⁷ Lang emphasised that Israel and Jews generally were divided like any other nation into a proletarian class and a bourgeois or middle class,⁶⁸ and aggressively critiqued what he identified as an increasing convergence of anti-Zionism with traditional forms of antisemitism.⁶⁹

Others on the Jewish Left were less sympathetic to Israel. Misha Frydman, long-time Marxist and leader of the Jewish Progressive Centre, consistently rejected Zionist ideology as reactionary. Nevertheless, at the same time he rejected Fatah's calls for the end of Israel as unreasonably denying the 'legitimate national rights of Israelis'.⁷⁰ Instead, he defended Israel's right to exist, and recommended a two-state solution to the conflict.⁷¹ Another Jewish anti-Zionist was veteran Communist Judah Waten, who framed Zionism as a conservative movement opposed to Socialism. Nevertheless, whilst condemning Israel's alliance with imperialist powers such as the USA and Britain, he still defended

the state's existence.⁷² Similar views were expressed by long-time Jewish progressive Saul Factor.⁷³

Further to the Left, the anti-Zionist ex-Israeli Jew Benjamin Merhav and his wife Rachel Merhav actively opposed the existence of Israel.⁷⁴ The Merhavs were members of Matzpen, the tiny Israeli Socialist Organisation, which insisted that the Israelis were an oppressor nation that should only be entitled to self-determination following a victorious Arab socialist revolution that transformed them into an oppressed nation.⁷⁵

Conclusion

The Israeli military victory in the 1967 Six Day War and the associated occupation of Arab lands provoked a new pro-Arab paradigm within sections of the Australian Left. Some anti-Zionist commentators openly supported calls by the PLO for the elimination of the State of Israel, and its replacement by an Arab State of Palestine. In response, a small group of Australian Jewish progressives led by Henry Zimmerman and Norman Rothfield actively resisted this trend, and unconditionally defended the right of Israel to exist. Their activities played an incredibly valuable frontline role in preventing the imposition of a pro-Palestinian orthodoxy on leading progressive circles, but surprisingly received little recognition from the mainstream Jewish community at the time. Hopefully, this historical overview provides them with the acknowledgement that they have long deserved.

Further research would ideally investigate the archives of political parties such as the CPA and ALP and organisations such as CICD to provide further insights into the varied Israel-Palestine perspectives and debates from 1967-75.

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WHO FOUNDED THE BUSINESS? A REVISED KRONHEIMER STORY

Paul L. Gardner

ABSTRACT

Joseph Kronheimer was a Bavarian Jew who emigrated to the Colony of Victoria in the 1850s and became one of the colony's earliest entrepreneurs. Although the history of his extraordinary business success as the director of J. Kronheimer & Co. and his philanthropy is well-known, this article presents a revised view of the story of the company's formation. The author is a great-great-great-nephew of Joseph Kronheimer. Ever since his younger days, he has regarded his own birth in Melbourne as being partly attributable to Joseph's emigration. While maintaining this view, he reveals through his recent research that Joseph was not the first Kronheimer to arrive in the colony and establish the business.

KEYWORDS: Family histories, Convicts and Early Settlers, German Jews in Australia, Tobacco merchants, Kronheimer family

The name of Joseph Kronheimer (1826-1914) is well recognised by historians of the early years of Melbourne's Jewish community. He was an extraordinarily successful businessman and a generous philanthropist whose name can be found listed as a benefactor of hospitals and synagogues, not only in Melbourne but in rural Victoria as well. Joseph was my great-great-great uncle. I have a personal reason for being grateful to him. After his emigration in the 1850s to what was then the newly founded colony of Victoria, he encouraged some of his relatives to follow in his footsteps and become employed in his thriving tobacco business, headquartered in Melbourne. The last of these was his great-nephew, Jacob Engländer (1873-1959), who called himself

Jack Englander after his arrival in the colony. Jack, whom I knew when I was young, was my great-uncle (I called him ‘Uncle Jack’). It was Jack who sponsored my newlywed parents’ escape from Nazi Germany. In 1938 they arrived in Melbourne, where I was born the following year.¹

When Joseph Kronheimer died in Melbourne in 1914, he was the wealthiest member of the Jewish community. Well-known as a philanthropist, he made major donations to both Jewish and non-Jewish causes, locally and overseas. He had become extremely rich through his tobacco wholesale business, known as J. Kronheimer & Co. In 1904, it had amalgamated with a foremost British tobacco company, WD & HO Wills. Joseph was no longer chairman (he was then in his late seventies) but remained as a major shareholder. Jack became a director of the new company, a position he still held in 1938 when my parents arrived in Melbourne.

But who was the founder of J. Kronheimer & Co.? In asking that question, I am not for a moment questioning Joseph’s role as the driving force of the business. He was the man who brought about its extraordinary expansion from its beginnings as a few retail tobacconist outlets, through to wholesaling, and then to becoming a nation-wide company before its amalgamation with its British partner. And, you might respond, what is the point of the question? Isn’t it obvious? J. Kronheimer & Co! J for Joseph, surely. That’s what I thought and believed, for many years. I had heard family stories about Joseph since my younger days. It was only in 2014, when I commenced studying my family history that I began to obtain more details of the Kronheimer story. Even then, however, I had no reason to have any doubts about the identity of the founder, i.e., the person who started the tobacco business in Melbourne. But in 2022, I changed my mind.

A centenary celebration

In 2005, along with other Kronheimer relatives, I was invited by the Austin Hospital (located in the Melbourne suburb of Heidelberg) to attend a celebration of the centenary of a building that had served as the tuberculosis sanatorium wing of the hospital. It was known as the Kronheimer building; the name appears on the foundation stone. The Austin Research Institute, then based in that building, possessed a portrait of Joseph. Joseph had donated £5000, an amount that in 1905 paid for the entire cost of construction of the building. Tens of millions, in modern language. One of the family attending the celebration was Ann

Falkenstein (née Wildberg), since deceased, a Kronheimer descendant. Although I was not engaging in genealogical research in 2005, I was interested in family history, and noted in my family journal that she was ‘the great-granddaughter of Elias Julius Kronheimer, Joseph’s younger brother’. I had no reason at the time to explore this statement any further. I can now confirm, based on genealogical research in 2014, that Joseph did have a younger brother named Elias, born in 1829 in Schopfloch, Bavaria, the hometown of the Kronheimer family, and that Elias was her ancestor. Elias was a farmer who died in 1899. But take note of that middle name, ‘Julius’. We will come back to that. This is a historical detective story, with a few tiny but significant clues scattered far and wide.

The centenary event was made possible through the efforts of Rod Skilbeck, a member of the Genealogical Services section of State Trustees in Victoria. He conducted extensive research on behalf of the Austin Hospital to locate family members and to compile a biography of Joseph Kronheimer. Skilbeck’s investigations were so extensive that he even discovered Joseph’s parents, Moses and Mina Kronheimer (née Freundlich), thus becoming the first person in my whole life to tell me the identity of one of my sets of great-great-great-grandparents. We were shown a PowerPoint presentation during the celebratory event. Afterwards, I recorded in my family journal that ‘Joseph was born in Schopfloch, Germany, in 1827 and migrated to Melbourne in 1856, following his brother Elias Julius’.

Evidence acquired in 2014² after I began my serious study of family history showed that Joseph was born in 1826 (not 1827) but confirmed that he did indeed have a younger brother named Elias, born in 1829. No mention here of any middle name of Julius. However, the evidence was entirely consistent with Ann Falkenstein’s knowledge of her ancestry: observe the line running from Elias and his wife Fanny to Rosa Kronheimer and her husband Josef Wildberg, the parents of Max, who was Ann’s father.

Elias

The name Elias crops up again in the writings of my own close family. My father Lothar Gardner (1899-1961) compiled several scrapbooks, and one of them contained notes about the Kronheimer and Engländer families, in which the tobacco business is mentioned. This scrapbook was written in English, probably in the 1950s. Here we see three assertions:

first, that his uncle Jack was the ‘forerunner’ who subsequently helped later members of the family who came to Melbourne; second, that the photograph of Jack (taken in the Victorian country town of Ballarat) was taken ‘about the time’ his uncle Jack came to Melbourne; and, third, that the Kronheimer already in Melbourne was forenamed Elias.

No argument with assertion one. However, assertion two is not even consistent with what my father wrote elsewhere in his scrapbook, where he mentions that Jack was 15 when he came to Melbourne. The photograph displays a mustachioed, well-dressed, mature adult, probably taken at least a decade later. Assertion three is the most questionable. My father was not alone in calling the central Kronheimer character Elias. As I am confident that my father did not conduct any research to investigate the Kronheimer story, I assume that what he wrote was drawn from a family story heard years earlier (or his recollection of it). The reference to Elias is puzzling. Is this a different person from Joseph? Or was Elias an alternative name that Joseph used?

Julius

With help from several experts, I began in 2014 to investigate my family history. Two strands of the Kronheimer story captured my attention. The first strand was genealogical. Joseph’s niece Clara Engländer was my great-grandmother and the mother of Jack. Rolf Hofmann’s extensive knowledge about the Kronheimer family of Schopfloch provided much new information about Clara’s Kronheimer ancestry. My investigations led to an article published online in a German website.³ The second strand was the Melbourne tobacco story. I learned about the various Kronheimer relatives who were involved in the business ever since it began. Joseph had a nephew, Max, who arrived in 1860 as a teenager and rose to be a partner in the company until his untimely death by drowning in 1893. Max’s brother Woolf arrived at about the same time but died of an illness a few years later. Joseph’s great-nephew Jack, born in 1873, arrived much later, remained with the company for half a century, and then retired and died in Melbourne in 1959. Although Max and Woolf were both sons of Joseph’s brother Heinrich, there is no mention of them in the family tree that Rolf Hofmann compiled. In this strand of the research relating to the tobacco business, I could not find a single reference to anyone named Elias or Elias Julius Kronheimer.

However, another name appeared in the Australian records: Julius Kronheimer. There is no mention of him in the Schopfloch records.

I assumed (correctly) that he was a relative, but I had no idea at the time of his relationship to Joseph. Julius was certainly important: his name crops up in numerous commercial records as one of the directors of J. Kronheimer & Co. and his role in the business was crucial, as he handled the export end of the tobacco business from the port city of Hamburg. We know that he came to Melbourne, as he obtained British citizenship in this city in 1859. But he returned to his homeland soon afterwards. Another record shows that, 40 years later, he was still a director of the company, based in Hamburg.

Who was this Julius? The easy assumption would be that this must be the Elias mentioned in my father's scrapbook, the same Elias Julius mentioned at the 2005 centenary celebration, and perhaps he was the same Elias Julius who was the great-great-grandfather of Ann Falkenstein. One can easily make sense of this, as German Jews at the time frequently dropped the name they had been given at birth (or circumcision) and adopted a more Germanic name. My paternal Gärtner grandfather was named Avraham, but I always knew him as Albert; a great-uncle whom I never knew (he was a Holocaust victim) was named Chaim, but he ran his business in Upper Silesia using the name Hermann.

The Schopfloch family tree lists two men named Elias Kronheimer. One of them was a brother of my great-grandmother Clara, but he was born in 1853, obviously not someone who emigrated to Melbourne to work in the tobacco business. The other was Joseph's brother, born in 1829, which fits well into a story of a young man leaving Germany to find fame and fortune in a new land. No mention of a middle name of Julius, though. If, however, one looks up myheritage.com, one can find a dozen or more entries referring to Elias Julius Kronheimer, and his date of birth matches the Schopfloch family tree entry. Aha, one might think, problem solved, he's Ann Falkenstein's ancestor, he's the one who emigrated temporarily to Melbourne to assist his brother, and then returned to Hamburg. But this would be wrong. The evidence negates such an interpretation. Elias was a farmer, and right in the middle of the period that Julius was working together with Joseph in Melbourne, Elias was courting and marrying his wife (and first cousin) Fanny Freundlich. Not only that: Elias died in 1899 while Julius was still alive and well in Hamburg (his celebratory 80th birthday party in Hamburg in 1911 was even reported in British and Australian Jewish newspapers).

The identity of Julius

The puzzle was resolved late in 2022, with the discovery in various ancestry.com and my heritage.com links of three previously unseen scraps of information. First, as can be seen from the Schopfloch family tree, Joseph had another younger brother, Joel, born on 3 March 1831. Nothing else about him appeared in the Schopfloch records. His name hardly ever appears in any other records. That is because as an adult he consistently called himself Julius. The fact that Julius was an alternative name for Joel appears on his 1918 Hamburg death record. The second piece of evidence relates to the order of arrival of the brothers in Melbourne. The naturalisation certificates of the two men are dated two years apart, with Joseph (in 1857) preceding Julius (1859). This might imply that Joseph arrived in Melbourne first, which would be expected if Joseph had been the founder of the tobacco business. (This is what I believed in 2014.) However, that became open to doubt with the recent discovery of a shipping record, indicating that Julius, age 21, had arrived in December 1852. Note the 1831 birth year. Clearly Joel called himself Julius throughout his adult life. His occupation is ‘dealer’. (The ‘French’ entry for country of origin is puzzling.) The third piece of evidence was found in this paragraph from page 71 of a book published in 1905 about the history of important people in the colony of Victoria⁴:

When the news of the extraordinary discoveries of gold in Port Phillip first reached Europe, Mr. Julius Kronheimer, then a very young man in Germany, had courage enough to start at once for Melbourne, landing there in 1852, in the midst of the great excitement occasioned by the influx of people from all parts of the world. Shortly after he opened a tobacconist’s shop opposite the present Flinders Street railway station, at the time when the railway (the first in Victoria) was about to be opened to what was then known as Sandridge. After a fair amount of success in this business, he pushed ahead, and obtained other premises on the site of the present Commercial Bank in Collins Street, in proximity to that historical hostel, the Criterion Hotel. He commenced then with importations from Europe and America, and was joined in 1856 by his brother Joseph, who afterwards may be regarded as the real

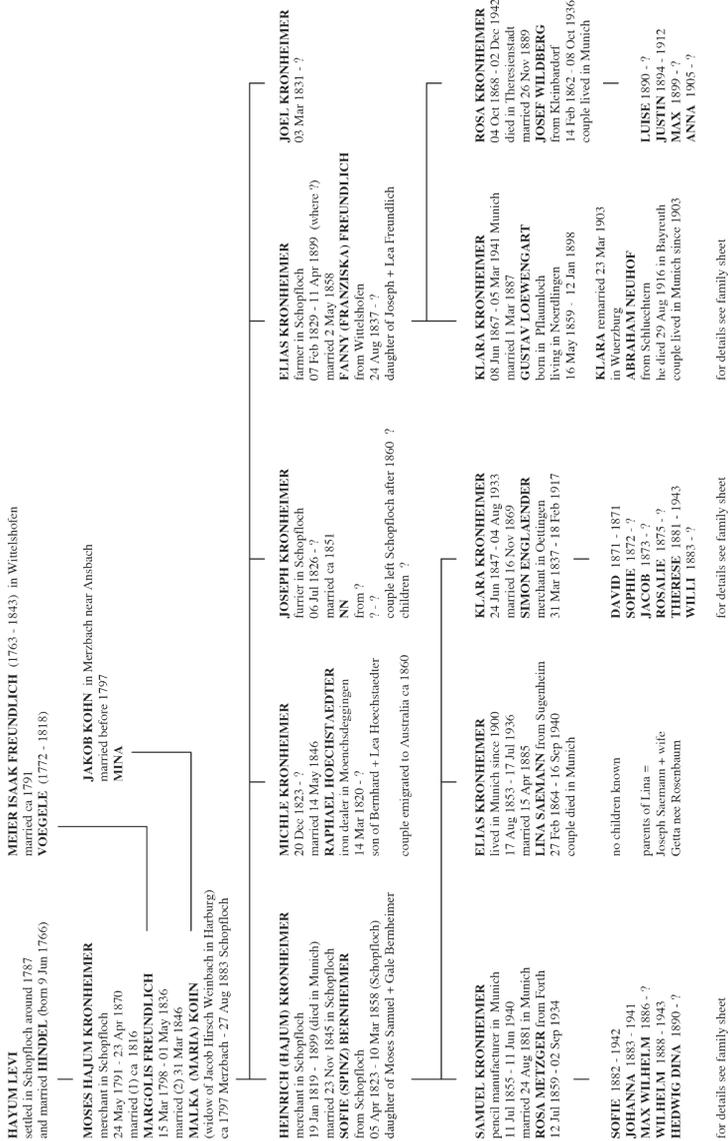
life and actual founder of the great wholesale business which by degrees was developed by the partnership.

Although the above paragraph rightly recognises the crucial role that Joseph played in developing and expanding the family's tobacco business, there can be no question that the honour of founding the business belongs to Julius. His arrival in 1852, four years before Joseph, makes Julius among the earliest entrepreneurs in the history of Victoria. (And possibly, since he founded the company, the J in J. Kronheimer & Co. refers to Julius.)

In 1860, Julius returned to his homeland (which became the German Reich in 1871) and established his base in Hamburg. As a commercial dealer in an international import/export business, he was clearly willing to move around. We have some evidence of this in the records of the United Grand Lodge of England Freemasons' Membership Register, where the Phoenix Lodge in London, on 12 November 1863, admitted a merchant, Julius Kranheimer [sic], a resident of Humburgh [sic]. How the name Elias became attached to this man in family stories remains an unsolved mystery.⁵

The research for this article also yielded the first evidence of when Jack arrived in Melbourne. The earliest document I had was Jack's naturalisation record, issued in 1897, which I originally interpreted to imply a possible arrival in the mid-1890s. I explained this at the time as a consequence of Max's death by drowning in 1893. However, the above-mentioned line in my father's scrapbook stating that his uncle Jack arrived aged 15, and our knowledge that Jack was born in 1873, would indicate an arrival in about 1888. This was confirmed in a 1959 newspaper report of his death.⁶ As Julius was the member of the Kronheimer family who first encouraged Joseph to emigrate, and a generation later Joseph invited Jack, who another generation later sponsored my parents, I can now offer a quiet blessing to Julius as well for his initiative in emigrating to Victoria, the first in a series of actions that contributed to my being born in Australia.⁷

KRONHEIMER FAMILY OF SCHOPFLOCH Version 05
 Extract of ancestral chart compiled by Rolf Hofmann (HarburgProject@aol.com) family names were only adopted around 1813



Kronheimer Family Tree (Rolf Hofmann, Harburg Project)

Endnotes

- 1 Research conducted in late 2022 yielded new information leading to a long article, 'Why was I born in Melbourne?' which has been accepted for publication during 2023 in the British genealogy journal *Shemot*. That article includes many details of my ancestry. The present article draws upon some of this research but is more limited in scope, focusing on the specific historical question of who founded the Kronheimer tobacco business.
- 2 Rolf Hofmann, now retired, is a German historian who previously worked as an architect and a real estate manager and developer. Many years ago, he bought a holiday home in Bavaria. This led to his discovering the Harburg Synagogue, which had been erected in 1754 and seriously damaged by the Nazis. He conceived and implemented the idea of restoring the building. In the 1980s various cultural events were held there. He also became interested in the Jewish history of the region and began to compile genealogical data relating to Jewish families from documents in the archives of the nearby Harburg Castle. One of those families was the Kronheimer family of Schopfloch. This was the source of the information in the family tree, above.
- 3 In 2014 I wrote about the Kronheimer family story in a chapter of my 2014 family journal. This was published in English soon afterwards as 'My Grandmother's Family: The Kronheimers and the Engländer's' on a German website; see Gardner Kronheimer Engländer.pdf (alemania-judaica.de).
- 4 James Smith (ed.) *Cyclopedia of Victoria (illustrated). An historical and commercial review descriptive and biographical facts figures and illustrations: an epitome of progress*, Cyclopedia Co, Melbourne, 1905. The cited quotation (from page 71) is from an extensive entry on the history of the J. Kronheimer & Co. business.
- 5 Ann Falkenstein called her great-great-grandfather Elias Julius Kronheimer (born in 1829) and there are numerous entries in various myheritage.com family trees mentioning this pair of forenames. I have never yet found any civic record to substantiate such a combination. Although it is certainly possible that Elias did not like his given name and chose to be known as Julius, as did his younger brother Joel, I find the idea of two brothers growing up together in Schopfloch both choosing the same alternative name difficult to believe. The name Joel never surfaced in any family stories that I ever heard. My father's reference in his scrapbook to an Elias as the founder of the tobacco business remains puzzling. Pure speculation on my part, but as both my parents and Ann Falkenstein's Wildberg parents arrived in Melbourne decades after the

deaths of both Elias and Joel, perhaps the Julius name of the Kronheimer agent in Hamburg became mistakenly attached to Ann's ancestor in family stories. Possibly relevant is the fact that in German, the letter J is pronounced Y (in German, Jacob is pronounced Yar'kob). Elias would be pronounced El'yuss, not Ee-lye'as, and Julius would be Yul'ius, so perhaps somewhere in the family story, the two brothers were melded into one. As for the multitude of 'Elias Julius Kronheimer' entries on various family trees, that is not evidence of anything, one way or the other. Managers of one family tree frequently copy entries from someone else's. If the information is true, good, information is usefully disseminated. If false, then not. Genealogical errors can multiply like viruses.

- 6 Obituary, 'Mr J. Englander' (*AJN*, 10 July 1959). An Englander family heirloom given to me by Jack's granddaughter Roslyn Seale in late 2022 provides further supportive evidence of Jack's presence in Melbourne. Sigmund Höchstädter sent a gift from Munich, inscribed in English 'to my dear cousin Jakob Engländer', a diary that Jack used for the rest of his life to record family events. The front page records the date of Sigmund's inscription: 6 March 1889.
- 7 My feelings about this are ambivalent. On the one hand, knowing that my distant relatives were capable entrepreneurs and men of social conscience who donated enormous amounts to support the poor and the sick (Julius, like Joseph, was also a generous philanthropist) naturally generates feelings of family pride. On the other hand, to put it bluntly, smoking kills. The tobacco business continues to make enormous profits at great social cost. I reconcile these contradictory emotions by recognising that the link between smoking and lung cancer and other medical conditions was unknown in the nineteenth century, and I therefore make no moral judgement about the men whose actions helped lead to my existence.

**‘A NEED IN THE COMMUNITY’:
THE VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH JEWS**

Hilary L. Rubinstein

ABSTRACT

A sliver of post-war Melburnian Jewish history that has been hitherto overlooked was the existence during the late 1960s and all of the 1970s of a social and cultural organisation consisting of Jewish migrants from the United Kingdom. The Victorian Association of British Jews drew its membership mainly from people who had come to Australia from the British Isles between 1947 and 1960, helping them to establish and consolidate social and presumably business networks. Its demise was probably due to several factors.

KEYWORDS: Australian Jews of British origin, British-born Jews in Melbourne, Jewish migrants from Britain in Australia, Post-war Melbourne Jewry, Landsmanshaften, Victorian Association of British Jews

Jewish migrants of British birth who arrived in Australia during the decades immediately following World War Two comprise a neglected cohort in our historiography. This article looks at a group of such migrants who arrived in Melbourne between 1947 and, roughly, 1960, focusing on their participation in an organisation of their very own. According to the 1911 Census there were 6,270 Jews in Melbourne, 16.7 per cent of whom had been born in the United Kingdom. Fifty-five years later, the corresponding figure was 31,058 and the corresponding percentage of Melbourne Jewry 6.9.¹ In contrast to the old established Australian Jewish community of British and anglicised largely German background, with their disdain for Yiddish and their widespread discomfort with overt manifestations of Jewish distinctiveness, our post-war cohort were products of a different upbringing. They came from mainly working class families of recent Eastern European provenance

making their livings in London, Manchester, Glasgow, and other urban centres as artisans and small traders, and many if not most had been surrounded from infancy by the sounds of Yiddish, spoken by older members of their households and those of their neighbours.

What factors must have induced these mainly second or third generation British Jews to migrate to Australia when they did? There were, of course, the factors that prompted thousands of non-Jews to do so: Britain's bomb-damaged inner-city wastelands that took years to re-develop (many people, of course, had lost their homes in air raids); post-war austerity involving very high taxes and the persistence (until 1954 on some items) of rationing that began during hostilities; and, after 1949 when the Soviet Union acquired the A-bomb, the fear of imminent atomic warfare. Australia, by contrast, was perceived as relatively prosperous, its climate attractive (inviting the assumption that it would not only be pleasanter but also cheaper to live in a warm climate than a rain- and fog-prone one, especially after the experience of Britain's freezing cold winter of 1946-47) and remote from a threatened Third World War. An additional factor weighing with at least some of the Jewish migrants was probably antisemitism. For although post-Reformation, post-Readmission Britain was essentially unreceptive to widespread virulent continental-style Jew-hatred, and although the horrors of the Shoah, glimpsed in cinema newsreels and in press reports, had driven the most malicious articulated antisemitism underground except among an incorrigible British hardcore, anti-Jewish sentiment had surfaced in response to such excesses as the Irgun's bombing of the King David Hotel in 1946 and the Stern Gang's hanging of two young British army sergeants in 1947. There was, too, an attempted return by Sir Oswald Mosley, Judeophobe and Holocaust denier, to a political career.²

Among the earliest British migrants to settle in Melbourne after World War Two were Liverpoolian brothers-in-law Hyman ('Hymie') Markoff (1920-66), and Nathan ('Nat') Morris (1914-96), who came here from Liverpool in 1947 'on impulse' and 'built homes for their families in Moorabbin, where market gardens had been sold off to provide inexpensive land for housing'. Within a year they had been joined by Hymie's wife Phyllis (née Spier; 1924-2003), his widowed mother Leah, and Nat's wife Rose (1910-82), who was Hymie's sister. With fellow Liverpoolian Samuel Victor ('Sam') Salter (né Zeltser;

1911-73), who had also migrated in 1947 to be joined within a year by his wife Muriel Violet ('Murielle', née Cohen; 1916-94) and their three children, Hymie and Nat were instrumental in founding what became the Southern Districts (later the Brighton) Hebrew Congregation. (Murielle Salter was a stalwart of WIZO and of the congregation's Ladies' Guild. In 1950 her widowed mother Henrietta, a feisty former suffragette and intrepid veteran Zionist – the longest standing female one in the English provinces – visited her here.)³ The southern suburbs from Moorabbin to Brighton became very popular with post-war Jewish migrants from Britain, yet there were into the 1960s plenty north of the Yarra. In contrast to their former compatriots who went to Sydney after the war and formed a 'closely-knit and compact little community in and around Rose Bay north', as the Sydney-based *Australian Jewish Times* (9 May 1958) put it, post-war Jewish migrants from Britain to Melbourne had as yet fewer opportunities to bond, being scattered across a wider urban area.

Reportedly, Jewish migrants from Britain were largely ignorant of the advice and assistance obtainable through the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society (AJW&RS) if they ran into difficulties. Hence this *Australian Jewish News* advertisement (2 June 1950) from an anonymous individual: 'Businessman, British, competent, educated, long Continental and English experience, knowing several languages, typing, general office and secretarial work. First class references.' Ageism often negatively impacted jobseekers still in life's prime. Consider, for instance, this lament, in the *Melbourne Age*, 6 July 1953): 'I have every sympathy with "British Migrant" (3/7), who at 40 and being a British ex-serviceman, cannot find a clerical job in the Public Service or otherwise, owing to prejudice. But what about a man aged 50, having volunteered and served four years in the Australian Army, not British-born, but naturalised and of Jewish faith? I have answered numerous advertisements for clerical jobs, and after many Interviews I know that it is not proven ability, undoubted integrity, versatility and excellent references which count, but only the handicaps, and they are too many in my case. EX-A.M.F. (South Yarra).' The letter to which he was responding was from a 'British Migrant', ex-British army, of undisclosed religion living in St Kilda, who on inquiring about a clerical position at a government institution learned to his chagrin that 'all administrative positions were reserved for Australian ex-servicemen,

but that anyone, including Germans, Italians, &c., could have the physical work if available.' Having studied 'employment vacancy columns, and after numerous interviews, I find one is too old at 40. It appears that one has not only to compete with experience, but also against age, married men, and prejudice, rather than ability. Whilst this state of affairs exists there will be many more British migrants returning to Britain.'⁴

It was reported that 'Whereas nearly all European migrants are sponsored or assisted by the Society, those from countries such as South Africa, Canada and Britain are often likely to bypass it altogether.'⁵ Late one September night in 1951 a British Jew surnamed Brace, staying at the AJWS's hostel in Coburg, opened his door in response to a knock on the window, and was confronted by three foreign-accented men demanding money. When he defied them, they attacked, inflicting head injuries that would require medical treatment, and fleeing in a utility truck when other residents came to his aid. The three 'bandits', assumed to be 'quite accustomed to rob Jews in Europe', were apparently never caught. (The victim was perhaps Harry Brace, a tailor whose wife Millie, in 1954 when the couple and their children were living in Carlton, won third prize – £1,250, about \$250,000 today – in Tattersall's state lottery on behalf of 'Pomies' [sic], presumably a syndicate.)⁶ Among the native English-speakers unexpectedly glad of the Society's support was a young married couple who arrived in Melbourne in 1963. The husband promptly found employment in an electrical parts factory and the wife in a shop, enabling them to rent a flat and buy furnishings on 'hire purchase'. But before long he was injured at work and laid off for two months, and then, having become pregnant, she soon had to quit her job to care for their new-born son. The infant had an innate medical condition that necessitated ongoing specialist's fees. Their hire purchase payments in arrears, creditors issuing summonses, and money tight, the couple moved from the flat into a single rented room, and, more as a gesture of frantic despair than a confident step, contacted the Welfare Society. Having assessed their plight it granted them financial assistance. Yet as the *Australian Jewish Herald* (29 October 1965) observed, they had been only 'vaguely' aware of the Society's nature and purpose, and 'Many English speaking migrants are unaware' altogether 'of the help they can receive from' that source.

Consider the following 'small ads' (all from the *Australian Jewish News*, Melbourne edition). In the 21 March 1951 issue: 'Wanted to

Rent. Desperate Scottish Jewish couple with 2 children req. house or flat furn. or unfurn.’ In the very same column, by a cabinet maker from London staying in the Migrants’ Hostel, Pascoe Vale: ‘Wanted S.C. [self-contained] flat, 3 rooms, in nice district in easy reach of City. British couple willing to buy some furniture or pay moderate rent.’ In the 28 March 1952 issue: ‘Scottish couple, 2 children house, flat, furn[ished] or [sic] rent, any proposition considered, any period. Alternative return Scotland’; also ‘Jewish, British, ex-Serviceman, wife, no children, must get within two weeks S[elf] C[ontained] flat, 3 rooms, unfurnished. Willing to pay advance rent, £3 or £4 wk.’ (The latter applicants were meanwhile in the Pascoe Vale hostel.) Were they, and the Scottish enquirers, the same advertisers as in 1951? It seems likely. In the 15 August 1952 issue: ‘Wanted to Rent. A quiet British family, 2 ladies, boy 13, req[ui]re] 2 B[edroom] S[elf]C[ontained] flat or house. Would be willing to purchase furnishings.’ That same year, on 26 December: ‘Couple recently arrived from England required [sic] living accommodation, desperately, southern suburbs.’ An address in Whitmuir Road, Bentleigh was the contact one. Its phone number was identical to ads on behalf of the seemingly identical couple, shortly before their arrival from England, which had appeared in the newspaper both before and after their arrival in Melbourne in November, in the last of which they sought a ‘furnished room with a kitchen’ in Caulfield, Bentleigh, Brighton or St Kilda.⁷ And there were ads seeking social contact, some with a view to matrimony. In the issue of 1 April 1949: ‘Would tall, personable, cultured and intelligent British born bachelor, over 40, care to correspond with attractive English girl?’ On 12 February 1954: ‘Refined British lady desires to meet refined tall gentleman 35-40 years view friendship, cinema, outings and dancing. Reply with photograph if possible.’ A box number was given. On 10 September that year: ‘Engineer, 48, British, desires lady penfriend up to 45.’ And on 5 March 1954: ‘Young British couple interested in dancing, films and sport would like to meet same.’

The British migrants’ relative lack of geographical cohesiveness, while providing an impetus for the perceived need to form a kind of *landsleit* of their own, probably explains, at least partially, why it was not until the 1960s that one was started, for the reality that there were sufficient British-born Jews in Melbourne to make such a venture both attractive and feasible probably took time to reach key individuals

each side of the Yarra. We learn from a contemporary report that the impetus had come from 'a small group of Jews from England who, after a number of years in Melbourne, had noted the great work done by the various *Landsmanschaften* of European Jews for social and cultural activity' and, with a view to establishing 'a similar organisation' for the 'large numbers of Jews from all centres of Great Britain, who apart from religious affiliations had no other means of sharing their common experience', asked communally active British Jews known to them whether such an organisation was needed and met an encouraging response.⁸

Consequently, on 22 October 1965 a boxed advertisement appeared in the Melbourne edition of the *Australian Jewish News* advising that at 8 p.m. on the evening of Sunday, 31 October, at the Beth Weizmann Community Centre, 584 St Kilda Road, a meeting would be held 'with a view to forming an organisation of British Jews for Social and Cultural Activities', and inviting 'All British Jews to Attend'. Further information could be obtained by ringing, after hours, any of the persons whose telephone numbers were given: Messrs. D. Zeiderman, M. Burke, H. Levene [sic; i.e. Levine], A. Langley, and G. Glazier. 'All Welcome', the bottom line iterated, twice. Accordingly, on 31 October, upwards of 140 'ex-Britishers' packed into Beth Weizmann. Chairing the meeting was a doughty figure in the annals of both London and Melbourne Jewry, Eric (Ephraim) Briskman (1916-97), who arrived in 1950 with his wife Hilda and two daughters and established a printing business. They lived in East Bentleigh and later in Ormond. Born in Bethnal Green, in London's East End, Eric – jocular, and of intellectual proclivities – had been 'brought up rigidly to observe the *mitzvot* and the rituals': his father was a rabbi who died shortly before Eric's bar mitzvah. Partly due to the horrors of the Shoah Eric's *frumkeit* (though not his ingrained sense of Jewish values) dissipated, but he found his niche in Progressive Judaism. He served, inter alia, as president and as *shammas* of the Southern Liberal Congregation (forerunner of the Bentleigh Progressive Synagogue) and was active – as he had been in London against Mosley's Jew-baiting Blackshirts – in anti-fascist endeavours.⁹ Now, following his words of encouragement to the gathering, listeners agreed to form themselves into the Victorian Association of British Jews and proceeded to elect office-bearers and a committee. 'The Association was first mooted by Jews from England who have been living in Australia for some years and had noted the good work

done for cultural and social causes by the various *landsmanshaften* of European Jews,' explained the resultant publicity statement. 'They felt that Jews with an English background, apart from religious affiliations, had no means of sharing their common experience. Members of the Association feel its activities would fill a need in the community.' The VABJ hoped eventually 'to purchase its own premises' (a goal never attained).¹⁰ Noted the *Australian Jewish Herald* (19 November 1965): 'This is no narrow segregated group, but a wide section of the community which feels it can achieve much in its own right, while still co-operating with other fields. The establishment of groups of this type follows closely the official view of Sir Robert Menzies, and the Federal Government, which believes that people from other lands should unite to preserve their common heritage and culture.'

Rather predictably, the men whose names had appeared for contact purposes in the initial publicity material (most of whom originated in London's East End proper or just adjacent to it) took leading roles. The president of the new organisation was Harry (Abraham) Levine (1907-2001), described in the Victorian electoral rolls as a 'designer'. He and his wife Brana (née Yager; 1908-88), married in London in 1933, and now lived in a flat in Dandenong Road, Windsor. They had previously resided in Edgware, north-west London, migrating with their two sons in 1957. Vice-president was Alfred ('Alf') Langley (né Ottolanguì; 1921-2010), whose Italian Jewish surname, a rare form of Ottolenghi, derives from Ettlingen in Germany. The son of a Stepney electrician, Alf had arrived in Melbourne in 1952 with his wife [Sally] Hilda (née Markowitz aka Martin; 1921-84), whom he had married in 1941, and two children. The VABJ's treasurer was David Zeiderman (1915-85), a tailor like his Polish-born father. London-born David and his wife Bessie (née Markowitz; 1917-2009), a dressmaker, married in Stepney in 1943. Bessie (aka Betty in later life) was Mrs Langley's sister. Implying a chain migration, perhaps inspired by nineteenth-century Ottolanguì (also aka Langley) settlement in Victoria, the two couples travelled to Australia together, bound for an address in Oakleigh. Later they lived in Bentleigh a few doors from each other. By 1958 the Langleys, still under their original surname, were residing in Bentleigh's commercial Centre Road, Alf (his occupation previously listed in the electoral rolls as 'sales') described as 'manager' and Hilda as 'proprietor'. They had formally changed their surname by the time the VABJ was founded,

and were living in Moorabbin, to which the Zeidermans also moved.¹¹

Helen Glazier (née Rosen; 1925-80), whose husband's name had appeared in the advertisement, was the VABJ's honorary secretary. Born in London's East End, she was the daughter of Louis Rosen, a credit draper – one who sells his wares on trust of future payment – and his wife Rose (née Glicksman). She and her husband Gerald Emanuel Glazier (1919-79), a motor dealer's son from the Prestwich district of Manchester, married in London in 1945. They moved to Australia when their only child, Rosalynd Hilary (b. 1947), finished primary school. Gerald, whose last British address, as listed on his passenger liner's manifest, was in Salford, Lancashire, made landfall in Hobart early in 1958; Helen, listed as a 'housewife' from Prestwich, voyaged to Melbourne with their daughter one year later. By that time Gerald was living in the Melbourne suburb of Prahran. He first worked as an engraver, and then became a credit draper. Helen quickly found work as a stenographer at the State Zionist Council. Settling in East Bentleigh, she and Gerald would prove linchpins of the VABJ. And, perhaps somewhat reflective of their links to Manchester, where, as is well-known, for decades the Zionist cause had been outstandingly strong, they were robust supporters of Israel.¹²

The VABJ's inaugural eleven-person committee consisted of ten men and a woman. One was Gerald Glazier. Let's look at the others in alphabetical order (particulars about some, being relatively elusive in available sources, are correspondingly meagre). Gateshead-born Mancunian Max Burke (né Berkovitch; 1921-93), a contact person in the original advertisement, was a clothing machinist. Britain's '1939 Register', an official record of everyone residing in the United Kingdom at the start of the Second World War, shows that Max was engaged in sewing for the Army. He and his wife Jean (née Gertrude Golda Weiner, 1920-2019), a tailor's daughter from the heavily Jewish neighbourhood of Cheetham in north Manchester where her maternal grandfather was a raincoat ('mackintosh') manufacturer, married in 1949 and migrated to Melbourne in 1958 with their daughter. They lived in East Bentleigh. In time Jean became an active voluntary worker for the VABJ.¹³ Sydney Bradley (né Solomon Bromberg; 1905-77), a gentlemen's hairdresser from Hackney, just north of London's East End, arrived in Melbourne in 1952 with his wife Lottie (née Weinstein; 1912-79), and their young son and daughter. They lived in Hampton and in Bentleigh before moving

to Moorabbin. Ralph Cowan (1918-2013), a hairdresser from Scotland, migrated to Melbourne in 1962 with his Berlin-born wife Sonja and their three daughters. They lived in Caulfield. Mancunian Anthony Abraham ('Tony') Hayden (1921-84) was the son of Ukrainian-born Rev Solomon Hershman (1893-1971), a world-class tenor who long served as a cantor in Manchester. In 1949 Tony arrived in Melbourne, where he would marry Dawn Caroline (1930-93), daughter of physician Dr Ernest Danziger (later Danby) and his wife Sylvia (née Harris), and set up home in Balwyn. Accomplished equestrian Dawn's middle name commemorated her grandmother, daughter of the much esteemed Carlton communal figure Woolf Davis, a noted figure in Australian Jewish annals. Tony was an architect: his designs included the Caulfield Synagogue, the Kew Synagogue, and the Martyrs' Monument in the Melbourne General Cemetery at Carlton. Blessed, like his father, with a splendid voice, he belonged to the Melbourne 'Y' Club, to the Melbourne Synagogue Choir, and the Hazomir Choir, for which was often soloist.¹⁴

Michael Tobias ('Mick') Halpern (1920-2009) came from Cheetham, where his relatives were involved in various facets of garment making. He was a clothing machinist both before and after arriving in Australia in 1949. Several other, mainly young, Jewish male passengers from the Manchester area were on the same ship. Mick and his wife Rose (née Rosa Nathan, 1920-2005), who had married in 1940, lived in Moorabbin before moving to the seaside suburb of Sandringham and later to Templestowe. Martin Lawrence (1920-2005) was born in Hackney, where in 1941, still using his birth surname, Lazarus, he married Minnie Weinstein, who was apparently Lottie Bradley's sister. Following their post-war arrival in Melbourne Martin was a journalist for some years before entering the public relations field.¹⁵ (Like Michael and Rose Halpern the Lawrences ultimately retired to the Gold Coast, where Martin, along with Mick, represented the Chevra Kadisha, as contacts for bereaved Orthodox and non-Orthodox visitors respectively.) Michael Neville ('Mick') Lewis (né Schwartz; 1903-83) and his wife Kathleen ('Kate', later 'Kit', née Levene, 1909-71) married in London not long before the war. Soon changing his surname, Mick was a professional saxophonist who played in popular (non-Jewish) British 'jazz king' Jack Hylton's dance band. The couple lived in the Willesden district of north-west London, among many Jewish neighbours. With

their two small sons, they migrated to Melbourne in 1950. They settled in Brighton East, where the electoral rolls defined Mick as ‘manager’. Nevertheless, he continued with his musicianship, and on at least one occasion was billed as ‘Australia’s “Freddie Gardiner” [sic; famed British saxophonist Freddy Gardner]’. Mick’s showmanship and talent made him an ideal master of ceremonies and performer at the VABJ’s cabaret events, as well as at similar communal functions.¹⁶

Bertha (‘Bobby’) Nussbaum (née Yablonsky; 1912-89), a mother of two, was the daughter of East European immigrants to Manchester, who had married in Prestwich in 1901; the 1911 British census, taken shortly before her birth, shows her father was a tailor in Cheetham. That was where she had been living until 1949 when, preceded by her husband Woolf (‘Bunny’, 1910-87), who travelled on the same ship as Mick Halpern, she sailed to Australia with her small son and daughter. Here was clearly a ‘chain migration’ in action. Woolf was the eleventh child of Austrian-born Mancunians; his father was a shoemaker. Woolf and Bertha appear in the Melbourne electoral rolls around the time of the VABJ’s foundation as ‘garment maker’ and ‘finisher’ respectively: it was typical of the clothing trade that men’s work often consisted of cutting out and machining garments, and women’s of attaching buttons and stitching button holes. This couple were living at the identical address in Marquis Road, Moorabbin that one of Woolf’s brothers, upholsterer Morris Nussbaum (c1907-77), was bound for when he was a passenger on the very ship that brought the Langleys and Zeidermans to Australia. (Mick and Rose Halpern, before making what seems to have been a not untypical move by these post-war British immigrants further south in the greater metropolitan region, lived for years at the next-door address in Marquis Street; they and the Nussbaums were longstanding friends.) By the time the VABJ was founded Morris Nussbaum and his wife Paula were living in the suburb of Cheltenham.¹⁷

Montague (‘Monte’ or ‘Monty’) Peston (1923-87) came from a large extended family in Hackney involved in garment making. His immigrant great-grandparents had married traditionally young and produced numerous children, mainly sons. Monty’s parents were that couple’s sixth son Morris and his wife Theresa (née Schleifer). One of Monty’s cousins, Maurice, son of Morris’s brother Abraham (the parents’ seventh son and close to Morris in age), became the famous British economist and Labour life peer Lord Peston (1931-2016), an avowed

secular humanist whose own son, broadcast journalist Robert Peston (b. 1960), has long been a household name in Britain. Bertha ('Bette', née Smollan, 1920-2002), Monty's wife, whom he married in 1943, also came from an immigrant family involved in the *shmatte* trade. Having moved to Melbourne, Monty and Bette lived in Ripponlea and eventually settled in Bentleigh. [Samuel] Gerald Salmon (b. 1945), was the younger son of Mark John Salmon (1891-1972) and his wife Martha (1900-76), daughter of native East Enders Polly (née Levy) and Samuel Foot, a cigar maker of Dutch background, as many Jewish workers in tobacco-related trades were. (The Foot family's original name was Voet.) Mark and Martha married in 1937 in West Ham, Essex, a working class suburb of Greater London, where Gerald's elder brother [Eric] David (1937-98) was born; Gerald was born in Doncaster, Yorkshire, where his mother temporarily resided. The foursome came to Melbourne in 1952, Mark's occupation on the ship's passenger list, and in the 1954 electoral roll, when he lived in South Yarra, being 'painter'. Subsequently, he worked in the textile trade, which his sons would enter. By the time the VABJ was founded Gerald lived in Box Hill with his wife Janice and his parents; subsequently Gerald and Janice moved to Mount Eliza with their three children. His brother married, at the 'Toorak shul' in 1960, Helen Carman (1929-2007), of Carlton, whose parents, fruiterer Joseph (d.1969) and Leza (aka Eliza; d.1988), were born in White Russia (Belarus). Donald ('Donny') Silverstein (1927-2010), a native of Belfast, was one of the youngest of the many children of Ralph Silverstein (d.1974), a Polish-born tailor long resident in that city, who having never taken out British citizenship found himself and his wife stateless at war's end. Donald migrated to Melbourne in 1950, and his brother Joseph (d.1990), an outfitter, came with wife Sophie and son Sidney in 1952. Parents Ralph and Bessie Lilian (aka Betsy Leah, d.1959), arrived in Melbourne in 1951: both became adherents of the Adass Israel congregation. A fitter by trade, Donald and his wife Betty (née Miller; 1928-2019) lived in St Kilda before settling in Bentleigh.¹⁸

With 'All British Jews and their friends welcome', the VABJ's earliest social function was well-attended. The cost was seven shillings and sixpence, including supper, and five shillings for members.¹⁹ More than three hundred British Jews from many parts of Britain and Ireland filled the B'nai B'rith Hall on Saturday evening, November 20 for the first "Get-Together" of the newly formed Victorian Association of British Jews, it

was duly reported The president, Harry Levine, in welcoming attendees, expressed 'pride in seeing so many present'. Mick Lewis, the evening's master of ceremonies, introduced a variety of entertainments, and there was music for dancing.²⁰ The stand-out performance was reportedly that of Hackney-born Stanley ('Stan') Gerald Berkoff (b. 1930) 'who delighted the audience with his songs and humour'. An apparel wear agent by occupation, Stan became well-known in Melbourne's fashion industry while proving enduringly popular in the Jewish community as an actor, comedian, and compere, as comfortable with Yiddish as he was with English. His parents, furrier Isaac (Jack) Berkoff (1903-69) and Hetty (née Bedish; later Salkind, d.1977), had migrated to Sydney in 1950, along with Stan's sister. In 1950 Stan and his wife Ruby Lila (née Lila Ruby Spier), had married in Liverpool, Lancashire. Arriving in Melbourne in 1958 with their two daughters, they settled in South Oakleigh, Stan appearing in the electoral rolls as 'manager'. Ruby was prominent in WIZO, and in 1963 her mother Bertha (c1901-81, who was Phyllis Markoff's sister) and stepfather Harry Zeffert (c1890-1981), a Polish-born Liverpoolian tailor, left Britain and settled in Melbourne. (The Berkoffs eventually divorced, Stan marrying Bronia Rosencwajg, with whom he had two sons, and Ruby marrying Philip Greenberg.) The closing act of the 20 November evening was that of the much-appreciated Tony Hayden on guitar, leading community singing of Jewish songs in English, Yiddish and Hebrew, the crowd joining in with considerable gusto. 'It was obvious from this Get Together that British Jews exhibited as much exuberance as their European counterparts, and their appreciation of the Yiddish songs of Mr. Hayden in which most of them joined, showed that Yiddish is very close to their hearts', the report noted. And continued: 'The provision of supper for so many guests was a mammoth task for the wives of committee members who were responsible for preparing a variety of savouries and cakes which met the great demand.'²¹ (At some point during the VABJ's early infancy an auxiliary committee of 'ladies' was formed.)

On Sunday, 12 December 1965, a coach trip to the Silvan Dam, a beauty spot in the Dandenong Ranges, took place under the VABJ's auspices. The cost was 10 shillings and sixpence for members and an extra five shillings for non-members. Participants were responsible for their own picnic lunches. Games and sports were organised for children, and a separate coach was provided for teenagers. On 3 January

1966 a 'New Year Get Together' for members and their friends was held at the Glenhuntly Public Hall, Royal Avenue, Glen Huntly. Within easy reach of rail, tram, and road, that venue must have proved notably convenient for most attendees, even those still living north of the central business district. The price was ten shillings for members and fifteen for non-members.²² On 30 January 1966 a luxury coach trip for 'members and friends' and their children to Mornington occurred, participants again taking their own picnic fare. On arrival, they found that they were outnumbered 'ten to one' by 1,400 members of Melbourne's Greek community, including musicians playing exuberant Hellenic music. 'VABJ members of all ages were soon attracted to the sound, and they drifted over in ones and twos ... It did not take long before Jewish sightseers, swaying to the rhythm, were invited to join in, which some of them did.'²³

In aid of the United Israel Appeal, for which all profits were destined, the VABJ held 'A Night to Remember' on the evening of 8 July at the B'nai B'rith Hall, 99 Hotham Street, East St Kilda, consisting of dancing to a three-piece band, supper, and 'fun for all'. The cost was \$1.50 (members) and \$2 (members) – note that Australia had switched to decimal currency on 14 February 1966. On 13 August that year 'Another Night to Remember' was held at the same time at the same venue. Promising 'music' and 'dancing' and 'supper' and 'fun' at a cost of \$1.00 to members and \$1.50 to non-members, the advertising material suggested: 'Come as a party with your friends'. Convenient for public transport users via tram or bus, the venue proved to be a popular locale of many of the VABJ's social functions, as a report in the *Australian Jewish News* of 29 July 1966 observed. That report also stated: 'Since its formation in 1965, the Victorian Association of British Jews has become firmly established in the community, providing a [sic] numerous activities for members and friends.... The committee and the ladies' committee work regularly to make functions a success, cleaning and decorating halls in readiness for socials, organising spot prizes and preparing suppers – often for several hundred.' However, as that same *AJN* report mentioned, 'Purpose of the Association is cultural as well as social. The next cultural function will be on July 30, at Beth Weizmann. Rabbi R. Lubofsky will speak on "The Role of the British in World Affairs"'. The topic was not dissimilar to the talks on issues of the day that the 'Y' Club liked to put on for its members; unfortunately no

record of it or its reception seems to exist.²⁴ On Saturday, 10 September a strictly kosher annual dinner and dance took place at the Armon Hall, Alma Road, St Kilda ('Cocktails at 7 p.m. Dinner at 8 p.m... B.Y.O. \$11 double.') There was a four-piece orchestra, a cabaret, and 'prizes and surprises.' 'Book a table for your party' went the advertising. How successful this event was is unrecorded.²⁵

At the Association's first Annual General Meeting, held at Beth Weizmann on the evening of Sunday, 13 November 1966 Gerald Glazier was elected president, and his wife Helen re-elected hon. secretary, with Ralph Cowan assistant secretary. Max Burke became vice-president and Mick Halpern treasurer, with Scheier ('Joss') Boltman (1924-2015) assistant treasurer. Born in the Mile End district of Tower Hamlets, east London, Joss, a designer related through his mother (née Bromberg) to Sydney Bradley, had in 1947 while living in Glasgow married a Glaswegian, Esther (then apparently known as Tilly) Duzelman (1923-86); arriving here in 1964 with their son and daughter; they lived in East Bentleigh. Tony Hayden and Bobby Nussbaum remained on the committee, joined by former treasurer David Zeiderman and by several newcomers, as follows. Abraham ('Alfred') Caplan (1914-80), who had married Rebecca ('Betty', née Freedman, b. 1917) in 1940 and arrived in Melbourne in 1953 with their daughter. Alfred and Betty came from Stepney, where they and their families were engaged in garment-making; Betty, daughter of a master tailor, had specialised in stitching millinery. In Melbourne the couple lived for some years in West Heidelberg and eventually moved to St Kilda and finally to Elwood. For many years Alfred's occupation was listed in the electoral rolls as 'textile worker' and later as 'presser'; Betty's occupation was 'sales' and later 'process worker'. An 'H. Cowen' listed (if not Ralph Cowan) was possibly Glaswegian Henry Cowan (1921-91), who with his wife Lily Leah (née Goldberg; 1923-2011) would eventually move to Queensland. Abraham Alfred ('Jimmy') Wiseman (1923-2018) – a future mainstay of the Gold Coast's Temple Shalom – came from the south London borough of Croydon, in Surrey. He migrated to Melbourne with his wife Minnie (née Diamond; 1919-79).²⁶

On Monday, 13 March 1967 a Moomba Car Rally was organised by the VABJ, participants meeting at the St Kilda Town Hall at 10.30 a.m. It sounds like a 'blokish' event, but we must remember that recreational attractions were fewer then than now, and that the VABJ did endeavour

to appeal to as wide a portion of its actual and potential membership as it could. A 'Grand Purim Dance' (members \$1.00, non-members \$1.50) with a three-piece band was held at the B'nai B'rith Hall on Saturday, 25 March.²⁷ On the evening of 10 May, against the background of ominous developments in the Middle East, Melbourne Jews filled the Festival Hall to capacity to celebrate Israel's nineteenth Independence Day, and for the first time all Melbourne's Jewish day schools, not just Mount Scopus College, participated in the celebrations. United Israel Appeal (UIA) president Nathan Jacobson – who died in 2022 at the extraordinary age of 106 – introduced the main guest speaker, Shlomo Goren (chief rabbi of the Israeli Defence Forces and a future Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel), who was on a whirlwind trip to the Antipodes. On the evening of 21 May Goren addressed the VABJ on the theme 'Israel in Peace and War' at the home of Leonard (Len) and Rachel (Rae) Singer in Thomas Street, East Brighton. Films accompanied the talk, and supper was provided. The function jointly took place under the auspices of Friends of VAJEX (the Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, as advertised independently. Len (1923-2015), whose occupation appears as 'manager' in electoral rolls, had married Rachel Leah Figg (d.2011) in Melbourne in 1946. His parents were Mark (or Marks; d.1966) and Miriam (née Ryvitch; 1899-98) Singer, who had married in Whitechapel in 1921. Miriam's father was a Spitalfields cabinet maker from Russia, where she herself was born. The Singers migrated to Melbourne from London in 1924 with baby Len and Miriam's parents David (c1860-1940) and Fanny (c1870-1940). Mark[s] Singer worked as a tailor in Carlton; David, until old age overtook him, in his accustomed cabinet-making occupation.²⁸

In June 1968, Melbourne's Jewish newspapers carried a group photograph of leading, mainly male, VABJ figures with Keith Beville, executive vice-president of the UIA. Among the group was a newcomer to the leadership team, Joseph (Joe) Santen (1916-87), whose great-grandparents on both sides were Dutch-born Ashkenazim in London's East End. With his parents, gentlemen's hairdresser Henry ('Harry'; 1910-80) and Rose (née Bitton; 1910-2013), and his two younger siblings, Joe had migrated to Melbourne from London in 1949, described on the ship's passenger list as a clerk.²⁹ In 1953, when he was one of the Judaeon Club's two vice-presidents, he became engaged to Anne (daughter of Auburn grocers Saul and Dora Finkelstein), who

was that club's hon. secretary; they married in 1954 at the 'Toorak shul', where Joe's sister had wed a few months earlier. By the time the VABJ was formed Joe and Anne lived in East Boundary Road, Bentleigh, the electoral rolls describing Joe as 'assistant'. He had earlier been a taxi driver, living in West Heidelberg. Before that, he had been employed at the Lady Nell Seeing Eye Dog School at Wonga Park (opened in 1960), disaster striking in January 1962 when a bushfire gutted the home nearby that he shared with Anne and their children, all three of whom would attend Bialik College, Hawthorn – the little girl was the 100th pupil enrolled – and, like her brothers, the Southern Liberal Congregation's Sunday School. Anne's parents were also associated with that congregation, having moved from Auburn. Joe's mother Rose lived well past her 103rd birthday, but his daughter and younger son died at the ages of 16 and 25 respectively. He helped the VABJ with publicity, his name often appearing as the contact for further information regarding specified events.³⁰

In 1969 the UIA organised fund-raising drawing room meetings (the VABJ participated) on behalf of the little Jewish State, stressing that Israel's survival was at stake and that organisations must do all in their power to bolster Israel's cause given the the threat the Arabs posed. Publicity material cited Nasser's chilling jibe that 'The Arabs will eventually defeat Israel because the Jews of the Diaspora well tire of supporting her.' The VABJ's resultant fund-raising ball, on 17 May at the B'nai B'rith Hall, attracted 200 people, netting \$1,300 for the UIA.³¹ Well-pleased, the VABJ took the opportunity to tell the Jewish press a little about itself:

The Association caters for the 40 and over age group and has been functioning in Melbourne for about four years. It was started because of the loneliness felt by a number of British Jews, who had few relatives or friends in Australia. A number of European Jews have also joined the organisation. The Association is purely social, and arranges picnics, card nights, dances and other outings, encouraging parents to bring their children when possible. The group envisages an offshoot of the existing club to cater for the 21 and overs and young marrieds. It will function under the direction of the senior committee.³²

And again (27 June 1969):

Very few functions are organised for young married couples and those seeking an inexpensive night out. The Committee of the Victorian Association of British Jews is organising dances to combat this deficiency. Their next dance is on Saturday evening, 28 June at B'nai B'rith Hall where you can meet friends in a gay, informal atmosphere.

Mrs Glazier was the person to phone. Apparently, the VABJ's 'cultural' side had been quietly shelved. The group 'film night' at the Esquire Theatre in Elsternwick on the evening of Saturday, 25 May 1968, followed by supper, was the acclaimed *A Man for All Seasons* about Sir Thomas More, with a fine British cast, but other film nights, reflecting the usual preoccupations of Hollywood, had no relevance to Britain. More broadly, club organisers were perhaps hard-pressed to decide what precisely British culture meant in the context of Australia, or perhaps there was a shortage of suitable speakers. In any case, membership no longer consisted solely of natives of the British Isles. How most of 'the 21 and overs and young marrieds' felt about being controlled by the 'senior committee' might be assumed, for they were hardly adolescents in need of monitoring and guidance.

Meanwhile, presumably owing to the exertions of Gerald Glazier and other former Mancunians in the VABJ, at least some of whom had probably known her, or of her, even before they set foot in Melbourne, enough money was forthcoming for the unmarked grave at Fawkner Cemetery in which a migrant from Manchester had lain for the past 15 years to at last acquire a customary *matzeiva*. The migrant thus remembered was unmarried Celia Cohen, born in Prestwich in 1919 to Rachel (née Dalinsky) and Sam Cohen, both Russian natives. She had depended, following tailoring machinist Sam's early death, on the charity of a Manchester Jewish benevolent organisation. Having become a machinist herself, she migrated to Melbourne in 1951, and was employed in the Hoddle Street, Abbotsford factory of Jewish garment manufacturers Joe and Sam Frieze. They too were British northerners, having migrated, many decades earlier, from Leeds. Celia, who lodged in Highfield Road, Canterbury, died intestate of cancer in 1954. A death notice ('Deeply mourned by all friends at Frieze Bros. Pty. Ltd.') appeared in Melbourne's Jewish press, undoubtedly placed

and paid for by the firm. But with no family to mourn her no tombstone was forthcoming. That provided by the VABJ was consecrated by Rabbi Lubofsky of St Kilda, British himself, on 3 August 1969, anybody who had known Celia in Manchester or Melbourne being urged to attend the ceremony. Perhaps Celia's story shows how desolate life here could prove even for native Britishers in a British Dominion, despite facing no linguistic challenges and few major trials of adaptation.³³

On 8 August 1969 the VABJ held a dance at the B'nai B'rith Hall with a three-piece band, charging members \$1.20 and non-members \$1.75. And similarly, into 1970, although during that year there was more variety in the VABJ's offerings. Thus, for the same charge, on 25 June 1970 there was a 'Lag B'Omer dance' plus supper at the B'nai B'rith Hall, with a 'Continental band' was held; there was a 'Fun and Games Night' at the same venue on 17 July; and on 7 August a bowls night at Moorabbin Town Hall (\$2). The VABJ's fifth birthday was celebrated with a dance on 31 October 1970 graced by a 'Latin American Band'. ('Come Along and Enjoy Yourselves') members (\$1.50 admittance) and non-members (\$1.75) were enjoined. A supper dance with a four-piece band was held at Beth Weizmann's main hall on 22 November (same charges), Jewish press advertisements advising that 'All members of the community are invited'. There was also the VABJ's '5th Annual Dinner and Ball' (\$13.00 per couple) at Armon Hall, East St Kilda on 17 October with cocktails at 7.30 pm' and 'Continental band'. A 'swinging dance' was on offer next, and a 'Chanukah Dance', each for the usual prices, and with a 'good band'. There was also a December barbecue at the home of Max and Jean Burke ('Bring your own steaks') and later that month a 'Family coach outing' to Geelong. Helen Glazier was still the hon. secretary, doing most of the advertising, her home phone number openly displayed.³⁴

There was, too, a serious side to that year's activities. On 10 June, ahead of a visit to Melbourne by Bialystok-born Israeli diplomat Lieutenant-Colonel Dov Sinai on behalf of the United Israel Emergency Appeal, the *Australian Jewish News* carried a soul-stirring 'Special Message to Diaspora Jewry' from Golda Meir that proclaimed:

You are with us at every moment. You are with us when we build; you are with us when we first send our little ones to the kindergartens; you are with us in the desert; you are with us in the hills; you are with us on the bank

of the Suez Canal and on the Golan Heights. As long as you are with us ... we can take it. And I know that we can because we have no alternative. We will not run away. This is ours. Here we stay. We know that you realise now probably more than ever before that our destinies are indivisibly linked.³⁵

Playing its part, the VABJ on 27 June was among a selection of Jewish organisations (including several *landsmanshaften*, congregations, occupational groups, and B'nai B'rith) addressed by Sinai at the Warsaw Centre. Imbued with concern for Israel, the VAJB donated the proceeds of its routine supper dance with four-piece band held on 24 April 1971 to the United Israel Emergency Appeal, Dr Israel Goldstein, chairman of Keren Hayesod, and two other Zionist spokespersons, having come to Melbourne to emphasise Israel's 'urgent need' for 'even greater' support from world Jewry.³⁶ The first half of 1971 also saw a 'swinging dance', a coach outing to Warburton for a picnic, a Purim fancy dress dance with 'prizes for the best costumes', and a Sunday car outing to Lara, taking off from Brighton Road opposite St Kilda Town Hall. On behalf of the VABJ's 'New President and Committee' a 'Getting to Know You Dance' occurred at the B'nai B'rith Hall on 5 June, with the usual VABJ dance ticket prices intact. 'Dancing to a 3-piece band – Surprises – Supper', the spruiking proclaimed. 'Come along and support the Club which was formed to bring you pleasure. Hear of the new amenities which will be offered to members.' Then came a card night and supper at the same venue (cost 60 cents for members, 75 cents for non-members), a 'Crazy Night Dance' with 'Lots of fun and surprises for all' ('Swinging Band – Excellent Supper – BYO), and at the Habonim Hall, Selwyn Street, Elsternwick in November a 'Daylight Savings Dance'. The Habonim Hall also saw a VABJ 'picnic dance' in December, featuring a 'new band' and 'new attractions'. ('Bring your own food and drink in flask or bottle. Nosh provided on tables.') At a time when the Melbourne Jewish community had many social hubs than ever before, the VAJB was clearly trying to extend its geographic operational area so far as venue was concerned into the heart of Jewish Melbourne.³⁷

The following year the surface calm of what seems to have been a stagnating organisation was disturbed by ripples of discontent set in motion by those who sought to make it more relevant to potential

members younger than its middle-aged core. Thus in the *Australian Jewish News* of 12 and 19 May 1972 a boxed advertisement invited 'all Members, Supporters and Interested Parties to attend an Extraordinary General Meeting' of the VABJ at Beth Weizmann on the evening of Sunday, 21 May, 'to decide the future of the organisation'. What precisely transpired escapes us, but an ensuing press release advised:

The Victorian Association of British Jews .is seeking new members. The group has recently elected a new committee and hopes to revitalise its activities. Mr. Alf Lyons, President, is to be assisted by Mr. Reg Harris [a high-profile gymnastics coach for AJAX, of which he had been a recent president] and Mr. Alf Caplan, in executive positions. The VABJ was forced to consider dissolution but has been able to reform and plans are underway for a series of functions.

Further information could be obtained from secretary Tricia Sharpe, well-known, like her husband Hyman, in communal thespian circles.³⁸

In the subsequent outreach to potential recruits (co-existent with the desire to retain existing ones) the VABJ's February 1973 advertising declared that a 'swinging dance' at which a 'groovy band will set the mood, and supper will be served' was to take place. A varied program for 1973 included, in February, 'a picture night at the Elsternwick Cinema', in March a dance at the B'nai B'rith Hall with supper, a 'swing band' and a raffle (members \$2.00 and non-members \$2.50), in April a 'Bar-B-Q' at Warburton, in September and in December (to celebrate Hanukkah, with raffles, and lucky number prizes), an outing to the Tait Theatre in Carlton, a popular venue for group bookings, to see *An Element of Doubt* ('Pre-show drinks and after show supper provided.') A supper dance on 26 October 1974 was held at the Kadimah Hall in Selwyn Street, Elsternwick (members \$2.50, non-members \$3.00). That same hall was the venue of the Association's 'first Dance of the Season' held on 5 April 1975: 'There will be dancing to our fabulous band. A delicious supper will be served. Raffles Prizes.' There was no apparent distinction between members' and non-members' costs, unless the advertisement was slapdash: 'B.Y.O. Admission \$4.00.'³⁹ If anyone confused these 'British Jews' with their 'Anglo' counterparts of previous Australian generations who balked at Yiddish, they must have been

disabused by a box ad in the *Australian Jewish News* (20 February 1976) which advised that the VABJ 'will shortly present an updated version of that popular Haimische musical fantasy' *Jake Mit De Beanstalk*. 'Cast, backstage and musical talent urgently required. If you can act, sing or entertain, we need you.' Mick Halpern was the person to contact. Further details evade us.

By the late 1970s the VABJ was evidently struggling to make and retain members. Several reasons can be suggested for the difficulties faced. Members had begun to consolidate their socio-economic status as well as their integration in the Victorian Jewish community. Some, like Harry Levine (whose sons married brides from Eastern European immigrant backgrounds), David Kenny, and Joe Santen, whose daughter-in-law was one of the large family of Czechoslovakian-born Jewish post-war arrival Milan Hanzalik (1929-80), moved easily between the native Britishers and the post-Holocaust continental European refugees who had made Australia their home. With the admission of foreign-born associates membership of the VABJ was no longer exclusively British, and British 'cultural' events, which were seemingly always few and far between, were by now non-existent, voiding a mooted *raison d'être* for the VABJ's foundation. The Six Day War and the ongoing danger posed to Israel's security by Arab boycotts and by the PFLP and the PLO welded the mainstream elements in the community together in the face of a common danger, without distinction of geographical origin. The tug of other calls upon members' time competed with active participation in the VABJ's events. Ties to the organisation loosened as members found their feet in their adopted city. Of a winter's evening, inducements to stay at home watching television surely appeared to many a more attractive prospect than attending a social function among people already known to them. There were many social functions, ranging from talks through cabarets to supper dances, laid on by a number of differing communal groups, so that the VABJ functions had lost their edge as drawcards for existing as well as potential members. The children of VABJ members had made their own friends, at school and elsewhere, and were not as much in need of the organisation as their parents had been when still adjusting to life in Australia. For the children, Britain was a receding memory, if indeed they had personal experience of Britain at all. Although the parental generation had settled in the southern suburbs, they did not invariably attend the same synagogues; some belonged

to the Bentleigh Liberal congregation, some to the Brighton Hebrew Congregation, some to the Moorabbin *shul*, some to South Caulfield, and others to St Kilda's Temple Beth Israel. Tracing the final years of the VABJ conveys the sense of an organisation grown stale.

In 1973 Gerald and Helen Glazier had joined the Menorah Lodge and Chapter of B'nai B'rith in Melbourne and been immediately voted onto its executive. For many years Helen had been an administrative fixture at the State Zionist Council as assistant secretary and from 1974 to 1978 she was general secretary, organising *Yom Ha'atzmaut* celebratory functions and managing Beth Weizmann on a daily basis. Her promotion had been due to Walter Duffield (1921-75), a native Londoner himself, when he became general secretary of the Zionist Federation. Aware that, in contrast to the Israeli situation, the very few female Jewish communal executives existing in Australia, including she herself, did not enjoy equality with their male counterparts – being treated as mere clerical staff, routinely isolated from decision-making, and never promptly advised of what those literal man-made decisions were – she publicly said so. Nonetheless, she gave her job her all, and won high respect for her commitment and hard work. For her long and exemplary communal service she was one of three communal stalwarts honoured in March 1980 by B'nai B'rith with a Menorah Award (the others were Mrs Fay Isaacs, for 15 years associated with the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society's Frances Barkman Homes, and Jonas Pushett, who had migrated from Poland in the 1920s and assisted the community's development in diverse significant ways over the years.)⁴⁰ Gerald's communal involvement extended to his roles as an executive member of the United Jewish Education Board and as treasurer of the South Caulfield Hebrew Congregation (perhaps Duffield had been influential in persuading Gerald to join that congregation). Gerald's sudden and untimely death on 17 February 1979 caused not only 'deep sorrow and grief' to his family, which included his mother in England, but also shock and sadness to the VABJ, whose life president he was. A notice of condolence from its serving president, Alf Lyons, and vice-president, Max Burke, on behalf of the committee and entire membership, appeared beneath the family notice in the *Australian Jewish News* (22 February 1979), a typing or printing error rendering Alf's surname 'Lion').

Gerald's absence from her life probably sharpened Helen's sense of

missing their daughter, who now resided in Israel, where being a keen Zionist she had worked and lived happily for some years in the 1960s. Eventually, Helen resolved also to settle in the Jewish State, long, surely, her homeland of the mind. Due to make *aliya* on 17 June, she died on 14 June, aged 55. Tributes poured in from private individuals whose lives hers had touched, as well as from, among others, B'nai B'rith, the staff of Beth Weizmann, the State Zionist Council, and the Zionist Federation of Australia. 'She was a woman of valour,' declared the latter two in a joint statement, 'for whom no task was too small or too difficult, if it furthered the cause of Israel or the Zionist movement. May her memory live on in our deeds.' A grove of trees in the Australian section of the International Women's Forest in Israel honoured her memory.⁴¹

Endnotes

- 1 Walter Lippmann, 'Melbourne Jewry: A Profile', in Peter Medding, ed., *Jews in Australian Society*, South Melbourne, Macmillan Australia, 1973, p. 17. For a historical overview of Jewish migration from Britain see Raymond Apple, 'Australia and New Zealand', in Gabriel A. Sivan, ed., *The Jewish Emigrant from Britain 1700-2000: Essays in memory of Lloyd P. Gartner*, Jerusalem, Israel Branch of the Jewish Historical Society of England, 2013, pp. 59-93.
- 2 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/holocaust-denial-was-already-taking-root-in-britain-during-wwii-says-uk-author/>; Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls & Consumption, 1939-1955* (Oxford, OUP, 2000).
- 3 Malcolm Morris, 'The Beginnings of the Brighton Hebrew Congregation', *AJHSJ*, vol. 16, pt. 3 (1998), pp. 417-24; www.ancestry.co.uk. Not long before his sudden passing Hymie (whose father had been a manufacturing upholsterer) put his own upholstering skills to work in restoring a 1908 Rolls Royce in time for the wedding of his nephew at Caulfield *shul*. *AJN*, 10 Nov. 1950, 16 Nov. 1956, 25 Feb. 1966.
- 4 In 1954 delegates to the federal conference of Jewish Ex-Service Associations reiterated their continued support for the migration to Australia of Jewish ex-service personnel, some speakers recommending that such migrants be encouraged by AJEX in England to settle in Queensland or Western Australia, in order to strengthen the existing Jewish communities there. *Sydney Jewish News*, 18 June 1954. And in 1958 Stepney-born Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky, then assistant minister at Sydney's Great Synagogue, declared that owing to 'background, tradition and outlook', British Jews were 'generally of a good type', and desirable immigrants to Australia, generally loyal to Judaism but not fanatical or

insular. (*Australian Jewish Times* (Sydney), hereinafter *AJT*, 21 Feb. 1958). In 1958 it was noted that Sydney Jewry had acquired an increase of 12,000 persons in little more than two decades, but that there was no failsafe way of ascertaining the exact percentage from Britain: 'For one thing very few come here under a sponsored or assisted migration scheme. The majority consisted of middle-class migrants who came to Australia under their "own steam," who opened businesses, factories and workshops, about whose arrival there is no statistical information and whose actual numbers were swallowed up by the Commonwealth Census. A mere estimate places their post-war number in Sydney at less than 1000': *AJT*, 9 May 1958.

- 5 *Australian Jewish Herald* (hereinafter *AJH*), 29 Oct. 1965. In mid-1951 there were '8,590 British and non-British living in hostels' in Victoria; for Melbourne's details see *Argus* (25 July 1951).
- 6 *AJN*, 21 Sept 1951; *Melb. Herald*, 17 Sept. 1954; <https://www.ancestry.com>. In June 1953 the two initial Jewish migrants from Britain sponsored by the Australian Federation of Welfare Societies arrived in Sydney, where jobs and accommodation awaited them: they were two single Londoners, 30-year-old Hilda Besser, a cutter and designer in the clothing industry, and Helen Godfrey, aged 21, a clerk. *AJN*, Sydney edition, 3 July 1953; *Sydney Jewish News*, 10 July 1953.
- 7 See *AJN*, 12 Sept., 10 Oct. 1952.
- 8 *AJH*, 19 Nov. 1965.
- 9 Here, Hilda was active in WIZO. Eric, although he was later to castigate aspects of post-1967 Israeli policy, was a strong Zionist and continued, according to his own passionately argued insistence, always to be one. Following the couple's return to Australia after a period (1983-89) in Britain Eric developed a regular pub act as a stand up comedian and won first prize on television's Red Faces' talent show. *AJN*, 1 April 1960, 4 Oct. 1963, 6 Jan. 1982, 3 Feb. 1967, 5 March 1992, 27 Dec. 1996, 2 May 1997; <https://heyhey.tv/streaming-video/red-faces-eric-briskman/>
- 10 *AJN*, 5, 15, 26 Nov. 1965. In 1967 a survey into Jewish poverty in Melbourne was undertaken, using data from the Jewish Welfare Society. In a category defined as 'marginal poor' were 'a wide range of families' unable to afford synagogue membership fees and the like and therefore on the margins of 'the religious and cultural life of the community'. It is not clear whether any post-war British migrants, let alone any of the people attracted to the VABJ, were in the survey's sample. See Lionel S. Sharpe, 'A Study of Poverty among Jews in Melbourne', in Medding, op.cit., pp. 30-8.
- 11 Affluent Melbourne businessman John Ottolangui (aka Langley; d. 1894) and his wife Fanny (d. 1917), both from London's Spitalfields, had five

- sons and two daughters in the colony. See www.ancestry.com
- 12 *AJN*, 11 June 1974. 20 June 1980 (where the Glaziers were described as the VABJ's founders), 6 April 1984; www.ancestry.com In 1942 Gerald's father David was one of a number of Jewish men standing trial before Mr Justice [Cyril] Asquith for offences involving forged clothing coupons. The worst offenders, convicted of uttering and possession, were imprisoned proportionately; David, one of the lesser offenders, received six months for possession. *Manchester Evening News*, 23, 25 March, 2 April, 16 May 1942; *The Scotsman*, 16 May 1942. Post-war rationing in Britain led inevitably to a black market run by spivs of various backgrounds, as depicted in the Australian-scripted 1952 film *Wide Boy*, with Jewish actor Sydney Tafler (1916-79) in the lead role. Earlier, owing to Tafler's vocal impersonation, a recording supposedly of Mosley himself ranting against Jews had the intended effect of convincing a wealthy target group to whom it was played to contribute generously to the anti-fascist cause: see David Sonabend, *We Fight Fascists: The 43 Group and Their Forgotten Battle for Post-War Britain*, London, Verso Books, 2019, pp. 229-30. Some VABJ members doubtless had links to the 43 Group. Jewish involvement in Britain's black market was touched on in 'Petticoat Lane', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 8 Feb. 1947, by London-based staffer Bill Strutton.
 - 13 www.ancestry.com; *AJN*, 23 April 1993, described in the death notice provided by his family as 'A brave and courageous man'.
 - 14 <https://geoffreyshisler.com/biographies-2/shlomo-hershman/>; *AJN*, 24 Dec. 1954; *AJH*, 21 Nov. 1952; *Argus*, 11 Oct. 1930. Dr Danziger changed his surname in 1939, 'being an Australian of British parentage': see his declaration in *The Record* (Emerald Hill), 18 Feb. 1938. For his mother, Caroline (née Davis), see *Hebrew Standard*, 17 August 1923.
 - 15 *AJN*, 24 Sept. 1993. Many thanks to Liz James and Rodney Eisfelder for telling me Mick Halpern's date of death (16 April 2009), citing his probate notice in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 22 May 2009 (<http://ryersonindex.org/search.php>) Rodney adds that Rosa died 25 Jan. 2005 according to a similar notice dated 4 March 2005.
 - 16 www.ancestry.com (including '1939 Register' for exact birthdates); www.findmypast.com; *AJN*, 4 Dec. 1987, 9 June 1989. Woolf's name was sometimes given as Wolf. 'He lit up our lives with the radiance of his everlasting smile', recalled friends following his passing.
 - 17 *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 Sept. 1938; *Williamstown Chronicle*, 28 July 1950.
 - 18 *AJN*, 29 August 1952; 27 April 1956; 17 August 1956; 13 August 1971.
 - 19 *AJN*, 12 Nov. 1965 (boxed advertisement).
 - 20 *AJH*, 10 Dec. 1965.

- 21 www.ancestry.com; *AJH*, 10 Dec. 1965.
- 22 *AJH*, 10, 24 Dec. 1965.
- 23 *AJN*, 14, 21 Jan., 11 Feb. 1966.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 10 Sept. 1966.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 29 July, 5 August 1966. For the ‘Y’ Club see my article about Aaron Cohen in the penultimate issue of this *Journal*.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 26 Feb, 24 Sept. 1993, 10 June 1994. Joss’s brother Colin (Calman, 1922-2008) was a solicitor who migrated here in 1951; he lived in Brighton with his wife Paula (née Kochen), whom he married in 1955. From Rodney Eisfelder: ‘Joss Boltman married Tilly Duzelman in Scotland in 1947 (source: scotlandspeople.gov.uk). [Their children] were born in Scotland in 1950 and 1951 (<https://www.mck.org.au/search/5798> and scotlandspeople.gov.uk).’ In retirement Jimmy Wiseman and his second wife Anita (1930-2019), as well as Jimmy’s brother Jack and sister-in-law Gwen – (formerly Mrs Conway; 1928-2018) – who married in London in 1990, were deeply involved with Temple Shalom on the Gold Coast. In 1994 they were largely instrumental in twinning that congregation with the South London Liberal Congregation, encouraging mutual visits, pen friend contacts, and generally fostering ties. Also involved in the Temple were Martin and Minnie Lawrence, and in 1993 Minnie was one of the 13 middle-aged and elderly women who following suitable tuition celebrated their joint bar mitzvah there.
- 27 *AJH*, 9 Dec 1966, *AJN*, 23 March 1967, 4 Jan. 1980, 10 August 1990; 26 Feb, 24 Sept. 1993, 10 June 1994.
- 28 *AJN*, 19 May 1967 (notice of meeting); www.ancestry.com. Miriam appears in some British records as Mina Ryvitch; her birth name is occasionally recorded as Ravitch and her birthdate as 1900. In their immigration vessel’s manifest the Singers, baby Len, and Miriam’s parents (their surname spelled Ravitch) were all listed as Russian subjects. In some records David is rendered ‘Davies’ or ‘Davis’. The birth dates of David and Fanny are variously given. Goren is depicted blowing the *shofar* in an iconic photo of Israeli troops at the Western Wall in June 1967 following its liberation from Jordan.
- 29 *AJN*, 7 June 1967, where the caption misprints R. Cowen (i.e. Ralph Cowan?) as ‘R. Women’; *AJH*, 14 June 1967.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 17 April 1953; 1 May 1964. Joe’s Whitechapel-born grandfather and namesake Joseph Santen died in Melbourne in 1974 aged 91.
- 31 *AJN*, 9 May 1969.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 30 May 1969.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 12 March 1954, 24 May 1968, 1 August 1969. The latter issue states

that Celia migrated to Melbourne 'in 1953 as one of a number of 'raincoat workers' but the ship's manifest on ancestry.com provides the accurate date. The 1911 British census shows that Rachel and Sam, who married in 1910, were living with Rachel's parents and brothers in Manchester's Cheetham district.

- 34 These events are gleaned from the advertising pages of the *AJN*; dates are not specified here in the interests of space saving.
- 35 This was extracted from the final passages of Mrs Meir's rousing Independence Day speech (printed in full in the *AJT*, 28 May 1970) where 'to kindergarten' appears as 'to the kindergartens'; cf. *AJN*, 12 June 1970.
- 36 *AJN*, 16 April, 4 June 1971.
- 37 These events are traceable via the *AJN*.
- 38 *AJN*, 2 June 1972.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 27 March 1975.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 11 Nov. 1977; 20 June 1980, 19 Feb. 1982; for Duffield see *ibid.*, 7 March 1975.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 22 April 1966, 4 Dec. 1970.

REMNANT OF ISRAEL: A HISTORY OF THE GEELONG HEBREW CONGREGATION

Tanya L. Warmis

ABSTRACT

The late Isidor Solomon's 'Geelong Jewry' appeared in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* as far back as 1946. Since that time, the original congregation has closed and smaller local congregations have re-emerged. Hence, it is timely to review the history of the original GHC or *Kehila K'dosha She'arit Yisrael*. In doing so, this paper brings together a number of previously dispersed sources of information about the community. How these first Jewish settlers of Geelong worked hard to make the most of their remote situation is described, as are their contributions to their local society.

KEYWORDS: Congregations (Geelong, Victoria), Convicts and Early Settlers, Regional Matters, Religious Issues, Women.

In the 1840s, Geelong became the main port in the Western District of Victoria. Its deep port made it an attractive site not only for wool, its first main industry, but also other enterprises dependent on shipping. In the early years of the Port Phillip settlement, it has been said that for a time, Geelong rivalled Melbourne in commercial importance. It was the dealings with these commercial enterprises that have been said to have attracted Jews to the area: they were mainly traders.¹ As has been previously noted, there is evidence that a number of Jews were already living in the area by the mid-1800s. For example, there was a law case involving Philip Phillips in 1848 against the Geelong branch of the store Harris and Marks.² In August 1849, land for Jewish burials within

Eastern General Cemetery in Geelong was granted (but not consecrated until later). In that same year, it appears that organised services had already begun because by September 1849 Benjamin Goldsmid (B.G.) Levien was noted as the secretary of the GHC. It was in that capacity in 1849 that he wrote an important letter to Asher Hymen Hart, the secretary of Melbourne Hebrew Congregation (MHC). In that letter, he asked for someone to conduct a funeral for a child of Abraham Levy in the newly acquired cemetery grounds.³

There have already been brief descriptions about the first laws and regulations of the GHC which were written in 1854. These laws note how the 'form of prayers shall be the same as read by the German Jews of England' (presumably this was Ashkenazi style).⁴ There are also descriptions of how members were to be fined for not attending services, how only men were allowed to take-up committee positions, and about the separation of burial areas within the cemetery on the basis of whether the male member was married or living with a non-Jewish woman.⁵ It was not until the 1930s that significant changes (described later, below) were made to these laws.

When Asher Hymen Hart refused the request for assistance for the funeral of the child described above, he stated that MHC could not 'sanction anything in connection with a separate congregation in Geelong'.⁶ This feeling represented an initial animosity towards GHC by MHC. The congregants of MHC, as the first Jews of Melbourne, have been recorded as insisting that they were the centre of Jewish faith in southern New South Wales.⁷ However, this feeling of 'superiority and perceived self-bestowed right' diminished rapidly over time. In later years, MHC and the congregations of both Bendigo and Ballarat assisted GHC in various aspects of Jewish life. One such example was the eventual consecration, in September 1851 by the MHC's Rev Moses Rintel, of the burial ground at Eastern Cemetery.⁸ In other examples, the newly rebuilt Geelong synagogue was consecrated in December 1861 by both Rev Emanuel Myers from MHC⁹ and Rev David Isaacs from Ballarat.¹⁰ In time, representatives from the GHC were invited to conferences on conversion¹¹ and arrangements for a Beth Din.¹² Rev Benzion Lenzer from Ballarat conducted classes at the Geelong Hebrew School in 1920.¹³ From 1929-40 others such as Rabbi Israel Brodie from the MHC were sent by United Jewish Education Board (UJEB) to assist in 'educating Geelong's Jewish children'.¹⁴

Those who founded the GHC were a long way from their original homeland, which for many was the United Kingdom. The first officers (or board members) of the synagogue in 1854 were George (Godfrey) Alexander, Henry Simon Ansell (treasurer and inaugural honorary reader) and George Casper (honorary secretary). Others on the committee were D. Isaacs, Hirsch Fink, David Cashmore and Benjamin Goldsmid (B.G.) Levien. The trustees were George Alexander, B.G. Levien and Emanuel Ackman.¹⁵ It is interesting that the Hebrew name, *She'arit Yisrael* ('Remnant of Israel'), chosen for the congregation was the same as the MHC's. Possibly this name was chosen because the founders of GHC were trying to impress upon their 'sister' congregation that they were worthy of being an independent set of worshippers. Alternatively, they might have been trying to form a closer connection with MHC, being the only two congregations at that time in Victoria. Furthermore, the laws and regulations of the GHC were also said to be modelled on those of MHC.¹⁶ Minutes of the GHC, currently held in State Library of Victoria, include many references to not only the cost of maintaining the synagogue building, but about service leaders (whom and what to pay them). These issues no doubt are a feature of many congregations worldwide then and even now (Jewish and non-Jewish). Nevertheless, many congregants of the GHC not only contributed to the synagogue community as a whole, but also made significant contributions to community life in Geelong and its surrounding areas. This was a common feature of Jewish communities in the English-speaking world.¹⁷

On 10 May 1851, land was given to the trustees listed above for a place of worship. This was on the corner of Yarrow (now Yarra) and McKillop Streets, Geelong. The grant for the synagogue was 'in order to promote religion and education in our territory ... for members of the Jewish Faith, and for their purpose whatsoever'.¹⁸ Consequently on 1 June 1854, GHC consecrated a temporary timber synagogue. The numbers of worshippers had increased, 'warranting a large separate house of worship'.¹⁹ Some years later a replacement synagogue was built on the same site.²⁰ In December 1861 this new building was consecrated (it is still standing and now in private hands). Classified by the National Trust (Vic) it has been described thus:

an unusually elaborate early synagogue and as one of only two known synagogues remaining in regional

Victoria, it is a rare example of a building type. It is also an extraordinary example of an architectural design in the Italianate style and is an important example of the eclectic and diverse work of architect John Young. It displays decorative treatment unusual in buildings of this time, especially the detailing of the side bays, the corner piers and the broken pediment with its heavy brackets above the semi-circular gable light, the distinctive detailing of the stucco porch and the unusual form and glazing pattern of the arched side windows.²¹

There was also an old weatherboard cottage on site (since gone) which served as the ministers' residence.²²

Minutes of the original GHC show that over time the congregation had many leaders of divine services, including lay leaders, reverends and rabbis. Sadly, most of the professionals did not stay for long periods. This was no doubt, because such a remote location was neither personally nor professionally satisfying, particularly in later years when the congregation became smaller. The first professional was Rev Jacob Levy (or Levi), who served during 1861-68. He also acted as *shochet*, an important role in a remote location. With his appointment, services were said to be conducted regularly every 'Friday night and Saturday morning'.²³ The congregation's next reader was Rev Isaac Stone, who remained for only one year in 1867 before he went to minister in Hobart. For a short period Reverend Joseph Goldstein then took over the position, followed by Rabbi Samuel Herman.²⁴

Herman (1800-79), was probably the most famous resident rabbi to serve GHC. Born in Poland, by 1851, when he had a wife, Frances, and three children, he was rabbi of the Falmouth Hebrew Congregation, Cornwall, England. Frances died in 1860 at Bath. By 1861 Herman was lodging in London. There, in 1863, he married, as her second husband, Sarah (née Levek; 1813-91). Settling in Victoria in 1864 to join the Ballarat community, he moved to GHC in 1867. Whilst at Ballarat, he was appointed head of Australia's earliest Beth Din, the first authorised outside London by the Chief Rabbi, an appointment which Herman took with him when he ministered at Geelong.²⁵ He died in office and was buried in Eastern Cemetery, Geelong.²⁶

The last resident professional service leader was Rev Falk, who served from 1914-15.²⁷ Thereafter, leaders were only hired for the more

popular services such as the High Holydays, certain *chagim*, and for special events such as funerals. This was due to the paucity of congregants, particularly men to make-up a *minyan*. For example, in 1923 Rabbi Brodie (from MHC) is reported to have conducted a *Hanukah* service in Geelong. Brodie ultimately returned to London and in time became Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth.²⁸ In 1956, Rabbi Raymond Apple conducted a *Hanukah* service which included seven Jewish boarders from Geelong Grammar School. For many years, similar services were 'conducted by himself or ... H. Barr ...' Barr travelled from Melbourne on these occasions.²⁹

As with all congregations, social life as well as spiritual life was important. The most notable of these events was in August 1932 at Rachel Goldenberg's home, 'Beachmount', in Geelong (since gone), when a concert was held under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Women (now National Council of Jewish Women), Geelong (CJWG). A visiting famous Jewish opera singer, Cesarina Valobra, gave a solo performance at this home. Valobra was from Italy and touring Australia in 1932 with the Imperial Grand Opera Company.³⁰ Reports of the GHC have stated how women also often provided suppers after meetings either at the synagogue itself or at the home of the presidents.³¹

Despite the problems attracting professional service leaders, the GHC seemed to have somewhat better success at attracting professional and lay teachers for the Sunday School in a manner that is typical of the importance Jews have always placed on education. It has been noted that a 'Ms Fink and ... Ms Harriet Levien' voluntarily conducted the Sunday school for about 15 children in the 1870s.³² In 1893, Joseph Jacobs was said to have closed his Hebrew School in Fitzroy and moved to Geelong, where he used the minister's residence located on the site (since gone) as a school. That same year there were 20 pupils.³³ In 1911 M. R. Berg was noted as the honorary Hebrew teacher,³⁴ followed in 1912 by A. Levy. Later in 1935, classes in Geelong were reported to be held at the home of the Crawcour family. Priscilla (Zillah) Crawcour (née Lenzer) was herself formerly a teacher of the UJEB.³⁵ A Mr Loebenstein conducted 'Hebrew lessons ... given every Tuesday, and arrangements had been made that even boys of Geelong Grammar School attend these lessons' in 1936.³⁶ In later years, Phoebe Myers, Abraham Pizer and then Frances Rosenberg also took the children for lessons.³⁷ As with many other communities, honouring those who served in Britain's

wars was important. There were tributes to Geelong congregants who served in the Crimea, World Wars One and Two (such as to Simon Rosenberg who died in 1918 and who had served in the Crimea War).³⁸ Those congregants who served in either of the world wars were also honoured on separate memorial boards located inside the synagogue.³⁹ The members of the GHC were highly aware and considerate of not only the predicaments of their fellow Jews around the world, but also non-Jewish people closer to home. This is typical of congregations in the diaspora. For example in the late 1800s, the 'Geelong Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society' contributed to the 'Southern Russia Jewish Relief Fund', a fund organised by a number of congregations in Victoria,⁴⁰ and they also contributed to the 'Jewish War Victims' Relief Fund' during World War One.⁴¹ Later, GHC members Frances and Ivy Rosenberg (1906-85), mentioned below, individually volunteered for various local branches of not-for-profit groups such as the Red Cross, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind and the Australia Day Council.⁴²

As with Orthodox Jewish practices of the time, a woman's role was considered important in the home rather than in the synagogue. Commensurate with this custom, women did not feature prominently in early synagogue life except for teaching at Sunday School and organising social and fundraising activities. However, that all changed in 1929 when Dr Fanny Reading visited Geelong. Reading was the founder of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia. Under her direction, the 'Geelong Hebrew Congregation Ladies' Auxiliary' was re-formed as the 'Council of Jewish Women of Geelong' (CJWG).⁴³ Although the Ladies' Auxiliary had raised funds to assist the congregation and Jews and non-Jews all over the world for many years, the aims of the CJWG extended this role. The CJWG's aims were to promote education of Judaism for all women and girls (including in the home); to provide social support for women of all ages; and to assist in formation of friendships amongst younger Jewish people, ... thus counteract the evils of intermarriage.⁴⁴

Another aim of the new organisation was: 'philanthropy' to 'bring together all sections of the Jewish community to pool resources so that all Jews can be assisted in times of need, including those of other countries.'⁴⁵ Rachel Sarah Goldenberg (née Freedman) became the first president of the CJWG and vice-presidents were Mrs A. Pizer and Mrs H.I. Crawcour. Mrs L. Crawcour was honorary secretary, with Frances

Rosenberg the honorary treasurer. Twenty-two members formed the first committee. The CJWG prospered for almost 25 years until it folded for lack of members. But in that time, as with other Council of Jewish Women groups, they held talks, sewing afternoons, card evenings and other cultural events to raise money for improvements not only to the synagogue but also local institutions such as the local Bethany Babies' Home and the Geelong Library. The Bethany Babies' Home was originally the Geelong Female Refuge when it was established in 1868. It accommodated pregnant women, babies and toddlers, operated a maternity hospital and also arranged the adoption of babies.⁴⁶

Most significantly, the CJWG sought to overturn the male-only membership rules of the GHC. Before the turn of the twentieth century, the minutes of the GHC reported that only men were to be admitted as members. Through the CJWG, the Jewish women of Geelong were successful in being permitted to obtain their own individual membership of the congregation. A motion to this effect was proposed in a special meeting prior to the annual general meeting of the Synagogue Executive in 1937 stating that 'a letter from the Council of Jewish Women was read requesting that women be permitted to become members of the congregation.' The motion was passed unanimously and it was noted that 'The word "Person" or "Persons" as mentioned in the rule book was from here on deemed to include "Woman" or "Women" and words purporting the masculine gender shall be deemed and taken to include Females.'⁴⁷ At that meeting, it was also agreed that women were allowed to be elected to the general committee but not the Executive and no more than three at one time. The cost of membership for women were to be a 'once-off' payment of five shillings. It was not until 1952 that women were allowed on the Executive, the first being Frances Rosenberg, who held the position for many years.⁴⁸ Sadly, this role became one of the last of the GHC as she and her sister Ivy were part of the last group of people given the task of closing the synagogue in 1984.

Like their contemporary Jews generally in Australia, members of the early congregation were keen to demonstrate their loyalty to the British Crown. For instance, in 1870 prayers were said for the late Prince Alfred,⁴⁹ and in 1910 for the late King Edward VII and his successor King George V.⁵⁰ In 1953, a letter had been received from the Chief Rabbi, asking that a special service be conducted (in all synagogues of the British Commonwealth) to pray for the newly crowned Queen

Elizabeth II.⁵¹ Prayers for the Royal Family continued to be common practice, just as they are in many synagogues in the Commonwealth to this present day.

Although their numbers were small, the Geelong community held onto their religious practices, all the while receiving great respect from local non-Jewish residents. Their standing in the non-Jewish community was evident throughout the existence of the congregation. For example, a number of local dignitaries donated money and were also seen at the consecration of the 'new' synagogue in 1861.⁵² In later years, a number of congregants served on the local council (for example, for almost ten years until 1884, draper-turned-auctioneer Edward Jacobs Jones, who subsequently showed parliamentary ambitions, and Ben Rosenberg, for whom see below)⁵³; became mayors (for example, Julius Solomon, Zillah Crawcour and Priscilla Pescott – all noted later); and were accepted on the board of the local football club (for example Morris Jacobs junior).⁵⁴ However, in 1980s it was realised that the synagogue building itself was becoming too expensive to maintain. Photos from this period show mould on the walls and paint peeling on the ceiling.⁵⁵ Prior to this, land at the rear of the property had been sold (a small toilet block was on that site).⁵⁶ The visitors' book shows that since the 1940s, congregants had looked-after the building and opened it for visitors but infrequently. In 1981, Frances and Ivy Rosenberg were interviewed for an article in the *Geelong News*, and reported at that time that there were only 15 members of the GHC.⁵⁷ In 1983, the building was sold to Kees Smit, former president of the Geelong branch of the National Trust. He is reported to have said that he had great sympathy for the architecture of the synagogue. He described it as 'a beautiful little old building ... it was crying out for someone to look after it'.⁵⁸ Fortunately, in 1984 the National Trust accepted it for heritage protection as signified by a National Trust medallion on the outside of the building. Prior to the sale, many of the religious artefacts went to the Jewish Museum in Melbourne.⁵⁹ Since that time, the building has housed a number of businesses which have used it for offices and/or tertiary student training purposes.

We turn now to some notable Geelong Jewish residents (in alphabetical order of surname). Emanuel Ackman (birth name Emanuel Nachman; 1793-1876) was a furniture storekeeper and part of the group of trustees for Geelong Jewish section of Eastern Cemetery, and trustee

of the newly formed GHC. He was born in Poland and smuggled out of Cracow when he was six years old, eventually to live in London with foster parents Henry and Elizabeth Harris. He married one of their daughters, Rachael, in London in 1836. They arrived at the Port Phillip District in 1847 and then in Geelong prior to 1848.⁶⁰ George (Godfrey) Alexander (1821-1900) followed his brother Raphael to Australia in 1837. He initially went to Portland and established a drapery store in conjunction with his brother and David Cashmore. Although he was an original member of the MHC, he was also was a founding member of GHC and in fact was married there in 1850, in a ceremony conducted by Asher Hymen Hart. His bride was Miriam Levy who was 16 years old. Until 1854 Alexander's main store was on Market Square south side of Malop Street, Geelong. In 1849 he was also appointed trustee of the Jewish section in Eastern Geelong Cemetery. He and Miriam had eleven children, four of whom were born in Geelong. The other children were born in Sydney where the family lived from 1858 while he worked as a chiropodist (the first of such a profession in New South Wales).⁶¹ Henry Simon Ansell (b. 1825) born in Birmingham, was a watchmaker and jeweller who lived for a time in Launceston. In 1850 he married Rosetta Casper in Hobart, and later Matilda Myers; he had five children.⁶² He was the first treasurer and honorary reader of the GHC. A pious man, through an advertisement in the paper, he informed his Tasmanian customers that he did not do business from Friday night until dusk on Saturday.⁶³ He is recorded as living in Geelong and dealing in gold in Market Square by 1852.⁶⁴ By 1859 however, he was declared bankrupt due to debtors and ill health before moving back to Melbourne but still working as a watchmaker.⁶⁵

Much has already been written about Philip Blashki (1837-1916), who came to Victoria in 1858. He was born in Poland and started working in Geelong as a hawker and retailer of goods during the gold rush. In 1868, following a bankrupting theft, he moved to Melbourne with his wife Hannah and their, then, 11 children. Around 1875 he opened his city jewellery store in Bourke Street and grew it into a thriving business. For 39 years, he was a justice of the peace, and for a lengthy period, chair of the City Court Bench. He founded the Melbourne Jewish Aid Society, was a trustee of the Brighton Cemetery and a prominent Freemason. He was also one of the founders of the Charity Organisation Society. Philip and Hannah had 14 children and

now over 500 descendants, mostly in Australia, have been recorded. Australian cricket's 'Sheffield Shield' (the cost of which was donated by Lord Sheffield in 1893, following his tour of Australia of 1891-92) was made by Blashki. He also produced the New South Wales Cricketers' Association's Hordern Shield.⁶⁶

David Cashmore (1820-1910) arrived in Australia following his brother Michael in 1836. On arrival, David travelled to Portland in the Western District, where he opened a business, later moving to Geelong. In 1848 the *Geelong Advertiser* carried an advertisement for the opening of his clothing shop in Yarra Street. There was another shop in Malop Street which opened in 1852 with George (Godfrey) Alexander.⁶⁷ He was also a founding member of the GHC. In 1876 he married Amelia Sarah Lawrence. The service was conducted by the Rabbi Herman at the residence of J. Crawcour (possibly Joseph Crawcour) in Geelong.⁶⁸ Henry Isaac Crawcour (1876-1938) was the son of Joseph Crawcour and his wife Elizabeth (née Levy. Henry's grandfather Isaac Crawcour, is mentioned below. Henry Crawcour was educated at Geelong College. He married Sarah Abraham and in 1891 obtained articles with a Geelong solicitor, Henry Speed of Yarra Street. He built up a very successful practice and in 1911 he was elected councillor of the city of Geelong West. An active member of the Geelong Law Association, Henry Crawcour became president in 1928-30. Apart from legal, municipal and literary life, Henry Crawcour was a member of the Geelong Rotary Club, the Corio Club, and the Masonic Lodge. He was honorary solicitor for the Geelong Hospital Committee and was also president of the East Geelong Cemetery Trust. On 6 October 1938, aged 62, he died after a short illness, survived by his wife (Rose Leah, née Renzel), three daughters and two sons, Jack and Murray. Both sons became lawyers and Murray served in World War Two (see later). Jack Crawcour continued Henry's legal practice of Crawcour and Hollyhoke. Two of Henry Crawcour's grandchildren, Andrew Joseph and Jan Barnard, also practised as solicitors.⁶⁹ Isaac Crawcour (1815-86) arrived in Australia in 1851 with his wife Esther and his mother-in-law Alice Cashmore. His good friend and brother-in-law, Michael Cashmore had already set up shop on the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets in Melbourne – as is well-known, it was to become popularly known as 'Cashmore's Corner'. Isaac had married Michael's sister Esther Cashmore (1816-83) at the Hambro Synagogue, London

in 1835. Before coming to Australia with his family, Crawcour had sent his eldest son Joseph, aged 14 years, ahead of him to assess the prospect of success in the new country. By the time they came to Australia in 1851 they had eight children. Five more were born later. It is possible that the prosperity of Geelong was a deciding factor in his move there. He also tried his fortune at Ballarat, where he was a tobacconist, at the Gold Diggings and Daylesford, finally establishing his 'financier' (or pawnbroker's) business in Pakington Street, Geelong West. No doubt being a pawnbroker gave him the (unwanted) opportunity of making contact with the police over many incidents such as receiving stolen goods (like watches)⁷⁰ and being fined for trading on a Sunday.⁷¹

Murray Mayer Crawcour (1919-93), who as noted above was a lawyer like his father Henry, was one of the administrators responsible for the production of the first edition (1971-73) of the multi-volume *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. In January 1941 he enlisted in the RAAF serving with 6 Squadron in the Middle East and Italy during World War Two. He was discharged in January 1946. *His Heroes and Fools: Diary of a World War II Airman* published privately in Israel in 1989, recounts his wartime experiences, but also included a considerable amount of biographical material about his life, including his years at Geelong College.⁷² Priscilla (Zillah) Crawcour (née Levy; 1899-1977) sold needlework and gifts in Ryrie Street in a shop called 'The Work Basket'.⁷³ She served three terms as mayor of Newtown: 1963, 1964-65, and 1976-77, dying in office. She was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1969 for her contribution to the community.⁷⁴ When she died, a number of tributes were published in the *Geelong Advertiser* by various community groups such as the Newton branch of the Red Cross, Geelong Young Women's Christian Association, and the councillors and staff at Shire of Corio.⁷⁵ As further evidence of her standing in the community, a park adjacent to the Queens Park Bridge, Geelong has been named after her.⁷⁶ There is also a Zillah Crawcour Hall at Matthew Flinders Girls' High School where she had been chair of the school's advisory group for many years.⁷⁷ She is also buried at Eastern General Cemetery, Geelong.

Moses Fink (1810-85) and his wife Gertrude Ascher (c1822-93) followed Moses' brother Hirsch to Australia and settled in Geelong in 1861. Working for storekeeper Hirsch, Moses hawked items to farms, vineyards and towns. He and Hirsch were said to be 'the pillars of the

tiny community'. One daughter, Theodora, married Samuel Leon (a future president of GHC).⁷⁸ Benjamin Josman (B.J.) Fink (1847-1909), Moses' Guernsey-born eldest son, was a businessman, politician and speculator. He went aged 16 to New Zealand, where he worked as a produce dealer. In 1865 he returned to Melbourne and became a clerk for Wallach Brothers, an Elizabeth Street emporium. He demonstrated and sold pianos and furniture and by 1874 he was joint owner of the store. The partnership with Julius Wallach was dissolved later that year. In 1883 Fink opened two branches of Wallach's in Sydney, later rebuilding the Melbourne store. He bought large interests in coalmines, goldmines and pastoral properties. During 1883-89, he was an independent MLA for Maryborough. He also amalgamated his small Joint Stock Bank of Ballarat with the City of Melbourne Bank, and then it became the colony's biggest buyer of gold at the time. He owned the Block Arcade, Melbourne's leading shopping arcade of the day, and took over and rebuilt the department store Georges Ltd. When the land boom collapsed in the late 1800s and devalued his financial speculations, he left Melbourne for London with his family.⁷⁹ At least two attempts were made to recoup financial investments, with out-of-court settlements conducted.⁸⁰ His brother Theodore Fink (1855-1942) attended Geelong College, but after the family's move to Melbourne in 1871, entered Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, where he was a classmate of Alfred Deakin. Like Deakin and under his influence, he became an ardent worker for Federation. In 1877 he was admitted to practice as a solicitor, and in 1881 married Kate Isaacs. His parliamentary career began in 1894, with his election as MLA for Jolimont and West Richmond. He held the seat until 1904. Fink was chairman of *The Herald* and appointed (Sir) Keith Murdoch as editor. Thorold, a son, was fatally injured in a car accident only months after his father's death. Another son, Gordon, was killed in World War One.⁸¹

Polish-born Samuel Freedman (1848-1926) married Welsh-born Miriam Stone at the Great Synagogue in London's Duke's Place. With their children they arrived in Australia in December 1880. When Samuel died, the family home known as 'Beachmount', Eastern Beach and the three cottages behind it in Corio Street were left to his widow for her lifetime. After her death, the properties went to their daughter Rachel Sarah, wife of Benjamin Rosenberg.⁸² Isaac Goldenberg (1876-1945) was a tailor and mercer with businesses at Little Malop Street, which

were known as ‘The Melbourne Tailoring Depot’ and ‘Goldenberg, Field and Co.’⁸³ Isaac and Rachel Goldenberg had one child, Freda, who never married. During World War Two, Freda enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy and served as a telegrapher. She is the only female mentioned on the ‘For King and Country’ World War Two honour board of the Geelong synagogue.⁸⁴ Harold Jacobs (1891-1950) was the son of Solomon Jacobs and Elizabeth (née Levy) Jacobs. He had been working as a surveyor’s assistant for three years with J. Urbahns at Winchelsea, when he enlisted in the 11th Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Imperial Force in 1916. In 1917, he was wounded in action, but remained on duty. In 1919, Jacobs was awarded the Military Cross this becoming GHC’s most distinguished soldier. He had been a director of the firm of Morris Jacobs Pty Ltd, Geelong.⁸⁵ Olga (née Benjamin; 1908-2012), Harold’s wife, lived in Aphrasia Street, Geelong where she remained until 2010. She obtained an MBE for community service, and died at the age of 104 years.⁸⁶ Morris Jacobs junior, a grandson of Morris Jacobs senior (directly below), was president of the Geelong Football Club from 1930-38.⁸⁷ From 1952–54 he was Geelong’s mayor.⁸⁸ His grandfather Morris Jacobs (1825-1927) was born in London and arrived in Australia in 1852. He and his wife Fannie, were married for over 76 years and had one son mentioned above and two daughters. Jacob’s Stores, a major retailer, was a landmark until 1950 when it was bought by Myer Melbourne.⁸⁹ Jacobs was president of the GHC for 40 years.⁹⁰ Fannie died in 1930 aged 100 and Morris died aged 102.⁹¹ Rabbi Jacob Danglow performed the funeral. A commemorative bollard of Morris currently exists in Geelong.⁹² Morris’s son Solomon Jacobs (1857-1942) was mayor of Geelong in 1901. He retired from Geelong City Council in 1907 but following numerous requests, re-entered in 1911, holding the position of mayor twice more (1928-30 and 1938-39). As acting mayor in 1934, he welcomed the Duke of Gloucester to Geelong.⁹³

London-born B.G. Levien (1806-98) married Eliza Lindo (1804-87) in 1833. They arrived in Australia in 1837. B.G. Levien moved around numerous times and in 1840 arrived in Footscray, where he bought a punt on the Saltwater Creek (later Maribyrnong River). First operated by William Watts, the punt was taken over by B.G. Levien as it was close to his newly acquired Victoria Hotel on the western bank of the river (the hotel was demolished in 1971). This original punt near Bunbury

Street could only take two horses or a light cart but sank in 1841. After Levien constructed a new punt, he advertised that it had improved capacity and also included lanterns for night crossings.⁹⁴ The new punt was also reportedly able to transport a ten bullock team.⁹⁵ The hotel and the punt not only serviced travellers, but also workers employed repairing ships in floating docks on the opposite side of the river. Levien moved to Geelong around 1846 when he had to give up this lucrative profession as a puntsman. When there was increased competition from other punts, he tried and failed to take the other operators to court to cease their businesses. However in 1845, it was ruled that there was not allowed to be a monopoly on punts.⁹⁶ The punt that he later bought in 1846 on the Barwon River near the site of the current Queen's Park Bridge was then near his plant nursery. In 1849 he opened another inn nearby (known as the Punt Inn) which he ran for several years. Levien's Bridge was named after him (as was another similarly-named bridge in Mildura where he also had another plant nursery).⁹⁷ After the bridge sank in floods in 1860s, the bridge was rebuilt and finally renamed Queen's Bridge.⁹⁸ By 1877 Levien's seed and fruit tree business had been taken over by Solomon Levien, one of his sons.⁹⁹

B.G. Levien's daughter Henrietta Matilda (d.1864) married her distant cousin (Sir) Saul Samuel, whom she met when he visited Melbourne from Sydney in 1837. Saul came to buy land for his parents but did not go ahead with the sale. He later entered New South Wales colonial government in 1854.¹⁰⁰ Williamstown native Jonas Felix Australia Levien (1840-1906) was reputedly the first Jew born in the colony of Port Phillip.¹⁰¹ He became well-known as a farmer in the Drysdale district and was also president of Drysdale Shire Council. Levien was MLA for South Grant until 1871-77. His opponent in the 1877 election alleged that he had been engaged in bribery.¹⁰² Two men testified before the parliamentary election qualification committee that at his seed shop in Ryrle Street, Levien had bribed someone five shillings to vote for him, allegedly stating that 'as a Jew, I should be the best man they can meet with' and had offered to 'buy them drinks [at the pub]'.¹⁰³ Levien denied the allegations, stating the money mentioned was merely to pay for canvassing for votes. Although many members disagreed with him, the committee's chairman, Peter Lalor (of Eureka fame), ruled against Levien, who subsequently lost his seat. However, in the following election of 1880, he was returned MLA, sitting until 1888. His service

(1883-86) as minister of mines and agriculture was appropriate given that he had a seed farm in Drysdale and that for a time the family company started by his father was one of the largest growers in the state. He was said to always receive a warm welcome when he returned home to Drysdale, and as a speaker at public dinners, positive references to his character and labours were often given. He was a director of several companies, such as Chaffey Bros. Ltd., and also a major shareholder of the Country Estates Company Ltd. He was a founder of the Australian Natives' Association, first president of Council Agricultural Education, Shire of Bellarine councillor (1869-75), and president of Bellarine Shire (1870-72). With his wife (his first cousin Clara Levien, whom he married in 1871), he had three sons and a daughter, baptised as Anglicans. Dying of cerebral apoplexy/cerebritis at St Kilda, he was buried in the Anglican section of Boroondara General Cemetery, Kew. His son Cecil John Levien (1874-1932) took out the first gold miner's right issued in Papua New Guinea in 1923; Cecil's brother H.S. Levien was a fruit grower in Mildura.¹⁰⁴

Abraham Levy (1811-77) is said to have been the first Jew to live in Geelong.¹⁰⁵ He ran a draper's store in Corio Street in North Geelong, and by 1841 was also known as a watchmaker and jeweller.¹⁰⁶ He married non-Jew Mary Baxter in a Presbyterian ceremony in Geelong and later, the issue of having his child accepted as a Jew later became problematic for him. In 1844 he wrote to MHC's Secretary to ask that his wife and daughter be accepted as Jews, but this was rejected.¹⁰⁷ He was mentioned again in 1849 when, in another letter to MHC, a request was made for someone from that congregation to conduct a funeral for Levy's deceased child. This was also rejected on the basis that Levy had not paid any money to MHC (possibly by way of membership).¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, this impediment did not hinder his adherence to Judaism as he served as vice-president of the GHC from 1848. He was also a Freemason, like a number of Jews around Australia.¹⁰⁹ Jacob Marks (1819-60) was born in London and arrived in Sydney in 1835 where he set up the Harris and Marks drapery store. In 1846 he bought land around Geelong.¹¹¹ Harris and Marks was involved in insolvency proceedings in 1848.¹¹² Later, Marks was said to be involved in a fraudulent scheme with Philip Phillips when they held a fake auction of goods at Colac.¹¹³ Marks eventually moved back to Sydney around 1850 and thence returned to London, having 14 children with his first cousin

Susannah Levey whom he married in 1846.¹¹⁴

Priscilla Pescott (b. 1936) younger daughter of Priscilla (Zillah) Crawcour, was mayor of the city of South Barwon for two years, 1979-81, and a councillor from 1977-93. She is also a life member of Australian Local Government Women's Association, a lobby group to promote women's participation as both councillors and active citizens to shape communities in the interests of all people. She obtained an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2005 for her work with local government, including promoting the participation of women and to the community, and also for the assistance she provided to various educational, water resources and cultural organisations.¹¹⁵ Philip Phillips (d.1851), mentioned above with Jacob Marks, was a storekeeper in Geelong and by 1846 and was said to be a 'pioneer' of the town of Colac.¹¹⁶ Sadly, he drowned while crossing Muston's Creek (near Warrnambool) with his horse.¹¹⁷ It has been reported elsewhere that he became the first person to be buried in the newly consecrated grounds of the Jewish allotment of land in Eastern Cemetery, Geelong on 1 January 1851.¹¹⁸ However in the newspapers of the day, the date of his burial was reported to be later that year namely September 1851.¹¹⁹ Days earlier in September 1851, the consecration of the grounds was conducted by Rev Moses Rintel from MHC.¹²⁰ Edward Pizer (1894-1917), born in London, worked as a tailor in Geelong. He left for World War One with the 17th Reinforcements from Melbourne on HMAT *Euripides* on 4 April 1916. On 28 September 1917 he was killed in action aged only 23. He was initially buried near Molenaarelsthoeck, Belgium. Following the Armistice his remains were exhumed and re-interred in the Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery, Belgium.¹²¹ Years later, Pizer Street, Geelong was named in his honour.¹²²

Benjamin Rosenberg (1865-1944) was a councillor and a mayor of the borough of West Geelong. He married Rebecca (née Marks; d.1926) in 1900. They lived for some years in Melbourne (where their four children were born) before returning to Geelong in 1913. Ben was very involved with the GHC being honorary secretary and representing the congregation on the Geelong Cemetery Trust. He was a member of the UJEB Melbourne, president of the Geelong Free Library, and on the local museum committee.¹²³ Elected to the Geelong West Council, he was first chairman of its finance committee and later, in 1919-20 became mayor of Geelong West. It was at the time he was mayor, that

Edward, Prince of Wales, visited Australia to extend official thanks for its support during World War One, and to strengthen links to the Empire. There were receptions, balls and the laying of foundation stones in his honour. Ben Rosenberg received invitations to all of these.¹²⁴ Frances Rosenberg (1902-92), daughter of Benjamin and Rebecca, was a private secretary and managed a large law firm for many years. She was also a Hebrew teacher, visitor and mentor of a Jewish prisoner at the Geelong gaol. She was an active member of Geelong society, being a foundation member of CJWG (mentioned above) and of the Geelong West Red Cross, a life member of the Geelong Memorial Hospital and a volunteer at the Geelong Library, Baby Health Centre and Geelong Art Gallery. In 1975 Frances was honoured with a life governorship of the Geelong Hospital. In 1977 she was awarded a Queen's silver jubilee medal for her community activities.¹²⁵ Both she and her sister Ivy also worked for the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. They are both buried at Springvale Cemetery, alongside their parents rather than the local Eastern Cemetery at Geelong as 'they wanted to know that someone was going to visit' their graves after their deaths.¹²⁶

Julius Solomon (1880-1933) moved to Geelong in 1908 from Talbot, where he was a draper. When mayor of Geelong (1926-27), he welcomed the Duke and Duchess of York (the future George VI and Queen Elizabeth) to the city. Besides being a councillor and alderman he was president of the Victorian Coursing Club, president of the Geelong Turf Cricket Club, vice-president of Geelong Football Club, and a member of the committee of Geelong Racing Club. He was also director of several important companies in Geelong and Melbourne. He financed 'Solomon's Buildings' (still standing in Moorabool Street, although no longer owned by his family), a landmark in the central business district.¹²⁷ His wife Ella (née Phillips; c1881-1938), was managing director of their well-known and established Geelong department store Solomon's Pty. Ltd from the 1920s.¹²⁸ Julius's funeral was said to be one of the largest ever seen in Geelong. The hearse was preceded by the Geelong City Band and the employees of Solomon's Pty Ltd, and the cortege comprised some 200 cars. At the cemetery, a crowd of 2000 gathered. Among them were the mayors of Maryborough, Ballarat and Geelong. Leaving almost £73,000 (at least \$50 million in today's money), he remembered several Christian orphanages, as well as the Geelong and Ballarat Hebrew congregations, in his bequests.¹²⁹

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FAST FACT FILE

The Editor writes: *Please enjoy!*

1. A True and Trusted Philosemite. In the House of Representatives on 2 December 1938, member for Melbourne Dr William Maloney (died 1940 aged 86) explained the deep philosemitism for which he was renowned. (For his parents, and for Ernest and Rae Lever, all mentioned in the speech, see Editor's Introduction, *supra*.)

I have studied the Jewish race for over 60 years. My earliest memory in connection with them is associated with the teaching of my mother ... She was in California at the time of the second fire [San Francisco, 24 December 1849 – Ed.], and was one of the first Englishwomen who walked across the Isthmus of Panama to reach the Californian goldfields. While my father was absent at the goldfields at Sacramento, she was employed in a hotel in San Francisco. There she fell sick with what was known as Panama fever. She was taken into the home of a Jewish family, perhaps strangers to her, and they nursed her back to health. She brought me up with a sense of gratitude to the Jewish people which I have carried through all my life... If I attended the Jewish Synagogue she did not mind; if I went to the Anglican church, of which she was a member, she did not mind; if I attended the Catholic church, of which I was a baptised member, she did not mind; but woe betide me if I attended a service in any other church. The laws of Moses will appeal to the most advanced democrat in the world for their justice and goodness. The jubilee was something which no nation has ever yet bettered. Every 60 years, or seven times seven, the sabbatical year, all lands and houses which had been mortgaged or pledged had to be returned to the family. One of my greatest regrets is that the Jews were never allowed to give their system a proper trial.

Wars were as numerous, and probably as bloodthirsty, then as now, though I do not think that the Jews ever had to suffer as much as they are now suffering under Hitler. The jubilee was a wonderful piece of lawgiving, and one that could be imitated with profit by any country in the world, no matter how advanced its civilization. The Jewish race has produced many great men. When reading the Scriptures, we cannot but be impressed with the roll of great names such as Isaiah, Nathan, John the Baptist, Samuel, Job, Jeremiah, Daniel and Malachi... It was Malachi who uttered these words: 'I will be a swift witness ... against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right.'

I have here a letter which I received recently from the wife of a good friend of mine. It is as follows: '... How strange the hand of fate works. For two weeks I have dreamed, thought and talked of you, and today a letter arrives from you, to my son, Ernest. Now my dear doctor, I am going to ask you to do the greatest and most noble deed of your remaining years. Will you please help my people, the Jewish Race. There is not a home in the world where Jewry exists that does not feel the pain and anguish for the fate and suffering of my people in Europe.... I implore you in the name of God Almighty to use your influence and put forth a suggestion before your Government to help these poor sufferers. Is it not possible, for our people to purchase a large state somewhere in Australia, which will enable them to call home. Australia will prosper by their brains, culture and intellect and work. Please be a Moses, and lead them out of their bondage in Europe, to a land flowing with love and kindness. They have suffered long and plenty. Please use your noble influence to help us. My heart and my soul is too full to write more tonight. Kindly hand this letter to your Prime Minister and ask his aid. I am prepared to do everything in my power to help with the good work.

Again I implore you with the help of God to help save
my people.

Our united good wishes,
(Sgd.) Rae Lever

Maloney recommended Rae's impassioned plea to prime minister Joe Lyons, whom he considered 'a big-hearted man', and in the rest of his speech argued at length for such a refuge. Having cited the heroism of Judas Maccabeus, he concluded: 'The settlement of the Jewish people in the north-west of this continent would be worth many ironclads in the defence of Australia. How they would fight!', and reiterated his gratitude for the kindness Jews had shown to his mother.

(*AJH*, 8 Dec. 1938; M. McFadzean, 'Robert Salter, Austrian Jewish Refugee & Tailor, 1938', <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/2715>, and related documents which include Maloney to Robert Salter and Rudolph Brill, 8 Nov 1938; Mr. Jones to Robert Salter, 1 June 1939; J. Hogan to Robert Salter, 16 Feb. 1939; T.H. Garrett, Acting Secretary, Ministry of the Interior, to Maloney, 9 Jan. 1940; Maloney to Robert Salter, 16 Jan. 1940.)

2. Szymon's Nasty Surprise. Lodz-born Holocaust survivors Szymon Sierakowski (1915-2010), a tailor, and his wife Sara (1920-2002) arrived in Australia in 1951 with their two young daughters. Settling in Melbourne, Szymon and Sara owned and ran a delicatessen in Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick, assisted by a young non-Jewish German woman, Lieselotte Franz. She had migrated in 1957 with her taxi driver husband Heinrich, a Lodz-born Catholic brought up in his ancestral Germany, and their toddler daughter. From about 1962 they rented an upstairs room in Swan Street, Richmond from Szymon. In February 1968 he was downstairs at those premises when he overheard male voices enthusing about Nazism. One belonged to Franz but Szymon didn't recognise the others. Investigating, he disturbed the incipient National Socialist Party of Australia (NSPA) in conference. Presiding was Tasmanian-born Sydney-based Jew-hater Arthur Charles Smith, who in 1963 had become leader of the miniscule Australian National Socialist Party (ANSP), founded the previous year by University of Adelaide physics student Ted Cawthron and Sydney council worker Don Lindsay; Smith was still nominally its leader, though following a police search of party files in 1965, and his consequent six-month gaoling in 1966, Cawthron and Lindsay had cold-shouldered him and founded an alternative anti-Communist white supremacist group. With

Smith and Franz was British-born Jan Peniston Butland (1948-2010), an ANU dropout, son of the foundation professor of geography at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW. He had hitch-hiked from Canberra in his zeal to attend. In the room were symbols of evil: two pictures of Hitler, a large red flag with a black swastika, a tape recording of a Nazi propaganda speech, and Nazi literature. Shocked, Szymon gave Franz notice and summoned police. As Smith (gloating that a Jewish landlord had been hoodwinked by a Nazi tenant for so long) and his henchmen left the premises, a nearby resident, Vilna-born relative-bereft Holocaust survivor Gita Genia Kuczinski (1922-2008), wife of knitwear worker Zvi, dealt a well-aimed rock at the picture of Hitler that accompanied them. (They left the rest of their vile paraphernalia behind.) That evening an anonymous telephone caller told Szymon in German: ‘Don’t worry, you won’t have much longer to live.’ The Sierakowskis received several abusive calls the following day. Smith relinquished the ANSP’s leadership in May 1968, though not his despicable leanings. Franz and his wife subsequently moved to Bena, in South Gippsland. For a few months in 1970 Butland was a probationary public servant in Canberra. He became a teacher in Armidale. (<https://www.ancestry.com>; *Canberra Times*, 12 Feb. 1968; *AJN*, 16 Feb. 1968; ‘Sieg Bloody Who?’, *Woroni*, 22 April 1970; David Harcourt, *Everyone Wants to be Fuehrer: National Socialism in Australia and New Zealand*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson. 1972.)

3. Cardinal Pell’s Jewish Connection. Some years ago, Cardinal George Pell (1941-2023) told a Jewish audience in Sydney that his was a ‘very pro-Jewish family’, citing particularly his father. It’s common knowledge that George Arthur Pell (1906-85), a nominal Anglican, was a Ballarat publican. But Perth-born George Arthur had earlier been closely associated in business with Bialystok-born Leslie (Lazar) Rubinstein (1902-78) of the family that once owned the *Australian Jewish News* – Joachim Chaim and Esther (née Rozen) Rubinstein were his parents. In 1935 the non-liability company Gordon Gold was registered in Victoria, with Rubinstein and Pell senior among its four directors. When Pell married the future cardinal’s Catholic mother in 1939 he was manager of the Gordon goldmine. In 1946 he and Rubinstein became directors of Hercules Goldmining Co., Ironbark Gold Mining Co., and Ironbark South Gold Mining Co. It would be fascinating to know more of the links between Rubinstein and Pell senior, both colourful characters.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ISLAND OF EXTRAORDINARY CAPTIVES

By Simon Parkin

London: Hodder & Stoughton-Sceptre 2022; xv +475 pp.; illus.; notes; map; rollcall list; bibliog.; index.

ISBN: 9781529347227 (hardback); 9781529347197 (paperback); 9781529347203 (e-book)

It is long-established policy that during declared wars states would routinely round up and intern citizens of enemy states to ensure that such persons could not in any way influence or endanger the war effort. During World War Two this procedure was also followed by the belligerents on both sides. Allied countries, such as Great Britain, the United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia interned Germans, Austrians, Japanese, and Italians who had not left before the outbreak of hostilities and these individuals were held under close confinement in designated prisons or prison camps. Although this procedure has received some attention in the historiography of this era, when compared to the rest of World War Two literature it is quite a neglected area. Some of this may be due to the fact that internment did not always proceed with very much fairness as it was often driven by fear, spy fever, and public paranoia. In many cases, individuals and whole families, sometimes already naturalised but with 'enemy' birthplaces or connections were, nevertheless, interned under hurriedly promulgated faulty legislation. After the war many Allied states were very embarrassed about this and made attempts to rectify these injustices through apologies and compensation.

Regrettably these injustices were exacerbated in the case of German and Austrian Jews who had managed to flee from Nazi persecution and certain death and had managed to reach Allied 'safety'. Although they were clearly refugees and totally opposed to what the Nazis stood for they would be considered 'enemy aliens' – itself a very pejorative

term – in the countries where they found safety. This was, certainly, the case in Great Britain, Canada, Australia, other Commonwealth nations and, after 1941, in the United States. It would also result in injustice being added to injustice for the thousands of Jews – many who had already escaped Nazi imprisonment – now facing internment in what they believed to be their safe haven. This book, written by award-winning British writer and journalist Simon Parkin, not only discusses this issue but also delves deeply into the operations of one of the many internment camps in Great Britain. The book tells a story of a battle between fear and compassion at a time of national crisis. It also reveals how Great Britain's treatment of refugees during World War Two resulted in one of the nation's most shameful missteps, but also how hope and creativity can flourish even under the most challenging circumstances.

Based on meticulous research from numerous unpublished first-hand accounts and previously classified documents, the book tells, for the first time, the story of what is probably history's most astonishing internment camp where a group of world-renowned Jewish artists, academics, musicians, scientists and industrialists came to be seen as 'enemy aliens'. These were all refugees from Nazi oppression who had come to Great Britain as a place of safety but were then imprisoned by the very country in which they had staked their trust. Although the book concentrates specifically on a single British internment camp, it is well-known that the policy in other Allied states, including Australia, was similar. In fact, the Hutchinson Internment Camp on the Isle of Man, was just one of dozens of camps in Great Britain, Canada and Australia where the combined total of internees stretched into tens of thousands. The Isle of Man, off the British West coast, was considered sufficiently far from the nearby coasts to be ideally suited for imprisonment and had already been used for this purpose during World War One.

Hutchinson was the seventh of ten internment camps on the island and, during this period, accommodated between 1,200 and 2,000 prisoners, predominantly refugees from Nazi Germany/Austria, most of whom had been living peacefully and working in Great Britain prior to their arrest. It had become abundantly clear as soon as the Nazis took power in 1933 that Germany and Austria would increasingly persecute its Jewish citizens, despite the fact that Jews had lived, worked, fought for and contributed to national prosperity for many centuries. As a

result, many Jews looked for safer countries to which they could move to. This is, of course, another issue that is being debated until today: many countries closed their doors and were unwilling to accept Jewish refugees, regardless of their desperate situation. The United States, Canada and Australia were especially difficult, but Great Britain was the main, positive exception, and many thousands of German and Austrian Jewish refugees flooded there between 1933 and the outbreak of World War Two in 1939. This caused some concerns in British government circles due to some antisemitic feelings but more because the country was undergoing severe economic problems. Nevertheless, the flood of Jewish refugees did not lessen and even dramatically increased in late 1938, when the Kristallnacht riots heralded the real start of what would become the Holocaust for the Jews of Europe under the Nazis.

Although Great Britain appeared to be quite unprepared for integrating this increase in refugees in the country, the MI5 intelligence service expressed concerns about the 'political reliability' of certain refugees – especially those with a left-wing history. As a result, a series of legal tribunals was then established where refugees would be more closely vetted. Before the outbreak of World War Two almost 65,000 Jewish refugees would go through this process and be pronounced 'No-Risk'. Regrettably this changed in May 1940 when faced with a country gripped by severe 'Fifth Column' paranoia, prime minister Winston Churchill ordered the internment of all German, Austrian and Italian citizens living in Great Britain. Jewish refugees had suddenly become 'enemy aliens'. Churchill even acknowledged that these orders would affect 'a great many people ... who are the passionate enemies of Nazi Germany' but that there was nothing to be done, adding 'I am very sorry for them, but we cannot ... draw all the distinctions which we like to do'.

These were now the internees in Hutchinson and many other British camps. Status, class, length of domicile in the country had become meaningless. Oxbridge dons, famous surgeons, society dentists, judges, lawyers, celebrated artists and musicians, mixed with tradesmen, merchants and business people were all taken in many chaotic roundups throughout the country. With very sensitive insight the author uses a young Jewish artist, who as an orphan boy, escaped to Great Britain on one of the famous Kindertransport (Children's Transport) only to be arrested and interned as soon as he had reached the internment age of seventeen. The book follows his years at Hutchinson as well as those

of many other remarkable, interesting internees. In fact, drawing on dozens of first-hand accounts, surviving lists and records and other documentation the author even provides a lengthy, detailed list of all Hutchinson internees for whom records were found. It is quite extraordinary research! There is even, of course, an interesting Australian connection. When the British Government asked Canada and Australia to accept some of the internees from the overflowing camps both countries agreed to take a limited number. A large group was destined for Canada on the passenger vessel *Arandora Star* which was torpedoed by a German U-boat with heavy loss of life. The survivors were re-interred but a number were subsequently dispatched to Australia on board the unfortunate HMT *Dunera* where the detainees suffered greatly from terrible treatment, so well documented already elsewhere.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of this book relates to the activities of these truly extraordinary captives at Hutchinson. They created a sense of normalcy under abnormal circumstances. They established educational groups and taught those who wished to be better educated. There was a newspaper, there were theatrical productions led by famous actors and directors, as well as artistic exhibitions, and musical performances by artists who formerly filled the world's great concert halls. Despite the sad circumstances of their unnecessary captivity the human spirit prevailed. However, the author also draws a sombre conclusion when he asks if this sort of mistake can be made again. He provides examples of the difficulties today facing genuine refugees in entering and being interned in Great Britain and the United States. In my view Australia's refugee policy is not much better.

Edgar Gold

THE TELLING: ONE FAMILY – TWO CENTURIES

By Daniel C. Tabor

i2i Publishing, Manchester, UK, 2023; x, 342 pp., illus., maps, glossary, geneal. tables., bibliog.

ISBN: 9781914933349

This outstandingly well-researched and well-written book is a history of the families of Daniel Tabor's parents and relatives, based on extensive interviews with their senior family members, as well as on diaries, letters, and other sources. The family on both sides came mainly from

the Russian Pale, and excellent maps enhance the narrative of their respective journeyings. Many well-chosen illustrations support the text. The author's Belorussian-born paternal grandfather Chaskel Taborisky (1871-1943) and Lithuanian-born paternal grandmother Rivka, née Weinstein (1875-1970), settled in London. There, on Tottenham Court Road, Chaskel established a successful firm that made fireplace fenders, grates, and mirrors. The couple's son Dr David Tabor (1913-2005), was educated, remarkably for someone of his background, at Cambridge, and became an eminent physicist and chemist. For readers of this *Journal*, the most relevant part of the book, about one quarter of the text, comprises the six-year period (1940-46) when Dr David Tabor lived and worked in Melbourne, emerging as an important and influential figure on the Jewish and Zionist scene here before his eventual return to England with his German Jewish refugee wife Hanna, from Giessen in Hesse, daughter of businessman Martin Stillschweig and chemistry graduate Melita Rosenbaum. Hanna shared David's interest and involvement in Zionism, and they married at Sydney's Great Synagogue in 1943. Their son Daniel was born in 1947.

As someone not connected with the established Anglo-Jewish community, not himself a refugee, and in addition extremely well-educated and articulate, David Tabor's observations are particularly valuable in presenting an intelligent and objective view of that crucial period in the evolution of the Australian Jewish community when he resided here. It is interesting, too, that while his family lived in Eastern Europe – many perishing in the Holocaust, some miraculously escaping – as well as in England and Israel (all described in this book), they had no connection, or only a marginal one, with the United States, thus representing a different Jewish experience, as seen in this excellent and valuable highly recommended work.

William D. Rubinstein

AUSTRALIAN GENESIS AND EXODUS: THE STORIES OF
DERWENT LEES AND HORACE BRODZKY, THEIR LIVES,
THEIR FAMILIES, AND THEIR IN-COMMON FRIENDS AND
ACQUAINTANCES

By Henry R. Lew

Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne, 2023; viii, 332 pp, plates, bibliog., index

ISBN: 9781922768032

Dr Harry Lew is a retired ophthalmic surgeon in Melbourne. In addition to his professional achievements he is the author of nine very interesting and impressive scholarly non-medical books, which include previous accounts of the two subjects of the book under review, namely Derwent Lees (1884-1931) and Horace Brodzky (1885-1969), and a life of Colonel John Henry Patterson, a British philosemite who commanded the Jewish legions at Gallipoli. In this significant new work, *Australian Genesis and Exodus*, Dr Lew brings more light to bear on the lives and careers of Lees and Brodzky, two Australian-born artists of enormous talent, who spent their lives abroad and are all too little known in Australia.

Lees, the Hobart-born grandson of a well-to-do Protestant bank manager, was a student at Melbourne Grammar School who lost a leg as the result of a horrible riding accident. From 1905 until 1918 he was a student, and then a lecturer, at the famous Slade School of Art in London. From 1918 until his death in London at the age of 45 he suffered from schizophrenia. A group photograph of the Slade School picnic in 1912 shows him with, among others, David Bromberg, Isaac Rosenberg, Dora Carrington, Mark Gertler, and Stanley Spencer – that was the company he was keeping. Lees's paintings, beautifully reproduced in this book and also online, are genuinely superb, and obviously deserve to be better known than they are.

Brodzky was born in the Melbourne suburb of Kew, the son of famous Melbourne Jewish journalist Maurice Brodzky (1847-1919), editor of *Table Talk*, the weekly exposé of the high life of 'Marvellous Melbourne' in the 1880s. Horace was educated in Melbourne and London, but lived in New York and then London. He is credited with being the first Australian to produce an abstract work of art, and was an authentic pioneer of Australian linocuts, as well as a patron of younger artists such as Russell Drysdale and Sidney Nolan.

Lees and Brodzky did not work together, if they even knew each other (which isn't clear); what they had in common was that they were outstanding Australian artists who worked all of their professional lives overseas, and hence are neglected in Australia, perhaps scandalously so. Dr Lew's excellent, deeply researched and comprehensive study of both these men forms a weighty tome containing numerous high quality photographs of them and their works. This is in every respect a magnificent book published to exemplary standards.

William D. Rubinstein

MY FATHER'S SHADOW: A MEMOIR

By Sandra Goldbloom Zurbo

Monash University Publishing, Clayton, Vic.2023; x, 276 pp.

ISBN: 9781922979186 (paperback); 9781922979193 (e-book)

Melburnian Samuel Goldbloom (1919-99) was a well-known – some would say notorious – all-purpose extreme leftist and, for decades, a leading activist in a variety of radical causes. Even by the standards of left-wing extremism, he was unusually radical, with few comrades as extreme in the Jewish community as he was. Goldbloom was, among other things, founding secretary (in 1959) of the Congress for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD), widely seen as a Communist front group; founder of the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign; and the progenitor of many well-attended anti-Vietnam War rallies, and, according to his daughter (p. 7) a 'secret member of the Communist Party of Australia, a Soviet loyalist', and, as she also notes, 'a nationalist and international philanderer'. He was one of the few figures on the Australian Jewish left who would simply not acknowledge the reality of Soviet antisemitism; even in 1990 he so admired the Soviet Union that its collapse 'rocked his foundation'. In the 1990 Australia Day Honours List he was, amazingly, awarded membership (AM) of the Order of Australia – not the lower-ranking medal (OAM) of the Order as his daughter states – an award so anomalous that it was condemned by the *Australian Jewish News*.

What made Goldbloom tick? Many insights are provided in his daughter's lively and unusually frank account. Far from being a white-wash, it brings out the many deficiencies in his character. It should be

read by anyone with an interest in the Australian Jewish left. Despite its merits, however, the work's bitty organisation, really a series of vignettes rather than an analysis, does leave the reader with many unanswered questions. We do not learn why Goldbloom was in lifelong thrall to the Soviet Union – when or why it began and why he was incapable of seeing the truth about the Soviet Union's appalling human rights record, especially towards the Jews. There is thus much room for a more academic study to set beside this interesting personal one.

William D. Rubinstein

REPORT TO MEMBERS, 2023

The last year has seen a wonderful and busy return to face-to face events, and activities for the AJHS–Vic. Thank you to all our members who have attended events, and remained loyal to the AJHS–Vic, our wonderful journals and our common interest in Australian Jewish history after the trials of the previous few years. Despite the support of most members, memberships have declined from 116 in 2022 to 106 to September 2023. Nevertheless, our audience has not shrunk, as evidenced by our number of Facebook followers increasing from 499 in 2022 to 533 to date, a great increase from our Facebook page’s inception in 2019. If you don’t follow us on Facebook yet, please do so, so you can keep up with activities and events (not just ours) that may be of interest.

Our two journals continued to be our key deliverables through the year, with terrific feedback on the quality of the production and articles. We particularly would like to thank the professionalism and drive of Dr Hilary Rubinstein and Professor Suzanne Rutland for their work on the Victorian and NSW journals respectively. In November 2022 (Mitzvah Day) we conducted a joint project with AJGS Vic to photograph memorial boards and plaques at synagogues and other Jewish institutions as part of our role in documenting Australian Jewish history. We have been promoting the Jewish Walks of Melbourne App which the AJHS–Vic developed in 2022, as a module of the “Walks of Jewish Australia” App which was created by our partner AJHS organisation in Sydney. Please download the App and select the Jewish Walks of Melbourne option on your phone. Thank you very much to Dr Hilary Rubinstein and Liz James for their terrific work on the project.

We had a very well attended information stand at the ‘In One Voice’ Festival in Elsternwick, where we promoted the importance of preserving and promoting Australian Jewish history. I thank all the committee members and other volunteers who helped staff the stand over the day. In March, we held a very well-attended AGM face-to-face at St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, featuring guest speaker Professor Paul Bartrop, presenting a very informative and interesting talk on Australia’s Jewish

refugee policy 1933-45. At the AGM, too, AJHS member Professor Leon Mann presented an unexpected and enlightening Jewish history of Broken Hill. In May, at our very well attended event in the same venue, writer and researcher Keira Quinn Lockyer opened the door to her research, speaking on 'Discovering the stories of the pioneering Jewish families of the Ballarat Goldfields'. In June, author Lian Knight spoke about her fascinating book *Ratbag, Soldier, Saint: The Real Story of Sergeant Issy Smith VC*. It was a great presentation and much appreciated by the large audience. We were delighted in August to participate with the Broken Hill Historical Society on the centenary of the Broken Hill Synagogue (now a Jewish museum), the celebration for which was held on the weekend of 11-13 August. AJHS-Vic was formally represented at the event by our president Gavin Silbert KC. Other members attended, including Professor Mann, who was a driving force behind the event. During the year, due to substantially increased fees at the Lamm Jewish Library, we have reduced our footprint and physical presence at the library. Thanks very much to Liz James who worked tirelessly on the project. I would like to thank our partners AJHS NSW for their much appreciated collaboration on the AJHS website and the Jewish Walks App. Special thanks also to our other key partners in 2023, including AJGS Vic, St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, and the Broken Hill Historical Society.

Stay safe and well, and let us all look forward to a wide range of interesting and entertaining events in 2024.

David Marlow
Honorary Secretary, AJHS-Vic Inc

CONTRIBUTORS

Tom Beer AO, DSc, PhD, FRSV, director of Safe System Solutions Pty Ltd, is a past president of Melbourne's Leo Baeck Centre and a former chief research scientist at the CSIRO. In 1986 he undertook pioneering research into the effect of bushfires on greenhouse gas emissions, and has since 1995 been involved in risk assessment methodology and its application to the international geophysical community. In 2021 he was made an officer (AO) of the Order of Australia for 'distinguished service to science, particularly environmental risk, climate processes and sustainability, through research organisations'. A Fellow of various scientific institutions and societies, he has authored many books, numerous book chapters, and over 100 articles in refereed journals. Elected president (2007) of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics Management, he was subsequently elected to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Paul Gardner AM, BSc, MEd, PhD, retired as reader in education at Monash University in 2002 after a long career in which he published widely in the fields of science and technology education, evaluation, and psychological measurement. He began engaging in family history research in 2014, and has had articles accepted by various American, British, German, and Australian publications, some in printed journals, others online. His book *The Family Hero* (Hybrid Publishers, 2014), written in the form of a novel but based on extensive research, tells the story of Gerhard Badrian, his mother's cousin, who was active in the anti-Nazi resistance in the Netherlands.

Edgar Gold AM, CM, KC, PhD, DSc (*honoris causa*), FNI, is a Holocaust survivor who arrived in Australia in 1949. He completed a marine cadetship with BHP Transport and served at sea on a variety of ships for 16 years, rising to the rank of captain. He subsequently settled in Canada where he completed a law degree and was admitted to the Bar. He specialised in international maritime, energy and environmental law, practising worldwide. He also subsequently completed doctoral studies in the UK. He has held professorial appointments at universities

in Canada, Sweden, Malta, and Australia and has provided advisory services to numerous states and several UN agencies. He was awarded the Order of Canada (CM) and subsequently made a member (AM) of the Order of Australia for contributions to international maritime development, law, training and education. He returned permanently to Australia in 2002 and is based in Brisbane.

Michael Henderson MBBS, BMedSc, MD, FRACS, is professor of surgery in the University of Melbourne Department of Surgery (St Vincent's Hospital) and Sir Peter MacCallum Department of Oncology, deputy director, Division of Cancer Surgery, and surgeon, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. He graduated from the University of Melbourne in medicine, coming through the St Vincent's Hospital Clinical School as a medical student. He did his residency and advanced training in general surgery at St Vincent's followed by further training in surgical oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. He returned to the University of Melbourne Department Surgery and St Vincent's Hospital and the Peter McCallum Cancer Centre where he remains as senior surgeon in the melanoma and skin cancer service.

John S. Levi AC, BA, MA, MAHL, DipEd, PhD, DD (*hc*), LLD (*hc*) is rabbi emeritus of Melbourne's Temple Beth Israel. Descended from notable colonial era figures, and much published in the history of Australian Jewry, he is a former president of the AJHS-Vic. In the 2021 Australia Day honours, he was advanced from member (AM) to companion (AC) of the Order of Australia for 'eminent service to Judaism through seminal roles with religious, community and historical organisations, to the advancement of interfaith understanding, tolerance and collaboration, and to education.'

Andrew Markus AO, BA (Hons), PhD, FASSA, is emeritus professor in Monash University's Faculty of Arts, and previously director of the university's Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation. Since 2004 he has been a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. His research specialisation is in the field of racial and ethnic relations and immigration policy. His most recent book, co-authored with Margaret Taft, is *Second Chance: A History of Yiddish Melbourne* (Monash University Press, 2018). He played a leading role in the Gen08 and

Gen17 Jewish community surveys and was senior researcher on the Scanlon Foundation social cohesion surveys from 2007 to 2021.

David Marlow MBA, Grad.Dip.Bus.Tech, B.Bus, B.Comm is the former executive director of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation and former CEO of the medical charity East Timor Hearts Fund. He was executive director of the JCCV for over five years and is a past committee member of the Jewish Christian Muslim Association, Victorian Multifaith Advisory Group, VicPol Interfaith Council, Vietnamese Museum PAF, Vietnamese DILP Advisory Board and VicPol Multicultural Advisory Group. He has extensive experience in banking, call centres and retail, including nearly 20 years at CEO level.

Philip Mendes BA, BSW, PhD, teaches social policy and community development and is director of the Social Inclusion and Social Policy Research Unit in the Department of Social Work at Monash University, where he is a full professor. He has published over 100 articles in local and international academic journals, and is the author or co-author of 13 books, including *Australia's Welfare Wars* (UNSW Press, three editions, 2003, 2008 & 2007), *Jews and the Left* (Palgrave, 2014), and *Boycotting Israel is Wrong* (New South Press, 2015).

Hilary L. Rubinstein OAM, BA (Hons), MS, PhD, FRHistS, an experienced research and academic librarian with a doctorate in history, has authored many scholarly books and articles ranging from Australian and British Jewish history to English Civil War and British naval history. A former Australian correspondent for the *American Jewish Year Book*, she catalogued the late Isi Leibler's substantial Judaica library and archive (now in Israel) before he made *aliya*. She co-edited these *AJHS-Vic Journals* for many years before becoming sole editor in 2021.

William D. Rubinstein OAM, BA, MA, PhD, FAHA, FASSA, FRHistS, held chairs of history at Deakin University and the University of Wales, of which he is professor emeritus. He has written and published widely on modern Jewish history and other topics. He was foundation editor (1988-95) of this *Journal* published in Melbourne, president of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies (1989-91), and president of the Jewish Historical Society of England (2002-04).

Suzanne D. Rutland OAM, MA (Hons), PhD, DipEd, professor emerita, Department of Hebrew & Jewish Studies, University of Sydney, is a past president of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies and the AJHS (NSW) and has edited the *AJHS*'s Sydney issues since 1991. *Let My People Go: The Untold Story of Australia and Soviet Jews, 1959-1989*, co-authored with Sam Lipski, was the joint recipient of the 2016 Australian Prime Minister's Literary Award (Australian History). Her latest books are *Lone Voice: The Wars of Isi Leibler* (Hybrid, 2021) and *Special Religious Education and its Value in Australia to Contemporary Society* (Springer, 2021), co-authored with Professor Zehavit Gross.

Tanya L. Warms MA (Hons), PhD, holds her doctorate from Melbourne University and her master's degree from Macquarie University. She was a founding member of Friends of Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery and chair of the City of Boroondara's anniversary of World War One commemorations in 2015. She is a recipient of a Union of Progressive Judaism *Ner Tamid* and a B'nai B'rith Menorah Award. Her last publication was on the enfranchisement of Australian Jews, published in this *Journal* in 2018.

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