

# JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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PART 3

# THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY — VICTORIA INC

The Australian Jewish Historical Society was founded in Sydney in August 1938. The Victorian Branch of the Society was founded in August 1954. Branches also exist in Canberra and in Western Australia.

The *Journal* of the Australian Jewish Historical Society has been published since 1939. From 1988, production of the *Journal* is being shared by the Victorian and New South Wales sections.

The Victorian-based issues of the *Journal* are edited and published by an Editorial Committee, whose members are:

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Mrs. Beverley Davis (Honorary Secretary).

Dr. Howard A. Freeman, B.D.Sc., L.D.S. (*ex-officio* as President of the Victorian Committee)

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Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein, B.A., M.S., Ph.D., F.R.Hist.S.

A complete list of the Society's office-bearers is printed inside the back cover.

The Editor welcomes suggestions for articles and manuscripts by authors dealing with any aspect of the history of the Jewish people in Australia. The *Journal* is national in coverage and deals with the whole sweep of Australian Jewish history from 1788 to the contemporary period.

Manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication in the *Journal* should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of a page, and may be accompanied by illustrations. References should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes. No payment can be offered for any contribution.

Communications regarding publication should be sent either to the Editor, Professor W. D. Rubinstein, School of Social Sciences, Deakin University, Victoria 3217, or to the Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Beverley Davis, PO Box 255, Camberwell, 3124, from whom information about membership in the Society and its other activities and resources may also be obtained.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria, Inc., gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution toward the publication costs of this *Journal* by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, Melbourne, Australia, and its Publication Advisory Committee (Isi J. Leibler, AO, CBE, D.Litt. (Chairman); Professor Louis Waller, AO; Joseph Gersh).

Cover: In 1937 Leah Kloot was the first Jewish woman to stand for Parliament in Victoria. Her story is told by her daughter, Mathilde Firestone. (See pp. 442–449; Vida Goldstein, the famous women's leader who stood for Federal Parliament in 1903, was of partially Jewish descent but not a member of the Jewish community.) (Photo courtesy of Mathilde Firestone)



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

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Once again, on behalf of the Committee of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Victoria Inc., it is my pleasure to introduce a new issue of the Society's *Journal*, the third part of Volume 11 and the fifth issue published from Melbourne. Again, too, it will be apparent that this issue is as large, diverse, and, hopefully, interesting, as any of its predecessors, and that a remarkable range of topics is surveyed here.

The earlier period of Australian Jewish history, which had been rather neglected in Melbourne's previous issues, is here examined in a number of interesting articles. Malcolm J. Turnbull looks at Solomon Joseph, who established one of the earliest Jewish newspapers in Australia. Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein details a fascinating Victorian scandal involving a Jewish minister and his serving girl, which raises many significant questions about Jews, women, and justice in colonial Australia. In a very important article, Margaret Chapman examines the strong and extremely noteworthy links between Jews and Freemasons in colonial Victoria. Mathilde Firestone tells the story of her mother, the first Jewish woman to stand for Parliament in Australia.

The transformations brought about by the rise of Fascism and Nazism and the coming of the refugees are discussed in three articles. Colin Thornton-Smith analyses the surprisingly key influence of continental anti-Semitism on some leading Catholic intellectuals in Melbourne during the 1930s, an influence its surviving leaders are, not surprisingly, anxious to forget. Dr. Peter Monteith relates the story of Egon Kisch, the radical Jewish activist from Europe whose 'landfall' here in 1935 occasioned a celebrated controversy. Dr. Lionel E. Fredman examines how Jewish refugees from Nazism were actually received and integrated in the industrial town of Newcastle, N.S.W.

The evolution of the Jewish community in the post-war period is observed from widely differing perspectives in a number of articles. Dr. Eliyahu Honig tells the story of the origins in Australia of *Habonim*, the important Labor Zionist youth movement. The now-influential and highly-visible *Lubavitcher* movement came to Melbourne only in recent times; Helen Sharp examines its origins here and explains something of the nature of Chassidic Judaism, so often opaque to outsiders. Philip Mendes, who documented the history of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism over three issues of our *Journal*, here continues his survey of the Melbourne Jewish Left from the time of the Six-Day War in 1967.

Two articles deal with questions of Jewish demography, a subject on which this *Journal*, when edited exclusively from Sydney, published many important essays by Walter Lippmann, the late Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush, and others. Dr. Charles A. Price, the eminent demographer who has a special interest in questions of Jewish population in Australia, offers some important and original observations on what the 1986 Census revealed about the size of the Jewish population, to which I have, with Dr. Price's concurrence, supplied a few comments. Dr. Oswald B. Tofler looks at the effects of Jewish day school education in Perth on intermarriage, a topic many will find especially important.

There are also articles of a more general nature. The Hon. William Kaye, recently retired from the Victorian bench after a distinguished career, relates the role of Jews



in the judiciary. Mark Braham, the well-known, controversial writer and editor, provides an extremely interesting biographical essay, which supplements his widely-known book *Jews Don't Hate* (1970). We very much wish to publish autobiographical essays of this kind, both from mainstream leaders of the community and those with other perspectives. Dr. Paul R. Bartrop surveys the history of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, with special emphasis on the profound changes which this Society has undergone over the past five years or so, of which this Melbourne *Journal* is an important artefact. Finally, Lorraine Freeman has again prepared '100 Years Ago', showing with photostatic copies how the Australian Jewish press viewed events in 1891.

This issue also includes many book reviews, including a wide-ranging review by Dr. Evan M. Zuesse of the two-volume history, *The Jews in Australia*, written by Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein and myself; also reviewed are works by Dr. Serge I. Liberman and Laura Gallou, David Martin, Dr. Geulah Solomon, and others. Mrs. Beverley Davis' Secretary's Report completes the issue.

As in the past, I must thank a number of people for their particular help. Our relations with Dr. Suzanne Rutland, editor of the Sydney issue of the *Journal*, are now excellent, and I must congratulate her on producing a fine issue. Dr. Howard Freeman, our President, Mrs. Beverley Davis, our esteemed Honorary Secretary who word-processed this issue, and Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein, who proofread and helped in many other ways, can have no equals at these tasks.

Finally, as editor it remains for me to make two further points. Sir Zelman Cowen, the former Governor-General, has honoured the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc. by agreeing to become its first Patron. We most sincerely thank Sir Zelman, Australia's most distinguished living Jew, for this mark of confidence in our Society, an association which is especially appropriate in view of Sir Zelman's own most impressive record as an historian of Australian Jewish life, as the biographer of his predecessor as Governor-General, Sir Isaac Isaacs. Secondly, we in Victoria wish fully to associate ourselves with our colleagues in New South Wales in paying tribute to the late Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush, a man whose distinguished rabbinical career still left time for frequent and important appearances in this *Journal* and elsewhere as an historian of Australian Jewry, and for service as President and Patron of our Society. We extend our most sincere condolences to his family.

Professor W.D. Rubinstein  
November 1991

## SOLOMON JOSEPH AND THE AUSTRALIAN ISRAELITE

Malcolm J. Turnbull

The *Australian Israelite* was Australia's first weekly Jewish newspaper. Promoted as a journal of literature, religion and record, 'devoted to the interests of Judaism and the Jewish community in Australia and New Zealand', it was published in Melbourne between June 1871 and May 1875, and established a precedent for quality Jewish journalism in this country. Owner/editor Solomon Joseph also set a standard of incisive and fearless (if foolhardy) community commentary and, in doing so, provided future generations with a detailed and multi-faceted picture of Melbourne Jewry in the 1870s.

This paper is a brief examination of the short career of the *Australian Israelite*, the factors in its decline, and the journal's continued importance as a primary resource for modern researchers. Beyond Percy Marks' short description in 1913, and passing references in more recent studies of Australian Jewry<sup>1</sup>, little attention has yet been paid to the newspaper's input into contemporary Jewish communal affairs, and the circumstances of its downfall. It is particularly interesting to note that the *Australian Israelite's* failure was the first instance of such an undertaking collapsing because of conflict between editor and influential community factions. Immediate parallels with the temporary closure of the *Australian Jewish Herald* in 1926, and that paper's ultimate cessation in 1968, spring to mind.

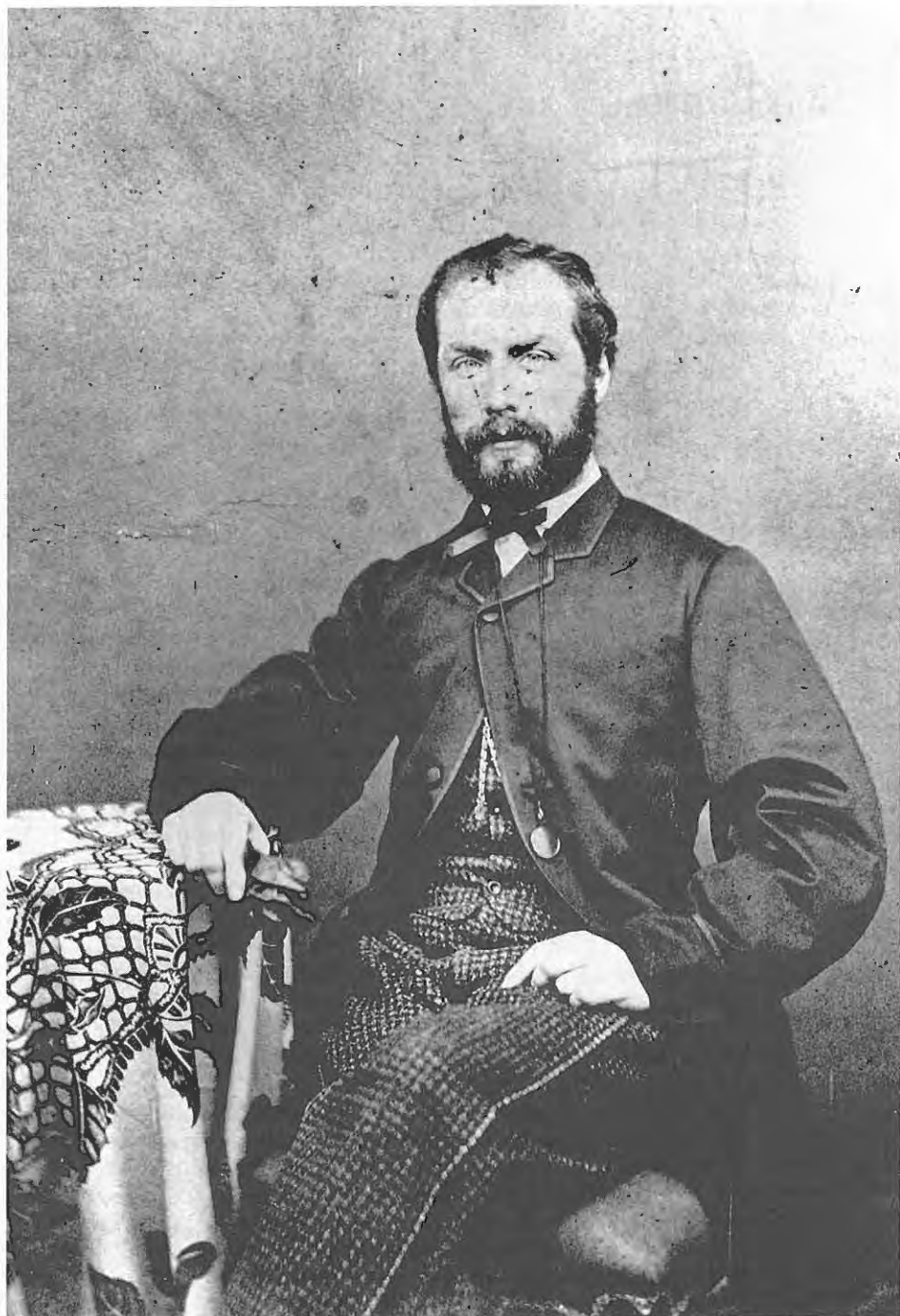
By 1871 the Melbourne Jewish community can be said to have attained permanency. Within the past thirty years its population had multiplied from around 50 to 2547, 80% of whom were concentrated in the city centre and the inner suburbs.<sup>2</sup> By this time an institutional framework of charitable organisations, educational facilities and synagogues was firmly established, and the community had achieved relative prosperity. W.D. Rubinstein indicates that Melbourne Jews of the 1870s were predominantly middle-class in occupation, and still mainly British (58%) and German (19%) in origin.<sup>3</sup> The times and signs seemed propitious for the establishment of a 'communal organ', and, amid considerable fanfare, the first number of the *Australian Israelite* appeared on Friday 11 Tammuz 5631, 30 June 1871.

The first issue established a permanent format: eight pages, fifteen inches by ten inches, two of which were devoted to notices and advertising, the rest divided among miscellaneous articles on Jewish history and religion (usually reprinted from British counterparts), local correspondence, and lengthy — often very frank — editorials. The cost of the paper was sixpence.

In that first number, editor Solomon Joseph prominently displayed the *Israelite's* motto: 'In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me' (Psalm 51, v.2), and promptly underlined his determination with a statement of principles. Joseph promised strict adherence to religious Orthodoxy and the traditions, ceremonies and customs 'made sacred by the hoar of untold ages' and 'hallowed by the authority of Holy writ'. Prophetically, he conceded:

It would be folly on our part to imagine that a straight career of prosperity will at once reward our labours, that there will be no shoals to obstruct our path, no drawbacks to regard our onward progress, but we hope to overcome all difficulties by the earnestness of our purpose, and by honesty and impartiality in our Editorship.<sup>4</sup>

Initial feedback reinforced his optimism. All sides appeared to wish the venture



*Solomon Joseph, founder and editor of the Australian Israelite.  
(Courtesy LaTrobe Collection, State Library of Victoria, MS 8553)*





well. East Melbourne's Reverend Moses Rintel, for instance, hailed *Ha-Yisraeli's* coming with 'great delight and satisfaction', and agreed that Solomon Joseph was 'supplying a great communal want'. Rintel's colleague (and rival), Reverend A.F. Ornstien of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, praised the newspaper's advent as 'a means of filling an immense void in our midst'. Nor was such enthusiasm misplaced. A glance through the four-year run of the paper testifies to Joseph's considerable editorial skills. Each issue boasted a wealth of carefully selected international material: sketches of major rabbinical figures, contemporary cullings on Anglo-Jewish communal politics from the *Jewish Chronicle* and the *Jewish World*, regular correspondence columns from Britain and the United States, literary guides, biographical, sociological and travel articles, learned papers on trends in Judaism, sermons, Talmudic discourses, and so on.

Interspersed with these there was comprehensive and forthright coverage of local and inter-colonial Jewish news. During the four years of production the *Israelite* witnessed a number of major events and developments within the still young Melbourne Jewish community, and it made considerable impact in its own right. For instance, Joseph led the lobby for a separate Jewish Day School once the 1872 Education Act had abolished State Aid to denominational facilities; the Melbourne Hebrew School opened in 1874 and endured twenty years. The following year, alleging that the *Irish National Readers* were 'full of doctrines and statements highly offensive to Jewish religion', he joined in coalition with the Anglo-Jewish Association and Jewish parliamentarians to remove the offending textbooks from schools.<sup>5</sup> On the synagogue front, only weeks after it commenced publication, the *Israelite* heralded the foundation of a new congregation in St. Kilda. The editor carefully charted the infant synagogue's progress in succeeding issues and, via the columns, almost single-handedly thwarted the first stirrings of a Reform movement there. In a similar vein, Joseph readily targeted shortcomings at the two metropolitan congregations, particularly the feuds between ministers Ornstien and Rintel and *shochetim* Goldstein and Greenbaum.

Other achievements included Joseph's successful founding of the community's sole cultural organisation, the Melbourne Jewish Literary and Debating Society, which was to last some thirty years; a spirited campaign in defence of Sydney's Reverend A.B. Davis in 1871<sup>6</sup>; and the fostering of Sabbath schools at both St. Kilda and East Melbourne, and a short-lived 'Sabbath Observance Association' (aimed at reducing Jewish business activities on Saturdays). In November 1872 the paper earned the praise of mainstream journals like the *Advocate*, *Town and Country* and the Melbourne *Evening Herald* for challenging local anti-Semite Marcus Clarke. (The *Herald* dubbed the *Israelite* 'a journal well considered, impartial and courteous in its contemporaries').<sup>7</sup>

Exhaustive attention was also paid to ongoing communal debates such as the questions of proselytism, Orthodoxy versus Reform,<sup>8</sup> and amalgamation of the synagogues. The newspaper tackled the full range of local Jewish issues, insisting on its right to comment 'with perfect freedom'; as the only Jewish journal in the colonies, it enjoyed considerable prestige and power. All in all, Solomon Joseph produced a weekly publication remarkable for its literate and wide-ranging coverage, and for its overall quality.

Yet, within the first six months, he was forced to concede that the paper was in difficulties. Basically, the *Australian Israelite* seems to have enjoyed an influence within the community out of all proportion to its regular readership. This was partly due to the 'old bogey' of a small target audience. The journal's only predecessors

had died ignominiously due to a chronic lack of subscribers. (They were a Sydney edition of the *Voice of Jacob* in 1842, which lasted three issues, and an abortive Victorian venture in 1861, the *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, which disappeared even more quickly).<sup>9</sup> By contrast, the *Australian Israelite* could boast a much wider public, but mounting a minority publication still entailed considerable financial risk. In addition, Melbourne Jewry was already developing a reputation for apathy and lack of Jewish consciousness; many were simply not interested in supporting such a specialised venture.<sup>10</sup>

Primarily though, the responsibility for the *Israelite's* problems lay with Solomon Joseph and his unyielding editorial policy. From first to last the journal was imprinted with its founder's personality and priorities. In his self-appointed role of commentator and 'conscience', Joseph rapidly (and persistently) alienated influential individuals and sections of the community. While he might regret any ill-feeling he elicited, he always insisted nonetheless that the press must retain its independence at all costs. He steadfastly refused to purchase success at the sacrifice of 'one iota of our principles'. Eventually this uncompromising idealism would so erode subscriptions that the paper would be unable to continue.

Solomon Joseph has been the subject of a biographical article in an earlier number of this journal.<sup>11</sup> According to W.S. Jessop, he was born in Plymouth, England in 1834, the third (surviving) son of Abraham and Eliza Joseph (née Woolf). Abraham Joseph appears to have been 'a person of some consequence', notably serving on the British Board of Deputies. He provided his sons with a solid general and Jewish education; in Solomon's case this included rabbinical training. The young man believed himself unsuited for the ministry, however, and apparently severely alienated his pious father by his decision not to become a rabbi.<sup>12</sup> (Jessop suggests that the resulting rift precipitated Solomon's emigration).<sup>13</sup> Following the lead of brothers Hyman and Henry, who had settled in New Zealand and Port Phillip respectively, he travelled to the Antipodes in 1859. Melbourne's La Trobe Library holds a copy of Joseph's shipboard diary, documenting his voyage out on the *Morning Star*. Apart from brief references to the anguish of parting with family and loved ones, the diary is chiefly valuable for its description of the rigours and hardships of the immigrant experience of the mid-19th century. As such, it is an early indicator of the future editor's considerable writing ability.<sup>14</sup>

On arrival in Australia, Joseph joined his brother Henry on the Ballarat goldfields and gained journalistic experience with Julius Vogel on the *Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser*.<sup>15</sup> After a period with Vogel in Dunedin, New Zealand, he settled briefly in Sydney, married Caroline Cohen in 1867, and subsequently moved to Melbourne. Jessop notes that he worked as a general merchant and importer for several years, lived successively in East Melbourne, Fitzroy and St. Kilda, and reverted to journalism in 1871.<sup>16</sup> (Goldman notes that he augmented his journalistic income by selling *tallesim*).<sup>17</sup>

Solomon Joseph's writings suggest a striking and forceful character and indicate that he was a keen and intrepid reporter. Reverend Elias Blaubaum of the *Jewish Herald* later testified to his predecessor's journalistic zeal:

... amongst them was one gentleman who scanned me very closely, wanted to hear all I said, and get as much information as possible about me. I afterwards found he was the proprietor of the *Australian Israelite*, and was anxious to get as much 'copy' out of me as possible.<sup>18</sup>

In his study of 19th century Victorian Jewry, Rabbi L.M. Goldman has described Joseph as a logical, learned and talented man who 'never feared to express his opinions and his love of Judaism, its people and ideals'.<sup>19</sup> His personal values were



reflected in the *Australian Israelite's* 'traditionalist' orientation and in his consistent refusal to employ diplomacy in communal commentary. Joseph must have realised that his Jewish education and rabbinical training were exceptional by colonial standards and probably superior to those of most others in the community (including Ornstien and Rintel). Not unnaturally, therefore, he styled himself a communal authority; it was inevitable that his often patronising attitude would be resented accordingly. For example, Joseph's tactless criticism of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's annual report for 1870–71 brought an immediate response from one committee member who labelled the attack 'unfair and discouraging' given that few in the congregation possessed 'the advantages both of literary culture and wealth'. Joseph compounded the injury when he naively targeted Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's president Benjamin Benjamin, and then dismissed that influential businessman in schoolboy terms: 'With a little careful study of the duties of his position he may yet become a very useful public servant'. (Benjamin, who would rise to be mayor of Melbourne and Victoria's first Jewish knight, made a public call for the paper's early extinction).<sup>20</sup>

Readers predictably objected to Solomon Joseph's apparent attitude of superiority as well as the unflinching nature of his attacks on perceived communal failings and 'erring' individuals, and they tended to boycott the newspaper as a result. The *Australian Israelite* ultimately died because Joseph alienated too many influential communal identities and their supporters. As Goldman has observed: 'In a small community an editor of a specialised newspaper is dependent upon the goodwill of his readers. Without it, unless he has some private source of income, he might as well close down'.<sup>21</sup> Joseph did. Ironically the honesty and rigidity of his editorial approach were the real strengths of the journal and account for its continuing appeal and importance as a research tool.

Joseph fervently desired to make a financial success of the enterprise; even more important to him, though, was maintaining the newspaper's integrity. Thus, reviewing his first half-year he admitted: 'By some of the little minds of the community our just strictures on many errors have been taken as personal attacks' — resulting in cancelled subscriptions. Six months later he lamented the lack of support accorded the journal but acknowledged that he had seriously alienated all three synagogues over the preceding year. He observed that Melbourne Hebrew Congregation had bitterly resented the 'communal censor's' attacks on its maladministration. Joseph's assertion that at East Melbourne 'under the name of religion, there was being perpetuated some of the vilest abuses that were ever engendered by ignorance or fanaticism' understandably brought down 'insensate wrath' on his head. ('Dire were the pains and penalties to which we were to be subject . . . but we survived it.') St. Kilda had been systematically targeted for daring to introduce 'unauthorised and unwarrantable' changes to its synagogue service, leading prominent modernists such as Isaac Jacobs and Nelson Marks to accuse the editor of 'a want of good taste and good feeling'.<sup>22</sup>

Within a community which primarily defined its Jewishness in religious terms, alienating synagogue leaders was particularly reckless. Yet, despite his wry acknowledgement that 'Anathemas and animadversions have been heaped upon us', Solomon Joseph seemed bent on self-destruction and continued to assert the 'indubitable right to criticise'. Stalemate preceded a downward spiral.<sup>23</sup>

In July 1873 Joseph was forced to close down publication temporarily due to a funding shortfall. An attempt to 'float' a limited '*Australian Israelite* Newspaper Company' failed when only 466 out of 2000 shares were applied for. Nor were

appeals to the congregations noticeably productive.<sup>24</sup> Joseph opted to carry on alone and he somehow managed to keep the paper above water for a further two years. Along the way, however, he continued to offend sections of his public. In reporting on the feud between Reverends Ornstien and Rintel (on the issue of which minister took precedence as 'Senior Jewish minister' of the colony) he sided rather unsightly with Ornstien and criticised the complete absence in Rintel 'of all that proper feeling and kindly spirit which should influence a Jewish minister under all circumstances'.<sup>25</sup> His own brain-child, the Melbourne Jewish Literary and Debating Society, fell from grace for exhibiting 'symptoms of deformity'.<sup>26</sup> Most damaging to the paper was a confrontation with St. Kilda's founder Moritz Michaelis.

Michaelis retained dual membership at both East Melbourne and St. Kilda during the latter's formative years, and he fell foul of Solomon Joseph on both fronts. At St. Kilda's foundation ceremony in 1872, Michaelis publicly differed with the editor on the question of a Jewish Day School, insisting that religious and secular education should be kept separate. Joseph snidely observed that Michaelis' statements merely exhausted his hearers' patience.<sup>27</sup> The two men also found themselves at loggerheads on the issue of ritual reforms; as St. Kilda's first president, Michaelis bore much of the brunt of Joseph's anti-reform onslaughts.<sup>28</sup> Relations deteriorated further when the men clashed during a factional struggle at East Melbourne.

In an ugly election dispute between Reverend Rintel's supporters and a dissenting party, Michaelis sided with the establishment and was subsequently accused of dirty politics by the *Australian Israelite*. As a result he threatened to withdraw his subscription. Sneering at the 'purse-proud vulgarity of the threat . . . as marked as its ludicrous pomposity', Joseph demanded:

Who is Moritz Michaelis that he should stand forward and publicly declare, in effect, that his personal feelings and fancies are everything, and the interests of the entire community besides nothing, whenever he chances to have a fit of the pet or the spleen?

Even granted the journalistic licence of the day, Joseph's anti-Michaelis diatribes were extreme; amid all the mud-throwing Michaelis' wide circle of supporters followed his example and cancelled their subscriptions. Abraham Benjamin declared the *Australian Israelite* a discredit to the community, and Joseph 'venomous, mischievous and spiteful'. Isaac Jacobs asserted that the journal's columns were being made 'the medium for defaming the characters of public or private individuals'.<sup>29</sup>

Joseph must have realised that he had underestimated the extent of Moritz Michaelis' influence and that the writing was on the wall; yet he still seems to have been unable to back-track. 'It matters not one straw to us personally whether the *Israelite* continues in existence', he declared in a hollow display of bravado.<sup>30</sup>

The paper limped on for a further six months with its editor defiant to the last. In January 1875 its opponents announced a proposed new journal, the *Colonial Jewish Monthly* ('open to all parties, influenced by none') to be edited by Nahum Barnet, under the patronage of the East Melbourne clique with which Joseph had come to grief (Michaelis, Rintel, Henri J. Hart, L.C. Gerschell, etc.).<sup>31</sup> Nothing came of the venture but, by this time, it was too late for the *Israelite*.<sup>32</sup> In his penultimate editorial, a pensive Joseph lamented: 'There is at this moment a strange and unusual dullness brooding, so to speak, over the spirit of this community. Every interest is depressed and everybody's spirit seems downcast'.<sup>33</sup>

The final number of the paper (Volume 4, no. 44) appeared on Friday 2 Iyar 5635, 7 May 1875. Joseph moved to New South Wales shortly afterwards, and in 1882 he

re-entered the journalistic fray as editor and proprietor of the *Tamworth News*. Although keeping this enterprise afloat also remained a 'constant struggle',<sup>34</sup> he was able to stay at the helm for eighteen years. He died at work in April 1900.<sup>35</sup> In a warm obituary, the *Jewish Herald* praised Joseph's journalistic efforts of twenty-five years earlier: '... it may be safely said that he had no unimportant share in the development of that community during the seventies. For as editor of the *Australian Israelite* he was a power in the land'.<sup>36</sup>

The *Australian Israelite's* demise left a noticeable void and prompted community leaders to affirm at a public meeting that 'it is desirable and necessary to have a weekly Jewish organ for the Australian colonies'.<sup>37</sup> The *Dialectic Jewish Monthly* which attempted to fill the gap in 1875 lasted only seven issues. Four more years passed before Reverend Elias Blaubaum founded the *Jewish Herald* in conjunction with a group of Melbourne businessmen. The gifted Blaubaum was able to match Joseph's erudition — plus he was notably more adept at diplomacy. In addition, the rapid expansion of the community ensured a more stable circulation. As it eventuated, the *Jewish Herald* would last nearly ninety years.

Yet, financial failure though it was, Joseph's *Australian Israelite* proved itself a 'critical success' (at least in retrospect) and represented a major step forward for Jewish journalism in Australia; despite its brief tenure it wielded considerable 'clout' and played a prominent role in local Jewish affairs. For all his lack of tact, Solomon Joseph had been a strong advocate of communal unity (including amalgamation of the synagogues), and an active proponent of religious observance within an increasingly apathetic and secularising milieu. More broadly, past and present historians of the Australian Jewish experience all owe a major debt to the editor and his newspaper. Even allowing for his occasional hyperbole, Joseph's legacy of 'no holds barred', detailed and graphic coverage of the local scene has proved itself a major and valuable resource for analysing and appreciating Melbourne Jewish life and religion in the 1870s.

#### NOTES

1. Percy J. Marks, 'The Jewish press of Australia: past and present'. Originally published Sydney, 1913. Reprinted in Marianne Dacy (ed.), *Periodical Publications from the Australian Jewish community: a Union List*, Sydney, 1986, p. v. See also: L.M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*, Melbourne, 1954, pp.231–2, 248; Hilary Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, Sydney, 1986, p.42; Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, Sydney, 1988, p.70.
2. Charles Price, *Jewish Settlers in Australia*, Canberra, 1964, Appendixes I and IX.
3. W.D. Rubinstein, 'The changing demographic and socio-economic status of the Jewish community of Victoria, 1870–1980', Appendix to Hilary Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, p.219.
4. *Australian Israelite* (A.I.), 30 June 1871.
5. See Geulah Solomon, 'The Jewish contribution to the Church-State debate and education in Victoria, 1872–1900', A.J.H.S.J., 6(4), 1968, pp.219–20, 233–6. See also: A.I. for January, February and March 1873; 5 December 1873; 19 February 1875; 19 March 1875.
6. The A.I. launched a sympathy fund to assist the popular Sydney minister in defending himself in an assault case mounted by his children's nurse, Letitia Cockburn. The case was dismissed. See A.I., 20 October 1871; 27 October 1871; 17 November 1871, and Hilary Rubinstein's article in the present *Journal*.
7. See A.I., 1 November and 15 November 1872.
8. Joseph virtually became the 'standard bearer' for Melbourne Orthodoxy. See for instance A.I., 30 June 1871; 26 July 1872; 22 August 1873; 2 January 1874.
9. Goldman, *op. cit.*, p.148.
10. A contributor to the paper's very first issue deplored the community's lack of energy and declared that even local Jewish leaders were 'lethargic'. A.I., 30 June 1871.
11. W.S. Jessop, 'Solomon Joseph (1834–1901): a pioneer Australian journalist. Biographical notes', A.J.H.S. Journal, 6(6), 1969.



12. Hilary Rubinstein indicates that Joseph worked as a school-master before emigrating. Hilary Rubinstein, *Chosen: the Jews in Australia*, Sydney, 1987, p.56.
13. Jessop, *op. cit.*, pp.320-3.
14. 'Diary of Solomon Joseph of the voyage of the *Morning Star* from Liverpool to Melbourne, 18 June 1859 to 4 September 1859', unpublished manuscript held by the La Trobe Library, State Library of Victoria, ms. 8553/69.
15. For biographical information on Vogel, later twice Prime Minister of New Zealand, see Eric Ramsden, 'The Hon. Sir Julius Vogel, K.C.M.G.: a great Jewish imperialist in the Pacific', *A.J.H.S. Journal*, 1(5), 1941; L.M. Goldman, *The history of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958, pp.168-179.
16. Jessop, *op. cit.*, pp.320-8.
17. Goldman, *op. cit.*, p.232.
18. *Jewish Herald*, 6 January 1899.
19. Goldman, *op. cit.*, p.232.
20. See A.I. for September 1871.
21. Goldman, *op. cit.*, p.248.
22. A.I., 21 June 1872. See also *ibid.*, 17 November 1871; 23 February 1872; 1 March 1872; 26 April 1872; 21 and 28 June 1872.
23. That he was able to keep the paper afloat even for three more years now seems a testament to Joseph's determination and tenacity.
24. Goldman, *op. cit.*, p.232.
25. A.I., December 1873 and January 1874.
26. *Ibid.*, 24 October 1873.
27. *Ibid.*, 5 and 12 July 1872.
28. For instance, see *ibid.*, 23 February and 1 March 1872.
29. For the progress of the Michaelis-Joseph dispute see *ibid.* for November 1874.
30. *Ibid.*, 20 November 1874.
31. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1875.
32. Too late, London's *Jewish Chronicle* lent support: 'We are shocked to learn that there has been a ridiculous attempt to choke the *Australian Israelite* simply because that journal strives to speak the truth'. Quoted in A.I., 9 April 1875.
33. *Ibid.*, 30 April 1875.
34. Jessop, *op. cit.*, p.329.
35. Jessop incorrectly dates Joseph's death to April 1901.
36. Obituary article, *Jewish Herald*, 11 May 1900.
37. Cited in Marks, *op. cit.*, p.v.

## COCKBURN VERSUS DAVIS: A COLONIAL JEWISH SCANDAL

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(A version of this paper was presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies, Trinity College, Melbourne, July 1991.)

Just as one of the major controversies occupying historians of Australian Jewry is the government's inter-war refugee policy, so a controversy which is threatening to simmer among historians of ethnic communities in Australia seems to be the degree of anti-Semitism which has prevailed in this country.<sup>1</sup> For me, there really is no valid ground for controversy: as I argue in an entire chapter of my recently published thematic volume, despite discernible pockets of prejudice, anti-Semitism in Australia has been historically low.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that some historians and commentators are over-eager to promote the view that pre-1945 Anglo-Celtic Australia was a veritable cesspool of bias and bigotry, which extended to Jews as surely as it did to Aborigines and Chinese. Such a view rests on a denial of the evidence and on a fundamental misunderstanding concerning the nature of Jewish identity in British lands.

Certainly, as Elie Wiesel has oft reminded us, the opposite of love is not hate but indifference, and the opposite of anti-Semitism is not philo-Semitism but disinterest. In observing that levels of 'the ancient hatred' have been historically low in Australia, I am not suggesting that Jews in Australia have been treated with widespread affection. But they have been tolerated, and more than tolerated: they have risen to the highest offices in the land.

The case of Cockburn *versus* Davis concerns one small and short-lived episode which rivetted the Jews of Australia, particularly of Sydney, during the closing months of 1871. Ostensibly, the episode is merely a sorry little tale of sordidness, fit to arouse no more than prurience. And yet, I believe that this compact vignette — played out against the backdrop of the 'Golden Age' of Jewish involvement in the commercial, civic and political life of Australia — has lessons for students of Australian Jewish history. It focuses a spotlight on the status of the Jews in colonial Australia and on the state of Jewish-Christian relations at that time. It provides yet more evidence, should any be needed, that anti-Semitism has not been a significant problem in this country. At the same time, it is suggestive of attitudes to women, particularly lower-class women, in colonial society, attitudes redolent of double standards and male supremacy.

In September 1871, as the great Days of Awe began, Rev. Alexander Barnard Davis (1828–1913) of Sydney's York Street Synagogue, could reflect with satisfaction on the closing year and face the coming one with confidence. Nine years earlier, he had arrived from Kingston, Jamaica, to assume the pulpit of a depleted, demoralised congregation. The rift in Sydney Jewry which had occurred in 1859, when a *coterie* of proud, disgruntled members of the wealthy, influential Cohen family and their supporters had stormed out of York Street on the issue of the circumcision of the child of a Cohen married to a proselyte, a marriage unsanctioned by Jewish law, and established their own 'Tabernacle of David' in Macquarie Street, was still fresh in communal minds. The bitterness and bewilderment lingered. So did the perception that the York Street Synagogue, composed largely of people of

modest means and status, was the perpetual 'poor relation' of the synagogue in Macquarie Street, located in one of colonial Sydney's most prestigious thoroughfares, and with people of money and influence dominating its membership.<sup>3</sup>

By 1871, however, the situation was changing. The angry men of 1859 had mellowed; the edge of conflict had been blunted. A decade of basking in their perceived superiority had made them complacent. Apathy had crept into their congregational affairs. Despite the best efforts of their minister, Rev. Solomon Phillips, their congregation often had trouble in mustering a *minyan* for Sabbath worship.

The fortunes of the York Street Synagogue, in contrast, had steadily improved in the years since Davis had taken office. The total Jewish population of New South Wales had climbed from 1,759 in 1861 to 2,395 ten years later, meaning an increase in Sydney Jewry of almost five per cent. The increase had been reflected in the York Street Synagogue's membership figures. We are informed that although the building was 'small and the accommodation limited', 'the attendance ... was very regular — generally about two hundred worshippers on an ordinary Sabbath'.<sup>4</sup>

Davis must have sensed that his congregation, in the ensuing decade, was about to take a dramatic leap forward. He could remind himself that, although great names such as Lewis Wolfe Levy, Joseph Raphael and the dynamic young businessman George Judah Cohen were associated with the rival congregation, his own could boast members equally renowned in commercial enterprise and civic endeavour. They included Sigmond Hoffnung, whose business empire rivalled that of the Macquarie Street Cohens, the merchant-parliamentarians Maurice Alexander, Samuel Aaron Joseph and (Sir) Saul Samuel, and the rising lawyer Alfred de Lissa. And he had the satisfaction of knowing that his own stock ran high, not only with his own congregants but with all sections of Sydney Jewry. His sterling efforts on behalf of the hitherto somewhat neglected field of Jewish education in the city had won him wide respect, and his attempts to bridge the gulf between the two rival congregations was beginning to pay dividends.

Already, there was a perception that the presence of two congregations in Sydney was now unsupportable: not only had the issues which had provoked the schism faded into obscurity, but the existence of the rivals seemed socially and religiously illogical and economically unsustainable.

A new synagogue to house the enlarged York Street congregation was not yet on an architect's drawing board, but a site in Elizabeth Street had been purchased. The first subscriptions towards the building fund had been pledged in March 1871, and the amounts and their donors made public in June: York Street was in an advantageous position. And Rev. Solomon Phillips, seventeen years older than Davis, was surely nudging retirement. By contrast, Davis was still in the prime of life, forty-five years old, a striking black-bearded figure, a far cry from the elderly mild-looking man in his most familiar likeness.<sup>5</sup> Davis might have sniffed communal unification on the wind. It would not come the following year; but it must come during the ensuing decade. Sydney Jewry would have one congregation again. And he, surely, would be the man to lead it. He had every reason to face the future with confidence.

As for the past year, a public irritation in the person of a Christian cleric, Rev. John Graham, had surfaced in July 1871. The *Sydney Morning Herald* had published a letter from Graham in which, amidst a general disparagement of Judaism, he had asserted that 'Jews scorned the nations outside their narrow pale as dogs'. Davis, in an indignant published response, had expressed 'surprise' at the clergyman's

canard, and 'pain, that one whom I had esteemed as the very embodiment of toleration, of charity, and of moderation, should have endeavoured to damage a race in the opinion of your numerous readers, by an announcement so injurious, and so likely to obtain the ear of a large number who will take it for granted'. An exchange, almost of a medieval theological disputatious kind, had ensued in the correspondence columns of the newspaper. Davis roundly tackled his opponent at every turn and as a result consolidated the respect he held not only among Jews but among people of goodwill towards them. The affair became something of a *cause célèbre*.<sup>6</sup>

Little did Davis know, however, that by the time the High Holidays had concluded, his name would be linked to a *cause célèbre* of a very different kind, surrounding alleged events which 'a large number' were also likely to take 'for granted'. And it all began with chicken soup.

On the evening of Saturday 23 September 1871, two days before *Yom Kippur*, Davis and his wife Blanche held a small Sabbath dinner party at their home in William Street, Woolloomooloo. About ten o'clock the guests, Mr and Mrs David Marks and a Mr Harris, departed, and Mrs. Davis went in search of the cook, to make final arrangements regarding Sunday's menu. Davis remained in the 'parlour', where his daughter Rachel (the future wife of Rabbi Dr Joseph Abrahams of Melbourne) was clearing fruit and wine from the table.

Having learned that there was plenty of soup left over from the meal, Mrs Davis informed her husband that it would not be necessary for him to slaughter a chicken for Sunday. She then instructed one of the servants, fourteen-year-old assistant nursemaid Letitia ('Lizzie') Cockburn, to take the reprieved fowl from the wash-house and return it to its coop on the back verandah.

Davis left the parlour, and saw his wife standing at the foot of the stairs in conversation with the cook. Noticing Letitia going upstairs with the chicken he remembered that the coop door was difficult for anyone but himself or his sons to fasten. Taking a candle, he followed the girl upstairs. Once she had put the fowl away he swiftly secured the door and returned to the parlour. He sat there with Rachel until his wife returned. Then he and Blanche went to bed.<sup>7</sup>

That, at any rate, is what Davis claimed. Letitia Cockburn offered a less mundane version of events. According to her, it was Davis who ordered her to replace the fowl in its coop. She alleged that as she was doing so he committed on her person 'an assault of a shameful nature'. She was protesting angrily when Davis became aware of his wife's footsteps on the stairs. He withdrew stealthily — on tip toe — to the 'front dining room' (which appears to be the 'parlour' in Davis' version). Rachel was not there, having gone to bed half an hour previously. Letitia rushed downstairs to the kitchen, where she acquainted the other servants — Maria Whelan, Mary Donald and Mary Fagan — with what had occurred.

Next day, she requested permission to go home to her mother, Jane Cockburn, but since dinner was late — it was the last meal before *Kol Nidre* — she was refused. On Tuesday, the day following *Yom Kippur*, her sister, apparently named Mary Lynch, called to see her and was told that Davis 'had been going on with his blackguard conduct'. For it was by no means the first time that such a thing had happened. But Letitia had been too ashamed to divulge these goings-on to her mother. After dinner that day she did visit her mother briefly, but returned to her employers the same evening. She knew she would be needed, because Mrs Davis was out 'and the nurse [Mary Fagan] had to make the baby's food and could not

leave the children'. Next day Letitia's brother, George, arrived at the house and took his sister home.<sup>8</sup>

Before she returned to the Davis house on Tuesday 26 September for her evening duties, Letitia repeated her allegations before Mr Cowper, magistrate at the Walter Police Court, and his colleague, Mr Renwick. In a letter dated 30 September, her solicitor, William Maguire, asked Davis to meet him at his Pitt Street chambers 'on Monday next before eleven o'clock'.<sup>9</sup> Davis, who by that time had been formally charged, declined. A hearing was scheduled to begin at the Water Police Court on 10 October 1871.

Davis briefed a distinguished Irish-born barrister, the sometime and future politician Edward Butler (1823–79). Butler was instructed by the partners David Lawrence Levy and Alfred de Lissa, both active members of the Jewish community. Appearing for the plaintiff was the equally distinguished Scots-born barrister and future politician David Buchanan (?1823–90), instructed by William Maguire. Butler, an attractive urbane figure, a radical in a conservative profession, was known for his zealous advocacy of Catholic rights, and may be assumed, incidentally, to have been not unsympathetic towards the colony's Jews. It seems reasonable to suppose that the liberal-minded Butler was conscious of the parallels between Catholic and Jewish minority status in Australia. The fiery Buchanan, a Presbyterian who evenhandedly, when he considered occasion warranted it, attacked both the Catholic and Anglican churches, was known for his espousal of divorce reform. He was eventually, as a parliamentarian, to succeed in legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister in the colony, and after a doughty protracted fight, to win for women (encumbered by a sexual double standard) the right to divorce on the grounds of adultery alone. His views on women's rights in marriage were well-known by 1871. He was thus probably an ideal man to prosecute in a case of this nature, given his apparent sympathy with the female point of view. Either by design or by accident, Letitia's solicitor would appear to have chosen her barrister well. Buchanan made it clear that he was prepared to grant Davis no quarter.<sup>10</sup>

The hearing, before magistrates Cowper and Renwick, took four days, and produced a 'very voluminous' body of evidence from the 'examination of the various witnesses on either side', as the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it. Letitia endured 'a very severe cross-examination' by Butler, and Davis was treated to some ferocity by Buchanan. Jane Cockburn, George Cockburn and Mary Lynch were called on behalf of the plaintiff, while David Marks, Rachel Davis, Maria Whelan, Mary Donald and Mary Fagan testified for the defence.<sup>11</sup>

Shortly before one o'clock on 14 October, Mary Fagan (the nurse whom Letitia assisted) completed her evidence, and after retiring for a few minutes, the magistrates announced that they had no desire to hear further evidence: they were dismissing the case.<sup>12</sup>

Buchanan was outraged. He protested that he had intended to produce evidence in contradiction of Davis' witnesses. Butler retorted that he should mention, in justice to his client, that he had a number of witnesses still to call. They included Letitia's former employer, Gerard Krefft (the German-born zoologist and curator of the Australian Museum) who was prepared to swear that Letitia had 'the character of a thorough liar'.<sup>13</sup>

Technically, the two barristers should not have remonstrated with the magistrates after the latter had announced their decision, and Buchanan's outburst, in particular, caused resentment. He blustered that he would have the case debated in



the New South Wales parliament, but his threat failed to intimidate the magistrates into revoking their decision. The dismissal stood, and Cowper rubbed salt into Buchanan's wound by announcing that he had resolved after hearing the evidence for the prosecution that Davis had no case to answer. He would have dismissed the case there and then, but did not do so in deference to Renwick, who was interested in what the defence had to say. Once the defence case had been put, Renwick, too, became convinced of Davis' innocence.<sup>14</sup>

So Buchanan's strong championship of his client was to no avail. Following his final outburst, he retired from the court 'with a perfect storm of hisses', as the *Australian Israelite* noted.<sup>15</sup> Letitia's evidence, and the depositions by her mother and other family members and witnesses testifying to her 'good character and quiet disposition' were unconvincing. It was remarked that none of these people was in a position to testify to her disposition and conduct in the eighteen months since she had been in service. Two testimonials to her 'excellent character', dated February and October 1871 respectively, which Buchanan claimed to have received, were deemed inadmissible as evidence.

Even without witnesses for the defence, Cowper had been prepared to dismiss the case, and Renwick had obviously believed Davis and his counsel, as well as Letitia's colleagues in the servants' hall. Davis' calling and good name, and the fact that his wife was in the house at the time of the alleged offence, were mighty hurdles for Letitia to overcome. (So, perhaps, were patriarchal attitudes). Letitia denied, during cross-examination, that she had a reputation for untruthfulness amongst the other servants. She stated that upon two other occasions she had told her colleagues that Davis had 'been taking liberties with her' but that they had laughed derisively. In evidence, Mary Donald, Mary Fagan and Maria Whelan agreed that Letitia was 'systematically untruthful, and was not only in the habit of telling falsehoods in trivial matters, but making mischief between the servants by reporting what one said of the other'. Mary Fagan said she had often noticed Letitia standing on the street giggling at men passing by, and denied Letitia's claim that she reported the alleged offence to the other servants in the kitchen as soon as it occurred. Mary explained that the first they heard of it was when they were all going to bed, and Maria Whelan told Letitia that she 'had better tell it as she had seen the shadow [of the assault being committed] on the wall'. In her evidence, Maria said that she had seen no such thing, but had used that phrase to 'draw her [Letitia] out' since on the way to bed Letitia had started laughing, and she wanted to know what she was laughing at. Mary Fagan also told the court that having heard Letitia's story she threatened that after the High Holy Days she would bring her before Mrs Davis and make her prove her allegations about the reverend.<sup>16</sup>

A very poor impression was created by the testimony of Letitia and her mother, and suspicions of a pecuniary motive were aroused by Maguire's attempt to interview Davis in his office before the hearing began. Many were scandalised by the revelation that Jane Cockburn and Maguire had appeared at the back door of the Davis home, in order to obtain surreptitiously any information from the two Marys and Maria which might help Letitia's case. Maguire had not been introduced to the servants as the solicitor he was, but had been represented by Jane as 'a poor old man' to put the servants off-guard. ('Thank God', reflected Saul Samuel, 'we were in a free country, and the law had proved powerful enough to put down injustice . . . If anyone had been present during the examination of the girl at the Police Court, they would have said the case ought to have been dismissed at once').<sup>17</sup>

There may be, perhaps, some few, who, forgetting that they that most impute a crime are prone to it, inflate themselves with some insane delight at finding some stain or blemish in a name of note. Yea, they would pare the mountain to the plain to leave an equal baseness.

Thus waxed the *Australian Israelite*. It added: 'We venture to think, however, that we are in perfect harmony with the general feeling pervading all classes of this community if we express to the reverend gentleman our heartfelt sympathy with him in the great misfortune that has overtaken him, and the universal belief that is entertained here, that the accusation preferred against him was "baseless as the fabric of a vision"'.<sup>18</sup>

Even before Davis' innocence was upheld, friends, acquaintances and those who knew him only by repute — many of them non-Jewish — were refusing even to contemplate his guilt. As Saul Samuel observed, 'the public had known [Davis] as taking part in many philanthropic movements and a good citizen'.<sup>19</sup> Saul Samuel, one of York Street's leading congregants, said that as soon as he heard of the charge, 'knowing Mr Davis' high character both as a friend and as a minister, he felt the falsehood of it' . . . The reverend

occupying the position he did, was incapable of perpetrating an offence of such a nature . . . No one but a madman would have attempted such a crime . . . The offence was alleged to have been committed at a time when Mr Davis' wife and daughter were within a few feet of him, and within the hearing of three servants. It was against commonsense to think such a thing could be done . . . He had known Mr Davis for nine years and he acknowledged him as a friend and a brother . . . A more devoted husband, or a more attached father never lived.<sup>20</sup>

John Dawson (probably the prominent non-Jewish Sydney lawyer of that name) did not know Davis personally, but nevertheless knew of the high esteem in which he was held.

He believed that as a man there were few to excel him; and from all that he would collect, so far as his sacred character was concerned in his peculiar position, none could surpass him. He believed with all his heart and soul that the reverend gentleman was utterly incapable of the scandalous charge brought against him . . . Saying nothing of him as a man, his sacred character as the minister of so large a body of the community was such as would protect him, and prevent him from committing such a filthy offence, even if he could be supposed capable of it under other circumstances. When he bore in mind Mr Davis' sacred character, he was doubly convinced that he was incapable as the crime was alleged to have been committed on the eve of so solemn a day as the services of that which he was about to attend . . .<sup>21</sup>

George Alfred Lloyd M.L.A., more inclined to acknowledge the sexual hypocrisy which lay beneath the surface of staid Victorian life, offered a more pragmatic reason for Davis' innocence. Lloyd recalled that when first apprised of the news

he was at once impressed with the conviction that the thing was absurd on the face of it. He weighed the probabilities of the case, and he never for a moment lost faith in the integrity and innocence of the accused . . . Whatever sins men committed, there was not one man in a hundred would be guilty of desecrating his own home . . . The spot where our wives and children trod was sacred to our hearts, and to do anything that would bring reproach on the sanctity of home life was what a man recoiled from . . .<sup>22</sup>

The president of the Macquarie Street Synagogue, Lewis Wolfe Levy M.L.A., was in his constituency of Maitland when he learned of the charge. He returned to Sydney to 'judge for himself' and sat through most of the hearing.

He might say that Mr Buchanan did his utmost to get a conviction. He was glad that such an able man as Mr Buchanan was supposed to be was against Mr Davis, because he left no stone unturned in his endeavours to prove the guilt of the defendant . . . [The plaintiff] unfortunately picked out a peculiar time for making the charge. It was the time when as members of the Jewish Church the whole family would be likely to be about the house; as on that particular evening there was a great deal to do for the morrow.<sup>23</sup>

The minister of Macquarie Street Synagogue, Rev. Solomon Phillips, said that when he heard of the charge 'sorrow came to his house, and he thought he might with confidence say that there was not a single Jewish house throughout the length and breadth of the city where sorrow did not dwell'.

These and other sympathisers demonstrated their solidarity with Davis at a packed public meeting held in the Sydney School of Arts on the evening of Monday 16 October. Chaired by Saul Samuel M.L.A., the attendance consisted of a considerable number of Christians of all denominations besides members of the Jewish community. Sitting alongside Samuel on the platform were such Jewish notables (drawn from both congregations) as Lewis Wolfe Levy, M.L.A. and future parliamentarian Harris Levi Nelson, Rev. A.A. Levi and Rev. Solomon Phillips, S.L. Bensusan, Alfred de Lissa, Morris Gotthelf, Sigmond Hoffnung, Montague Levey, Jacob Marks, Eliezer Levi Montefiore, Jacob Levi Montefiore, Moses Moss, Louis Phillips and M.A. Worms. Interspersed among them were many gentiles. These included Rev. Daniel Allen, (the future Sir) George Dibbs, G.A. Lloyd M.L.A., Walter Bradley, Dr Brereton, merchant T. Cowlshaw, N.J. Crocker, Captain Eldred, senior railways official C.A. Goodchap, T. Hale, Anthony Hordern (probably senior), John Hourigan, William Neill, W.H. Paling, J.H. Palmer, and J. Woodward. (Davis' recent adversary, Rev. Graham, was conspicuous by his absence!).<sup>24</sup>

It was the kind of ecumenical gathering which came together in support of some urgent and very worthy civic cause, or of the victims of persecution overseas. But it had come together in support of one man, and unanimously passed the motion (proposed by Jacob Levi Montefiore, seconded by Lewis Wolfe Levy) that 'this meeting expresses its deep and earnest sympathy with the Rev. Alexander Davis, for the painful position in which he has recently been placed by the unfounded charge preferred against him and properly dismissed, and desires to assure the reverend gentleman that in the opinion of this meeting the esteem and respect in which he has hitherto been held continue entirely unabated'.<sup>25</sup>

The meeting also unanimously resolved (on the motion of John Dawson, seconded by Rev. Solomon Phillips) that a delegation consisting of a representative cross-section of the attendance should personally present an address to Davis which said, in part

We . . . desire to convey to you the expression of our deep and earnest sympathy for the sufferings you have recently undergone by the unfounded charges preferred against you . . . and most properly dismissed . . . And we desire to assure you that the respect and esteem in which you have hitherto been held continue entirely unabated. There never existed a doubt in the minds of any of us as to the falsity of these disgraceful charges, and your high public position, and your reputation for moral integrity and social worth, in no wise suffer from any base detractions.<sup>26</sup>

A sympathy fund was also subscribed at the meeting, to be administered by M. de Lissa and Harris Levi Nelson as joint treasurers. The fund was intended to defray the expenses Davis had incurred in defending himself, and the surplus was to be divided among Sydney charitable institutions. Between £300 and £400 was collected, and many Macquarie Street members were among the donors. Donations of ten guineas each came from parliamentarians Maurice Alexander and Saul Moss, David Lawrence Levy (one of Davis' solicitors) and the business partners Myers and Solomon. Davis' other solicitor, Alfred de Lissa, subscribed five guineas, as did D. Barnett, Walter Bradley, Abraham Cohen, Samuel Cohen, Mr and Mrs Ernest Davis (the minister's eldest son and daughter-in-law), M. de Lissa, (Sir) George Dibbs, Morris Gotthelf, John Isaacs, Harris Levi Nelson, W.H. Paling, Louis Phillips, John Solomon, R.F. Stubbs and Company, G.R. Whiting, and the Sydney Jewish Literary

Society. The Catholic Archbishop, John Bede Polding, and George Alfred Lloyd M.L.A. were among those who donated two guineas each; others included Elias Cohen and M.A. Worms. Robert Forster M.L.A. was one of the many who gave one guinea each: these included the celebrated William Westgarth (apparently on one of his visits from London, where he was now largely based), William Neill, who gave a stirring speech at the public meeting (he paid tribute to the legal system and to the 'high morality and high commercial principle' of the Jews), Letitia's former employer, Gerard Krefft, and Alexander Harris, who was probably Davis' dinner guest on the fateful evening. Rev. Solomon Phillips parted with ten shillings and sixpence, a generous amount given his salary and considering that comparatively well-heeled businessmen, including Anthony Hordern (probably senior) gave the same. Others gave five shillings, yet others half-a-crown each. Gentile names were almost as prominent as Jewish ones throughout the list. Lewis Wolfe Levy, who gave ten pounds, was undoubtedly responsible for procuring additional subscriptions to the fund from seventeen individuals at West Maitland. Those there who donated the largest sum of one guinea each included George Judah Cohen and Benjamin W. Levy, both to become well-known in business circles, and among those subscribing smaller amounts were several obviously gentile well-wishers. One guinea was also subscribed from a gentile sympathiser from Bega, and letters of condolence reached Davis from all sections of the Australian community.<sup>27</sup>

This ready non-Jewish support was obviously, as William Neill suggested during the public meeting on 16 October, of considerable comfort to the Jewish community. So was the impartiality of the magistrates. It would not have been difficult for Davis and his contemporaries to imagine what the outcome might have been in certain parts of Europe, had a Jew been charged with the offence imputed to him. That the case appears to have produced little or no anti-Semitism is further proof of the fairminded tolerance of the overwhelming majority of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Australians. Not for nothing did colonial Jewry give constant thanks for living under the British flag! We perceive this gratitude clearly in the letter which (the future Sir) Benjamin Benjamin, president of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, penned to Davis on 26 October 1871, a letter as remarkable (at least to our modern eyes) for its almost risibly high-flown language as for its extravagant expressions of sympathy:

It is with feelings of the most profound pleasure, and under a very grateful sense of duty to the Father of All, that we, the President, Treasurer and Committee of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, desire to express our cordial rejoicings at the triumph you have just achieved over a base, malevolent, and unfounded charge, by which your well earned good name as a minister of religion, was sought to be blighted; but as good frequently springeth out of evil, so you have been raised, by the event, still higher in the estimation of your co-religionists and the public at large.

We may indeed thank the great Giver of all Good that we live in a country whose liberal laws mete out justice to all, irrespective of creed or country [of origin]; where the Jew has the same privileges and the same immunities as his fellow-citizen of other creeds; laws emanating from liberal minds, and which have given to the world a noble example of devotion to the sacred rights of conscience.

We contemplate with the utmost sincere gratification, Reverend Sir, the increased esteem in which you are held by the community whose spiritual head you have long been, and whose confidence you have long possessed for the victory you have so signally gained over the machinations of the wicked. At the same time, we deeply sympathise with you and those who are most dear to you, at the anguish which so baseless an accusation must have occasioned.

We feel that Providence, who has ever watched over and protected the Jewish people through all their troubles and vicissitudes, who has ever frustrated the evils of their enemies, has been the means of tearing the mask from your false accuser, exposing the infamous attempt of a miscreant, and proclaiming to the world your perfect innocence.

Fervently supplicating the Almighty Disposer of Events, that He may mercifully watch over yourself

and family; grant you long life and health to fulfil with wisdom the public duties you are called upon to perform, and so dispose them that they may tend to the Glory of God and the welfare of your co-religionists . . . <sup>28</sup>

Saul Samuel believed that William Maguire had sought a meeting with Davis prior to the hearing in order to propose to him that Letitia would drop the charges in return for an appropriate sum. He admired Davis for bravely insisting that the allegations be thoroughly investigated. Like many another bourgeois *paterfamilias*, Samuel felt a personal involvement in the case. He thundered that the case

was not an occasion where Mr Davis alone was affected. But circumstances were connected with it which affected every member of the community. A vile girl, aided by a few unprincipled persons, might forward a charge against any head of a family . . . and have his reputation and good character ruined. Any man, either in this or in any other community, might be placed in the same position as that in which Mr Davis had been placed. Such charges as that which had been preferred against Mr Davis had been brought against many other persons for the sake of extorting money . . . But few had the moral courage of Mr Davis.<sup>29</sup>

Samuel was one of several people regretful at what they considered Buchanan's harsh treatment of Davis:

Mr Davis was entitled to their sympathy, because he was treated in the police court by the advocate for the prosecution, not with that consideration which was due to a gentleman, but as though he had been the basest creature . . . Several times during the hearing of the case Mr Davis was addressed as the prisoner.

Was anything more opposed to the proper administration of our laws?<sup>30</sup>

T. Hale, an avowedly philo-Semitic magistrate, declared that his colleague, Mr Cowper, always took 'the greatest possible pains to arrive at the truth, and his decisions had always met with his warmest approbation'. He believed Buchanan owed Cowper and Renwick, in handing down their finding, 'silence, attention and common courtesy; and that no gentleman, whether a member of parliament, a barrister or a solicitor, should use such expressions as a learned gentleman [Buchanan] used on that occasion when he said that a scandalous miscarriage of justice had taken place'. Emotions ran high on this subject, and the public meeting of 16 October, at which Hale spoke, concluded with 'cheers' for Davis and chairman Saul Samuel and 'boos for plaintiff's counsel and attorney'.<sup>31</sup>

On the afternoon of 18 October a deputation, composed of Jews and non-Jews, appointed at that meeting assembled at the School of Arts. Led by Saul Samuel, it proceeded to Davis' residence, and presented him with the minutes of the meeting and their loyal address. (The latter was subsequently 'elaborately illuminated on vellum, and handsomely bound in the form of a book'.) A deputation from the Sydney Jewish Young Men's Literary Society, led by Solomon Levy, also presented Davis with an address. By the end of October the Melbourne-based *Australian Israelite* was able to report that 'Public meetings to express sympathy with Davis have been held in many parts of the colony and he has received innumerable messages of sympathy from all creeds and classes throughout the colonies'.<sup>32</sup> Most Jewish institutions followed the lead of the Young Men's Literary Society in presenting an address, while expressions of sympathy were forthcoming from synagogues around Australia. Messages were also received from the civic authorities of various country towns, one of which — Gulgong, New South Wales — outdid the others by presenting 'an elegant piece of silver plate'.<sup>33</sup> The *Australian Israelite's* Sydney correspondent commented that

although the public demonstrations of sympathy which have taken place are, perhaps, greater than have been made here for any individual (except H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh), there is still a feeling of regret that the good and worthy pastor should have so suffered. The bitter memory will, no doubt,



long remain with him, but he has the best consolation in the love and esteem of the whole of his flock, and the respect of all classes and denominations of the public.<sup>34</sup>

In November 1871, the costs of the defence having been met out of the Sympathy Fund, the remainder of the money was distributed among Sydney charitable institutions. The Benevolent Asylum, Infirmary, Destitute Children's Society, St Vincent's Hospital, Soup Kitchen and Night Refuge, Deaf and Dumb and Blind Institutions, the Ragged School and School of Industry (all institutions within the general, non-Jewish community) benefitted. So did, but to a lesser extent, the Hebrew Philanthropic Society and the Hebrew School. Even-handedness in the distribution of charity between Jewish and non-Jewish causes was a marked feature of colonial Jewish life (and indeed persisted into the twentieth century) but the imbalance this time caused some resentment. ('I heard a growl or two', reported the *Australian Israelite's* Sydney correspondent, 'that the Jewish charities did not receive enough, but I think the committee exercised a very wise discretion in devoting the bulk of the money to the public charitable institutions').<sup>35</sup>

There was general concurrence that the press had been right in its limited reportage of the testimony at the court hearing.

The Catholic *Freeman's Journal* reported the case in more detail than did its contemporaries, explaining that it so decided 'because the published reports left out the particular points in the testimony both of the prosecutrix and witnesses — points that there was no reason in logic or morality to exclude which rendered the charge utterly incredible and silly'.

The paper added

We are fully aware that Mr Davis' character requires no vindication whatsoever; but it is only fair that, having suffered in his feelings, all the reparation of publicity, to a worthy and respectable fellow-citizen, should be made . . . We need only say that the great meeting of sympathy held the other night [16 October] sufficiently manifests the feelings of every section of this community towards Mr Davis, in recognition of his high moral worth, of his liberality in the associations of citizenship, and of his unblemished character.<sup>36</sup>

With such a spontaneous and spectacular show of support, can there be any who can honestly argue that anti-Semitism was widespread in Australia? Indeed, the *milieu* to which Davis belonged was of far more influence in congealing sympathy than his ethnicity was in dispersing it. The general attitude may be seen in a thoughtful leader in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

A respectable family and a large circle have been harassed by a scandal unsupported by a grain of probability. An act was imputed for which there was no motive intelligible to any man, said to be perpetrated under circumstances and at a time when there could be no inducement or temptation, and by a gentleman of an age [Davis was a mere forty-five!] and domestic connections which rendered it all but impossible. A silly, prurient girl, little above the age of a child, having indulged in certain freedoms of speech, was told that she would have to repeat her accusation and prove it, and this seems to have led to her bringing it forward as a distinct charge. Nothing more than this is shown in the evidence. It was not pretended that any violence was inflicted, or even attempted; and yet, with this story, a Court was kept sitting for several days, and details unfit for publication were dilated upon with offensive minuteness.

We do not say that the magistrates should have refused an enquiry, or that it would have been upon the whole desirable, for the sake of the person accused, promptly to have dismissed the case; but it is certainly a hardship to which the purest and most elevated character in the community may be liable by one forward girl, and by the reckless or corrupt support of unprincipled people.

There was no occasion for the legal advisers of the prosecutrix to assume the guilt of the accused. There is room for rhetoric or insinuation in a preliminary inquiry. The moment any man is accused, whatever may be his character, he seems to be thought by the lawyers fairly liable to every kind of insinuation and degrading allusion. We are quite aware of the difficulty of presiding at such a trial; but certainly the conduct of gentlemen of the law often causes a sober man to doubt whether we do not purchase at a very high cost the publicity often given to these proceedings.

The meeting held to express confidence in the Rev. Mr Davis will, however, be the best antidote to the pain inflicted upon his household. Few men could have obtained a higher reputation in his position. The advantage of general character is felt as the best shield against false accusations. But nothing can compensate for the mental pain such an ordeal must give. We are under the power of that system which everywhere exposes the most precious possessions to be endangered by the meanest things, where the venom of the serpent may be as fatal to human life as the shock of an earthquake — where passion and ignorance may inflict a wound which the skill of a college of surgeons could never heal. These are the deductions which have to be paid by some for the benefit of all.

The meeting held the other day spoke of the triumph of British justice. Though we are not inclined to eulogise its proceedings on all occasions, we have no doubt that essentially and generally speaking there is a strong sympathy for fairness, and, therefore, for those who have right on their side. What, however, commonly distinguishes the justice of our Courts is the transparency of their proceedings, and the certainty that any attempt to warp them one way or the other would be represented to the gaze of the world.

Many years occasional intercourse with Jewish society, and a far more extensive acquaintance with the social life of that people, have led us to the conclusion that, in social morals, they will compare with the better portions of the Christian community. They have a large proportion of kind fathers and good husbands, judged by the ordinary rules.<sup>37</sup>

From a Jewish standpoint such sentiments were and remain heart-warming and reassuring. But the steady assumption that the servant girl was lying and of disreputable character, a theme propounded by many champions of Davis, Jewish and non-Jewish, must surely disturb all fair-minded people. Pitted against Letitia were the male, middle- and upper-class citizenry of Sydney, stolid, solid and outwardly respectable, contemptuous of her and her allegation. The onus of proof was upon her: in that male-dominated and rigidly class-structured age her sex and her social status were against her, and the position and vocation of the man she accused weakened her case. Yet she persisted in her accusation. Perhaps she was, indeed, a black-mailer, a schemer who felt compelled to continue with the charge once she had brought it. Assuming that she was telling the truth, that took courage, for she must have realised how the odds were stacked. And if twentieth century women are reluctant to press charges of sexual assault, how much more reluctant must their nineteenth century counterparts have been!

The fact that the other servants testified against Letitia is not necessarily of significance. Perhaps they were jealous of what was possibly a pristine prettiness or adolescent vivacity; perhaps they were afraid of losing their jobs; or perhaps they were motivated by a combination of both. Buchanan certainly believed her; it would be interesting to know whether he charged for his services — and how the Cockburn family managed to pay him if he did!

Did the *Sydney Morning Herald* honestly believe that the case for Davis' innocence was strengthened by alleging that his age virtually precluded a sexual act? He was only in his forties, and in any case the paper must have known that Methusaleh was not the only hoary-headed patriarch capable of fathering a child!

Much as we might like to share in the almost universal assumption of Davis' innocence, we should surely keep an open mind. The coy Victorian language describing the charge prevents us from knowing precisely what he was accused of having done. Since his wife and daughter were in the house at the time, rape or attempted rape seems highly improbable, an impression seemingly confirmed by the *Sydney Morning Herald's* comment regarding the lack of alleged violence. But what is elegantly known in our own day as 'a quick grope' does not.

As for Davis himself, the York Street authorities granted him a month's leave almost as soon as the case against him was dismissed, in order for him to recover from the trauma. He spent part of the time away from it all at Manly Beach, trying to come to terms with what happened. But since he also had numerous letters of

sympathy which, in those formal and courteous times, required a reply, he was kept busy.<sup>38</sup>

It seems that scant record of his feelings have come down to us, though we may guess what they were. We glimpse the phlegmatism he managed to maintain despite his humiliation and turmoil in a letter he wrote on 3 November 1871, thanking Benjamin Benjamin and the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation for their encouraging words:

It was ever so far from my expectation that the groundless and malicious charge, of which I was recently made the unfortunate victim, would have evoked, in Sydney and the colony generally, that unanimous demonstration of sympathy which has been so kindly and feelingly accorded me; still less did I expect to receive such a manifestation of goodwill as you at Melbourne have been so generous and so thoughtful as to forward me, in your affectionate and much-esteemed address passed in meeting.

That my own people and my [Sydney] fellow citizens should have surrounded me with tokens of sympathetic regard and assurance of unabated respect and esteem, might possibly have been anticipated, as they have been, in some measure, the witnesses of my active labours as a minister of God and an humble worker for the public good; but that you, almost unacquainted with me except by report and reputation, should have thought me worthy of so high and flattering a mark of confidence as your address testifies, was beyond all expectation, and therefore calls for all the more gratitude on my part, and which I deeply feel, while I thank you for your expressions of sympathy, and your gratulation at the triumph of a righteous cause and the vindication of innocence; for the assurance of the esteem which I prize so highly, and for the solace your gracious and sincere words have brought to my mind.

I need not tell you of the anguish of mind this audacious charge induced, for that you can easily imagine, as you are well aware that character, so dear to every man of family or of standing, must be doubly dear to one holding a sacred office — one who is a moral and religious guide — one who is the reflex of the congregation. Yet it is perhaps ordered that one shall not pass his whole existence without some kind of trouble, and this has been mine; yet, painful though it has been, there has been a silver lining to the darkening cloud through which the light of a kind Providence has glimmered, showing that He does not forsake the innocent — does not forget Israel, His peculiar heritage — and like as He maketh 'the wrath of man to praise Him', so will He turn present evil into future good, by exhibiting to the world, as at the grand demonstration at the School of Arts, that the Hebrews are yet a power in the world, and strangers come to testify to their good name, their honourable character, and the faithful hope in which they follow their sacred mission.

I shall not easily forget the kind purpose of your letter of sympathy, which has helped, with so many others, to bring solace to my mind, and peace into a happy home so ruthlessly and causelessly disturbed; and while I pray that the consideration you have had for me and mine be reflected upon your own lives individually, I hope fervently, at the same time, that you may have peace and congregational prosperity collectively — that harmony and goodwill may ever be the prevailing characteristic of your communal life, and that all you do may tend to the glorification of God . . .<sup>39</sup>

Evidently, and no doubt inevitably, Davis' traumatic experience lingered in his mind. It surely explains his interest in a case which took place fifteen years after his own.

In November 1886, eleven young Sydney men were tried for the pack-rape of a sixteen-year-old unemployed servant girl, Mary Jane Hicks, on a scrub-covered hillock in Moore Park known as Mount Rennie. Two were acquitted, five reprieved, and the rest were condemned to death.<sup>40</sup>

The Mount Rennie case, as it became known, was widely discussed in Sydney during the summer of 1886–87. The four men condemned to hang were all under twenty years of age, and, supported only by the Catholic *Freeman's Journal*, J.F. Archibald's *Bulletin* embarked on a vociferous campaign for their reprieve. The *Bulletin* argued that their guilt was in doubt, since its presumption depended largely on Mary Jane's unsubstantiated testimony. However, even if they were guilty, they should not suffer a punishment rooted (according to the *Bulletin*) in the brutality of Australia's convict past. In arguments which make very disturbing reading from a

feminist perspective, Archibald himself asserted that Mary Jane had 'come to Mount Rennie with the cabman for no moral purpose' (he was chivalrous enough to add that this 'of course would give no licence to anyone assailing her, the person of the most degraded woman being in the eye of the law as sacred as that of the most virtuous lady . . .'). He commented that 'you may search the records of Australia for the last seventy years without finding more than three authenticated cases where even in the lonely bush, a really virtuous woman has been successfully assailed by a satyr'.<sup>41</sup>

It was doubtless Davis' own experience as one wrongfully accused — combined, perhaps, with the traditional Jewish antipathy towards capital punishment — which made him lend his voice to the campaign for clemency. He joined three other leading citizens — the barrister-politician William Bede Dalley (consistent anti-death penalty crusader who edited and part-owned the Catholic *Freeman's Journal*), Henry Parkes (with whom, ironically, Dalley often clashed) and Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran — in a deputation which pleaded (unsuccessfully) with Lord Carington, Governor of New South Wales, for a reprieve.<sup>42</sup>

But although his ordeal continued to torment him, it did not in any way impede his career. In fact, the groundswell of sympathy which Letitia's false charge evoked from all sections of the public, his failure to attempt to bribe her into withdrawing it, and the dignity he maintained throughout the episode, may be presumed to have, in a sense, advantaged him.

One wonders what the attitude of Australian Jewry would have been had the magistrates decided differently, and if a verdict of guilty had been returned. Would there have been dark — and perhaps not so dark — mutterings of a biased judiciary; would some kind of solemn petition, whether alleging prejudice or imploring leniency, have been presented to the Governor? At the very least, would there have been defiant meetings proclaiming Davis' innocence? Or would his co-religionists have instantly forsaken him, agreeing loudly that he deserved to feel the full brunt of the law for a dastardly crime? A 'guilty' verdict would certainly have put colonial Jewry to the test.

Needless to say, had the case proceeded and Davis not been cleared, his career would have lain in tatters. As it was, he went on to become the undisputed spiritual head of Sydney Jewry until his retirement in 1904. Rev. Solomon Phillips retired from the Macquarie Street pulpit in 1874, and at the induction of his successor, Rev. Isaac Moses Goldreich, in May that year, Davis declared that he considered two congregations unnecessary (although he looked forward to co-operation for the sake of Judaism). A year later, Goldreich returned to his former pulpit at Ballarat, while the fortunes of the once proud 'New Sydney Synagogue' in Macquarie Street continued on their downward spiral. It was an inexorable course. Scarcely more than a *minyan* of members attended the meeting which in 1877 voted to curtail the congregation's affairs. The York Street congregation occupied the Macquarie Street congregation's premises, their own premises having been put up for sale, until 4 March 1878 when the Great Synagogue in Elizabeth Street was consecrated.

On that grand day, members of the original congregation, and members of its upstart rival, the one superseded, the other voluntarily defunct, sat alongside each other. They sat in hope and harmony, with a fraternal sense of purpose, just as they had sat over six years previously at a public meeting in the School of Arts when the esteemed minister now standing before them had been the object of their concern and pity. The unification of Sydney Jewry had been realised at last. Perhaps the unpleasant little episode of 1871, by forcing the leaders of the two congregations to

make common cause, helped in some humble measure to smooth the way towards the single congregation which Davis craved.<sup>43</sup>

## NOTES

1. See, for instance, James Jupp, 'Australia Has Done Very Well', *Australian Book Review*, July 1991, p. 22, and, more especially, Barry York, 'The Saga of Australia's Jews', *Canberra Times*, 8 June 1991, p. 9. In ways which I shall not belabour here, Dr. York has completely misinterpreted, indeed distorted, my views on anti-Semitism and Jewish achievement in Australia.
2. Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: a Thematic History*, Vol. One (1788–1945), Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, Chapter Seven.
3. For the background, see Israel Porush, 'From Bridge Street to York Street', *AJHSJ*, vol. 2, pt. 2, 1944, pp. 61–66; Israel Porush, 'The York Street (Sydney) Synagogue', *AJHSJ*, Vol. 1, pt. 7, 1942, pp. 213–18; Sidney B. Glass, 'The Reasons for the Macquarie Street Secession, Part 1', *AJHSJ*, vol. 3, pt. 1, 1949, pp. 6–14; Israel Porush, 'The Reasons for the Macquarie Street Secession', vol. 3, pt. 1, 1949, pp. 14–28; David J. Benjamin, 'The Macquarie Street Synagogue, 1859–1877', *AJHSJ*, vol. 3, pt. 9, 1953, pp. 379–431; Esther H. Stone, 'A Reminiscence of the Macquarie Street Congregation', *AJHSJ*, vol. 1, pt. 4, 1943, pp. 319–22.
4. Marie Keysor, 'The York Street Synagogue Building: reminiscence', *AJHSJ*, vol. 1, pt. 7, 1942, p. 27.
5. See the photograph reproduced in *Lone Hand*, 1 January 1909, which shows Davis in his prime; cf the portrait reproduced in Israel Porush, *The House of Israel*, Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1978, and elsewhere.
6. Some of the Davis-Graham correspondence, which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, appears in the *Australian Israelite*, 20 July 1871, 4 August 1871, 25 August 1871, 22 September 1871. Graham followed the exchange with a public lecture in Sydney entitled 'The Talmud and the Gospel', *Ibid.*, 29 September 1871.
7. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1871. Mr. Harris was possibly Alexander Harris. Perhaps he was a relative of Mrs. Davis (née Harris). For Davis, see *Australian Dictionary of Biography (A.D.B.)*, vol. 4, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1972, repr. 1979, p. 34. His full address was 82 William Street, Woolloomooloo.
8. *Australian Israelite*, 27 October 1871. Rachel Davis, under oath, corroborated her father's story.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.* For Buchanan and Butler see *A.D.B.*, vol. 3, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1969, pp. 281–83 and 312–5. See also R.B. Walker, 'David Buchanan: Chartist, Radical, Republican', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, v. 53, no. 2, June 1967, pp. 122–38; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 March 1861 and 29 August 1862 for Buchanan's often inebriated condition. An awareness of the parallels between Catholic and Jewish minority status in Australia probably explains the presence at the 16 October public meeting of Joseph Spruson, a Sydney public servant and leading Catholic layman, who contributed half a guinea to the Sympathy Fund. However, Protestant denominations were also represented at the meeting, including Sydney stockbroker Josiah Mullens, an important figure in the Congregational Church, who donated five pounds. For Spruson see *Footprints* (Melb.), May 1980; for Mullens see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 October 1915.
11. *Australian Israelite*, 27 October 1871. Several other defence witnesses also appeared.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.* For Johann Ludwig Gerard Krefft see *A.D.B.*, vol. 5, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1974, pp. 42–44.
14. *Australian Israelite*, 27 October 1871.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. Main list (139 names), *Ibid.*, 27 October 1871; additional list (32 names), *Ibid.*, 3 November 1871. One name (Montague Levey) appears on both lists, with donations of two and five guineas respectively. (Was the first list mistaken?). Some donors, such as Myer Brodzyak, Morris Gotthelf, Moses Moss, Louis Phillips and B. Vallentine, definitely belonged to the Macquarie Street Synagogue. Many gentile names appear. A few companies, both Jewish and non-Jewish, contributed, including the Cowlshaw Brothers (for whom see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 July 1900).



21. Dawson subscribed three guineas to the Sympathy Fund. For the lawyer Dawson see *Town and Country Journal* (Sydney), 18 January 1902.
22. *Ibid.* For Lloyd see C.N. Connolly, *A Biographical Dictionary of the New South Wales Parliament*.
23. *Australian Israelite*, 27 October 1871.
24. *Ibid.* I have been unable to discover the precise identity of some of these people. Clearly, many of the Jews on the platform belonged to the Macquarie Street Synagogue. For Archbishop Polding see *A.D.B.*, vol. 2, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp. 340–47.
25. *Australian Israelite*, 27 October 1871.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.* This issue reproduces the remarks of Saul Samuel, Jacob Levi Montefiore, Lewis Wolfe Levy, John Dawson, T. Hale, J.H. Palmer, Robert Campbell, G.A. Lloyd, Rev. Solomon Phillips, Robert Forster, and J. Lippmann. It is possible that by 'J. Lippmann' an 'L. Lippmann' (who appears on the donors' list) is meant. If so, perhaps this was Lewis Lipman, a Macquarie Street member, and Hon. Secretary of that congregation. See *Jubilee History of the Great Synagogue and Records of the Earlier Jewish Community of New South Wales*, Sydney: Great Synagogue, 1928, p. 9.
28. This well-meaning but perhaps characteristically inflated letter by a future Mayor of Melbourne is reproduced in *Australian Israelite*, 17 November 1871.
29. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1871.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, 17 November 1871.
34. *Ibid.* The Duke of Edinburgh, son of Queen Victoria, survived an assassination attempt on 12 March 1868 at Clontarf, New South Wales, by the Irish Fenian, O'Farrell.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Some of the remarks from the *Freeman's Journal* are reproduced *Ibid.*, 27 October 1871.
37. *Ibid.* The assumption of male innocence displayed here reminds one of the dismissal in 1956 from the University of Tasmania of Professor Sydney Sparkes Orr: 'Orr, it was widely believed . . . was framed by an hysterical girl . . . ' Of this episode, Dr. Cassandra Pybus observes: 'I think it is a universally true fact . . . that a young woman confronting an older, powerful man has to be given some credibility. Suzanne Kemp was turned on with incredible vituperation . . . ' See Cameron Forbes 'Historian Stirs Ghost of "Martyr"', *Age*, 7 September 1991.
38. *Australian Israelite*, 27 October 1871.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Sylvia Lawson, *The Archibald Paradox: a Strange Case of Authorship*, Ringwood, Vic.: Allen Lane, 1983, pp. 130–33.
41. Quoted *Ibid.*, p. 133.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 132. For Dalley, see *A.D.B.*, vol. 4, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1972, pp. 6–9; for Moran see *A.D.B.*, vol. 10, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1986, pp. 577–81.
43. The inaugural executive of the Great Synagogue consisted of George Myers as president, Louis Phillips as treasurer and David Cohen as secretary, with Samuel Aaron Joseph, Henry Emanuel Cohen, Saul Samuel, David Marks, Moses Moss, John Isaacs, Montague Levey and David Lawrence Levy as committee members, *Jubilee History of the Great Synagogue*, p. 32; Saul Samuel, David Lawrence Levy, Moss, Montague Levey, Isaacs and Phillips were definitely at the 16 October meeting and contributed towards the Sympathy Fund. See *Australian Israelite*, 27 October 1871. Moss and Phillips are known definitely to have been prominent members of the Macquarie Street Synagogue. Presumably David Cohen was too. (I would like to add that my views on the essential tolerance of Anglo-Celtic Australia are supported by Professor Geoffrey Blainey. See his 'The Jews in Australia,' *The Independent Monthly*, November 1991.)

## JEWES AND FREEMASONS IN THE COLONY OF VICTORIA 1840-1900

*Margaret Chapman*

Many notable members of the Jewish community have been defenders of the fraternity of the Freemasons. In this role Rabbi Raymond Apple and Sir Asher Joel figured prominently in a cover story in the *Bulletin* on 11 April 1989. Both men pointed out that they found no difficulty in carrying out their duties as observant Jews while at the same time maintaining a sense of brotherhood with fellow Freemasons who had different religious concepts. They also affirmed their belief that the moral values taught within masonic lodges benefited both the individual Freemason and the community in general.

From the earliest years of settlement in Australia, Jews have been enthusiasts for Freemasonry. Although a very small proportion of the overall population, they have usually been very well represented within Masonic associations and prominent in the Grand Lodges which have been formed. This is not intended to be a dissertation on the moral philosophy which underlies masonic ceremonials and the rituals which accompany the passing of the degrees of apprentice, fellowcraft and master mason which are held within private lodges, but rather an analysis of Freemasonry as a social institution. Of particular interest to this writer was to explore the part Freemasonry has played in Jewish social history in Victoria. The intention is to explore the reasons for Freemasonry's attraction to Jews and the effect which interaction between Jew and Freemason had upon Victoria's Jewish community during the nineteenth century.

For most of the nineteenth century, all Australian Freemasons gave their allegiance to Grand Lodges situated in Britain. The history of these Grand Lodges is not widely known and several recent studies by social scientists<sup>1</sup> indicate that, wherever Anglo-Saxon culture has dominated, Freemasons has performed similar functions. Therefore, a brief discussion of the fraternity's history prior to settlement in Victoria was deemed necessary to clarify Freemasonry's social role, and the attitudes to Freemasons of Jews who settled in the colony. Once within that colony Jewish colonists would encounter circumstances and personalities unique to Victoria; the effect of the latter factors will be discussed within the final section.

The modern era's first Grand Lodge came into existence in London in 1717. Its founders styled themselves 'Speculative Freemasons' as their stated intention was to preserve and teach the philosophy rather than the craft skills of the ancient fraternity of the freestone masons. By the early eighteenth century this craft fraternity differed little from the other artisan guilds, but there were many popular legends about the way in which these skilled workers in stone had organised themselves in the past.<sup>2</sup>

It was said that until the sixteenth century masons had been the past paid of all artisans and had differed from the other crafts in some important ways. Their lifestyle had had something in common with that of the scattered Jewish communities of medieval times, for the nature of their work, in the main the building of fortifications and cathedrals, led to an itinerant life, and over the years they might need to accommodate to quite diverse social environments. They travelled long distances, sometimes to other countries where they were surrounded by those who

spoke a different language and whose customs were strange to them. Once embarked upon a project they could live together for considerable periods of time in lodges, communal accommodation houses attached to a building site. These largely autonomous communities were loosely linked with others of a similar kind by the rules and customs of their fraternity.

The masons usually had no feudal obligations other than to the King, as they had no permanent association with a particular parish or town. Within England, their fraternity had been self-regulating under a tenth century King's Charter. While they had a greater degree of freedom than most artisans they also had additional problems for, again like medieval Jews, they did not have recourse to relief from the parish in time of need but had to depend upon their own resources for support. They needed to make rules for the protection of their trade and to find out how best to protect their membership who, as strangers in a parochial world, were often vulnerable to attack. They could not always count on a welcome or protection from Church or lay authorities, as it was widely believed that they retained and taught in secret many pantheistic beliefs about the natural world and followed the customs of earlier tribal society, electing a leader for each building site and deciding matters of importance to the craft by vote.

These masons often acted as architect as well as worker in stone and had a considerable knowledge of mathematics and the nature of their building materials. Such knowledge as was necessary was imparted to apprentices through oral teaching and reinforced by rituals. These methods were also used to impart a moral or social philosophy suited to their style of life. They established rules of personal conduct which aimed to minimize conflict both between masons themselves and between masons and their neighbours. The fraternity had a reputation for circumspection, and being peaceable as well as charitable. Membership dues were collected by these isolated communities and financial members were acquainted with a password or sign which would identify them to other masons. All such communities were obliged by oath to assist their fellow craftsmen in need to the best of their ability. Occasional large gatherings of stone masons determined their laws and the policies which regulated the craft overall, these meetings having been known as Grand Lodges.

The title of Grand Lodge was bestowed upon a joint meeting of four clubs of Speculative Freemasons when they met together in 1717 to discuss how best to undertake their self-appointed task of rediscovering and teaching the philosophy of the ancient freestone masons' fraternity. They elected a Grand Master and set about gathering together and studying old manuscripts which told of the fraternity in order to formulate a constitution for their new kind of organisation. These 'Speculatives' were a diverse group of individuals; the first Grand Master was an artisan, but in the main they were civil servants, members of the professions, clergy or men of leisure. Within a short time the craft contingent appears to have had little influence, masonic records showing that gentlemen who belonged to one or more learned society, among them the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquarians, had monopolised office and were thus determining the direction of the new organisation. Under this new leadership Freemasons became notable for the conviviality of their meetings and the high social standing of their Grand Masters.

A constitution and history of the fraternity was published in 1738 by the Rev. J. Anderson. The semi-mythical style Anderson used has tended to cloud rather than clarify knowledge of these early days, but he does reveal that there was considerable dissension among the early membership. There were many arguments as to

the correct interpretation of the manuscripts, some of which were destroyed by those who objected to the way they were being used.

'The Charges of a Freemason', which preface lodge constitutions and are a cornerstone of Freemasonry, purport to be the final result of this search among these old records and legends. They take the form of the instruction of an apprentice by a master craftsman. Primary place is given to attesting to faith in a Supreme Being. This is followed however by the command that Freemasons should never allow differences of religious belief to be the cause of discrimination between men. Masons are charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the reputation of the fraternity by their personal conduct and the care they take in examining the oral character of all candidates for lodge membership and those raised to positions of authority within the lodge. They are also enjoined to be charitable and peaceable citizens, to obey all legitimate civil authorities and to zealously promote the prosperity of their own country.

Speculative Freemasonry seems to have been an occasional occupation of gentlemen for many years prior to the formation of Grand Lodge, and Anderson provided a number of explanations as to why a formal organisation was thought necessary at this time. Most of his explanations receive little support from other historical records.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, his history suggests that the motivation of these Speculatives was far more complex than simply the preservation of the philosophy of an old guild. He stressed that there was a link between the timing of the holding of the first Grand Lodge meeting and the defeat of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1716 after George I ascended to the throne of England. And, although the rules of their constitution may have banned religious and political controversy from the lodge-room, Margaret Jacob in *The Radical Enlightenment*<sup>4</sup> argues that the fraternity was founded with a distinct political purpose.

Jacob believes that those engaged in speculative Freemasonry before 1717 often had links with radical political movements, of the kind which surfaced among the Levellers and Diggers of the Civil War period. Early disputes as to manuscript interpretation, she believes, were in reality struggles for control between rival groups among the speculatives. Republican ideas flourished not only among workers; some enthusiasts for experimental science offered this and other 'Rationalist' solutions for society's problems, arguing that only thus could European civilisation be raised to a higher stage. But by the early years of the eighteenth century disciples of Isaac Newton had begun to dominate intellectual life in England. This group was more pragmatic in outlook than their European counterparts and sought ways to facilitate progress without discarding all traditions, recognising that social cohesion was endangered, the population had just endured over a century of religious and social strife and were apprehensive of social change. It was the Newtonians who appear to have won the battle for control of the Speculative Freemasons' Grand Lodge.

Masonic rituals do show traces of pantheistic beliefs, which had associations with working class rebellion, and were forbidden by the Church during the medieval period. However, Jacob maintains that the Newtonians gave these a somewhat different interpretation. Using archaic myth and legend they created a civic religion out of masonic ceremonials. This new kind of religion bestowed moral authority upon the Hanoverian dynasty, but it not only gave an odour of sanctity to constitutional monarchy, it also provided moral justification to claims for higher social status being made by those with professional education or scientific and technical skills.

Constitutional monarchy itself was a compromise which it was hoped would satisfy a cross-section of the population. The Crown was preserved as the symbol of national unity, but the doctrine of Divine Right was superseded by the older tribal concept that the mandate to rule came from the people, a sentiment enshrined in the constitution of Grand Lodge. New institutions were created and a real shift of power occurred, the landed aristocracy yielding place to advocates of progress. However, the idea that all these changes were within English tradition was maintained, partly by the retention of a hierarchy of class differentiated by behaviour, responsibilities and privileges. Freemasonry with its emphasis upon the contribution to the nation of those skilled in the arts and sciences provided justification for retaining such differences in wealth and political influence.

It so happens that John Theophilus Desaguliers, who seems to have been the most influential person within this first Grand Lodge,<sup>5</sup> had been born in France, for he was the son of a refugee Huguenot minister and had come to England as a small child. A clergyman himself, he was also an Oxford graduate in Arts and Law and became tutor to the Prince of Wales. He was also a member of the Royal Society and gave public lectures in Newtonian chemistry. In the preface to a collection of his lectures published in 1734<sup>6</sup> he made plain his reasons for hesitating to apply purely scientific methods to social enquiry. In this short treatise he cautioned his readers to shun 'the plausible accounts of natural phenomena' of Descartes, which were at this time so popular within his native France. For, he warned, those who fancied that 'they could solve all appearances mechanically by Matter and Motion' had become an 'army of Goths and Vandals in the philosophical World'. He then went on to praise John Locke, who had undertaken 'reasonings and corollories' about the nature of society only after assuming that social laws should be based upon the same principles as Newtonian geometry. Desaguliers' preference for Locke's ideas on social organisation undoubtedly arose from his belief that they offered greater stability.

It seems likely that social theories enunciated by John Locke, rather than the practices of an archaic guild, best explain the orientation of Masonic teaching at this period. However, there have been a number of Jewish Freemasons who have claimed that Masonic philosophy emanated from principles to be found in the Talmud.<sup>7</sup> Certainly the Masonic concept of the Deity, GAOTU, the Great Architect Of The Universe, and the prime place these Speculatives gave to a statement of faith in GAOTU, can be interpreted as an expression of faith that it is the rule of law which ensures justice and social stability. The absence of religious dogma attached to this Masonic concept of a Supreme Being made the statement of belief required for lodge membership acceptable to Jews, most Christians, Mahommedans and many other religious sects, and even to many Rationalists.

The Freemasons' moral philosophy had wide appeal in the early eighteenth century and was to spread quickly beyond the confines of London. In 1728 a Grand Lodge was set up in Dublin and another was formed in Edinburgh in 1736. Jews were certainly among Masonry's earliest supporters in England; though it has been estimated that there were only about 1,000 Jews in England in 1717, there are believed to have been Jewish names among the members by 1723 or earlier, and evidence that Jews were lodge members in the 1730s.<sup>8</sup> Grand Lodges soon appeared throughout Western Europe, and prominent Jewish scholars such as Moses Mendelssohn and Gotthold Lessing were much involved in the intellectual discussion generated by Freemasonry in Europe during the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>



This association of Jews with Freemasons was soon itself the subject of controversy. In *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939* and elsewhere<sup>10</sup> Jacob Katz has explored the impact of Freemasonry upon the Jewish communities of Europe. He noted that the religious neutrality of the Freemasons helped to expand the horizons of Jews, making it possible to maintain regular social contact of a kind which had been impossible in the past. In lodges Jews not only took part with non-Jews in esoteric rituals but also joined in comradely conviviality with those not of their religion.

Katz argues that Masonic lodges merely provided an impetus to an existing assimilationist tendency within Jewish communities, the Enlightenment having already affected attitudes within the Jewish as well as the Christian community. Changes in economic and political organisation had opened up new avenues of employment for Jews and necessitated some increased interaction between Jew and non-Jew. The Masonic stance that social status and preferment should depend upon personal characteristics and individual achievement rather than ascribed characteristics, such as religion, was of particular importance to a minority community such as the Jews. The teaching conveyed in a Masonic setting helped to spread such sentiments within the community and improved work opportunities for Jews. At the same time the convivial fraternalism within lodges, and the commendation of ancient Jewish culture implicit within rituals which centred on Hiram, the architect of King Solomon's Temple, helped to break down traditional antagonisms between Jew and non-Jew.

On the other hand, despite these attributes of Masonry, and the support Masonic teaching gave to such traditional Jewish values as family obligation, charity, group loyalty, respect for the law and for scholarship, Freemasonry could increase the stresses within Jewish communities. For Jews who became Freemasons were sometimes a source of agitation for more rapid changes to the customs and attitudes which separated them from others in the community than the more conservative in their community were willing to approve. Also adding to tensions, Freemasonry undoubtedly politicised Jews. English Jews, like their fellow Freemasons in eighteenth century England, were keen supporters of the Hanoverian regime, but this was an attitude widely shared with Jews who were not Masons, for the Hanoverians had a long record of tolerance for Judaism. But, within Europe, Jews, and society in general, was much more divided. The Masonic principles of religious toleration and promotion according to merit met fierce opposition from more conservative European governments, and while some Jews joined groups which plotted the overthrow of such governments, others preferred to keep aloof from party politics, fearing a renewal of the kind of persecution of Jews which had so often accompanied social upheaval in the past.<sup>11</sup>

In world terms, the political stance associated with Freemasons has varied considerably, for, in practice, Freemasonry is flexible in this regard. Arguments about how its traditions should be interpreted have certainly not been confined to the 1717 Grand Lodge's founders; the cultural and social background of the individuals involved in Masonry are important in this respect. New rituals have been added as 'higher degrees'; some of these drew their inspiration from European legends which had a distinctive Christian character which disqualified Jews from participation. Also modifications which possibly denote a more radical political stance than taken by the British models have occurred at some times and places.<sup>12</sup>

Whether or not justification existed in Europe, 'Jews and Freemasons' did become an epithet of abuse within nineteenth century conservative circles. Typical of this

type of antipathy, which still occasionally surfaces today, was the author who wrote in 1919: 'Jews and Freemasons are primordial forces which aim to overthrow civilisation, their work of disintegration extends to all branches of religion, politics, arts, literature etc. and to all countries'.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, in England by the late 1730s, joining a Masonic lodge was considered fashionable, and a useful avenue for improving one's social position. The Prince of Wales had agreed to join a lodge in 1737, raising the status of all members of the fraternity who then had the right to address him as 'Brother'. Apparently to prevent too wide a spread of such a highly prized privilege, changes were made to the constitution which gave the Grand Master, or Master of a Lodge, the power to rule against admittance of a candidate and to override the opinion of lodge members on other matters. The Grand Master and Master were allowed to appoint assistant office-bearers, whereas all had previously been elected, and it became customary for the Senior Warden to succeed to the chair of the Master who had appointed him. Charity to brother Masons became less important, and artisans who had previously considered it their right to claim temporary relief when in distress found they were refused even the right to put their case to the lodge.

By the mid-eighteenth century a wave of disaffection with this kind of Masonry was abroad in London and, with considerable assistance from London's small Jewish community, a new Grand Lodge was founded in 1751. A joint meeting of several clubs was held which heralded the birth of a new Masonic society; those attending styled their meeting a Grand Lodge, claiming that they had inherited this title directly from the lodge at York which was guardian of the ancient charter of freedom of the masons. Thus, for over sixty years two Grand Lodges situated in London were to vie with each other for members throughout England and her colonies. Because they so loudly proclaimed that they were the true upholders of ancient tradition, the newcomers were nicknamed the 'Antients' (sic) by their opposition; in return those belonging to the older Grand Lodge became known as the 'Moderns'.

These Grand Lodge founders came from a rather different social group to their predecessors of 1717. Early membership lists show that these Freemasons were shopkeepers, clerks and semi-skilled workers; the professions were totally absent from the earliest notations of occupation against the names of members.<sup>14</sup> They were careful not to disassociate themselves completely from members of the older, prestigious, association. Rather they emphasised that they were members of the same fraternity who were objecting to some abuses of tradition which had been instituted by that Grand Lodge in latter years.<sup>15</sup> Their concern that the social status of their members should be respected seemed to underpin other of their activities, such as the strenuous efforts made to ensure that their Grand Master would be a titled gentleman.<sup>16</sup>

The lodges which joined together to form this Grand Lodge had previously met at local inns and were probably a kind of club which was common in England. Clubs were the traditional centre of social activity for working men and women, and there was a hierarchy among them. Admittance to one frequented by the most respected men in the locality improved an individual's status.<sup>17</sup> Such clubs often had initiation rituals and special feast days which were accompanied by ceremonials and drinking and dining together. The songs and stories which accompanied this activity ensured that oral traditions were passed on to the next generation. Such clubs often 'passed around the hat' to raise a fund which was kept in a box at the inn, to be used to celebrate a feast day, hold a funeral for a member or assist when temporary

distress affected a member or their dependents, so that they became known as 'box-clubs'. The growing Jewish community of mid-eighteenth century London would appear to have joined these clubs, or formed their own, and it would seem that some of the original Antients were Jewish.

The Antients had marked success; by the end of the century they had more lodges than the Moderns.<sup>18</sup> An important factor in their popularity was their Grand Secretary, Laurence Dermott. It was Dermott who wrote and published the constitution of the new organisation, together with a commentary on the activities of the Moderns. The title he gave to this book was *Ahiman Rezon — Or to Help a Brother*, the cost of its publication being defrayed by assistance from subscribers.

The first edition provides firm evidence of Jewish interest in the project. Levi Hart, Abraham Jacob, Mordecai Isaacs, Lion Solomon and Israel Wolfe were among the list of subscribers. The 'Ahiman Rezon' of the title has been the subject of much controversy, but Jewish commentators suggest that it is a rough Hebrew equivalent of the sub-title. Within *Ahiman Rezon* the item 'prayers to be used in Jewish lodges' preceded 'prayers to be used in Christian lodges' and within the text Dermott quoted from the *Mishnah* as well as the Bible to emphasise or explain his criticism of the Moderns.<sup>19</sup> The coat of arms he chose for the Antients' Grand Lodge was a design attributed to Rabbi Judah Jacob Leon, who had exhibited a model of the Temple at Jerusalem in London during the previous century; it was in marked contrast to the three castles of the Moderns or the three crowns of York.<sup>20</sup>

It is reported that Dermott could speak and write the Hebrew language<sup>21</sup> and he obviously had some links with London's Jewish community, but his actual origins are unknown. It is only known for certain that he had been a Freemason in Dublin before venturing to London, and that he was a house painter at the time he first became Grand Secretary, but a wine merchant when he retired towards the end of the century. His life's progress was fairly typical for his time for, in Britain, this was a period of considerable personal and social mobility. The Acts of Settlement no longer prevented the working class from moving to the growing urban centres in search of work opportunities and many migrated to London from Scotland and Ireland as well as from rural villages. European Jews also came to London; the Jewish population of England has been estimated to have risen to nearly 30,000 by the end of the century.<sup>22</sup>

The Jewish newcomers were not the only Londoners who had to cope with 'outsider' status, for the insular older residents found most of these urban immigrants strange in speech and custom. All needed to acquire appropriate social skills if they were to overcome prejudice, succeed in finding new occupations and assimilate into their new community. In *Ahiman Rezon* Dermott described lodges as

the only Seminaries where Men may hear, understand and learn their Duty to God and also their Neighbours without the Multiplicity of spiteful and malicious Words, long Arguments, or fierce Debates; which have been made Use of, among mistaken Mortals upwards of a thousand Years past.<sup>23</sup>

He also insisted, both in *Ahiman Rezon* and on other occasions recorded in this Grand Lodge's minutes,<sup>24</sup> that members of the fraternity would ensure that they obtained the greatest benefit from inclusion in these 'seminaries' if they obeyed rules of behaviour which he laid down. He suggested that Freemasons should avoid any 'intemperance or excess'<sup>25</sup> for this might obstruct their progress or bring the reputation of the fraternity into disrepute; they were urged to behave with decorum in public, not to waste their time and money running from one lodge to another, and reminded that their first duty was to their own family, even when they were dealing

with appeals for help from fellow Masons. He urged self-improvement, advising careful study of the arts and sciences, and cited thirty-three examples of men of humble birth who had succeeded in becoming leaders in their fields by their own efforts. Dermott was reflecting an attitude to social virtue which had been traditional within some artisan sub-cultures and was gaining wide acceptance in England, that those who strove to improve their skills and remain financially independent were more virtuous than those who did not, for the former increased the nation's wealth while the latter drew upon its accumulated stocks as they frequently had recourse to charity.<sup>26</sup> Such social virtue endowed respectability, not of the type associated with the old gentry, but of a new assertive urban middle class, a kind of middle class which Jews could more easily enter, for they shared its chief characteristics.

In a variety of ways, this Grand Lodge became a practical 'self-help' organisation for this sub-group. With no State or Parish assistance available to them, and often living far from their immediate family, this urban middle class existed on something of a knife-edge. In good times, their families could be maintained in 'respectable' style and savings could be accumulated. But should the breadwinner have a long period of sickness, need to move elsewhere to find employment or suffer other misfortune, a family's hard-won social status could be quickly undermined. The Antients set out to provide this class of persons with a primitive kind of insurance policy.

The Antients provided centralised administrative services for a branch network of lodges. The elected Grand Secretary and his assistants collected dues, kept membership lists and issued cards of identification to financial members. These cards ensured not only that Masons could enjoy fellowship in other lodges as they moved from place to place, but also that they could obtain assistance whenever and wherever they faced temporary monetary difficulties. Such assistance differed from parish charity, for it was financed by those who controlled the organisation. Each year, possibly every six months, the Master and Wardens elected by lodge members assembled as the Grand Lodge, and it was this assembly which set the rules of the organisation and if need be established Boards to administer funds allocated to orphans, widows or old and infirm members.

This practical fraternalism may well have been inspired by the legendary guild or craftsmen which the Masons revered, or it may simply have been a logical development of the traditional 'box club'. On the other hand, it has been suggested that this Grand Lodge was modelled upon existing Jewish organisations. The democratic communalism of the Antients' system does appear to have had parallels among the scattered synagogue communities of the Diaspora.<sup>28</sup> As noted earlier, Jews were certainly involved in the initial stages, and numerous Jewish Freemasons have drawn other parallels between the philosophy and organisation of Freemasonry and Judaism.<sup>29</sup> However, it is probable that the Antients owed something to each of these sources of inspiration.

Another way in which the fraternity assisted this emerging social class was by providing their members with opportunities to practice skills and gain self-confidence. The passing of the Master's degrees within Masonic lodges itself increased self-confidence. The ceremony had some similarities to a Bar Mitzvah: oral learning was displayed and congratulations and some form of celebration followed. The young men who formed the bulk of candidates felt they had achieved a new status in a respected group. These Master Masons who in everyday life were clerks, shopkeepers or semi-skilled workmen eagerly sought election to office as Senior Warden

or Master of their lodge, for office-holding gave them the opportunity to exercise social and leadership skills which they had few occasions to display at their work.<sup>30</sup> As it was the Ancients' custom to rotate office-holding as much as possible, many had their chance within their lodges. Once an officer of a lodge, one could be a delegate to Grand Lodge, and had a chance to become a Grand Lodge officer. Such positions had very impressive titles and carried considerable prestige in the wider community as well as the fraternity.

It has been noted that Jews were often high achievers within the Masonic fraternity, partly because the custom within Jewish families of requiring the young to learn long passages of the Talmud by heart made them especially adept at the kind of oral learning required for exercise of office.<sup>31</sup> In the variety of social situations met with in lodge or Grand Lodge gatherings, Jews learnt what was and what was not considered acceptable behaviour within that level of non-Jewish society with which they increasingly identified, the urban middle class.

The problem their dietary laws and other religious practices posed for Jews in this kind of environment seems to have been solved from the time of the Antients by constituting 'Jewish' lodges. Although Masonic law may have forbidden discrimination on grounds of religion, such lodges could ensure that their dietary laws were observed and that meeting times would not infringe upon the Sabbath or Jewish festivals. Several early English lodges would seem to fit this description, one example being Lebecks Head Lodge in The Strand where thirteen of the twenty-three names listed in the petition for a warrant in 1759 were Jewish.<sup>32</sup> The name Lodge of Israel which first appeared in London in 1793 is thought to indicate that a lodge had a large Jewish contingent and adapted its practices to their special requirements.<sup>33</sup>

The Antients not only re-defined concepts of 'respectability' and 'class', they exerted political pressure. When members of the aristocracy, including the Prince of Wales, joined together with professional men in lodges and wore a leather apron over their formal dress, they had claimed to do so because they wanted to honour the work ethic, accumulated knowledge and wisdom of artisans. The Antients insisted that the culture they had honoured was that which had been inherited directly by their membership, and that such reverence constituted recognition of their social worth and approval of their claim to a say in government. Like their 1717 predecessors, the Antients gave moral connotations to arguments for extension of the franchise to themselves. Jews who were Freemasons found a powerful ally in their own struggle for full civil rights.

Although the government of the day had not yet acceded to all the political demands of the Antients, at least the Moderns were willing by 1813 to accord them equal status in a United Grand Lodge of England; a constitution was agreed to by both Masonic societies. Union provided benefits to the Antients' lodge members; they had easier access to fellowship with those of higher status as lodge visitors, their officers became part of a more prestigious gathering when they attended Grand Lodge, and the status of their lodge's membership rose accordingly.

Some friction occurred. Among the Moderns there were those who had believed their task was to 'uplift' their new brethren. A new kind of Masonic literature appeared which aimed at procedural uniformity and contained strictures on behaviour within the lodge and on public occasions.<sup>34</sup> But there is plenty of evidence that many preferred their old ways and, in Australia at least, the practices within lodges affiliated to London could differ quite markedly. Members tended to conduct their affairs in the manner traditional within their particular sub-group.<sup>35</sup>

Additional factors made for lack of uniformity in the Victorian fraternity. Despite the appearance of the United Grand Lodge of England, several Masonic societies continued to operate side by side in Australia until the last decade of the nineteenth century, for even after 1813 there were still three Grand Lodges in Britain, and from 1820 until 1890 these Grand Lodges, situated in London, Edinburgh and Dublin, vied with each other for the right to warrant lodges in the Australian colonies.

As in London during the latter half of the eighteenth century, multi-constitutional Freemasonry in Australia was a reflection of actual divisions in contemporary society. Australia was just as much a multi-cultural society during the nineteenth century as today. The Australian-born did not dominate numerically until nearly the end of the century, and both convicts and free settlers brought their inherited ideas and attitudes with them to the colonies. The many and varied sub-cultures of stratified English society, of the Scots, Irish, German and smaller migrant groups from Europe or America had representation within the community.<sup>36</sup> The Jewish community itself had sub-divisions, those who had been born or spent time in England differing from those who had come directly from Europe, while Australian-born Jews seem to have formed another distinctive group.

All these diverse colonists acknowledged their common British citizenship, and similarly colonial Freemasons considered they were members of the same fraternity. A few of them visited and sometimes joined lodges in more than one society. Nevertheless, in the eyes of colonists, each of these organisations was associated with different attitudes and values; each Grand Lodge's reputation was the result of a long period of development within a distinctive social environment.

In Scotland, strong clan associations had ensured that organisations along tribal lines had continued long after they had disappeared in England and Ireland. This was reflected in Freemasonry's Scottish Constitution, which, like that of the Antients, ensured that all lodge officers were elected. Despite the effect of two centuries of rule from England, clan loyalties often remained stronger than those of social class in Scotland and the Masonry of the Scots appears to have involved a broad cross-section of local communities as a popular contributor to social life.<sup>37</sup> Despite the strength of Calvinist sentiment in Scotland, Scottish Freemasons were noted for their conviviality — Robbie Burns provided Masonic songs which earned him the title of Grand Bard — and, even in Australia, for the fraternal, or clannish, support they gave their own society's members.<sup>38</sup>

Dublin's Grand Lodge constitution was the most democratic of all; lodge officers faced their electors every six months. In Ireland, Freemasons could not avoid being embroiled in controversy. The Masonic ethic of religious tolerance itself constituted a political stance at the time the Grand Lodge was founded. The first two Grand Masters had been active in the struggle for the extension of full civil rights to all Irishmen irrespective of religion even before them becoming involved in Freemasonry. Despite this partisanship, Masonic meetings were allowed during the troubled years at the end of the eighteenth century when nearly all other voluntary associations of Irishmen were illegal. Possibly for this reason, many Catholics seem to have become Freemasons, including the great Irish patriot Daniel O'Connell, even though Freemasonry had been forbidden by the Catholic Church since the Papal ban of 1738.<sup>39</sup>

By the nineteenth century affiliation with Dublin was very popular within lodges formed in British regiments stationed overseas for long periods, due in part to the number of Irishmen in the army, but also because of the considerable autonomy the Dublin Grand Lodge allowed, which suited these mobile lodges. Within Australia, Irish Constitution Freemasonry was to act rather like a 'left-wing' of the Masonic



fraternity; in both Victoria and New South Wales the Provincial Grand Lodges of this Constitution led the field in a number of 'radical' moves, such as that to form local Grand Lodges. It attracted supporters of Garibaldi's Italian campaigns and its members were involved in the inauguration of the Eight Hour Day campaign in Victoria. Within that colony, Dublin affiliation attracted the more idealistic among the Freemasons, less was spent upon drinking and dining and rather more attention given to practical social needs. Dublin's lodges were very popular with those on the goldfields during the 1850s and 1860s, but it was to remain a minority society within more conservative Melbourne. However, even in Melbourne, Dublin affiliates had considerable influence on Masonic affairs, for this society attracted some of the most enthusiastic Freemasons.<sup>40</sup>

Freemasonry was introduced into Australia by Dublin-affiliated military lodges. When Lachlan Macquarie was appointed Governor of New South Wales, the 48th and 49th Regiments accompanied him, and both these regiments had lodges attached to them. These military Masons seem first to have invited civilian guests to their meetings and then to have sponsored civilian lodges in both Sydney and Van Diemen's Land. The first civilian lodge in Sydney, Australia Social, was warranted in 1820.<sup>41</sup> As had been the case in London in 1851, this initiative had considerable Jewish support. The first public ceremonial performed by members of this civilian lodge was a procession to lay the foundation stone of Barnett Levey's Royal Hotel in 1827. Levey was a free settler, although his brother Solomon had arrived in the colony as a convict, but the Master of the lodge at this time was Samuel Terry, a Jewish emancipist. Terry had acquired ownership of an inn named the 'Masons Arms' from his fellow Jew, James Larra, in 1820, and re-named it 'The Freemason's Arms'. It seems likely that this had been the original place of meeting for New South Wales military Freemasons and that Terry became host for the first civilian lodge at his newly acquired inn.<sup>42</sup>

Macquarie was himself a Freemason<sup>43</sup>; although he does not appear to have been active within the fraternity in New South Wales, his association with Freemasonry and that of other military officers gave the fraternity considerable status in the small Sydney community. Membership of a lodge would have been of considerable practical benefit to a Jewish emancipist such as Terry, for lodge membership opened up new social contacts and endowed respectability. With the arrival of increasing numbers of free settlers in the latter 1820s, the social status of the emancipists became a contentious topic in New South Wales. 'Exclusives', those who objected to emancipists having the same rights as themselves, and the more liberal free settlers and the emancipists themselves were frequently at loggerheads. Masonic lodges became one of their battlegrounds.

By 1828 there were three lodges in Sydney, two affiliated to Dublin and one, the Lodge of Australia, affiliated to London. The latter refused to admit emancipists, and tried to persuade the other lodges to do likewise. Nonetheless, there is abundant evidence that 'respectable' emancipists continued to be accepted by the other two lodges. Already, the special circumstances of the colonies were influencing Freemasonry. Co-existence of two Masonic societies enabled colonial Masons to challenge contemporary class definitions; respectability was newly defined. Personal characteristics and achievement in the colony rather than past actions conferred respectability. Simultaneously the 'radical' Freemasons challenged the Exclusives' right to be social arbiters, yet used their Masonry to increase social approval of themselves.<sup>44</sup> It is not surprising that the colony's first Jewish Freemasons favoured Dublin's lodges.

However, like their predecessors of 1717, and in concert with Dublin's lodges,

the Exclusives who congregated in the Lodge of Australia set out to oppose autocracy. John Stephen, son of the colony's Puisne Judge, is credited with being the founder of this lodge at a time when he was already involved in the struggle for civil rights. It was he who prepared the *Petition for Trial by Jury and Representative Government*<sup>45</sup> which, accompanied by 4,000 signatures, was forwarded to the British Parliament in 1825. He and other early members of the Lodge of Australia continued to be in the forefront of this continuing struggle. As a result of his political activity, Stephen incurred the wrath of Governor Darling,<sup>46</sup> and was dismissed from his government post. Returning to England, he arranged to have his case heard before the House of Commons, then returned to Australia, this time without his wife and family, and settled in Melbourne in 1839. His enthusiasm for Freemasonry was undimmed, and by 1840 he had gathered together a sufficient number of Master Masons to establish the fraternity in the new colony in the Port Phillip Region of New South Wales. From the beginning, Masonry in the latter colony reflected the political involvement of its founder.

Settlement of the Port Phillip Region was undertaken as a private venture by free settlers who had spent some time in adjoining colonies without the assistance of convict or indentured labour and without initial consent or support from government. These circumstances endowed even those who came later to the settlement with a unique self-image; Victorians saw themselves as more independent-minded, more enterprising and more respectable than their colonial neighbours.<sup>47</sup> It was in this spirit that the first lodge in the colony, the Lodge of Australia Felix, was founded. Regular meetings were being held less than five years after the first settlers arrived at the site of Melbourne. Early members were to be very involved in local politics as firm supporters of representative government.

John Stephen was the occasional editorial writer on the *Gazette* at this period, and he had already used this forum to urge his fellow citizens to demonstrate their capacity to participate in government by creating co-operative institutions.<sup>48</sup> Most of those he brought together to form the Lodge of Australia Felix had been active in the public arena previously, attending the various public meetings held to settle disputes, opposing the introduction of convict labour or creating such institutions as a Mechanics' Institute, Oddfellows' Lodge, Chamber of Commerce, and the Melbourne Club. The Masonic fraternity was soon to provide Melbourne's Market Commission and then its Town Corporation, the colony's first experiments in representative government, with the majority of their elected commissioners and councillors.<sup>49</sup>

When investigating Freemasonry within Victoria it was possible to gain access to the minute books of this and other early Victorian lodges, and to locally published Masonic journals and other records. This material was not always easy to interpret, but did provide interesting insights into local Freemasonry.

Jews were among the twenty-four Master Masons who signed the request to London for a warrant for the Lodge of Australia Felix in January 1840. One was John Levien who had been convicted of forgery and had arrived perforce in Van Diemen's Land in 1832. Although not technically an emancipist, his conditional pardon put him in much the same social category as the emancipists in Sydney, but there were certainly no objections to his inclusion from former members of the Sydney-based Lodge of Australia such as John Stephen. Levien's family connections were no doubt of assistance in this matter, for a John Levien, probably his uncle, had achieved Grand Lodge officer rank in England in 1828, and was possibly known to Stephen.<sup>50</sup>

The other Jewish Master Masons were Henry Davis, John Moses and George Moss. All the Jews, plus several others, had previously belonged to Dublin-affiliated lodges in Van Diemen's Land or Sydney, so that attitudes associated with that Masonic society were well represented in Australia Felix. However, the first Master of the lodge, George Brunswick Smythe, was a territorial magistrate. He was installed by John Stephen, and the latter rather than Smythe chaired all subsequent lodge meetings in that year. Despite the fact that they had set their dues at a considerably higher level than contemporary Sydney lodges, and occasionally refused admittance to men who had been acceptable to lodges in the adjoining colonies, this was no exclusive gathering. The lodge rapidly attracted a fair cross-section of the small Melbourne community.

Among the initiates during the first year were Solomon Benjamin, Jacob Marks and Michael Cashmore. W. Cohen was also admitted as a joining member and soon appointed secretary.<sup>51</sup> In June 1841 Asher Hymen Hart was initiated. Hart and Cashmore were to demonstrate great interest in Freemasonry, and continued to play an active part in lodge affairs for most of their lives. It seems likely that it was the enthusiasm of these two community leaders which ensured that all executive members of the synagogue were office holders in Masonic lodges during the 1840s.<sup>52</sup> Cashmore did not confine his support to the London Grand Lodge; at one time he belonged to at least three lodges and to all three Masonic societies.<sup>53</sup>

In Melbourne, Jewish Freemasonry stemmed from the same causes as accounted for the lodge membership of their London co-religionists. Masonic philosophy was compatible with Judaism, and the religious tolerance, attitudes to class and government which had characterised colonial Freemasonry in adjoining colonies offered assurance that Jews would gain from their membership of a lodge. They could broaden their social contacts, improve their social status and gain firm allies who would back their assertion of their right to equal treatment with other religious groups in the matter of grants for Synagogue and school. Long before full civil rights had been extended to Jews in England, colonial Jews were voting and taking their place in a variety of elected assemblies.

There is evidence that religious tolerance was high upon the list of Masonic virtues in the eyes of John Stephen<sup>54</sup>, but the lodge minutes indicate that Jewish Freemasons themselves were ever alert to any suggestion of underlying anti-Semitism, and Asher Hymen Hart seems to have been convinced that such sentiments existed within the lodge.<sup>55</sup> However, in 1846, he had been selected to represent the Masonic fraternity at the ceremony which marked the laying of the foundation stone of the first bridge across the Yarra River in March, for he had been elected Master of Australia Felix that year. But by May he was to offer to resign 'pending certain public rumours'. Michael Cashmore immediately took the chair and reproved the offenders<sup>56</sup> for their 'unmasonic and uncalled for questions' and Hart continued as Master of the lodge until the end of his term. His successor was John Stephen, who had been supportive on the occasion mentioned, and who thanked Hart for the support he had given him in his bid to regain this position.

Within all the colonial Masonic records which have been signed, only two formal complaints by Jews of discrimination upon religious grounds were discovered. In neither case was it certain that anti-Semitism was the basis of conflict. One such complaint was brought in the Golden Lodge, Bendigo, by Alexander Fox.<sup>57</sup> However, the man who offended Fox by breaking with custom and not appointing him Senior Warden after his year as Junior Warden, was an American by the name of Connolly. The latter seems to have been domineering, or to have adhered to

American practices which offended, for schism occurred in the lodge on two occasions when he was Master. It was noted that there was no complete exodus of Jewish members from Golden Lodge when Fox's supporters formed the rival Corinthian Lodge. Joseph P. Joseph, secretary of the Synagogue, Morris Samuel and Alfred Alexander did join him but the Cohn brothers and other Jews did not. On the second occasion when schism occurred no Jews were involved. The other complaint was contained in a letter to the *Masonic Journal* during the 1890s, and it is suggested that at this time the deep economic recession probably did cause some heightening of what underlying anti-Semitism existed within the Masonic community.<sup>58</sup>

Although Jews seem to have been welcome in all the Masonic societies, there were 'Jewish lodges' in Melbourne. All the early members of the Lodge of Judah, which was an Edinburgh-affiliated lodge founded in 1858, were Jewish; the Rev. Moses Rintel became the lodge's first Master. For a time Jewish names would predominate in other lodges such as King Solomon and Hiram, both of which were affiliated to Dublin. In the Lodge of Judah, Jews seem to have predominated throughout the 1860s. But the Jewish community was small, and the lifestyle in the colony apparently did not sustain such separate grouping indefinitely. Members tended to gradually drift into other lodges, or the new candidates the lodge attracted were not Jewish.

In general, the colonies were undoubtedly a more open and less stratified society than England. There was nevertheless a social ladder of sorts and, like others in the colony, some Jews were attracted to Freemasonry largely because it helped them to maintain a higher position on this ladder. But in the Port Phillip District, as in earlier Sydney Town, early Freemasons were somewhat divided as to what kind of behaviour denoted a man was a suitable candidate for lodge membership. As one observer was to note in 1862, conditions in the settlement upset many pre-conceived attitudes

Class or family position goes for little upon the new untraditional scene, and the status given by a finished education does not override any evident superiority of natural talents that can adapt themselves to public usefulness.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless there were those within the colony who fought a rear-guard action against the egalitarian spirit of their fellow colonists. During the 1840s, the Freemasons among them did attempt to act as arbiters upon manners and morals. Like others before them in England, they believed implicitly in the superiority of their own code of behaviour. Lodge records would indicate that in the eyes of those they sought to influence, such elitist Masons merely confused propriety with morality, and they appear to have had little success in convincing either the English artisans, Calvinist Scots, egalitarian Australian-born or the Jewish community that they should adopt their values.<sup>60</sup> When financial institutions collapsed in 1843 the elitists within Australia Felix suffered resounding defeat. The crisis wrought havoc with the reputation of many gentlemen colonists. It became only too apparent that they usually lacked the kind of skills necessary for survival, and their self-serving manoeuvres aimed at preserving their life-style were resented by their fellow Freemasons. Jews, who seem to have displayed more ability than most to 'adapt themselves to public usefulness' at this time, created a favourable impression of their group within the wider community.<sup>61</sup>

It was during 1843-4 that a series of confrontations split the Lodge of Australia Felix in four. Michael Cashmore could perhaps be counted among the elitist Freemasons prior to this period. In 1841 he had expressed the opinion that the door to



the lodge was 'too wide' and had moved that one blackball should suffice to exclude a candidate.<sup>62</sup> His motion was opposed by the Australian-born John Thomas Smith, soon to be a populist leader in the political sphere,<sup>63</sup> who argued that the reasons for blackballing should be clearly stated to the lodge, or at least three blackballs should be necessary for exclusion.<sup>64</sup> But by mid-1843 alliances were changing, and Michael Cashmore, Solomon Benjamin and Asher and Edward Hart joined forces with Smith, resigned from Australia Felix and requested a warrant for a new lodge Australia Felix Lodge of Hiram, from the Dublin Grand Lodge.

At a meeting at the Adelphi Hotel on 25 April, these five Freemasons resolved 'that as the brethren present had the welfare of Masonry at heart, and on account of the large number of members belonging to Lodge Australia Felix, many worthy brethren would be precluded from taking office'.<sup>65</sup> Perusal of the minutes of the Lodge of Australia Felix would suggest that at this time the financial crisis had in fact decimated the membership of that lodge. At a meeting of Australia Felix two weeks earlier, forty-seven unfinancial members had had their names erased for non-payment of dues, but at the same time twenty-two honorary memberships had been created. As the honorary members included many 'gentleman' colonists and among those excluded were men such as W. Cohen who had long served the lodge as secretary and others who had served the community in a voluntary capacity,<sup>66</sup> it would seem that the formation of 'Hiram' owed more to resentment at the snobishness which underlay this action than to 'large numbers'. Within Hiram, Cashmore, Benjamin and Asher Hart did achieve office for the first time, as the first Senior Warden, Junior Warden and Treasurer respectively; Smith became Master.

The attitude of the 'gentlemen' was widely disapproved within the Masonic community, so they set about forming their own lodge, Australasia. Yet another lodge, Kilwinning, whose members were mainly Scots, affiliated to Edinburgh. Although the Scots who had formed Kilwinning stayed somewhat aloof from their Masonic brethren for some time, amicable relations between the members of Australia Felix, Hiram and Australasia were soon restored and some members of Hiram, including Cashmore, Hart, and John Stephen who had formed Australasia, again began attending Australia Felix at frequent intervals and personal conflicts diminished.<sup>67</sup>

Another underlying cause of this break-up of the Masonic fraternity had been the impact of the first experiment in responsible government; the colony's Masons were divided in their political loyalty. Elections for the Melbourne Town Corporation had been held in 1842 and by the following year John Thomas Smith of Hiram, John Stephen of Australasia and Australia Felix, and William Kerr of Kilwinning Lodge, were seen to be heading different factions on the Council. They were not the only Freemasons elected to this body. The fraternity was well represented; although they probably numbered little more than one hundred in total in the community, the Masons had eight representatives upon the Council.<sup>68</sup>

It was claimed by Edmund Finn, better known as 'Garryowen',<sup>69</sup> that these Masonic lodges acted as political support groups for Smith, Stephen and Kerr, and that conflict in the Masonic fraternity sharpened factional antagonism on the Council. It is possible that the formation of Kilwinning was partly due to the local Scots' desire to rally support among Freemasons for those they felt would represent their interests on the Council. Several of the founders of the lodge were successful at the first election, including Henry Condell, the first Mayor. Both Smith and Stephen

opposed the influence of the Scottish faction on the Council, for their relationship with Kerr both on the Council and in the Masonic fraternity was soured by Kerr's violently anti-Catholic editorials in the *Argus*.<sup>70</sup>

John Thomas Smith of Hiram was to be elected Mayor seven times. He had active support from the Irish Catholic community, who were certainly not active in Freemasonry, and from Jews such as those who had joined him in forming lodges under the Irish Constitution. But it so happened that it was that prominent member of the Jewish community, Edward Cohen, who had been invited to join Kilwinning by the supposedly clannish Scots shortly beforehand, who brought Smith's long tenure as Mayor to an end in 1860.<sup>71</sup> While Freemasonry has a political orientation, the fraternity stresses that its philosophy does not support one particular party and within the colony of Victoria Jewish Freemasons were certainly never unanimous in support of any contentious Masonic or government policy.<sup>72</sup>

While the colony's Freemasons had somewhat different party allegiances, they did have interests and attitudes in common. They were at all times united in their support for equality before the law, representative government and universal education. Such sentiments frequently accompanied loyal toasts on the ceremonial occasions reported in Victorian Masonic journals. Within Victoria, Jewish Freemasons were foremost in proclaiming their own British citizenship and loyalty to the Crown, for in the colony they had never suffered legal discrimination, and had been treated on equal terms to other religious groups with regard to grants for land for religious and educational purposes. In 1863, the *Victorian Gazette*<sup>73</sup> published a copy of the 'Congratulatory Address' presented to Queen Victoria by the Jews of Victoria upon the occasion of the Prince of Wales' marriage to Princess Alexandra. This was a Masonic Journal and the 'dutiful, loyal and loving subjects professing the Jewish religion' were Freemasons Henry Harris, Henry Horwitz, Edward Isaacs, L. Davis, S. Leon and Hyman Levinson. They gave as the reason for the Address their loyalty to the throne and respect for the Royal Consort 'who descends from ancestors who were ever foremost even in the Dark Ages of Intolerance, to offer Protection to our oppressed Brethren'.

This Jewish expression of loyalty to the Crown did not necessarily denote political conservatism. As noted previously, Masons' 'civil religion' was open to varied interpretations. However, the American social historian Rowland Berthoff<sup>74</sup> notes that those who founded and enthusiastically supported self-help organisations such as the Freemasons' Grand Lodges in America during the nineteenth century usually were regarded as political conservatives. But, he suggests, they would better be categorised as social conservatives. He believes that the unbridled individualism, so prevalent in new Anglo-Saxon communities such as America and Australia during this period, was perceived as threatening by many of those who otherwise welcomed the opportunities which the opening up of new lands had provided.

Masonic philosophy balanced individualism with fraternalism. Fraternity membership provided an 'old-fashioned' group, whose inherited value systems clashed with popular culture, with reassurance. For Freemasonry espoused traditional values, communal responsibility and respect for the rule of law and those who exercised authority, while at the same time it encouraged personal achievement.<sup>75</sup> It helped social conservatives, such as Jewish traditionalists, to adjust their new aspirations to their inherited values. The formal attire which was worn beneath a leather apron and ritualised behaviour of lodge ceremonies was also reassuring, for it gave an air of dignity to Masonic proceedings at the same time as it disguised the actual differences in social background of those taking part. The fraternal ethic



helped older high status groups accept the incursion of Jewish newcomers to their ranks, and did not put pressure upon them to change their religious attitudes.

Victoria's Jewish social conservatives devoted much energy to Freemasonry, maintained frequent social contacts with non-Jews, and thought of themselves as loyal British citizens, and respectable members of the middle class of the Jewish persuasion. But at the same time they struggled to create a synagogue community out of the Jewish adventurers who came to the Port Phillip colony, firmly upholding traditions inherited from older European Jewish communities. During the 1840s, the most active within the synagogue community were also the most active Freemasons in Melbourne. Moses Rintel became a Freemason in 1849 and was to act as chaplain for the Irish Constitution lodges until his death. E.M. Myers and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Abrahams also acted as chaplains for considerable periods. This stamp of approval by Rabbis and the zealous Masonry of early enthusiasts Cashmore and Hart, no doubt inspired the involvement of others. The Grand Lodge of London conferred Masonic honours on sixteen Victorians, among them being J. Levi, J. Moss, Mark Folk, Joseph Aarons, R.E. Joseph, H. Hart, Jacob A. Cantor and A.S. Abraham. Others such as Aaron and Phillip Blashki, Aaron Waxman, M.A. Alexander, Angel and Asher Ellis, and Ephraim Laman Zox helped found more than one lodge. At the same time most of these men worked to raise the level of commitment of other Jewish immigrants to the synagogue.<sup>76</sup>

Not all Jewish Freemasons fit easily into this 'social conservative' category. Some did break with their inherited traditions, either re-focussing them within 'modernist' congregations, or accepting literally the universality of Masonic fraternalism. The latter course meant acceptance of a Humanist viewpoint, that men and women should be judged purely on the basis of their unique individual characteristics, thus making Masonic philosophy a moral argument justifying desertion of the synagogue, marriage to those of other religious persuasions, and complete absorption into the wider community. By proffering a substitute fraternal community, Freemasonry assisted those choosing this path. Comparison of lodge membership records and published histories of the Jewish community suggest that there may have been quite a number of Jews who came to the colony who did not maintain much contact with the synagogue community.

The discovery of gold and subsequent mass migration had utterly changed the Masonic fraternity. For a short period lodges were forced to close because so many men of Melbourne left for the goldfields.<sup>77</sup> But by early 1854 lodges such as Australia Felix needed to hold extra meetings each month in order to cope with the initiation of candidates, despite the fact that numerous new lodges had sprung up in both Melbourne and on the goldfields. Each of the Masonic societies formed themselves into a Provincial Grand Lodge. John Thomas Smith became Provincial Grand Master of Irish Constitution lodges, but in the other Masonic societies new arrivals now dominated. Jewish immigrants quickly demonstrated enthusiasm for lodge membership; twenty-eight of the first one hundred names in the new Provincial Register of the English Constitution were Jewish. Overall, of course, they were a much smaller proportion of this enlarged fraternity, as their numbers within the community were relatively few.<sup>78</sup>

Among those Jews who came from England there were a few who had belonged to a Masonic lodge previously<sup>79</sup> but, although English Jews had such a long association with Freemasonry, for most it was the first time they had joined a lodge. Membership opened up an avenue through which they could learn how to adapt to the strange environment in which they found themselves. Upon arrival these



*Angel Ellis, Grand Treasurer of the United  
Grand Lodge of Victoria, 1889-94  
(Courtesy Margaret Chapman)*

seekers after fortune usually had no family with them, and no close connections within the existing Jewish synagogue community. The old, small, synagogue community was overwhelmed with problems due to this influx of newcomers, and much divided. There were a number of reasons why Masonic fraternalism would have appeared more attractive than it had been in England.

In addition, in the cosmopolitan, transient society of the goldrush, criteria for entry to a lodge became much more flexible. Despite some protest,<sup>80</sup> all who wished to join seem to have been welcome. Blackballing was rare, and only committal for crime seems to have been considered grounds for excluding a member. Lodge Masters arranged for men returning to England to rush through the ceremonies which qualified them as Master Masons. Many were willing to pay the cost of extra meetings to accomplish this rapid promotion, seemingly because they were not confident they would be accepted as a candidate by lodges in England.<sup>81</sup> New kinds of occupations appeared against the names of members; whereas candidates such as Henry S. Fish, an old-clothes man, or Phineas Solomon, fruiterer, may have found their candidature opposed at an earlier period, now they were welcomed.

The egalitarian spirit in the colony increased, as fortune on the goldfields caused a random distribution of wealth, and education often was seen to be of little practical use on the fields or in the chaotic economic climate of Melbourne. All those who had undertaken the long arduous voyage at their own expense felt they had demonstrated that independence and diligence which was said to characterise the respectable middle class, and so felt they were worthy candidates for Masonry.

In 1857 colonial optimism was high. The colonists had just elected a new legislative assembly for the newly sovereign colony of Victoria. The editor of the colony's new *Masonic Journal*<sup>82</sup> devoted his energies to urging the assembly to enshrine in legislation the religious tolerance, reverence for education and fraternal benevolence of Freemasonry. William Clark Haines, the colony's Premier, was a prominent Freemason. Earlier, in 1847, Haines had been involved with Abraham

Levey in moves by the Lodge of Unity and Prudence at Geelong to quell fraternal dissension and concentrate attention upon development of charitable institutions.<sup>83</sup> Among the other Freemasons elected to the Assembly were Edward Cohen and J.T. Smith, previously arch-enemies on the Melbourne Council but each in his own way involved in promoting the social welfare.

Meanwhile, assisting busy John Thomas Smith to organise the Dublin-affiliated lodges in the colony was Angel Ellis, as Provincial Grand Secretary from 1859 until the formation of a United Grand Lodge of Victoria in 1890.<sup>84</sup> Ellis was the Sydney-born nephew of that pioneer Jewish Freemason, Barnett Levey. The Ellis and Hart families had arrived in the colonies within six months of each other in the latter 1820s,<sup>85</sup> and Angel had come to Melbourne with his family in 1846 at the age of fifteen. From 1849 onwards he held office in the Melbourne synagogue community, first as Secretary of the Jewish Philanthropic society, then as Secretary of the Hebrew Congregation, and was to continue to serve as a member of various synagogue committees for most of his long life. In 1856 he had joined Australia Felix, but soon transferred his allegiance to the Irish Constitution, first at Carlton, then Washington lodge.<sup>86</sup>

Ellis was, like J.T. Smith, an advocate for the practical application of the Masonic spirit,<sup>87</sup> but it was Henry Harris who seems to have been the first to urge the fraternity to construct almshouses.<sup>88</sup> However, though Harris, like other prominent fraternity members, served for a time on the Board of the Benevolent Homes, finally opened in 1867, it was to be Angel Ellis and J. Aarons, as Secretary from 1868 to 1896 and Treasurer from 1867 to 1872 respectively, who undertook the practical tasks which kept this institution functioning.<sup>89</sup> Ellis wrote letter after letter to lodges requesting donations and took every opportunity to raise funds for this charitable institution. An occasion he seems to have regarded as favourable for this objective was the installation of H.J. Moses as Master of Neptune Lodge on 1 June 1886, a function attended by three hundred Masons.<sup>90</sup>

During the prosperous 1860s, self-confidence and local patriotism abounded. Many Freemasons already saw themselves as 'robust champions of brotherly love and the Masonic cause in this beautiful southern hemisphere'.<sup>91</sup> Pamphlets containing speeches made by John Thomas Smith during the 1850s and 1860s, one of which was printed in pamphlet form at the behest of Angel Ellis<sup>92</sup> well illustrate Smith's oratorical power. A visionary, who proclaimed that 'the poor and lowly of this world, the hungry and despised, may be and frequently are, imbued with a knowledge, a faith and a love that passeth knowledge, holding the truth in its simplicity and sincerity'<sup>93</sup>, he could also draw vivid word pictures of Masonic ceremonies which demonstrate that he shared with many of the colonial-born a belief that ordinary men, freed from the constriction which the conventions of old societies imposed, could construct a better world in the colonies.

William Taafe, the editor of a new *Masonic Journal*<sup>95</sup> published 1863-5, used contributions from readers and articles from overseas journals to encourage discussion of alternative interpretations of Masonry's philosophy. Much of this literature displays the same strain of optimism. In one series of essays by J.J. Moody, an enthusiastic leader among London affiliates, one finds belief that Freemasonry provides 'inward light', 'waking God in the sleeping Man'. Moody claimed as his mentor in his search for knowledge the Rev. Moses Margouliath, who had guided him through the Talmud when he was a young man. Moody's essays indicated an indiscriminate enthusiasm for knowledge of all kinds seemingly common among

these young adventurers who were often the first literate generation of their family and who relished their freedom from social conventions. Study of Judaism, Egyptian mythology, Islam, Buddhism, and Phrenology, were equally recommended by Masons by Moody. Other essays or letters praised American attitudes to Freemasonry, and the impressiveness of their Grand Lodges.

Taafe himself was an enthusiastic supporter of colonial initiatives, such as the building of a suitable Masonic Hall for Melbourne and of the Masonic Union formed in 1863. The latter was a permanent committee which was set up to persuade the sceptical that their social prestige would be enhanced by creation of a local Grand Lodge.<sup>96</sup> Within the Jewish community it would seem that those who had been born or grown to maturity in the colonies were the most caught up in this idealistic fervour of the 1860s. The seemingly ever-active Angel Ellis and the brothers L. and A. Hart were to the fore in trying to convince their fellow Masons that subservience to Grand Lodges in Great Britain was unnecessary and undesirable. Hart and S. Goldstein and the majority of that sometime 'Jewish lodge', the Lodge of Judah,<sup>97</sup> would support a small rebel group of Freemasons led by George Coppin, theatrical entrepreneur and enthusiast for American republicanism, who formed the Grand Lodge of Victoria in 1883. Ellis, however, was not prepared to throw in his lot with Coppin, apparently at this stage heeding warnings earlier sounded by John Thomas Smith that 'the time was not yet'. Only in 1890, when all the lodges united, did Ellis assume Grand Officer rank.<sup>98</sup>

Even during the affluent and optimistic 1880s, Smith and Ellis were not alone in wondering whether the colony could demonstrate it had created a superior 'new man' and that a local Grand Lodge would have the same social status as those in Britain. For, as Smith had argued, the colonies had as yet produced few 'illustrious men to give it name and character'.<sup>99</sup> Consensus was not easily arrived at either on local autonomy or as to what kind of community Freemasons should try to create in Victoria. During the economic recessions of the 1870s and 1890s, there was a perceptible failure of confidence in the capacity of the common man. There were many who leaned towards preservation of tradition. But during the buoyant 1880s the hope was expressed that colonists would 'learn from each other and . . . combine the good qualities of the cautious Scot, the enthusiastic Irishman, the practical Englishman and the painstaking German, now present in the colony and shape a new kind of Man'.<sup>100</sup>

By the end of the century, Victoria could perhaps be said to have already produced a new kind of Jew. One who retained links with the synagogue, taking office on committees, observed Jewish dietary laws within his own home but sometimes ignored them outside it, and who in his day to day activities seemed to associate more with non-Jews than with his co-religionists. Some demonstrated by their choice of career a disinterest, or aversion, to the kind of occupations traditional within older Jewish communities, and displayed great enthusiasm for the latest technology. One example was Isaac Hart who helped pioneer the new gas lighting industry in Victoria as the long-time director of the Melbourne Gas Company.

Within the Ellis family, on which I have more detailed information than most,<sup>101</sup> there were a plenitude of examples of this kind of life-style, quite marked among those who were active within the Masonic fraternity. Angel Ellis was one who disregarded his draper father's ambition that his sons would follow legal careers, and was, like Hart, attracted to this 'sunrise' industry, retiring from the position of accountant at the Gas Company after forty years service. His brother Asher also made a choice unusual among Jews of the time. He joined the public service as a

clerk in a department of government involved in new technology. Asher is credited with personally arranging the first demonstration of the telephone in Australia in 1878 when, as Postmaster at Kerang he connected the instrument to a single wire telegraph-wire which ran between Swan Hill and Kerang. He is also credited with establishing Freemasonry in the north of Victoria during his thirteen years as resident Postmaster.<sup>102</sup>

Both Angel and Asher would appear to have consciously sought to represent a different kind of Jew. Asher did not marry — at Kerang he was isolated from marriageable females of the Jewish persuasion — but the bequests in his Will to the synagogue and to Jewish charitable institutions indicate his sense of Jewish identity despite his long isolation in northern Victoria.<sup>103</sup> Angel married the daughter of the Rev. Solomon Phillips, and helped found the St Kilda Synagogue, but neither he nor his brothers who remained associated with synagogue communities seem to have raised strong objection to the marriages outside the community of their siblings or their children. Another brother, Solomon, briefly a Freemason in Melbourne before moving to Sydney, married the daughter of another pioneer Jew, Benjamin Lee, and was a member of the Sydney synagogue community. Louis, another who joined the public service and became sheriff of Melbourne, married another daughter of Rev. Solomon Phillips, and four of his grand-daughters married sons of Isaac Jacobs, long-time advocate of modernisation of Judaism in Victoria.<sup>104</sup>

It was interesting to note that among the Ellis brothers it was those who showed no interest in Freemasonry, Maurice and Barnette,<sup>105</sup> who married outside the Jewish faith. The colonial-born Jew differed somewhat from Jews in England and in America, in that among those who married out there seem to have been few instances of adoption of Christian faiths. This phenomenon often continued among the children of mixed marriages. Among my own father's forty-one first cousins<sup>106</sup> there seem to be few who ever attended a church; certainly only a wedding or funeral would draw my father or uncle into one. The former had found Freemasonry adequate spiritual support, the latter was a Theosophist. The Humanist thought which had spread through the lower reaches of British society by the time Australia was founded, and which has support also in Freemasonry, shaped the founding ethic of Australia's colonies.<sup>107</sup> Among Jews, tolerance of diversity does seem to have been greater than elsewhere as many genealogical studies would indicate.<sup>108</sup> The many descendants of Rev. Solomon Phillips in particular provide an example of the many different attitudes to religion and interpretations of Jewishness which were current in Australia by the beginning of the twentieth century.

There was a distinct tendency among the children of the earliest group of Jewish settlers in Australia to either marry among themselves or marry outside the Jewish faith. The more socially conservative adopted the former course, and usually Freemasonry. Neither conservatives or rebels among the young seem to have experienced a sense of affinity with young European-born Jews newly arrived in the colony.<sup>109</sup> Jewish women may not have become Freemasons, but the Australian-born daughters of Jewish families demonstrated considerable independence of mind in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The daughters of Masonic families like the Ellises and Goldsteins were very prominent among the founders of women's clubs such as the Lyceum Club.<sup>110</sup> Many of these women were involved in the struggle for women's rights and undertook training for careers of their own in such diverse fields as medicine, nursing, writing and lecturing, music, painting and labor party politics.<sup>111</sup> Concern by parents that the standard of living they had

provided for their daughters should be maintained after marriage seems only a very partial explanation of the number of Jewish young women who failed to accept offers of marriage from Jewish young men.<sup>112</sup>

Jewish parents, like others in the colony, had taken pride in the independence of spirit which had led them to make the long sea voyage to Australia, and in their contribution to the many evolving institutions within the colony. Such Anglo-Jews, as they still saw themselves, were becoming generally indistinguishable from others in the middle class in attitude and style of life. Among the attitudes they had adopted by the end of the century was that it was an individual's state of mind or attitudes which determined his worth and social class, and suitability as a son- or daughter-in-law. For tolerance of marriage outside the community inevitably accompanied wholehearted acceptance of democratic fraternalism in a colony where most considered themselves middle class, and, for Freemasons, objection to inter-marriage became associated with an exclusiveness which did not sit well with the tolerance they considered the chief colonial as well as Masonic virtue. Pride in these aspects of colonial life is apparent in *Australasian Keystone* in 1891, where one enthusiast wrote, 'Variety is the spice of life. Business men, merchants, mechanics, day labourers, men who get up in the morning at six o'clock and do hard labour all day long are lodge members'.<sup>113</sup>

Support for Reform Judaism<sup>114</sup> was perhaps another by-product of enthusiasm for attitudes embraced by Victoria's Jewish Freemasons; most of those involved seem to have been members of the fraternity at some time.<sup>115</sup> For the fraternity may attract social conservatives and help them conserve their moral values, but during the nineteenth century it did not necessarily entrench existing customs and attitudes within the Jewish community, although there have been accusations that some had tended to 'fossilise' pre-migration concepts. But, to quote from the *Australasian Keystone*, March 1901:

If Masonry is anything it is protest. If the right of a man to believe as he pleases has been upheld by any organisation it has been upheld by Masonry.

In 1841, John Stephen had spoken of his 'faith that Freemasonry would cement a feeling of mutual confidence which would benefit the community as a whole'.<sup>116</sup> As the nineteenth century drew to a close it could be said for Freemasonry that, for the Jewish community at least, it had done much in this direction. In the process there had been some depletion of the numbers closely involved with the synagogue community. The tolerant fraternalism which the Freemasons had endeavoured to spread, and which many Jews had so welcomed, had induced some to become completely absorbed into the wider community. Nevertheless, by the end of the century, Victoria had retained a distinctive Jewish community, one which took pride in playing an active part in a wide variety of community activities, and which was widely respected within the non-Jewish community for the active part it had played in creating colonial institutions. Jewish continued support for Freemasonry in the present century would seem to stem from recognition of the important part the fraternity has played in Jewish social history.

#### NOTES

1. L. Dumenil, *Freemasonry in American Culture 1880-1930*, Princeton U.P., 1984; W.A. Muraskin, *Middle Class Blacks in a White Society*, Univ. of California, 1975; J. Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, Harvard U.P., 1973; M. Chapman, *Freemasonry and Community in Nineteenth Century Victoria*, unpublished Thesis, Univ. of Melbourne, 1987.



2. This very abridged history of the Masonic fraternity has drawn upon a variety of sources which are listed in the bibliography of my thesis, *Freemasonry and Community in Colonial Victoria*; the official history of Freemasonry is contained in *Gould's History of Freemasonry* Vols. I-VI of which there are several editions.
3. H. Sadler, *Masonic Fact and Fiction*, Diprose and Bateman, London 1887.
4. Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans*, Early Modern Europe Today Series; ed. J.H. Shennan, Allen and Unwin, London 1981.
5. *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, Vol. II; ed Rev. H. Poole, Caxton, 1958, pp. 202-4.
6. J.T. Desaguliers, *A Course of Experimental Philosophy*, Vol. I, London 1734.
7. A. Posnan, *Freemasonry And the Talmud*, Sydney 1905, is an example published in Australia, but this viewpoint is quite common in Masonic literature. Many intellectuals of the period were philo-Semites and such interest in Judaism must also be recognised as a possible explanation of Masonic philosophy.
8. J.M. Shaftesley, 'Jews in English Freemasonry in the 18th and 19th Centuries', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Transaction of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, Great Britain, Vol. 92, 1979. Shaftesley and other writers have equated 17th and 18th century associations of expatriate Spanish and Portuguese Jews with early manifestations of Freemasonry.
9. J. Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*, Harvard University Press, 1970, p. 83, for discussion of attitude of Moses Mendelssohn and Gotthold Lessing's contribution to this discussion during the 1760s and 1770s.
10. J. Katz, *Ibid.*; *Out of the Ghetto — The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation 170-1870*, Harvard U.P., 1973; 'Emancipation and Assimilation', *Studies in Modern Jewish History*, Gregg, Surrey 1972; *Jews and Freemasons 1723-1939*, Harvard U.P., 1970.
11. J. Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe*, passim; and James Dewar, *The Unlocked Secret — Freemasonry Examined*, W. Kimber, London 1966; Bernard Fay, *La Franc Maçonnerie*, ed. De Cluny, Paris 1935.
12. There has long been a French Grand Lodge which has eliminated the concept of a Supreme Being from its rituals. This lodge has been associated with revolution in France. The Provincial Grand Lodges within the colony of Victoria took strong action when news reached them that a lodge on the goldfields had affiliated with this Grand Lodge during the 1850s.
13. Vicomte Leon de Poncins, *The Secret Power Behind Revolutionary Freemasons and Judaism*, 1929, p. 17.
14. J.R. Clarke, 'The Formation 1751-1967' in United Grand Lodge, *Grand Lodge 1717-1967*, p. 92.
15. One matter of contention was the 'Royal Arch' degree. This entails rituals which are associated with Genesis XLIX, Jacob's prophecies to his sons. The underlying cause is not clear.
16. H. Sadler, *Masonic Fact and Fiction*, Diprose Bateman, London 1887, p. 82.
17. See Margaret D. Fuller, *West Country Friendly Societies*, Oakwood Press, Oxford, 1964; David Levine, *Family Formation in the Age of Nascent Capitalism*, Academic Press, New York 1977; Richard P. Price, 'The Making of Working Class History', *Victorian Studies*, March 1976; G. Crossick, 'The Labour Aristocracy and Its Values', *Victorian Studies*, March 1976.
18. J.R. Clarke, 'The Formation 1751-1967', *Grand Lodge 1717-1967*, U.G.L. of England, Oxford U.P., 1967; W.H. Hughan, *A Numerical and Numismatical Register of Lodges which Formed the United Grand Lodge of England*, London 1878.
19. Cecil Adams, 'Ahiman Rezon — The Book of Constitutions', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Vol. 46, 1933, pp. 239-306.
20. *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, Vol. II, 1958, p. 274-5.
21. J. Shaftesley, *Ibid.*
22. J. Shaftesley, *Ibid.*, p. 25.
23. Laurence Dermott, 'Ahiman Rezon'.
24. H. Sadler, *Masonic Fact and Fiction*, *Ibid.*
25. See also Cecil Adams, 'Ahiman Rezon — The Book of Constitutions', *Transactions ARQ*, Vol. 46, 1933, pp. 239-306.
26. Within the next century Samuel Smiles in *Self Help*, John Murray, London 1859, was to widen still further the appeal of this concept of social morality. However it was already discernible in the economic theories of the Mercantilists, and in Sir Frederick Eden's pioneer study of working men's attitudes and associations, *The State of the Poor*, 1797.
27. The early historians of the great English friendly societies admit their debt to the Grand Lodge of the Freemasons. They adopted the same organisation for the affiliated friendly societies of the nineteenth century. In both Britain and Australia these societies were usually founded and run by Freemasons.

28. See Daniel J. Elazar with Peter Medding, *Jewish Communities in Frontier Societies*, London 1983, pp. 23-4.
29. A. Posnan, *Freemasonry and The Talmud*, Sydney 1907, provides a local example of this school of thought. Masonic journals provide numerous instances of this line of argument.
30. In the Minutes of Evidence, 15 May 1848, *British Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 1, p. 8, it was noted that the possibility of improving his status was a considerable incentive to joining friendly societies. Interest in Freemasonry often seemed to spring from this same source.
31. Shaftesley, *Ibid.*, p. 40.
32. Among them are Solomon Levy, Jacob Aarons, Jacob Moses, Lazarus Levy, Moses Levy, Henry Lyon, names which re-occur in connection with the history of Australian Jewish families, including my own.
33. Shaftesley, *Ibid.*
34. Rev. Dr George Oliver, *The Golden Remains of The Early Masonic Writers*, R. Spencer, London, 1869.
35. The minute books of Australia Felix, Naval and Military, and Rupertswood lodges and published lodge histories indicate considerable differences.
36. James Bonwick, *Our Nationalities, Who are the English*, 1891; *Who are the Irish*, 1880; *Who are the Scotch*, 1880, Bogue, London. Bonwick was only one of a number of Australians who wrote on this topic during the period 1860 to 1900.
37. Alexander Kemp, 'Scottish Reminiscences of an old Freemason' in *The South Australian Freemason*, 15 January 1892, p. 110; and D.M. Doudielock, ed., Reprint 'Burns and Freemasonry', Glasgow 1906; Rev. W.L. Kerr, *Mother Lodge Kilwinning*, London 1896.
38. Lodge minute books tend to confirm that expenditure on both refreshment and charity was usually at a higher level in Scottish lodges in colonial Victoria.
39. T. Desmond Williams, *Secret Societies in Ireland*, Harper and Row, London 1973; and R.E. Parkinson, *History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in Ireland*, Dublin 1956.
40. For further detail see M. Chapman, 'Freemasonry and Community in Victoria', M.Com. Thesis, University of Melbourne.
41. Karl N. Cramp and George Mackaness, *A History of the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Freemasons of New South Wales*, Angus and Robertson, 1938.
42. Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, p. 46.
43. M.H. Ellis, *Lachlan Macquarie*, p. 43.
44. Masonic speeches during the colonial period continually emphasised that members of the Royal Family belonged to the fraternity. This very obviously endowed social prestige and increased the enthusiasm for Freemasonry of the upwardly-mobile.
45. C.M.H. Clark, *Selected Document 1788-1850*, p. 32. Note, Stephen was but one of the original delegation who presented the petition to Brisbane, but the LaTrobe Library credits this pamphlet to him alone.
46. M. Chapman, *Ibid.*, pp. 86-90; Sir John Jamieson, W.H. Moore, G.P. D'Arcy and William Wentworth were members of the Lodge of Australia. John Stephen was arrested for harbouring a female convict, and was separated from his wife and lost his position in the government service as a result.
47. James Bonwick (a Freemason), *An Octogenarian's Reminiscences*, 1902, expresses this attitude, claiming (p. 92), 'I cannot but regard [Victoria] as first in Australia. It is less on account of its wealth . . . than upon the character of its people for enterprise and devotion to public progress'.
48. See editorial, *Port Phillip Gazette*, 11 march 1840: 'Melbourne . . . has hitherto been possessed by a race of people, energetic, industrious and enterprising as individuals, but as a community, disjointed, jealous . . . productive, but how much more productive . . . when organised . . . amalgamating single interests in the public good'.
49. See M. Chapman, *Freemasonry and Community*, Ch. 3, for details of this Masonic involvement in local government.
50. Shaftesley, *Ibid.*, p. 43.
51. Cohen appears with two different initials, B. and W., in the minute book of the Lodge of Australia Felix. Such careless recording of names at times made it difficult to correctly determine identity.
52. Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, p. 303.
53. Membership registers and lodge histories indicate that he belonged to Australia Felix, Hiram, Kilwinning, Judah, and Prince of Wales, Jamieson. His son of the same name was also a Freemason.
54. M. Chapman, *Ibid.*, p. 102-3; Edmund Finn (Garryowen), *Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835-1851*, Melbourne 1888. Stephen was not only active in trying to counteract anti-Catholic feeling but also seems to have acted to combat anti-Semitism. The minutes of Australia Felix indicate he came to the

aid of A.H. Hart in both 1842 and 1846; the latter seems to have displayed considerable sensitivity when remarks were made in the lodge room.

55. Hart was sensitive to criticism; this was not the first occasion he was offended, but it is not clear from the minutes whether this was an instance of anti-Semitism. Jews were not the only lodge members who took offence at personal remarks made within the lodge.
56. Apparently these were John Caulfield, a former supporter of William Kerr, a leader of the 'Orange' faction as well as a Freemason in the colony, and another Mason by the name of Liddy who seems to have rarely attended lodge meetings.
57. See 'Fragment of a Short Life', *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Vol. IX, Part 5, esp. p. 370. Alexander Fox was the father of Emanuel Phillips Fox, the artist. He had arrived in the colony in 1854 and was admitted to Australia Felix just after E. Nathan, Sam Hart and Mosely Hyman.
58. *Australian Keystone*, 1 August 1892. The complainant offered to give £200 to the Benevolent Homes if the Master of the lodge could prove he had not withdrawn his name without the permission of the proposer and seconder because he was a Jew.
59. William Westgarth, *Australia, Its Rise, Progress and Present Condition*, Edinburgh, 1862, p. 460.
60. The minutes of Australia Felix tell of several clashes between individuals with different value systems. John Stephen was accused of being 'a keeper of a seraglio', but he had previously attempted to expel Hill, an upright artisan, who did not turn his pregnant daughter into the street. See M. Chapman, *Freemasonry and Community*, for details.
61. Comments recorded in the diary of Georgiana McCrae, indicating that Michael Cashmore was one of the few who weathered the crisis without loss of prestige. See also, Paul De Serville, *Port Phillip Gentlemen*, Melbourne 1980.
62. E.V. Rodda, *Australian Keystone*, 2 September 1895.
63. See *Australian Dictionary of Biography* 1851–90 for details of Smith's career. He is categorised as 'conservative' in politics; although 'a man of the people' he was an upholder of established authority. He is easily fitted into simplistic categories such as radical or conservative.
64. Lodge of Australia Felix, *Minute Book*, November 1841; ad E.V. Rodda, *Keystone*, Reminiscences, 2 September 1895.
65. Rev. E. Rodda, P.G.S.W., Sketch No. 9, *Australian Keystone*, 1 December 1894, pp. 234–5, 'Introduction of Irish Freemasonry into Victoria'.
66. Some were office-bearers in local friendly societies. Freemasons have usually led moves to form such organisations.
67. Minute book, Lodge of Australia Felix.
68. Comparison of Minute books and other records of lodge membership with contemporary newspaper reports of Council election results.
69. Edmund Finn (Garryowen), *Chronicles*.
70. *Argus*, various issues 1844 to 1846; during this period Kerr seems to have neglected Freemasonry for the Orange Lodge of which he was president. He had been publicly reproved for his anti-Catholic outbursts by fellow Scot and Freemason, Henry Moore, in 1846.
71. David Dunstan, *Governing the Metropolis*, Melbourne U.P., 1984, p. 87; also official history of Lodge Kilwinning.
72. Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age*, Melbourne U.P., 1963; and *The Rush to Be Rich*, Melbourne U.P., 1971. Comparison of the factional groupings in the legislature defined by Serle and Masonic records would seem to justify this claim.
73. *Victorian Gazette*, 22 June 1863, p. 7.
74. Rowland Berthoff, 'The American Social Order: A Conservative Hypothesis', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3, April 1960.
75. Berthoff argues that these 'old-fashioned' attitudes conserved by Freemasonry provided a reservoir of political support for such 'radical' policies as the New Deal programme of Roosevelt during the 1930s.
76. Religious identity is not always discernible from names. However a record was kept of as many Jewish names, occupations, ages and lodges as possible. These are held in the Library of the AJHS in Melbourne.
77. Lodge of Australia Felix, *Minutes*, 9 January 1852. The Secretary noted: 'Many of our members being absent from Melbourne and gone to the gold fields, a temptation which could not be resisted, this being a circumstance of a most unexpected discovery tending to all human appearance to make men dissatisfied with their present occupations . . . it was determined to go into abeyance'.
78. H.L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, Allen and Unwin 1986. A figure of 0.5% is generally accepted as the proportion of Jews in the Victorian population.
79. Membership Register of Lodge of Australia Felix.
80. *Masonic Journal* 1857. These protests emanated mainly from those in the Lodge of Australasia and a

new London affiliated lodge, Meridian St John. Gold migrants, J.J. Moody and R. Levick, who introduced many candidates to lodges, appeared to see little need to investigate the character of fellow migrants.

81. Complaints of this practice were recorded in the Minutes of the Lodge of Australia Felix and Washington Lodge.
82. J.R. Needham published the *Masonic Journal* 1856 to 1858, originally as part of his journal *The Peoples' Free Press*, but after a few months the *Masonic Journal* took over from its progenitor.
83. Geelong Lodge of Unity and Prudence, *Centenary History*, and the lodge's Membership Register where Abraham Levey's name appears first and is followed by that of Haines.
84. Angel Ellis was the author's great-uncle. Biographical detail appears in the family history, *The Humanist Jew*, 1976.
85. Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, p. 344. Asher Hymen Hart arrived on the 'Elizabeth' on 21 August 1828, and Elias Ellis and wife on the 'Surrey' on 22 January 1929. Elias Ellis was the author's great-grandfather.
86. Carlton Lodge attracted several prominent members of the Jewish community including Asher and John Hart, Isaac A. Isaacs, as well as Angel's brother Samuel and brothers-in-law Mark Folk and P.D. Phillips.
87. J.T. Smith, Thomas Smith and Angel Ellis, all members of Dublin lodges, were to the fore in the move to reduce working hours and for the construction of a Benevolent Asylum. See W.E. Murphy, *History of the Eight Hour Movement*, Spectator Press, Melbourne 1896.
88. *Australian Masonic News*, 7 January 1865.
89. J.W. Jacobs, *Let Them Be Admitted*, Melbourne 1967. Receipt of such letters were noted in the minute books of several lodges.
90. *Australasian Keystone*, 1 June 1886.
91. *Australian Keystone*, 1 August 1893.
92. *Light*. The introduction states 'that a cordial vote of thanks be given to the RWPGM for his Address and that he be requested to prepare the same for publication; A. Ellis, Acting WM, W. Smith, Secretary.
93. John Thomas Smith, *Three Addresses*, ed. J.L. Milton, MD, Melbourne 1853.
94. See Michael Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1857*, for a discussion of the origin and spread of this attitude in the colonies.
95. W. Taaffe was the editor of this second colonial Masonic journal; he was a member of the Dublin affiliated Washington Lodge.
96. P.J. Thornton, *The History of Freemasonry in Victoria*, Shepparton 1978.
97. The Lodge of Judah was split on this issue, and Ellis himself declined to give it his support, arguing that the move was premature. S.P. Goldstein and H. Rintel were the only easily recognised Jewish names among the office-holders of this Grand Lodge. Ellis did not hold Grand Officer rank until made Grand Treasurer of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria in 1890.
98. Peter Thornton, *The History of Freemasonry in Victoria*, 1978.
99. *Masonic Journal and Victorian Gazette*, April 1863. John Thomas Smith argued that local autonomy was premature until his death in 1878.
100. *Australasian Keystone*, 1 February 1886.
101. M. Chapman, *The Humanist Jew — The Family of Elias and Rebecca Ellis, Early Anglo-Jewish Migrants to Australia*, Clarendon Press, 1980.
102. Bill Webster and Graham Gardner, *Glimpses of the Past*, commemorating Back to Kerang October 1984; pp. 6 and 13 tell of Asher's activities in Kerang.
103. M. Chapman, *Ibid*.
104. Malcolm J. Turnbull, 'Isaac Jacobs and the Reform Movement' *AJHS Journal*, Vol. IX, Part 1.
105. Barnette was my grandfather. He deserted his religious faith completely, seemingly substituting an enthusiasm for Esperanto, his consuming passion, and perhaps an indication of his own vision of the future.
106. My father, W.B. Ellis, was the son of Barnette. His mother died when he was a baby and the children were brought up by Barnette alone.
107. See Daniel J. Elazar with Peter Medding, *Jewish Communities in Frontier Societies — Argentina, Australia and South Africa*, Holmes and Meir, New York 1983.
108. A.S. Ellis, *The Cousins, Descendants of Solomon and Caroline Phillips*, 1990; Beverley Davis, *Be Fruitful and Multiply*, 1979; Hulda Reid, *A Pot Pourri*.
109. The excerpts from the *Jewish Herald*, 1888, within the *AJHS Journal*, Vol. X, Part 4, mention the concern over the number of Jewish young men marrying outside their community. There are other letters in this *Journal* which support my viewpoint expressed here.

110. Adele, Ray and Dora, daughters of Angel Ellis, and their cousin Constance, daughter of his brother Louis, and the grand-daughter of Rev. Solomon Phillips, Dr. Marion Phillips, all had careers in the varied fields of writing, medicine, nursing and politics. They, together with Vida Goldstein, were founders of the Lyceum Club.
111. M. Chapman, *The Humanist Jew* and A.S. Ellis, *The Cousins*; Joan Gillison, *The History of the Lyceum Club (Melbourne)*, 1975.
112. See *AJHS Journal*, Vol. XI, Part 1, '100 Years Ago', pp. 183-210.
113. *Australasian Keystone*, October 1891.
114. See Malcolm J. Turnbull, 'Isaac Jacobs and the Reform Movement'.
115. Crawcour, Levi, Ellis, Jacob are all names which appear in lodge membership lists.
116. B.J. Savill and W.G. Sutherland, *Special Occasions Associated with Freemasonry*, Melbourne 1940; also minute book, Lodge of Australia Felix.

## A WOMAN OF VALOUR

*Mathilde Firestone*

As one grows older it is amazing how much further back in time the memory goes. I remember when I was three or four years old, my mother to me was a warm cosy lap — two loving enfolding arms and the most beautiful soft brown smiling eyes in the world. My childhood was one of warmth, security, and carefree laughter — of turning cartwheels, playing hopscotch and jacks, skipping rope, popping tar bubbles on the road on hot days and fishing for yabbies in the Albert Park Lake. Life was such fun! And every now and then when tears flowed mother was always there — wise, loving, secure and strong. But she was much more than that. Only when I was growing from girlhood to womanhood did I begin to appreciate the greatness of the person she really was.

My mother, Leah Kloot (*née* Spielman) arrived in Melbourne as a war bride on 22 August 1919 with her ANZAC husband Phillip and baby son Harry, who was born during the last air-raid over London in World War One on 19 May 1918. It had been a horrendous journey in a cattle ship converted for troops who were returning to Australia with their young families. The facilities on board were very primitive and she was also pregnant. Two months later, on 22 October, I was born, and three years later another little son arrived, my brother Bern.

The young Leah had early shown a disposition towards an academic career, and my grandparents allowed her to travel to Scotland where she studied and was in residence at the University of St. Andrews in Fifeshire, the first university in the British Isles to grant degrees to women. She graduated L.L.A. (Lady Literate in Arts) with Honours on 18 September 1912, and thereupon embarked on a teaching career of some distinction at Westminster Jews' Free School in London — all the while gathering an impressive number of extra qualifications such as music, physical education, first aid and languages at the London University and through courses given by the London County Council.

She quickly rose to the position of Senior Mistress, teaching girls in the top grade, as well as preparing students with outstanding talent for scholarships. I have been informed by one of her previous pupils, Minnie Woolf (then Minnie Cowen) who is now 85, that she was easily the most popular teacher in the school and it was everyone's ambition to be in her class.

The school itself was an exceptional one. It was founded at the turn of the century for the education of children of poor immigrant Jewish families who had fled the pogroms of Poland and Russia to the haven of England. It had such patrons as the Hon. Lily Montagu and her sister, Marian, together with Claude Montefiore on the Board of Management. The objectives of the school were not only to teach the children to speak and write perfect English, but also to acquire a general standard of excellence in all subjects, which would prepare them for later life, and to give those who were able the opportunity for higher education. It was here, I'm sure, that the seeds of love and devotion for disadvantaged children were sown.

Following the whirlwind courtship and marriage of my parents in July 1917, mother continued teaching almost until the birth of my brother Harry; and after the cessation of hostilities came with father to Australia.



I'm sure she felt that when we children started school she would be able to resume her teaching profession again, and make friends in the academic field to which she was accustomed. Alas, it was not to be!

She was turned down by the Education Department on the grounds that she was a married woman, and although British by birth, was unacceptable as she came from overseas. Also she was over-qualified for teaching in Primary State Schools, and there were few Secondary Schools then.

It was many years before I understood the quality of her heroism in those early days — the loneliness and quiet desperation hidden behind that wonderful smile. Not only was she a stranger in a strange land, bereft of parents and a large close-knit family, but even deprived for the most part of the companionship of my father. He was a printer by trade and regarded himself fortunate indeed to work as a compositor for the *Age* newspaper, and to be able to provide for his family, even in the worst Depression years. However, as it was a morning newspaper, he always worked at night. How terrible those evenings must have been when we were all in bed! Only on Saturday nights did we revel in Dad's company as there was no newspaper on Sundays.

At that time we lived in a small terraced house in Stead Street, South Melbourne. There were no 'all night' trams yet, and the *Age* office was in Collins Street at that time. Father had to be within walking distance of the city, so that he could get home at 2-, 3-, or even 4-a.m. when the paper went to press. And of course, he slept in the daytime. Mother walked miles with us every day to keep the place quiet for father. Baby Bern would be in the pram and Harry and I trotted along beside her. One of our favourite walks was to the old Homeopathic Hospital (which became Prince Henry's). We walked there two or three times a week with sweetpeas and other sweet-scented flowers Dad grew in his tiny garden, and we took them to the patients.

To combat her loneliness and frustration, mother did two things. She took a course in sweet-making and she bought a piano. When father was at work or wasn't asleep, the house was alive with music, and she marked time waiting for a ray of light at the end of the tunnel.

Living in the heart of this working-man's district she saw at first hand the sufferings and deprivations of the poor, especially during the Great Depression. There was a great deal of unemployment and for those who had jobs, wages were appallingly low. Families who couldn't pay the rent were turned out of their homes. There was much malnutrition among their children. Some were forced to leave school before the required age because the little they could earn was needed at home, or parents could not afford school books, clothes or shoes.

The seeds already sown at the school for immigrant children in London took root in this atmosphere, and reinforced her determination to strive for the welfare and education of disadvantaged children everywhere.

Mother felt so strongly for the sufferings of families whose breadwinners were unemployed, that she even stood for Parliament in 1937 as an Independent candidate in the State Elections for the electorate of Albert Park. It was her idealistic hope that she would be able, in some way, to help ameliorate their lot. She was not elected, however, which was just as well. Politics were no more honourable then than they are now, and I do not think the Victorian State Parliament was ready for a woman of her stamp. Mother received threatening letters and obscene phone calls. Frequently her meetings were broken up by paid hooligans. The media on the whole was scathing, suggesting that women who went into public life neglected

their families. But her biggest disappointment came from the women she most wanted to help. Women voted in those days as their husbands told them, and it was considered beyond the pale for a woman to try and take away a man's job. Many were the doors slammed in her face during the election campaign.

When Harry and I were ready for Kindergarten in 1922, mother became one of the founders and an early President of the Lillian Cannam Free Kindergarten. That was to be the pattern of her life. Always she was to be concerned and active with the health, welfare and education of children, not only her own, but all children.

In 1924 when Harry and I started at the Eastern Road State School, mother joined the Mothers' Club, which had only come into existence the previous year. There she began to find warm friendships and appreciation from other mothers dedicated to the educational advancement of their own children and all children at the school. She also began to derive great satisfaction from her association with the Headmaster and Staff.

The Mothers' Club Movement began in a small way at individual State Schools. At first they were merely committees under the control of the Education Department and the President had to be a member of the School Staff. They were formed primarily to interest caring mothers in working to raise money for school facilities for the children. Although the State School system was compulsory and supposedly free, the fact was that it was the Cinderella of the Education system. Having come from the background she did, mother was horrified to find that parents, who had trouble enough making ends meet, had to buy books, slates, pens and pencils, and the teaching staff fared little better. Albert Park State School probably had the first properly constituted Mothers' Club and the Infant Mistress, Miss Ida Body, was its first President. The Mothers' Club at the Eastern Road State School was formed soon after and the Infant Mistress too, Miss McPhee, became President.

As more and more mothers became involved, and they took up positions as office-bearers, the Mothers' Club gradually ceased to be a mere appendage of the school, and began to become an organisation in its own right. Functions were held to assist in the building of a shelter shed. The timber was provided by the Mothers' Club and the fathers helped to put it up. Furniture, curtains and paintings, as well as more mundane necessities, were purchased for the Headmaster's Office, the Staff Room and the classrooms.

The Mothers' Club also provided money for class facilities, Christmas treats and prizes for the children, even Scholarships. They sometimes held card nights among the members, and dances for the young people which cost a shilling.

They came in for scathing criticism from certain members of the local clergy who regarded cards and dancing as definitely of the Devil. They remained undeterred however, and made short work of one minister who was unfortunate enough to accept an invitation to attend one of their meetings. Among their most important projects was that of getting free dental care for children in State Schools. Another was to provide cocoa and buns for children who came hungry to school. When a Grand Concert was organised in the South Melbourne Town Hall, mother trained children for some of the musical items. When bazaars were held, mother made sweets.

She made delectable snow balls, coconut ice and jelly jubes, as we called them, and we loved to help her sugar-coat the jubes, popping more than our fair share into our mouths. But her speciality for these events was toffee apples. I remember being puzzled as to how she managed to keep the toffee liquid in the pot, whereas the

moment the apples were dipped in the toffee, it set. The children always lined up for them, pennies in hand, and they were all sold out before the bazaar started.

On one occasion, I recall, apart from her usual generous donation to the sweets stall, she gave a large box of sweets to be raffled. Unbeknown to her, one of the mothers bought a ticket in her name; imagine her surprise and embarrassment when she won her own box of sweets! Of course, being Mum, she handed them back to be sold for the proceeds of the sweets stall. There were other stalls of course, groceries, home-made cakes, etc. Mothers were urged to make toys, knitted garments, handmade embroidery and other novelties, which quite a lot did.

In the minutes of the Mothers' Club meeting of 8 July 1925, it was recorded that a sum of £335 was made that year, a colossal amount at the time, and the way the money was to be used was discussed. It was particularly interesting to note that the money was to be set aside for Scholarships to help talented students to continue their studies. After all, this was a poor, working-man's, area, and it was during the Great Depression, when children were expected to leave school at fourteen, if not before.

Apart from these activities, with her educational training and background Leah was able to give the mothers a wider view of the expectations they had a right to have for their children. One very important experiment took place at Eastern Road School, which was to have a profound effect on the Secondary School system in Victoria. Tom Allsop, who was a highly qualified and dedicated teacher, taught the sixth grade from 1918 to 1930, when he retired. Sadly, he and Mrs. Allsop had no children of their own, but they lived near the school, and their home was always open to pupils who had problems or who just liked to visit. He refused several opportunities for promotion because of his devotion to the children at Eastern Road. He believed fervently not only in equal opportunities for boys and girls, but also in the right of children with ability from working-class homes to succeed.

To this end, with the enthusiastic encouragement of members of the Mothers' Club, he approached the Education Department asking for permission to take those children in the sixth grade, whose parents were willing, up to the level of Leaving Pass, which was then the equivalent of entrance to university. Rather grudgingly the Department agreed, and alone, save for the assistance of one Junior Teacher, Mr. Allsop brought his students to this level. The few who failed a subject at the end-of-year exams were coached by him during the Christmas holidays and all passed supplementary exams which were held at the end of January. I still have a photograph of the Honours Board set up in the school in 1929 bearing the names of the successful students. This pilot programme was never repeated, but proved a watershed in the development of the Secondary School system. What it achieved was a recognition by the Education Department of what mother had known all along through her teaching experience in England, that children from poor families did not lack natural ability, and were entitled to the same educational opportunities as those from more privileged homes.

Another thing which helped to extend the State Secondary School system was also initiated by people like my mother and others in the Mothers' Club movement. She was an outstanding speaker, was Mrs. Louisa Pitt, also from Eastern Road, and when the Victorian Federation of Mothers' Clubs was formed in 1925, fine speakers from other schools also entered the arena. They were often invited to speak at country schools and this they did, travelling long distances by train, usually at their own expense. Sixty years ago there were few country telephones,

wireless was just coming into being, and of course, television was still far in the future. Country folk were therefore very isolated, and grateful for visits from interesting speakers who could keep them up to date on educational advances in the city. When mother got up to speak there was a hushed, expectant silence. She was tall and imposing, with a real Presence. She always began by asking, with her big smile, 'Are there any Pommies here like me?'. A few hands would go shyly up and the ice was broken. She did this countless times with unfailing success.

The Mothers' Club movement was growing by leaps and bounds, and the need was soon recognised for a combined organisation with common objectives. The idea of a Federation came from Miss Ida Body, the Infant Mistress at Albert Park State School, and was enthusiastically taken up at Eastern Road and by Mothers' Clubs which were springing up at schools all over the Metropolitan area. Thus, in 1925 the Victorian Federation of Mothers' Clubs was born. Miss Ida Body was elected first President of the V.F.M.C., as it soon became known, and mother of course was a founding member, and a delegate from Eastern Road; so too was Mrs. Pitt, their capable Secretary for many years. They formed a formidable partnership and remained life-long friends. The V.F.M.S. had its own Constitution and policies which were non-political and non-sectarian.

For the modest fee of ten shillings annually, the Mothers' Club of any school in Victoria was eligible to join the Federation, and unlike the School Councils of today, which are individual to each school, the V.F.M.C. soon became a tremendous combined body of women throughout the State of Victoria which was respected and exercised a beneficial influence in many fiends connected with child welfare. Its objectives were set out in its own magazine, the *V.F.M.C. Quarterly Review* of December 1930. They were to establish a bond of union between Mothers' Clubs of various schools throughout Victoria, to confer on questions of common interest, and to advance the interests of scholars in the schools of this State.

The members of the V.F.M.C. were a remarkable group of women in their generation. With few exceptions most had not gone further at school than the sixth grade, yet their reports at Annual Conferences were outstanding. In all matters relating to children they were the experts recognised by members of the Victorian Parliament and were often called upon for opinions or advice in this field. Mother was usually their spokeswoman, and used to laughingly declare that she had worn down the steps of Parliament House taking delegations to present ideas and suggestions which came up at their Conference to the Minister of Education or of Health.

In 1930, when 'all night' trams were running, we moved from the little house in South Melbourne to a new home in South Caulfield. Mother did not lose interest in the Eastern Road School nor the V.F.M.C. On the contrary! The V.F.M.C. was expanding in a multitude of directions, and in 1930 mother was elected President, and Mrs. Pitt her most able Secretary. Various organisations dedicated to the interests of children were springing up, and as President of the V.F.M.C. and delegate of this body, mother was always involved. The National Cinema Council of Victoria was the brainchild of Mrs. Caroline Bolitho. She was so deeply impressed by work she had seen being done in England that she aroused the interest of the Australian Women's National League, of which she was General Secretary. The ideals were to foster in children a liking for the best in the cinema world, to encourage film houses to make available suitable films for children, both educational and entertaining, and to encourage theatre proprietors to hold special sessions at appropriate times and at concession rates. With the advent of television some of their work became

redundant, but the National Cinema Council is still in existence, and the valuable film facilities now in most schools were initiated and fostered by them.

At the inaugural meeting held on 25 August 1930, mother was, as usual, a delegate representing Federation, and became the first Vice-President. Mrs. Bolitho also became a treasured life-long friend, as did many other members of the V.F.M.C.

In a similar way, the National Safety Council came into being, and mother was a founding member of that. The idea of school safety crossings, which we now take for granted, was one of the main purposes for which this organisation was formed. Another ideal was to have trained supervisors watching over children who played in public parks so that they would not be at risk, but Governments never had the money for worthy causes like that.

Public-spirited mothers from various schools tended to have special projects in which they were interested, which naturally came into the orbit of Federation, and were taken under its large, maternal wing. For instance, Mrs. N.C. Longland of West Melbourne was a long-time member of the Mothers' Clubs through her association with the Bell Street, Fitzroy, Special School and Essendon High School. Her chief love was for *Travancore*, probably the first 'home' for mentally retarded children, apart from Kew Cottages. *Travancore* was a lovely old home in a garden setting, overlooking what was then Royal Park. The children lived there under the care of properly trained staff, including a child psychologist, and those who were able to work with their hands were given special training and instruction. They could proceed at their own pace without having to compete in the outside world. It was found that these children responded particularly to beautiful surroundings, and in 1930 donations from a number of Mothers' Clubs amounting to £256 were used to purchase lovely colourful bedspreads and curtains.

In June 1931, whilst mother was still President and Mrs. Pitt Secretary, a public meeting was convened at the Melbourne Town Hall by Mrs. Longland, under the auspices of the V.F.M.C., to gain publicity and support for *Travancore* and mentally handicapped children generally. This meeting was addressed by such experts as Dr. Greig and Dr. K.S. Cunningham of the Mental Hygiene Department and was reported at length in the *Leader* of 13 June 1931. The reporter mentioned the sterling work being done by the Mothers' Club movement and remarked that, whilst in 1929 only eighteen Mothers' Clubs were affiliated with V.F.M.C., by 1931 there were already 149, representing a membership of over 7000. The report also went on to speak of Mrs. Kloot's educational background and her activities at this time. She was currently President of the V.F.M.C., a member of the Eastern Road State School Mothers' Club, Honorary Secretary of the Lillian Cannam Free Kindergarten, Vice-President of the Vocational Guidance Association, and Vice-President of the Children's Cinema Council. It stated further that the success of the Mothers' Clubs was due largely to her and her capable Secretary, Mrs. Louisa Pitt, who despite her busy life, still found time to sit as a Magistrate in the South Melbourne Children's Court. Needless to say, as a result of this meeting, an Auxiliary was formed to assist *Travancore*, and a lot of public interest and support were generated.

During their terms of office, three educational visits of interstate students to Melbourne were arranged by the V.F.M.C. The first was a group of girls from Western Australia, sponsored financially by the Vacuum Oil Co. One of the teachers in charge of this group was the late Dorothy Tagney, who later became the first woman Senator in Australia. Organising these trips was a prodigious task, done mainly by Mrs. Pitt and mother. Not only did visits to Yallourn and other places of



educational interest have to be arranged, but suitable billets for the girls in private homes had to be found. The finale of this most innovative and successful trip was a social function in which the boys from Melbourne High School partnered the visiting girls.

In the late 'thirties, when the Great Depression was still at its height, the Opportunity Clubs for Boys and Girls were formed. The idea came from a generous-hearted man, Dr. Ramsay Mailer, who felt so deeply moved by the plight of the deprived children in the worst-hit areas of Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond that he determined to do something positive to help.

Accordingly, he called together a number of similar-minded people, and as mother was already well-known for her work in the Mothers' Clubs and allied organisations, she was invited to join as a matter of course. Needless to say, this work was very close to her heart and she became an active participant. Local Halls were used where children could meet for recreational purposes, under the supervision of responsible adults. It was at the Hall in Richmond that we gave a party for these youngsters to celebrate my twenty-first birthday, the children from Collingwood and Fitzroy being brought by bus to share the fun.

Probably the most useful and important work of the Opportunity Clubs was to provide free lunches for the needy school children in these districts. Oslo Bakeries, the first bread manufacturers in Melbourne to make good quality wholemeal bread, provided their sliced bread for some years. The famous 'Oslo Lunch', as it became known, consisted of sandwiches made with this bread and slices of cheese. Each child received a double sandwich, an apple and a small bottle of milk containing one-third of an Imperial Pint. As a result, milk for children in all schools in the Metropolitan area became a Government project until times of prosperity and full employment returned, when this practice was discontinued.

I don't know how she found the time, but along with her work in the general community mother also managed to fit in worthy causes within the Jewish community itself. A great lady, Dr. Fanny Reading by name, had begun in the mid-twenties in Sydney an organisation which she called the National Council of Jewish Women. It was a great success from the start, and in 1927 she came to Melbourne to establish a branch here. Mother was a foundation member and became President in 1933. Its members made significant contributions not only to the Jewish community in Melbourne but also to worthy causes in the community at large.

Mother helped create what was then known as Junior Council, consisting mainly of teenage daughters of older Council members, and these ladies, now growing elderly themselves, are still following the fine example set by their mothers. They have become a very active body, joined in the course of time by many other members. I am told that when mother addressed their meetings, she liked to see the girls knitting or sewing; she didn't approve of idle hands. As a result, I learned to knit and sew at a very early age, and remember making an embroidered apron of Amy Johnson, the first woman aviator to fly from England to Australia. There was something very nice about the N.C.J.W.; although it was for women, many husbands came to the meetings too, and were most helpful and co-operative. As a matter of fact, they still do and they still are!

When Hitler came to power in 1933, refugees who were able to leave Germany began arriving in Melbourne. Mother, together with other members of Council, met every incoming ship. When I came home from work there were often newcomers enjoying a meal or a cup of tea in our dining room, and getting helpful advice about employment and places to live. Great and lasting friendships were made there;



many a love-match was made there too! As I look back, it amazes me that I was never surprised to see so many strangers in our home. It was truly a 'half-way house' for many, who gradually settled and did well in their new home country. I married a refugee myself — one of the young men of *Dunera* fame. This work ceased when war broke out in September 1939, but resumed with a vengeance after the war, when the trickle of tragic survivors became a steady stream, and the burden was shared by other organisations such as Jewish Welfare and the Overseas Relief Fund.

After the war, the legacy of the Nazi Holocaust in Europe unfolded before the horrified eyes of the world. As Israel was proclaimed a Jewish State by the United Nations in 1948, eyes were turned to this small country as a refuge. Its life began with a terrible war, and in defiance of the United Nations Arab invaders from neighbouring countries over-ran the new-born State. No-one, not even sympathetic members of the United Nations who had voted overwhelmingly for its rebirth, expected the infant Jewish State to survive, but survive it did, and the triumphs of its people in that and subsequent wars are history.

There was untold suffering and hardship in those early days, and a great deal of help was needed. Mother did what she had always done — responded to the needs of mothers and children. She worked through an organisation called *Ezra*, and crate after crate of baby clothes and napkins as well as other needs and hospital facilities were shipped to the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem by the women of *Ezra* as well as the National Council of Jewish Women.

The wonderful work went on, but mother was growing tired. In June 1950, following an operation, she had a massive heart attack. She was not expected to live; however, her surgeon, Dr. Moritz Myer, fought for her life and her brave spirit was not to be quenched. To the surprise of us all, she came home from hospital, and was nursed with great devotion by a cousin, Ray Huxtable. It was five months before mother got out of bed. Her public life was over. For the remaining twelve years of her life she lived very quietly, almost in seclusion. Father was retired, and they lived those years happily together, revelling in their grand-children. Theirs had always been a meeting of great minds, as well as a partnership of deepest love. Friends from the past visited often to share in the glow of their twilight years.

On 17 March 1962, following another heart attack, the valiant heart of Leah Kloot ceased to beat. That living, loving flame, which had nurtured all around her for 76 years, was gone.

## KISCH AND THE JEWS

*Peter Monteith*

One of the most prominent Jews to visit Australia in the 1930s was a Czech journalist by the name of Egon Erwin Kisch. Indeed the Kisch visit has acquired almost mythical status, largely because it reveals so much about the forces at work in Australian politics and society at the time. From our own viewpoint the strange combination of adulation and persecution which greeted this distinguished visitor appears almost incredible. Almost fifty years after they occurred, it is worth recalling the tragicomic events surrounding the Kisch visit. Beyond that, it is worth examining the Kisch visit for what it tells us specifically about the roles of Jews and indeed also of anti-Semitism in Australian society at the time.

Kisch came to Australia in 1934 as a writer of some note, owing his literary reputation primarily to his journalistic activity. As a reporter he achieved some fame in his home town of Prague, and played a key role in the exposure of the Colonel Redl spy scandal in pre-World War I Vienna. During the war he served as a soldier in the Austro-Hungarian army, but then in the last two years of the war he worked as a press-officer. In the aftermath of war he became a commander of the Viennese 'Red Guard', and then for a short time returned to Prague. From 1921, though, he lived in Berlin, working for a number of newspapers, and also writing a number of books of reportage. These were based on his work in Germany, but also on his widespread travels through the Soviet Union, Asia and America. With the coming to power of Hitler in early 1933, Kisch was forced to become a kind of permanent traveller. His travels during his many years of exile are also recorded in his works of reportage.

Living in Paris in 1934, Kisch was invited by the World Committee Against War and Fascism to attend an anti-war congress in Melbourne. The second All-Australia Congress Against War and Fascism was to take place in the Port Melbourne Town Hall on November 10–12, and was thus timed to coincide with Victoria's centenary celebrations. It happened to coincide also with the visit to Australia of the Duke of Gloucester, who was to dedicate the Shrine of Remembrance on Armistice Day, and who was accompanied by high-ranking British military officials engaged in defence discussions with the Australian government.<sup>1</sup> The host of the congress, the Victorian Council Against War, had hoped that Henri Barbusse, Lord Marley or John Strachey would be able to attend, but in the end settled on Kisch at Barbusse's suggestion.

Although Kisch had received a visa for Australia from a British official in Paris, he was refused entry when he arrived at Fremantle on the *Strathaird* on November 6. This was despite the fact that a search of Kisch's baggage had failed to reveal any evidence linking him with communist activity. The Lyons government had received information that Kisch had recently been excluded from England and so was banning him under section 3(gh) of the Immigration Act, according to which an immigrant could be declared undesirable on the basis of information received through official or diplomatic channels.<sup>2</sup> Membership of the Communist Party

would certainly have been sufficient grounds for exclusion, but when the question was put to Kisch, both in Fremantle and elsewhere, he either denied Party membership, as reported in the *Age* on November 13, or he equivocated.<sup>3</sup> According to his own account, when asked in Fremantle whether he was a Communist, he replied, 'Splendid, that the question of my party affiliation is asked first. I can now explain straight away that I shall neither invoke my membership of any particular political party, nor, by emphasising my non-membership, will I disassociate myself from the party. I come as an anti-fascist and as a militant opponent of war.'<sup>4</sup> There seems little doubt, though, that Kisch *was* a member of the Party at the time. In 1919 he had become a member of the Austrian Communist Party and then in November 1925 had transferred his membership to the German Communist Party.<sup>5</sup> Kisch must have realized that to reveal such an affiliation would have been of no help to himself or to the Australian anti-war movement.

Failure to land in Fremantle meant that Kisch was unable to take a train to Melbourne and to arrive there in time for the anti-war Congress. Instead he remained aboard the *Strathaird*, arriving in Melbourne on November 13. By this time a Kisch Defence Committee had been founded, and in the Supreme Court of Victoria its solicitors challenged the right of the ship's captain to detain Kisch.<sup>6</sup> During this *habeas corpus* hearing many delegates to the Congress Kisch was supposed to attend visited him aboard the *Strathaird*. Kisch managed to pass to Arthur Howells, Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Anti-War Movement, a draft of his address to the Congress, so that it could at least be read out at the Congress.<sup>7</sup>

The court hearing in Melbourne failed to secure Kisch's release, which persuaded him to adopt a more radical solution to his dilemma. Just as the *Strathaird* was on the point of leaving Port Melbourne, Kisch jumped from the lower afterdeck to the wharf, managing to break his leg in two places in the process. Immediately he demanded to be arrested, as he was now on Australian soil, but the police insisted on returning him to the ship. Kisch's misery was complete, though he had gone a long way towards endearing himself to an Australian public which instinctively favoured the underdog and which came to admire Kisch's praiseworthy, if somewhat foolhardy, sporting prowess.

The next confrontation with Australian authorities was scheduled to take place in Sydney. Attorney-General Menzies had assured parliament that Kisch would not land, but Kisch's supporters had appealed in the High Court against the unfavourable Melbourne ruling. On November 16 Mr. Justice Evatt ruled that the requirement of section 3(gh) of the Immigration Act had not been met, because the Minister had failed to specify the source of the information on Kisch. Ten days after his virtual imprisonment on board the *Strathaird*, Kisch was allowed to land. But on setting foot on Australian soil for the second time he was taken to police headquarters and, on the advice of the Attorney-General's Department, subjected to a dictation test. By demanding that a dictation test in any European language be passed, the test had for fifty-seven years been able to keep unwanted immigrants, especially Asians, out of the country.<sup>8</sup> Aware of Kisch's considerable linguistic talents, the test was administered in Scottish Gaelic by a Constable Mackay. Kisch failed the test and was consequently accused of being a prohibited immigrant. He was tried in the Central Police Court by a police magistrate, who on November 28 found him guilty and ordered him to serve six months with hard labour and to pay court costs.<sup>9</sup> He was taken briefly to jail but soon released on bail pending an appeal to the High Court.

In the time both before and after his trial Kisch, though under constant surveillance, was able to travel widely throughout Australia, overcoming the disappointment of not addressing the anti-war Congress by appearing as a celebrity before enthusiastic audiences in many towns. At his first appearance, at the Domain in Sydney on November 18, he made his famous statement: 'Yes, my English is broken, my leg is broken, but my *heart* is not broken; for the task, which I was given to do by the anti-fascists of Europe, is fulfilled when I speak to you, the anti-fascist people of Australia.'<sup>10</sup>

In December in an appeal to the High Court it was found that Scottish Gaelic was not a European language within the meaning of the Immigration Act. Mr. Justice Rich claimed, 'It is not the recognised speech of a community organised politically, socially or on any other basis.'<sup>11</sup> The decision understandably caused much consternation amongst Australian Scots, some of whom vented their outrage in the Sydney press.

The legal complexities of the Kisch visit did not end there. On the advice of his barrister Kisch brought an action against the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which had taken a blatantly pro-government stance in the affair, to the extent that Kisch compares it with the *Volkischer Beobachter*, the organ of the Nazi Party.<sup>12</sup> It had been responsible for the publication of a number of letters protesting the High Court's decision, one of them written by Sir Mungo McCallum, Chancellor of Sydney University, under the pseudonym 'Colombinus'. At the time that the *Sydney Morning Herald* was engaging in this contempt of court, the government was acting to build a water-tight case against Kisch, this time by providing a source for its original claim that Kisch was a dangerous subversive. In England the Secretary of State for the Dominions sent an uncoded cable which clarified Kisch's status, and with this information the original charge against Kisch could be made to stick. He was convicted and given three months hard labour and ordered to pay costs. Another appeal was made to the High Court and bail of £200 was set. By the end of February the Government was prepared to compromise. It proposed that all charges would be dropped, Kisch's passport returned and costs paid if Kisch were prepared to take the next available ship to Europe and if he guaranteed not to take part in any more public meetings or demonstrations.<sup>13</sup> Kisch rejected all of these conditions; in fact he attended a torchlight procession in Melbourne to commemorate the second anniversary of the burning of the *Reichstag*. Despite this the Government went ahead with its proposal to pay all Kisch's costs. Kisch returned to France aboard the *Orford* in March 1935.

As none of his books had been translated into English, Kisch was hardly a household name when he entered Australia, but by taking on the government and by breaking his leg in such spectacular fashion he soon became one. When signing autographs Kisch did not write 'Egon Kisch, reporter' or 'Egon Kisch, writer' but 'Egon Kisch, jumper'.<sup>14</sup>

Many Australian writers did of course know of Kisch and were able to develop close relations with him during his stay. The Kisch Defence Committee was heavily stocked with recognised literary figures — people such as Vance and Nettie Palmer, Katherine Susannah Prichard, Louis Esson and E. J. Brady. The Jewish writer Judah Waten was one who was fortunate enough to witness the jump onto the wharf<sup>15</sup> and who clearly made an impression on Kisch. On his return trip aboard the *Orford* Kisch wrote a letter to Bertha Laidler expressing the hope 'that you one day will run away from Australia and visit me in Paris. Bring Juda Watton (sic) with you, and when all is allright in Germany I go with him to Bavaria and we will have a good

time and you will have the pleasure to carry us home!’<sup>16</sup> Waten was later to write glowingly of Kisch that ‘he was several sizes larger than life. He had great experience of life and he had a sharp wit. He was brave beyond human limits, brave in a dashing almost exhibitionistic fashion.’<sup>17</sup>

Another Jew with whom Kisch had close contact in the very early part of his stay in Australia was Joan Rosanove, who represented Kisch (unsuccessfully) at the *habeas corpus* hearing in the Victorian Supreme Court. Rosanove (nee Lazarus) was the first Jewish woman in Australia to be called to the bar.<sup>18</sup> Like Waten, though, Rosanove did not take up contact as a representative of the Jewish community. She had been briefed by an organization called International Labour Defence, which was doing its utmost to rescue Kisch from the jaws of Australian officialdom.

As far as the response of the Australian Jewish community in general to the Kisch visit is concerned, however, it is apparent that Waten and Rosanove were the exceptions rather than the rule. It is symptomatic of the indifference with which most Australian Jews greeted the Kisch visit that neither the *Jewish Weekly News*, a Melbourne publication, nor the *Hebrew Standard* of Sydney made mention of the visit or of the enormous controversy surrounding it. Clearly there existed a desire not to be identified in any way with a man who, although he denied being a member of the Communist Party, was at the very least anti-Establishment and a supporter of the political Left. This apparent conservatism of many Australian Jews and their accompanying desire to be identified with the Establishment is well illustrated by the fact that the *Hebrew Standard*, whilst overlooking the Kisch affair, was prepared to welcome publicly to Australia the man whose role Kisch was supposed to countervail, namely the Duke of Gloucester.<sup>19</sup> It even published the text of an address to the Duke by the New South Wales Jewish Congregational Advisory Board, whose members proclaimed deference of a truly British kind: ‘We beg to assure Your Royal Highness of our continued loyalty to the Throne and Person of His Most Gracious Majesty The King. We fervently hope that the visit of Your Royal Highness to this State will be replete with interest and pleasure.’<sup>20</sup>

The desire of the Jewish community not to be associated with a political radical, albeit one who had been treated in the most appalling way by the Australian authorities, is not surprising. At the same time, though, it is clear that Kisch was able to report on events in Europe which would have been of the greatest interest to Jews in all parts of the world. Kisch had recently witnessed the coming to power of Adolf Hitler in Germany, and had himself been incarcerated for some time in Spandau prison in the aftermath of the *Reichstag* fire, to be saved only by his Czechoslovakian passport. The topic of the treatment of Jews in Germany since Hitler’s coming to power is explicitly discussed in the address which Kisch had written aboard the *Strathaird* and which he had had read at the Melbourne anti-war Congress. In it he reported ominously that the Jews in Germany

... have been dragged through the streets, brutally flogged and killed, and their property confiscated. Jewish lawyers are not allowed to appear in the Courts. Jewish doctors may not practise in hospitals. No Jews are permitted to edit or to write for papers, and they are excluded from universities. The paper of the official Government of Nuremberg unceasingly denounces the Jews for virtual murder and rape. At the entrance of many villages the Nazis have erected signs reading ‘Jews forbidden to enter.’<sup>21</sup>

If the Jewish community greeted Kisch with a good measure of indifference, Kisch does not seem to have been unduly perturbed. He was not a practising Jew, and moreover he had been invited to Australia as a committed pacifist and anti-fascist, not as a representative of European Jewry. It is therefore hardly surprising that

when Kisch came to writing an account of his Australian experiences he made very little mention of Australian Jews. His book *Landung in Australien (Australian Landfall)*, which was finally published in Amsterdam in 1937, makes only passing reference to Jews. He briefly mentions Rosanove, and also a certain Mrs. Aarons, who identified Kisch in the presence of a Justice of the Peace (though in fact she had never seen Kisch before in her life).<sup>22</sup> In discussing the democratic nature of Australian society, Kisch admires the fact that the 'commander of the Australian troops in the World War was a Jewish engineer, John Monash, called up as a reserve officer.'<sup>23</sup>

Even before Kisch managed to publish his own account of his Australian visit, an Australian journalist by the name of Tom Fitzgerald (not to be confused with the later editor of *Nation*), using the pseudonym Julian Smith, published a book-length account under the title *On the Pacific Front*. Fitzgerald became a close friend of Kisch, acting as a kind of 'cultural guide' when the latter was staying in Sydney. In his book he devotes a chapter to the topic 'Kisch and the Jews', where he recounts an incident which illustrates well Kisch's attitude to Jewish orthodoxy:

Kisch and a Gentile went into a Jewish bookshop — not because it was Jewish, but because there was a book in the window (an Australian encyclopaedia) which Kisch wanted.

A fierce argument ensued for and against the Palestine proposal for the so-called liberation of the Jews, the bookman supporting it and Kisch opposing.

The significant point was that the old orthodox Hebrew bookseller quoted the Talmud at great length in Hebrew to Kisch's Gentile companion. The Gentile, of course, could not understand a word, but must have looked at least impressed, because the studious old man quoted the Talmud to him again and again.

Kisch explained afterwards that the Jew was so orthodox and so 'Nationalistically' Jewish that it never crossed his mind that a Jew like Kisch would go around with anyone who was not also a Jew. As the Gentile in this case wore glasses, and was in the company of an intellectual Jew like Kisch, the old bookseller took it for granted that he also was a Jewish intellectual and would naturally understand the Talmud.

It was enough that he was with a Jew to make him also a Jew. Yes, he must surely be a Jew, and because he was with such a well-known scholar as Kisch, he must undoubtedly understand the Talmud.

Kisch treated his elderly opponent vigorously, yet sympathetically, but often shrugged his shoulders about such Jews.<sup>24</sup>

Though neither Fitzgerald nor Kisch himself says much about Kisch's contact with Australian Jews, both are interested in the Australian anti-Semitism encountered by Kisch. There is absolutely no doubt that the primary source of opposition to the Kisch visit was political in nature; nevertheless the latent anti-Semitism of some of his antagonists did surface on a number of occasions. Fitzgerald singles out the *Bulletin* for what he calls its 'gratuitous Jew-baiting'.<sup>25</sup> In particular he draws attention to an article which appeared under the title 'Australia and Alien Jews', and whose author, Montague Grover, claimed:

The visit of Herr Kisch is a very unhappy chapter in the story of the Jews in Australia. Coming to Australia to campaign for the Communist anti-war stunt, Herr Kisch was refused its hospitality, as he had been refused that of tolerant Britain — obviously for good and sufficient reasons. Instead of behaving like the gentleman Osmond Esmond showed himself in corresponding circumstances, this international Jew went on as if Australia were a tenth-rate Tartar colony temporarily under Menshevist control — landed in spite of the Commonwealth, challenged its right to expel him and took advantage of a weakness of the law to blither for the crew which demands that Australia should disarm, while applauding Russia for arming to the teeth. In all these proceedings he had the sympathy and assistance of Jews.

It has set Australians that Jewish names are rather common on Communist lists published in these parts. They have also remarked that the returned traveller who, on the strength of a few days in Moscow, rushes to reporters with the news that Russia is a marvellous country ruled by supermen, while Australia is a poor, backward land, is often a Jew. [ . . . ]



Perhaps Australia needs no protection from foreign Jews who meddle in its affairs or local Jews who are Communists first and Australians a long way after. But they can do it harm indirectly, besides doing individuals an injury, by exciting prejudice against Jews who are good Australians.<sup>26</sup>

The author continued by pointing to opposition which had built up within the electorate of Sir Daniel Levy, who at that time was Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly. Levy responded with a letter of his own to the *Bulletin*, in which he sought to distance himself and Australian Jews from the activities of Kisch. He certainly had good grounds to argue that Kisch had not received specifically Jewish support whilst in Australia.

I do not know whether Kisch is a Jew or not; but I do know and I think you know, or ought to know, that the Jews in Australia have no concern with his visit to these shores. The statement that this visit is a 'chapter' in their 'story' is a grandiloquent inaccuracy. 'In all these proceedings', referring to this man's objectionable activities, you say 'he had the sympathy and assistance of Jews.' What evidence have you in support of so serious an imputation? What Jewish societies or organisations or individuals of any importance sympathised with or assisted him in his activities?

Far be it from me to suggest a taint of anti-Semitism in the *Bulletin*, the national Australian newspaper. All I say is, '*Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis.*' [Heaven preserve us from such defenders.]<sup>27</sup>

To this the *Bulletin* replied by denying any implication that it might be anti-Semitic but also by insisting that it had 'no regrets for the publication of an article which expressed plain facts and honest convictions.'<sup>28</sup> With a sense of mystery inspired by a lack of names and evidence it argued that 'Members of a Jewish association welcomed and supported Kisch in Melbourne. Its name was given to representatives of the N.S.W. Jewish Advisory Council who called at this office last week; they described it as an off-shoot from a concern which is negotiating with the Moscow Government for the establishment of a Jewish colony in Russian Asia.'<sup>29</sup> All of a sudden Kisch was being presented as an advocate of Jewish migration to the Soviet Union. The *Bulletin* concluded the item by expressing its delight 'that all organisations qualified to speak for Australian Jews repudiate Herr Kisch — reject the man and his mission.'<sup>30</sup>

Apparently overlooking its denials of any charges of anti-Semitism, the *Bulletin* marked Kisch's departure from Australian soil as a free man with the acerbic comment,

Our visitor is one of those international Jews who do their race the disservice of helping non-Germans to understand Hitlerism. They make a habit of stirring up class and political hatreds. But their revolutionary principles don't impel them to take risks. Kisch was among the first to bolt from the Nazi menace. His challenges to tyranny have been delivered since from countries like our own, where the political game is played according to rules.<sup>31</sup>

Fitzgerald perceptively noted the irony of the (widely alleged but erroneous) fact that the founder of the *Bulletin*, J. F. Archibald, was himself of Jewish extraction.<sup>32</sup>

The other medium of anti-Semitic thought detected by Fitzgerald was the *Sydney Morning Herald*, where a somewhat scurrilous attempt was made to link Kisch with the Governor-General. It was reported that Kisch had appealed to the Governor-General to grant a remission of the court sentence which had been imposed on him and that the Attorney-General would advise the Governor-General to grant the request. It was suggested also that Kisch would abandon appeal proceedings against his conviction.<sup>33</sup> As the Governor-General at the time was Sir Isaac Isaacs there existed inevitably an implication that Kisch was seeking special consideration from a fellow Jew. According to Fitzgerald's account, Kisch's solicitors issued denials and the institution of proceedings against the paper was discussed. The Governor-General was prevented by the traditions and etiquette of office from

expressing any view, though presumably he would have been as eager to disassociate himself from Kisch as Kisch was to disassociate himself from the King's representative.<sup>34</sup> Two days later the *Herald* published a report according to which Kisch had denied 'the statement of the Acting Federal Attorney-General (Senator Brennan) that he (Kisch) or his supporters had initiated negotiations to enable him to leave the Commonwealth before his appeals were heard. In the first place, the appeals were initiated by a High Court judge, who said that as he was willing to leave Australia, the Commonwealth would agree to his departure.'<sup>35</sup>

Kisch in his account makes only very brief mention of this incident, though he is scathing in his treatment of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which he compares with the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the official organ of the Nazi Party.<sup>36</sup> As for the *Bulletin*, he accuses it of becoming 'anti-Semitic in its desire to add a new note to the campaign; but so as not to offend its Jewish subscribers, it invokes the race of the "International Jews", whose only representative for the moment is — you've guessed it! — our man himself.'<sup>37</sup>

The observations both Kisch and Fitzgerald make regarding the anti-Semitism engendered by the Kisch visit help to confirm an interesting point which Paul Bartrop has made about Australian attitudes to Jews. There was a strong tendency in the inter-war period to draw a clear distinction between Australian Jews and foreign Jews. As Bartrop puts it:

Native-born Jews were admired and accepted by most citizens; foreign Jews were not. It must be reiterated, therefore, that while Australia was not primarily an anti-Semitic society, the peculiar brand of xenophobia it developed after World War I led to the emergence of anti-Semitic attitudes which were specifically directed at foreign Jews seeking (or obtaining) entry to the Commonwealth.<sup>38</sup>

Kisch of course was not seeking permanent residency in Australia, as many other European Jews were at this time. Nevertheless, the existence of this clear distinction between Australian Jews and others is helpful in explaining why many Australians were eager to place the allegedly subversive Kisch in the category of 'International Jew'. The cold response of the Australian Jewish community to the Kisch visit, as illustrated in particular by the above-cited letter to the *Bulletin* by Sir Daniel Levy, suggests that many Australian Jews also were happy that this distinction should continue to be made. If any particular ethnic group took exception to the circumstances surrounding the Kisch visit, it was the Scots, not the Jews.

As a final, conciliatory note in this discussion of Kisch's relationship to Jews, it is worth pointing out that Kisch appears to have rekindled an interest in the Jewish faith in the last years of his life. Having spent the bulk of World War Two in Mexico, Kisch returned to his native Prague shortly after the war. An Australian acquaintance of Kisch by the name of Howard Daniel recalls visiting him in Prague. There Kisch had explained to him that his family 'had always been prominent in the Jewish community in Prague. He was a direct descendant of the *Golem* rabbi.' Daniel goes so far as to claim that in 1948, the year of his death, Kisch 'was first of all a Jew, and proud of Jewish culture'.<sup>39</sup> It has also been claimed that Kisch at this time was honorary president of the Prague Jewish community.<sup>40</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Drusilla Modjeska, *Exiles at Home, Australian Women Writers 1925-1945*, London, Sydney, 1981, p. 100.
2. A. T. Yarwood, 'Lessons of the Kisch Case', *Hemisphere* vol. 28, no. 2, September-October 1983, 98-102, p. 99. The Act defined a prohibited immigrant as, 'Any person declared by the Minister for the Interior to be in his opinion, from information received from the government of the United Kingdom or from any other part of the British Dominions or from any foreign government, through

- official or diplomatic channels, undesirable as an inhabitant of, or visitor to, the Commonwealth.'
3. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
  4. Egon Erwin Kisch, transl. John Fisher and Irene and Kevin Fitzgerald, *Australian Landfall*, Melbourne, 1969 (1937), p. 29.
  5. For these and other biographical details see Egon Erwin Kisch, *Nichts ist erregender als die Wahrheit, Reportagen aus vier Jahrzehnten*, vol. 2, Cologne, 1979, pp. 283–288. For further biographical information see Ken Salter, 'Egon Kisch: A Biographical Outline', *Labour History*, no. 36, May 1979, 94–103. Yarwood also supplies evidence that Kisch was a Party member. Yarwood, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
  6. On this and other judicial intricacies of the Kisch visit see especially Phillip Thorne's pamphlet *How the Kisch-Griffin Ban Was Smashed*, Sydney, 1935.
  7. For the text of the speech, see A. F. Howells, *Kisch's Censored Speech, What They Prevented Kisch from Saying*, Melbourne, 1934, pp. 14–8.
  8. The Irish-born New Zealand delegate to the anti-war congress, Gerald Griffin, had on November 3 been forbidden entry on the basis of his inability to pass a dictation test in Dutch. He had, however, been able to later sneak into Australia in disguise and under an assumed name, and spent some time with Kisch.
  9. Kisch, *Australian Landfall*, p. 104. Griffin received the same sentence.
  10. *Ibid.*, 87–8.
  11. Quoted in Yarwood, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
  12. Kisch, *Australian Landfall*, p. 115.
  13. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
  14. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
  15. See Judah Waten's review of the 1969 edition of *Australian Landfall* in the *Age*, 27 September 1969, p. 15.
  16. Egon Kisch, 'Letter to Bertha Laidler', 19 March 1935. Bertha Walker Papers, Box 1, State Library of Victoria. Quoted in D. Carter, *Judah Waten: the Avant-Garde Moment*, unpublished draft of a biography, 1990. Bertha Laidler was a well-known CPA activist.
  17. Judah Waten, 'When Egon Kisch jumped ship', *Age*, 27 September 1969, p. 15.
  18. Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985, p. 102.
  19. *Hebrew Standard*, 23 November 1934, p. 4.
  20. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1934, p. 4.
  21. Howells, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
  22. Kisch, *Australian Landfall*, pp. 51, 47–8.
  23. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
  24. Julian Smith (pseudonym of Tom Fitzgerald), *On the Pacific Front, The Adventures of Egon Kisch in Australia*, Sydney, 1936, p. 147.
  25. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
  26. *Bulletin*, 19 December 1934, p. 8 (Mis-)quoted in Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
  27. *Bulletin*, 2 January 1935, p. 9. Quoted in Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
  28. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
  30. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
  31. *Bulletin*, 6 March 1935, p. 9. Quoted in Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 150–1.
  32. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
  33. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 1935, p. 12. Quoted in Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
  34. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
  35. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 February 1935, p. 10.
  36. Kisch, *Australian Landfall*, pp. 135, 115.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 114. Kisch in his book repeatedly refers to himself as 'our man'.
  38. Paul Bartrop, "'Good Jews' and 'Bad Jews': Australian perceptions of Jewish migrants and refugees, 1919–1939", in W. D. Rubinstein (ed.), *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987, 169–84, p. 182.
  39. Howard Daniel, 'Egon Remembered. Egon Erwin Kisch: a Comedian of the Revolution', *Overland*, no. 110, March 1988, 48–54, p. 54.
  40. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 10, Jerusalem: Keter, 1972, p. 1062.

## ECHOES AND RESONANCES OF *ACTION FRANÇAISE* ANTI-SEMITISM IN EARLY ISSUES OF THE AUSTRALIAN *CATHOLIC WORKER*

Colin Thornton-Smith

As B.A. Santamaria tells it in his autobiography, the *Australian Catholic Worker*,<sup>1</sup> launched on 1 February 1936, was largely the product of the *Campion Society*, a study group of young Catholic laymen, many of them university students, formed in 1931 as a result of the realisation that they were ill-equipped to defend the values of their faith in open debate.<sup>2</sup> This would have been at a time when the Catholic Church in Australia was still predominantly Irish in character, with strong folk memories of the fight for sheer survival against centuries of overt persecution, and an awareness in the present of covert discrimination. Conviction of belonging to 'the one true faith' could lead easily to triumphalism, and the generally subordinate role of Catholics in a predominantly 'WASP-ish' society to feelings of injustice and defensiveness. Economic and social advancement, in so far as that was possible during the difficult Depression years, had been through the Catholic education system, with the issue of financing for this itself a bone of contention, but then intellectual survival required more than the apologetics learnt at school. Through the *Campion Society*, these young men discovered that 'they were the heirs not merely of a religious apologetic but of a complete intellectual system with a philosophy, a theology, a history, a set of social and political principles [ . . . ].'<sup>3</sup>

The dominant lay mentor of the *Campions*, as they were called, was until about 1934 the late D.G.M. Jackson, who came to Australia with the special cachet of conversion to Catholicism, the prestige of service as a British army officer, a B.A. and M.A. in history (though not, as has been thought, from either Oxford or Cambridge),<sup>4</sup> and some competence in languages which enabled him to keep abreast of developments in Europe and particularly in France. The French Third Republic, beset by various financial and political scandals generated largely by its inherent constitutional weaknesses, was under constant attack by the *Action Française* movement, which advocated restoration of the monarchy in a sort of corporate state with a special role reserved for the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup> Such a programme interested Jackson, catering as it did for his romantic, indiscriminating royalism and anti-democratic conservatism which saw society as threatened by ideals of egalitarianism and secularism.<sup>6</sup>

Another foundation *Campion* with a great enthusiasm for *Action Française* was Frank Quaine, then a well-read student at the Teachers' College and Melbourne University's Department of French, where either coincidentally or thanks to his communicating this enthusiasm, several fellow-students also became interested.<sup>7</sup> Quaine was to win the Mollison Scholarship for overseas study in 1934, with his imminent departure and skill at debating being celebrated by a special debate in which as a one-man team he defended the notion 'That Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler are all tarred with the same brush' against 'R. Santa Maria' for Mussolini, D. Aaronsen for Stalin, and S.T. Ingwersen (another *Campion* and future foundation member of the *CW* for Hitler. Quaine lost, possibly because his heart was not in

attacking Fascism as much as B.A. Santamaria's was at that stage in defending it, but during the debate, and in a subsequent letter to the student newspaper *Farrago*<sup>8</sup>, he declared his faith in 'Maurrasism' and showed how Action Française's royalist platform, on the face of it so remote from local preoccupations, could be applied to Australia. He claimed that if one of the English princes were put on the throne in Australia with autocratic powers, one would soon see the country pull out of the Depression. This was hardly likely to appeal to his fellows, largely of Irish descent, but Action Française's critique of parliamentary democracy certainly did, because to them the British version had been the instrument of Protestant capitalism and colonial oppression. Quaine saw Communism, Nazism and Fascism, whose respective victims were Kulaks, Jews and Catholics, as equally imbecilic products of the nineteenth century, materialistic and democratic in so far as they all claimed to appeal to the common man, and all 'Work States' like capitalist democracy. He did not mention Action Française's attitude towards Jews.

Quaine's activity in the *Campions* does not seem to have lasted very long, and he was already in France before the *CW* was so much as mooted, but his constant involvement in university debates, his breadth of reading and knowledge of French meant that he exerted a considerable influence on *Campions* at the university and in particular on those studying French.

The main European intellectual mentor of the *Campions*, as later of the *CW*, was undoubtedly Hilaire Belloc, who offered something more substantial than the brilliant polemical paradoxes of G.K. Chesterton, and more accessible than the long-sighted Catholic syntheses of Christopher Dawson. *The Servile State* (1912) made an original critique of capitalism, while his historical works, marked by a belligerent and refreshing Catholic revisionism, provided reassurance to young Catholic intellectuals in a milieu which was largely Protestant, British and Empire-orientated in historical interpretation, challenged mainly by incipient Marxism.

Against this, however, Belloc's Catholicism was excessively Eurocentric and his polemical stance thoroughly triumphalist, so that in all good faith he was capable of monstrous propositions which caused serious offence. This was no more the case, perhaps, than in *The Jews* (1922), with its opening thesis that 'The Jews are an alien body within the society which they inhabit',<sup>9</sup> its identification of Bolshevism as 'a Jewish movement', and its criticism of the 'dependence of our politicians on wealthy Jews' and of the Jewish habits of secrecy and attitudes of superiority. All this is hardly mitigated, in some cases even aggravated, by his condemnation of disingenuousness in dealings with Jews ('we conceal from the Jew our real feelings'), of failure to mix with Jews, and anti-Semitism (dangerous in its accumulation of 'facts' which Jews have answered with nothing but ridicule). While very sceptical of Zionism, Belloc sees the solution to the Jewish problem as lying in a full recognition of separate nationality; however, this should not be expressed in 'laws and regulations on *our* side' until it has appeared in 'our morals and social conventions'; meanwhile, 'the suggestion of separate institutions coming from the Jewish side should be welcomed'. Obviously well satisfied with his equitableness and charity, Belloc concludes by saying 'Peace to Israel'.

In 1913, with less circumspection in a letter to a friend, he had advocated a separate status and statute for the Jews and rejected a policy of absorption. On this a biographer comments:

Now this was the policy of *apartheid* and it reeked of the Action Française. Belloc was too humane and reasonable a man to express himself with the crudity of Maurras and his disciples; he was too careful

with words to deliver himself to their vile invective. But the solution was the same and it was contradicted by the facts of common observation.<sup>10</sup>

The reek of Action Française was more than coincidental. In both there was a tendency to see Protestants, Jews, politicians and Germans as involved in some gigantic conspiracy against the real values of the nation. Belloc showed sympathy for Action Française while its newspaper of the same name commented favourably on him and his thought on a number of occasions. As Andre Bordeaux points out, what ultimately distinguished them was that while Action Française believed that the Church should serve the purpose of politics, Belloc believed that politics should serve the purposes of the Church.<sup>11</sup>

Given the background outlined, with Jackson offering conservative opinions on a whole range of issues and a critique of parliamentary democracy with all the authoritativeness of a mature expert from overseas, and endorsing many of the ideas of Belloc, who in turn seemed to add a solidly Catholic intellectual mandate to what may have come from a distorted and simplistic theology in justification of a special attitude towards the Jews and of lumping them together with other potential enemies of the Church and nation, it is not so surprising that some of the earliest members of the CW should have shown an interest in either Action Française, or its less compromising Belgian counterpart, the Rexist movement, according to one report,<sup>12</sup> or the more specifically Australian nationalist movement, Australia First.<sup>13</sup> These bodies had in common an extremism impatient of the normal processes of politics, especially as practised in parliamentary democracies, a belief in the possibility of national salvation or regeneration offered by a movement and its leader, and a resentment of covert control or subversion of society by specific groups: Bolsheviks, capitalists, freemasons, who could all, incongruously, be found working hand-in-glove with Jews.

What is surprising, however, is that the interest in Action Française was maintained despite the fact that both the body and its newspaper had been under the most solemn ban of the Catholic Church since the end of 1926. In 1910, Pius X had been quick to condemn the 'Sillon', a body of young French Catholics of all classes which tended to absolutize democracy as the only political path and to become politicized in a way which removed it from effective ecclesiastical influence; he had been slower in condemning Action Française, given its enormous popularity among Catholics, and a document eventually banning it in 1914 was not to be promulgated in view of the misunderstandings it would cause with the outbreak of World War One.

In retrospect the subsequent delay seems inexplicable, as Maurras had made no secret of his attitude towards Christianity and, be it noted, of the essentially anti-Semitic rationale for it. He was an atheist for most of his life, and the basic principle by which he operated was 'politique d'abord' (politics first), meaning primarily that political considerations must take precedence over economic ones, but also that they justify all sorts of means and compromises. Thus, one fundamental plank in his policy was that the Catholic Church, although pernicious and contemptible because of its Jewish origins and beliefs, had nevertheless gained sufficient of the virtues of Latin civilization through its long contact with Rome, to become an essential element of a properly governed France along with the monarchy.<sup>14</sup> It was the Church's unwillingness to be put to the service of a specific political programme, and to see its officials abused when it acted otherwise, which ultimately led to the ban. The preliminary manoeuvring was as complicated as the situation was delicate, but the result was that on 20 December 1926, Pius XI forbade Cath-



olics membership of Action Française under pain of excommunication, meaning that those persisting were to be denied the sacraments of the Church and in the absence of recantation before death, the right of religious burial. Nine days later, *Action Française* was placed on the now defunct *Index Libris Expurgatoribus*, meaning that without prior permission, a Catholic would commit mortal sin by reading it.<sup>15</sup> Naturally Action Française perceived the ban as an act of gross betrayal and ingratitude by a previously friendly body which it had always defended and held in the highest regard, while there were acute crises of conscience for many French Catholics who had identified Maurras' politics, anti-Semitism included, with the cause of the Church.

With the exception of Denys Jackson, the future Champions would have been too young in 1926 to understand what the ban was about, but in the intervening years up to 1931 and then to the emergence of the CW in 1936, the Melbourne diocesan weekly, the *Advocate*, contained many references to the matter which would have made clear the background to Action Française's relationship with the Church and the nature and scope of the papal ruling.<sup>16</sup>

By the time the Champions were established, there had been available in Melbourne, apart from material in the Catholic press and what may have existed in personal libraries, three works which clearly outlined the reasons for the ban. Readily to hand in the Central Catholic Library from March 1928 was the very full study by Denis Gwynn, *The 'Action Française' Condemnation* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1928); more unexpectedly, in the then Victorian Public Library since later the same year were the brief outline edited by Leo Ward, *The Condemnation of the 'Action Française'* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1928), and *Pourquoi Rome a parlé* (Paris: Spes, 1927), a series of essays on the ban by its editor P. Doncoeur and others, including Jacques Maritain.

That Champions were interested in studying the Action Française controversy, had some admiration for Maurras and Daudet, and were aware of the ban, is evidenced by a draft programme of talks with reading guides in the hand of Gerard Heffey, then Champion secretary, who was to become one of the founders of the CW. The last topic on the list, 'Gallicanism in "Action Française"', has a wide-ranging guide of French and English titles, but is followed by the note:

N.B. I believe D. Gwynn has published a book on the Gallican controversy w. Maurras but Quaine tells me it is both poor & unjust. Maurras and Daudet have answered their accusers rather brilliantly. I think — by the way — that we should keep off this controversy until some of us have had a chance of reading it up seriously. I myself submit, of course, but I feel very sorry for Maurras himself, and have a feeling that certain Catholic authorities have not treated him with consideration.<sup>17</sup>

As we shall see, Quaine was hardly an objective judge on Action Française matters, but his enthusiasm was outweighed by Gerard Heffey's caution, so that in the subsequent programme for January-June 1933 in the hand of Frank Maher, the then leader of the Champions, and in the ensuing typescript of this, the contentious topic is replaced by 'The Growth of Rationalism in France'.<sup>18</sup> The leaders of the Champions were clearly unwilling both to announce any consideration of Action Française before a full study of the issues involved, and to expose the Society to any implication of disregarding the ban.

The extent to which the Champions were later able to study and in some cases endorse Maurras' analysis of the shortcomings of parliamentary democracy without being affected by its concomitant anti-Semitism doubtless varied from individual to individual, but it must be pointed out that among them there was a distinct strand of philo-Semitism or at very least of willingness to engage Jews in

discussion of beliefs. Kevin Kelly, despite being a part-time student in full-time employment, was extremely active in university debates and in speaking for the Campions. In 1931 he led a group of four of them to give talks and engage in discussions with members of a body called the 'Young Jews' [JYPA] in an assembly hall attached to the St Kilda Road synagogue in Melbourne.<sup>19</sup>

The CW was begun largely thanks to the dynamism, persuasiveness and incipient propagandist skills of B.A. Santamaria who, as far as he could recall, wrote most of the first issue and 'a somewhat large proportion of the writing for the next eighteen months'.<sup>20</sup> In his role of initial anonymous editor he launched the first issue with 'We fight', a piece of triumphalist rhetoric which claims that only the Catholic Church has the answer to the social problem, the freeing of the worker from constant anxiety about his livelihood. Communism and its brother, Capitalism, are rejected as materialistic and enslaving, as against the social doctrines of the Church, the instilling of which into the masses requires reform at the individual level: 'Until men become living Christians there will be no solution to the social problem'. The fight of the CW to achieve this is identified first with the struggle of the Church in other parts of the world, against Stalin and Hitler, the Mexican government and the Chinese Communists, and the 'herd of bigots in Scotland and Northern Ireland'; beyond that is the fight of the Church over two thousand years, which it has always won.

The rest of the issue is most mundane, but continues the metaphor of armed conflict as it juxtaposes the struggle of the Church in other parts of the world, most notably Mexico, with local labour issues.<sup>21</sup> On page 1, the Seamen's Union is backed against the Lyons government, despite the manipulation of their strike by Communists, and on page 2 is an item headed 'Gaol Sweat-shop Owners. Imprisonment only fit punishment for sweaters'. This reports the successful prosecution by the Clothing Trades Union of one Adler, owner of La Rose Manufacturing Co. of Little Bourke Street, for failure to record hours worked, underpayment of workers, and failure to pay monies due on termination of employment. The CW regretted the silence of the daily press on the matter, which, together with the employer's ability subsequently to dismiss those complaining, meant that there was no real sanction against sweaters practising a system of terrorism against defenceless workers; the proper deterrent was gaol.<sup>22</sup>

The article, vehement though it is, and hinting at double standards on the part of a press which is 'chock full of uncertain atrocities committed by the Italians in Abyssinia but silent on the ones committed against Australian workers', is unexceptionable. Adler is mentioned not as a Jew but as a sweater.

Less so is a small item which appeared on page 3 of the second issue (29 February 1936). No more than a filler in size, but set in the middle of the page and in bold type, it reads:

He was beaten up by the Royalists.  
Bad luck for Baron Léon Blum,  
Frenchman, nobleman, millionaire,  
factory owner, wage-slasher, sweater  
and leader of the Socialist-Communist  
Popular Front, at present misruling France.  
But was it any wonder?

The partial source of this item was the various reports which had appeared in the Melbourne dailies of an attack upon Léon Blum, leader of the Popular Front, in Paris on 13 February. It is the other sources and apparent local additions which merit some scrutiny.

The implicit condoning of political violence has an essential connection with the other sources used, and in one matter misunderstood, while additional 'coded' information relying on the item about Adler (a factor owner, wage-slasher and sweater) obliquely informs Australian readers of Blum's Jewishness, in case they had not realised it from his name.

In fact Blum was not a nobleman, not a millionaire, not a factory owner and therefore not in a position to be either a wage-slasher or a sweater. Nor was the Popular Front misruling or even ruling France at the time, as the elections bringing it to power did not take place until April, and it did not assume office until May. Presumably, the claim that it was doing so, which could not have been the result of misunderstanding or ignorance, given the press reports, was meant to heighten the effect of the deadly combination of Capitalist, Socialist-Communist and Jew. Otherwise, the implication is that though not yet in government, the Popular Front was already wielding an occult destructive power.

The reporting of the incident in the Melbourne dailies varied slightly in volume, emphasis and order of presentation from paper to paper, with the *Sun* (15 February 1936, pp. 3,8) giving the shortest account, and the *Herald* (14 February 1936, pp. 1,7) the most detailed, but the common elements of wording and coverage are such that all four must have depended upon the same news service, which however only the *Herald* actually names as 'The Herald Cable Service'.

The information which the CW would have gained from the reports is as follows: Léon Blum, leader of the French Socialists, was being driven away from Parliament by Deputy Monnet and his wife when their car was blocked by the funeral procession of Bainville (given as 'Vainville' or something similar by all four journals), a Royalist historian. Members of the procession recognised Blum, dragged him from the car, and began beating him with loaded canes. Workmen from a nearby building site rescued him; his temporal artery had been cut, necessitating a visit to a hospital, but he was deemed not to have been seriously hurt. M. Monnet and his wife were also cut by fragments of glass.

Reaction by both police and Parliament was energetic. After a skirmish with some Action Française members returning to their headquarters, police raided these and found there Blum's hat and tie, and an amateur film of the attack; the offices were then sealed. In Parliament, various deputies expressed outrage at the incident and howled down a Rightist member who rose to speak. Subsequently, Socialist leaders called on the Premier Sarraut, asking for immediate action. At an emergency meeting of Cabinet, the President ordered the dissolution of Action Française and its related bodies, and proceedings were begun against the nominal co-owners of *Action Française*, Maurras and Daudet (strangely named as 'De Lest' or 'Delest' by three of the papers), for incitement to murder on the basis of already published material. (This included calls to lynch Blum, to 'shoot him in the back', and to slit his throat 'with a kitchen knife').<sup>23</sup> The first reaction of Maurras was to claim that the funeral procession had been authorised by the police, yet Blum had attempted to break through it and mentioned *lèse-majesté* when confronted, while other Royalists claimed that the car's occupants had asserted parliamentary privilege. Two of the accounts (*Sun* and *Argus*) report that when arrested as one of the attackers, Jean Lecomte said he was no longer a member of Action Française or its student arm, the 'Camelots du Roi'.

Only one paper, the *Herald*, gave any background information about Charles Maurras and Léon Daudet, mentioning their involvement in a Royalist, largely intellectual movement against French democracy. All but the *Sun* mentioned that

Blum, although wealthy, was the leader of the French Socialists, was much caricatured because of his appearance, and in recent times was protected by a close police guard over his flat. If only by their headlining, all four stressed the seriousness of the incident and the resultant political tension. It is significant that, obviously dependent upon overseas news services for their information, none of the papers explained the reason for the particular anger of Action Française against Blum: that in addition to his leadership of the Popular Front and strong commitment to the parliamentary democracy of the French Republic, he was a Jew and thus had been the most prominent target of the rabid anti-Semitism, expressed in amazingly vile terms, which was an integral part of Action Française policy constantly outlined in its newspaper.

Subsequent accounts by historians and biographers bring a few slight corrections to discrepancies in the contemporary reports and incidentally expose the CW's naive acceptance of Action Française material. Thus, it was a vein and not an artery which was cut on Blum's head, hence the deeming that he was not badly hurt despite the need for several stitches. The wound itself was caused by 'a sharp object torn from the vehicle'.<sup>24</sup> The attribution to him of great wealth shows that the Action Française's 'repeated innuendoes that Blum was a rich, hypocritical millionaire',<sup>25</sup> echoed by other right wing newspapers, had become accepted truth for the press.<sup>26</sup> The discrepancy between the blaming of the attack upon Action Française and the report that the one so-far identified assailant stated at the time of his arrest that he was no longer a member of that body or the Camelots du Roi is reconciled by Weber. On the Royalists' reaction to the dissolution of their movement he comments:

[...] the royalists were the more outraged because the men who attacked Blum were part of a group that had been expelled from the movement not long before, who followed the funeral unattached to any Action Française delegation. Although the extent of responsibility was never altogether clarified, the Action Française was held accountable for having created the kind of situation in which violence of this sort could happen in the street.<sup>27</sup>

In any event, members of the movement gathered various of Blum's possessions and took them back to their headquarters as trophies after the incident, while proclaiming for public consumption that it had been 'a put-up job, a deliberate provocation, a plot of the police, the Bolsheviks, and the British'.<sup>28</sup> Somewhat inconsistently with this, *Action Française* claimed the next day that the attack was a spontaneous reaction of the crowd incensed at being called hoodlums by Blum and that he had been rescued from serious injury by the movement's members.<sup>29</sup>

Lacouture relates that during the raid on Action Française's headquarters which preceded its dissolution, 'the police found on Maurras' desk a cup filled with coins with the inscription "Product of the sale of Baron Blum's glasses"',<sup>30</sup> which provides not only graphic evidence of the satisfaction which Maurras felt at the attack, and his private endorsement of it, but an explanation of why the CW took Blum to be an aristocrat. 'Baron' was simply one of *Action Française*'s less offensive standard ways of referring to Blum, as one might call someone metaphorically a 'mogul' or a 'czar'.<sup>31</sup> Coming from a royalist organisation it is ironical, with implications that Blum is a caricature of or a traitor to genuine aristocracy, and is perhaps intended to recall the Barons Rothschild, the only Jewish aristocrats of great wealth who rapidly spring to mind.

At the very least then, the writer of the item must have had access to prior reports of Action Française's attitude to Blum, if only by word of mouth, and without

actually saying so, he endorsed that body's recourse to verbal abuse, and as far as he knew, physical violence, which were partly anti-Semitic in inspiration.

There is another aspect of the incident in Paris and the circumstances of Bainville's funeral certainly not touched upon by the press, which further explains the angry mood of members of the procession and renders the item even more unjustifiable. As Bainville was well-known as one of the intellectual leaders of *Action Française*, and apparently had not made any form of recantation acceptable to the Church authorities, who according to *Action Française* would have been satisfied with a purely formal and posthumous recantation by the family on his behalf, a church funeral ceremony was refused, and the procession to the cemetery had to start from his home.<sup>32</sup> This was seen as one more act of betrayal by a former friend.

Before the CW's comment at the end of February on the incident, the less official Melbourne Catholic weekly, the *Tribune*, carried an item in 'Notes on the News' by its Editor, D.G.M. Jackson. In 'The Royalists and Léon Blum', he invents the analogy of Mr Menzies deliberately driving through a procession of unemployed seamen to suggest that there has been an overreaction on the government's part to the deserved result of Blum's arrogant provocation because he is a Red parliamentarian and supports sanctions against Italy, and that the Republican government is lacking in fair play in dissolving *Action Française* before holding an inquiry. At the same time, whether he was ever in real danger is put in doubt by deliberate misapplication of the report that he was allowed to go home after treatment in hospital.

Jackson's description of Blum simply restates the *Action Française* line:

Léon Blum, the Jewish millionaire-revolutionary, is typical of the alliance between corrupt finance-capitalism and the subversive forces of Marxism, which is a noticeable feature of Europe today. He dominates all the forces in French life most hostile to the Church and the nation; and he has a strangle-hold on the Masonic clique who run the Republic. If France is ever cured of her ills, her first act will be to hound such men from public life.<sup>33</sup>

The parting shot is reserved for the news services which got the great historian Bainville's name wrong, because being of the Right he was not known to them, unlike the Leftist French writers, enemies of faith and morals, usually hailed by the English. There is no mention of the fact that the Royalists involved as well as Bainville belonged to *Action Française* and that this was banned by the Church.

As the second item, 'Royalist Editor Gaoled', in a feature entitled 'Of General Interest', the *Advocate* came to mention the attack on Blum, who 'attempted to drive through the funeral cortege of the late M. Jacques Bainville', only when four months' imprisonment was imposed on Maurras, 'who is one of the most brilliant men in France, a writer of high distinction . . . a man of powerful personality [and] the leader of a movement which has been condemned by the Church'.<sup>34</sup> The third item, headed 'M. Jacques Bainville', outlines the historian's career and mentions his connection with *Action Française* before describing its newspaper as the mouth-piece of Maurras, 'who attempts to exploit religion for political ends' and as having been 'condemned some years ago by the Bishops of France'.<sup>35</sup>

While inaccurate in one respect regarding Blum, vague in others regarding the condemnation and the circumstances of Bainville's funeral and showing considerable regard for Maurras, of whom a photograph is included, the two items may nevertheless be seen as an attempt by the *Advocate* to make the existence of the ban clear while conceding the grounds for local admiration of Maurras.

Some of the shortcomings of these items were remedied in the next issue by a

more substantial editorial comment headed 'The Action Française/Condemned by the Church'.<sup>36</sup> This established a tenuous Australian connection by pointing out that the late Cardinal Ceretti, who when Nuncio in Paris was the subject of Action Française's 'disgraceful slanders' which became one of the direct causes of the Papal ban, had formerly been Apostolic Delegate to Australia. Obviously based on knowledgeable sources, the piece describes Bainville, Maurras and Daudet as the chief propagandists of Action Française and more questionably names the latter two as 'among the greatest figures of modern French literature' before explaining that while Maurras' identification with the scurrilous abuse in *Action Française* had blocked his election to the Académie Française, Bainville's brilliance as an historian and his penetrating critiques of foreign affairs gained him election to it without difficulty. But 'He died excommunicate, on account of the ban on "Action Française"' and a Requiem was not permitted by the diocesan authorities. The prosecution of Maurras and Daudet is seen as thoroughly justified by *Action Française*'s constant incitement to hatred of democratic institutions, its role in fostering the Paris riots (of 6 February 1934) during which the Chamber of Deputies was almost stormed, and its attacks on Briand during negotiation of the Locarno agreement, which Cardinal Ceretti was encouraging. After the Papal ban, the Holy See was abused as 'the agent of German intrigues against France'.

While the seriousness of the ban is now made perfectly clear, on the highly acceptable grounds of Action Française's exploitation of the Church and abuse of the Pope, and while Maurras is shown as deserving of imprisonment for having attacked democracy and fostered civil disorder, it will be noted that Blum has dropped out of sight altogether, and with him it seems, any possibility of mentioning Action Française's anti-Semitism.

Four weeks later in the *Advocate*, D.G.M. Jackson, apparently inaugurating 'As the Earth Turns: Reflections on Topics of the Day' under his customary pen-name of 'Sulla', approaches the Blum incident from a different angle, and very belatedly, so that one wonders whether his response is really to the, for him, unacceptable treatment of it by the *Advocate*, in which he was not now playing the same dominant role as earlier.<sup>37</sup> The first of three subjects commented on (the second being an expression of support for Italy in Abyssinia against lying propaganda) is 'M. Jacques Bainville', whose name the papers could not get right and whose death we would not have heard of at all, such is the English-speaking world's isolation from European intellectual life, 'but for the "fracas" against the Socialist leader, Blum, at his funeral . . .', whereas if a Leftist had died, it would have been different.<sup>38</sup> He concludes his piece with high praise of Bainville's historical and political writings, and regret at his allegiance to Action Française.

For Jackson, then, what he reduces to some sort of hubbub surrounding Blum has become the unworthy means of informing the English-speaking world (though surely he is extrapolating here from the Melbourne press reports) of the death of a very great historian. His *a priori* claim to knowledge of what would and would not have happened in other circumstances wins both ways. What is not due to the English-speaking press' cultural isolationism would come from its being dominated by Left-wing forces, which looks very much like code for the old claim of Jewish control of the press.

It seems more than coincidence that in a book review on the first page of the same issue of the *Advocate*, an explicit version of the same claim, along with much of Belloc's typology of the Jews, is expressed by 'Historicus', as one of the pen-names of the litterateur P.I. O'Leary. The review of *The Yellow Spot: The Extermination of*



*the Jews in Germany*, with an Introduction by the Bishop of Durham (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1936), begins most promisingly: 'No condemnation is too great for the persecution of a minority by a majority, whether because of racial, religious or political hostility and hatred. That the Jews in Germany today are the victims of such a persecution abundant evidence proves'.<sup>39</sup> However, with the third sentence, the rot sets in: 'And so well-organised and influential are Jews in journalism in many lands, that outside Germany the whole world has been made to hear of the sufferings of their compatriots inside the Reich'.<sup>40</sup> The 'Jew' is claimed to be unequalled as a propagandist and 'Jewry' to be in direct and widespread control of the press. Hitler's charges against the Jews are outlined and apparently endorsed in part, via the suggestion that he could have punished those guilty of subversion of the state without such extreme and universal measures. But it seems that the German situation is not a specific one, as 'The Jew has always presented a problem',<sup>41</sup> his religion, traditions and character making him constitute a class apart that does not mix and mingle, while the acquisitiveness, business acumen and perseverance of Jews as a race invariably bring them wealth and with it, power. The Jew can be generous but he is more often a 'sweater' (that word again!). The intellectual brilliance of the Jews means that they become leaders in finance, literature and the arts, but they are also found leading revolutions in Russia and Spain, and are to be seen 'on the highest seats of the judiciary, on banking directorates, and in commerce and trade, calculating, ruthless, dominant'.<sup>42</sup> Whether it is envy, as the Jews claim, that provokes pogroms, their treatment in Germany is totally unjustified, containing as it does a sort of official sadism and indecent spirit.

'Historicus' ends his review with the reflection that while many books and pamphlets have been published in London about Nazi persecution of the Jews, not one has been published by Victor Gollancz or anyone else about the bitter, brutal and murderous persecution of the Catholic minority in Belfast;<sup>43</sup> were such a book to be written, he wonders whether the Bishop of Durham would write as condemnatory an introduction. But he knows the answer, for his final words are 'I wonder!' With the cry of 'What about the Irish?' the point seems to be that as the two cases are commensurate or even equivalent, the whole publishing game is somehow rigged, we can guess by whom, and the Anglican Bishop of Durham is biased, we can guess why.

When the CW ultimately came to mention the ban on Action Française, it was almost incidentally in a piece which was both reactive and derivative. In a reply to a claim by the *Postal Advocate* that Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris, had celebrated a requiem for 'Fascists' killed in the riots of 6 February 1934, but had refused to preside at a service for the militant workers killed in the subsequent revolutionary demonstrations (i.e. the protest marches and demonstrations of 12 February in which four demonstrators were killed), the CW says that the latter belonged to the 'so-called "Christian" Socialists', an organisation condemned by the Church as irreligious, membership of which involved excommunication. 'Those members who were killed died excommunicate, and for the excommunicate the Church has no requiem'.<sup>44</sup> Any attempt to see this as showing that the Church sides with the employer against the worker is contradicted by the fact that 'the same sentence has been passed against the most "Fascist" party in France — the "Action Française"',<sup>45</sup> with the result that Jacques Bainville, 'the most illustrious French historian of the century, but a member of the group, died without the Sacraments'.<sup>46</sup> This latter information seems to derive from the *Advocate*, though it is more categorically specific as to Bainville's rank as a historian and unshriven passing.

The reply was a most inappropriate way of censuring the *Postal Advocate* for what seems to have been an extraordinarily gratuitous piece of sectarianism in the journal of a postal workers' union, as the demonstration of the Church's even-handed justice is based on several pieces of misinformation. The French hierarchy showed a great deal of sympathy for the rioters of 6 February, with Cardinal Verdier giving 'permission for a religious funeral for members of the Action Française League killed in the fighting'<sup>47</sup> and designating 11 February as the day of special Masses for the victims, of whom he said: 'Our children have fallen while demanding a more honest and more beautiful France! Their desire, sealed by their blood, will be granted. We promise it to them'.<sup>48</sup> However, it was his presiding at the anniversary memorial Mass for the fallen on 6 February 1935 which provoked an approach to him by the leaders of a small body called the Federation of Christian Socialists,<sup>49</sup> suggesting that this apparent solidarity with political organisations of the Right and endorsement of French Fascism's resort to violence should be counterbalanced by his presiding at a service for the militant workers who fell on 12 February 1934. After taking counsel, the Cardinal understandably told them that he could not grant their request. Regardless of whether partiality had been shown to the Right, he certainly should not have jumped through that particular hoop presented by a body whose good faith was suspect. Obviously this group would have fallen under the general ban covering the Socialists and Communists, while *Terre Nouvelle*, after condemnation by the French hierarchy in February 1936, was put on the *Index* . . . in June. It seems unlikely that the CW would have heard of this more specific ban in time for its 6 June issue, which in any case misstates the reason for the Cardinal's refusal. There is nothing to suggest that the four victims of 12 February had anything to do with the Christian Socialists, and that was not the basis on which this body was trying to mount a stunt for its own purposes.

While the CW had now identified Action Française as a body under papal ban, the spirit of its anti-Semitism seemed to survive in the paper. Just as it had seen fit to endorse the attack on Blum, but had failed to make any reference to a subsequent report describing the enormous march through the streets of Paris on 16 February,<sup>50</sup> so the issue of 4 July 1936 made the coding for Jew in reference to Blum even more easily decipherable. In a front-page item headed 'Direct Action by Workers/Despite French Millionaire Government', he is referred to as 'the lion of socialist journalism . . ., worth about a million, made in the clothing trade'. It is safe to assume that this last new detail, identifying the product of non-millionaire Blum's non-existent factory, did not arise from stretching a point about the fact that in partnership with a brother, Blum's father had become wealthy through a retail outlet for 'ribbons and velvets, silks, tulles, and crapes, fashionable articles'<sup>51</sup> in a fairly low-class Paris street. Given the long-standing prominence of Jews in the Melbourne clothing trade, such that 'By 1845, twenty-five of the forty-seven draper's shops in Melbourne were owned by Jews',<sup>52</sup> its import is obvious enough, and the more so in the light of the earlier item about the prosecution of Adler. Once again, the struggle of workers overseas for wage justice is seen to be reflected in Australia, with the Jewish clothing manufacturer the common villain.<sup>53</sup>

To put this naively reactive yet covert anti-Semitism into perspective, one must point out that it was of a piece with other CW responses or lack of them to developments in Europe reported in the daily press. The most striking instance, given that it comes soon after the Blum attack and again involves Paris and race-related issues, is the lack of comment on a feature entitled 'Life in Paris Today' in the *Age* of

22 February 1936. The first of its three parts reports on the attempts of Right-wing law students to boycott lectures of a professor who had acted as adviser to Haile Selassie and supported the Abyssinian cause at the Council of the League of Nations, and thus placed himself in opposition to the 'French "Fascist" party, enrolled under the banner of a pro-Italian, anti-League and anti-English policy'. The second reports the Fascist weekly *Gringoire's* attack on England for its opposition to Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the subsequent manifesto by '64 intellectuals', led by Maurras and Daudet, protesting that the criticism of Italy was leading to the civilised world being placed at the mercy of a 'handful of savage tribes', and a counter-manifesto signed by some 5,000 writers stressing that the '64' were a tiny minority, and defending English policy. The third concerns a manifesto drawn up by the Roman Catholic writers of France, 'For Justice and Peace', deploring theories of racial inequality as un-Christian. The feature ends with the claim that the two replies to the '64', combined with the making of Fascist paramilitary bodies illegal, has cleared the air and checked the violence of Fascist propaganda. It is a strange familiarity indeed with French Catholic responses to the issues of the day, which can allow this last manifesto to pass unnoticed, yet can endorse an act of political thuggery while drawing out its anti-Semitic implications to suggest that in Australia as in France, the Jew is a threat.<sup>54</sup>

Later the same year, an endorsement of the attack on Blum and of Action Française's policy was to arrive from Frank Quaine in Paris and arouse a sympathetic response in at least one CW member. In a long letter to Farrago (9 July 1936, p. 5), entitled 'On Looking into the Australian Papers', Quaine castigates the Australian press for failing to convey the vital importance of Maurras' brilliant undermining of the basis of the present regime in France and to see in incidents such as the beating up of a deputy 'the impatient evidences of a political revolution, a deliberate disanglicization of political philosophy'. By way of extolling in *machismo* terms the imminent Italian victory in Abyssinia, Quaine warns that if the British cannot learn to abandon economic pragmatism, then there are people in 'Paris, Rome, Berlin and Tokio who can'. The remedy is to learn from the adversary by restoring the notion of the state and giving the Monarchy real power over the City and economic experts. Meanwhile, Commerce students should do four or five years of Classics and a course of Maurras before taking up their specialty.

This provoked 'Two Letters on Quaine's Views' in the following issue (Farrago, 16 July 1936, p. 2), one ironizing at Maurras' lack of genuine political effectiveness, fostering of totalitarian-style political violence and recourse to vile abuse of opponents, and the other warning that Quaine, in advocating recourse to violence and exploitation of base emotions to establish a Fascist state in monarchist guise, is 'playing with perilous stuff' which could well lead to war and anti-Jewish violence.

A fortnight later (Farrago, 30 July 1936, p. 4), Leo Ingwersen, also a French student and like his brother Stan a Champion and foundation member of the CW, replied that 'Strong language is an essential element of French political journalism, and its presence does not indicate that a writer has no impersonal arguments to offer', foresaw dire results from the Popular Front government's socialisation policies, 'unless the deputies manoeuvre a war with Germany', and repudiated the equation of French nationalism with German racist mysticism.

The feeling that persecution of Catholics did not receive the same prominence as persecution of Jews was to be many times expressed in the CW. An early example is

found in the same issue as the 'Baron Blum' item, headed 'Cross or Swastika/Church fights Hitler'. It begins: 'Hitler maltreats the Jews; he puts the Communists in concentration camps. HE SLAYS THE CATHOLICS'. Those slain were three German Catholic Action leaders. The worst was yet to come for the Jews but already it was clear that they were victims as a group, while the very selectivity of the killing, deplorable as it was, of the Catholic leaders, in one case disguised as suicide, showed relative circumspection as against the generalised irrational racism of Hitler's Jewish policy.

To do with France again, an item headed 'French Popular Front — Communist Split' (5 September 1936), reports the defection of Doriot from the French Communist Party and his foundation of the Parti Populaire and comments: 'Many of the new proposals of the Popular Party are entirely in line with Catholic thought'. In fact, the general thrust of the party's policy, opposed to Capitalism and democracy as well as to Communism, and committed to the leadership principle, was such that it was no surprise that it received subsidies from Mussolini and that after the fall of France in 1940 Doriot became the leader of the French Fascists and a thoroughgoing collaborator.

Moving to 1938, year of the *Anschluss* and Munich, we find the April issue lamenting the former, and belatedly castigating Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson for not having accepted the Austro-Hungarian Empire's peace overtures in World War One, leading to dismemberment of the Empire instead of creation of a new state out of Bavaria and Austria, as Clemenceau rejected the emergence of another Catholic country.<sup>55</sup> While lack of action regarding Austria is deplored, it is praised, together with Chamberlain's 'firmness', in the case of Czechoslovakia, whose integrity 'we' may be asked to defend because it is a weapon to prevent the rise of a Catholic state in central Europe; besides which, Benes is a leader of Freemasonry, so that 'These frontiers are not worth the blood of one Australian soldier'.<sup>56</sup> Coincidentally after Munich, French anti-Semites were calling the war which had been temporarily avoided '*la guerre des Juifs*' and it was also regarded as '*la guerre des francs-maçons de Prague*'.<sup>57</sup>

The night of 9–10 November 1938 saw the notorious 'Kristallnacht', subsequently reported in the Melbourne press, along with the statement by Hitler's radio double that 'Every utterance by the Pope is an incitement to Jews throughout the world to agitate against Germany. The Church is making Germany its enemy'.<sup>58</sup> This seems to have led to the smashing of the windows of Cardinal Faulhaber's palace by an excited mob.

The December 1938 CW responded with a quarter-page feature headed 'Degrading racial persecution in Reich. What of Schuschnigg?' which, after an opening paragraph deploring the 'pitiful story' of Germany's latest onslaught on the Jews, and stressing that Catholic doctrine condemns theories of racial superiority, becomes firstly an attack on the press, accused of turning a blind eye to many current events. The logic of the accusation in relation to Kristallnacht betrays some confusion:

Synagogues were aflame. The papers could not see them till they flamed. For years, the press-fed Australian people have probably thought that the Jews in Germany would have lost their religious buildings long ago, so black has the anti-Jewish drive been painted. Yet it transpires that the Jews have synagogues and, in some cities, large emporiums.<sup>59</sup>

In other words, an attitude of: 'Now you tell us that synagogues were aflame, but you could have told us earlier that the Jews did still have them', is coupled with the suggestion that past accounts of persecution of Jews in Germany have been exag-

gerated, as though the press had been crying 'Wolf!' by somehow hinting without stating that synagogues had already been confiscated. The implication is that the Jews have been a far sight better off than the press led one to suppose. One wonders whether the mention of 'emporiums' has something to do with the prominent Myer Emporium in Melbourne, owned by a family of Jewish origin, and in any case why these should be mentioned, with an implicit focussing upon wealthy Jews, when the press had spoken of 'shops and emporiums'<sup>60</sup> and when in fact the vast majority of shopfronts shattered and looted were of small premises belonging to people of modest means like the vast majority of German Jews.

The article then belabours the press for telling little of the persecution of Catholics in Germany and Austria and the burning of churches in Spain accompanied by thousands of deaths compared to the few in Germany, the reason being that 'us Catholics' are not the friends of the papers. President Roosevelt is criticised for not protesting about Turkish atrocities against Christians, the starving of millions of Russians in 1933, the slaughter of clergy in Spain and the persecution of Catholics in Mexico. Moreover, the attention concentrated on the Nazi persecution has meant neglect of the fate of Schuschnigg, betrayed by the European powers and languishing in a concentration camp.

Thus, like the *Advocate* review of *The Yellow Spot* . . . , an item which begins as a clear expression of sympathy and statement of principle is transformed by way of ambivalent comment about the past level of oppression into a protracted grizzle about lack of reportage of persecution of Catholics. Yet strangely, the CW itself had nothing to say about the Nazis' criticism of the Pope on this occasion and the agitation against Cardinal Faulhaber, just as it had missed various opportunities since 1936 to comment on manifestations of Nazi repression against Jews, Protestants, Catholics and indeed any independent-minded German.

It was not until February 1939, exactly three years after the little piece on Blum, that the CW made anything like an *amende honorable* for it, even indirectly in the form of an unqualified condemnation of anti-Semitism not cut across by charges against the press. Here too the process was a derivative and reactive one. Under the heading 'Anti-Semitism/Forbidden to Catholics by Pope/Jews protested about persecution of Catholics', appeared a reprint from the American CW News Service, preceded by a description of anti-Semitism as 'this inhuman and demoralising policy . . . alien to every Catholic instinct, and . . . founded in an essential lack of charity'. There followed a reprint of a protest by the Chief Rabbis of France against persecution of Catholics in Mexico and their expression of gratitude for the stance taken by the eminent leaders of Catholicism against anti-Semitism. As far as one can tell, the reference is to none other than the 'For Justice and Peace' manifesto which went unnoticed by the CW at the time. The publication of the reprint, 'Lest Catholics should think their charitableness is all on one side . . .' would lead one to believe that the CW, which declared its pride in making the noble statement known, and thus performing 'a distinct service to Australians', had never been anything but charitable in its references to Jews. There followed a brief report of a resolution from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, objecting to treatment of Catholics in Mexico, and finally a report of an address by Pius XI, outlining the continuity of Jewish and Christian religious sacrifice, and describing anti-Semitism as 'a movement in which we cannot, as Christians, have any part whatsoever'.

The shortcoming of the CW in misreading for so long the growing tragedy of German Jewry may have been caused partly by a receptivity to Belloc-style typology of Jews, to be found in other sections of the Australian Catholic press,<sup>61</sup> but the

more important factor was its selectively reactive and largely hostile parasitism upon a daily press which Jews were deemed to be covertly manipulating. Much was attributed to Leftist propaganda or anti-Catholic conspiracy, rather than to honestly differing interpretations of events, or to the random muddle and frantic rush to which the press is so prone. How long vestiges of Action Française-style anti-Semitism remained is highly debatable and ultimately unmeasurable, but presumably attitudes would have been healthier without such an early exposure to the essentially anti-Semitic Maurrassian virus, boosted rather than moderated in its effect by the milder Bellocian strain. The application of Action Française anti-Semitism to local affairs through the Blum material is not simply a matter of having accepted a certain characterisation of Blum; it represents an attempt to show Jews in Australia, as elsewhere, behaving in accord with the universally valid 'sweater and unfairly rich' typology.

However, the offending Blum items seem to have been an individual aberration either on the part of the Editor or allowed to stand because of his approval or, at very best, oversight, and were certainly not the product of a considered policy of the paper's Central Committee. Their obtuseness would not have survived collective scrutiny, and their partly covert character tends in any case to make them self-defeating, while the notion of a Jewish control of the international press, leading to highlighting of persecution of Jews, is hardly proved by a news service which mentions neither Action Française's anti-Semitism nor Blum's Jewishness. The CW itself was particularly subject to the results of rush and muddle, having at that stage no paid staff and depending for its material upon the spare-time efforts to meet deadlines by volunteers already taken up with studies or the earning of a living, or both, in a hard economic world. Often, the worse had to appear for lack of the better, which is perhaps one reason why, from as early as the second issue, the Central Committee was to begin the process of lodging editorial responsibility more and more in a small group rather than in an individual.<sup>62</sup>

## EPILOGUE

In October 1937, the position of Editor of the CW was formally replaced by an Editorial Board of three, including B.A. Santamaria, but he left this on becoming Assistant Director of the National Secretariat of Catholic Action, and after some time as an ordinary member of the Central Committee of the paper, relinquished membership by ceasing to attend meetings.<sup>63</sup> Whatever mixture of conflicting demands on his activity and disagreements about editorial approach may then have been involved, the fact is that the CW and he were later to diverge markedly, especially over whether the Church should appear to endorse a particular political line as part of the fight against Communism. In that matter it was in effect the CW's stand which was to be vindicated by a Vatican ruling in 1957, after which the Santamaria-directed Catholic Social Movement, earlier the Catholic Social Studies Movement, was to become the National Civil Council, but was still usually known simply as the 'Movement', and still enjoyed a privileged relationship with the Church in Victoria.<sup>64</sup>

As part of the Movement's spreading of its message to the senior forms of Catholic secondary schools, one of its officials named Jim Macken in 1946 or 1947 gave the Matriculation class at Assumption College, Kilmore, a 'quarter to midnight' address outlining the Communist threat to Australia. For circulation among the



boys, he gave the Brother in charge of the class a copy of the 'Second and greatly enlarged edition' of a small book entitled *Communism — Why Not?* by 'Advance Australia',<sup>65</sup> which they were advised to read attentively as a lucid interpretation of world affairs.

The *nom de plume* was that of Father Patrick J. Gearon, a Carmelite priest and Professor of Theology at his Order's monastery in Donvale, Victoria, who already had numerous publications to his credit, mostly devotional in character.

Father Gearon's basic thesis is that Communism, an essentially Jewish product, is part of the plan of International Jewry, which controls International Finance, for world domination. He reserves judgment on whether *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is a forgery, but notes that every prophecy in it is coming true. The power of International Jewry is such that it masterminded World War One and decided when it should stop. Rasputin is reported to have been financed by Jewish bankers, as was the Russian Revolution, and it was Jews who ordered and carried out the execution of the Russian royal family. Hitler too is a tool of International Finance, as his anti-Jewish spleen, directed against the little Jew, is being used to further the big Jew's plans. Once Hitler started the war, the International Jew who armed him was then able to call for Hitlerism to be stamped out. Even the exodus of Jews from Germany is part of the plan 'to spread world control by the Jewish race' (p. 92). Had Hitler really been attacking the International Jewish Financier, he would not have been let live for long.

This mass of sinister drivel, backed by quotations from all sorts of 'authorities', including Belloc and Action Française-inspired material, and lightened by folksy and smart-alec formulations, mentions Dr. Mannix and the Pope a number of times, but naturally it has no sort of Catholic endorsement whatsoever. A priest publishing on matters of faith and morals has to seek a *nihil obstat* and an *imprimatur* as a guarantee of theological orthodoxy, with the ecclesiastical censors concentrating strictly on the matter of orthodoxy and not making value judgments on other matters or on the book as a whole, but on non-doctrinal subjects he is free to be as stupid and as nasty as he likes.<sup>66</sup> Thus it was that in the late forties this one was able to have his pseudonymous, non-doctrinal, but thoroughly un-Christian work passed on in a Catholic school under the auspices of B.A. Santamaria's Movement, criticism of which was regarded as disloyal because of its ostensible mandate from the bishops.

There is the possibility, of course, that Jim Macken was some sort of 'loose canon', handing out the work without the knowledge of his superior. In that case, the Movement's responsibility changes, but does not disappear.

In any event, it is reasonably certain that, when on 14 June 1964, B.A. Santamaria addressed the Melbourne University Jewish Students' Society at B'nai B'rith Hall, East St Kilda on 'Nazis, Communists, Catholics and Jews',<sup>67</sup> he did not bring along a copy of Father Gearon's book to pass around, despite its *prima-facie* relevance to his theme. However the line he was now pushing, by way of consideration of the obvious shortcomings of German Catholics and the apparent failure of Pius XII regarding effective opposition to Hitler's persecution of the Jews, was that totalitarian systems cannot be effectively opposed once they are in place, nor overthrown from within; as minorities in Australia, Catholics and Jews should therefore make common cause before it is too late, to prevent the coming to office of a party 'which might ultimately "do a deal" with the Communist power in the Pacific' (p. 20).

On the matter of anti-Semitism among Catholics, B.A. Santamaria admits candidly that 'on many issues . . . they have behaved badly, sometimes shockingly'

(p. 6), but one would gather that he himself is not only innocent, but a fellow sufferer of racial prejudice through his Italian origin which caused him and his parents to be looked down on as 'Dagoes'. Thus, 'when I hear the ignorant speak of Jews in derogatory tones, I react with you . . .' (p. 7). *Politique d'abord*, or the candour of an amnesiac?

## NOTES

1. CW henceforth in this article.
2. B.A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 12–15.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
4. See Niall Brennan, *The Politics of Catholics*, Melbourne: Hill Publishing, 1972, p. 19; Kneipp, Pauline, 'Australian Catholics and the Abyssinian War', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 10, No. 4, December 1979, p. 428n.
5. The policy of Action Française reflected the strains in French society created by the Revolution of 1789, the subsequent abolition of the Bourbon monarchy, the execution of Louis XVI and later of Marie-Antoinette, and in 1793 a reign of terror, all this accompanied by widespread religious persecution and dispossession of the Church, which thereafter generally fared better in regaining some of its rights and prestige under the various monarchical and pseudo-monarchical regimes (First Empire, Bourbon, Restoration, Orleanist constitutional monarchy, Second Empire) which followed the First and then the Second Republic. Leo XIII's call for 'Ralliement' in 1892, urging French Catholics to give loyalty to the Third Republic as the properly constituted civil authority, was not very enthusiastically received. The more traditionalist elements of French society became increasingly dissatisfied with the political atmosphere of the Republic, especially after the polarisation caused by the Dreyfus Case (1894–1899). This saw the Army, most sections of the Church with a few honourable exceptions, and the political Right upholding the unjust conviction of the Jewish Captain Dreyfus against the largely anti-Clerical Left; the government of the day eventually had to pardon Dreyfus over the head of a second military court which would not do so. The Church suffered badly in the subsequent settling of scores, with religious Orders expelled, state education secularised, and virtually all remaining links between Church and State cut. In this atmosphere a body claiming that France's ills could be cured only by reversing various consequences of the Revolution and restoring the monarchy, albeit Orleanist, naturally appealed to many middle and upper class Catholics, including many members of the hierarchy and the leaders of some important religious orders. The settling of the Dreyfus Case aggravated resentment against Jews, whose emancipation under Napoleon was seen as another consequence of the Revolution which it would be desirable to overturn. Various financial and political scandals damaged the reputation of the Third Republic and were exploited by Action Française, which saw the election of Blum's Popular Front government in 1936 as the victory of 'legal' France over the 'real' France, whose values it claimed to represent. (See Chapter I, 'Preparation 1899–1908' in Eugen Weber, *Action Française — Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth Century France*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962, pp. 3–43).
6. See Colin H. Jory, *The Campion Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929–1939*, Sydney: Harpham, 1986, pp. 62, 64. Jory neither explores the scope of the interest in Action Française on the part of loyal young Catholics keen to study and implement Catholic social principles, nor shows awareness of the official Church policy regarding it. However, he describes well the deference paid to Jackson. This was such in B.A. Santamaria's case that in 'Orders of the Day', the roneoed Campion Society news bulletin which he produced in 1935, he wrote regarding 'The Italo-Abyssinian Argument': 'Make sure you know the true facts of this matter. You can't believe the popular press. Read the leaders in the Advocate [sic] and Tribune [sic]. Catholics must not be ignorant or misinformed on this subject' ('Orders of the Day', No. 2, October 1935, p. 2, in Catholic Action folder, Hackett Papers, Jesuit Archives, Jesuit Provincialate, Hawthorn, Victoria).
7. Associate Professor A.R. Chisholm, Head of the Department of French, had an interest in Maurras which was essentially literary at this stage, focussing upon his critique of Romanticism, and he certainly would not have attempted to interest students in him as leader of Action Française. However, after a year in France in 1936, during which he visited Maurras, he expressed sympathy and admiration for his politics, incitements to violence included, and described him as 'a great Frenchman . . . condemned for speaking out in defence of his country' (see A.R. Chisholm, 'Thunder on the Boulevards', *Australian Quarterly*, No. 32, December 1936, pp. 36–48).

8. See 'Quaine v. The Rest — Vive la France!', *Farrago*, 18 April 1934, p. 2; letter by Quaine, *ibid.*, 26 April 1934, p. 3.
9. All quotations in this paragraph are from the chapter summaries in Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews*, London: Constable and Company, 1922, pp. xi-xix.
10. Robert Speaight, *The Life of Hilaire Belloc*, London: Hollis & Carter, 1957, p. 454.
11. See André Bordeaux, *Hilaire Belloc*, Lille: Service de reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille III, 1972, pp. 461-4.
12. In *Against the Tide*, citing a report by J.T. Kane, who was to become one of the leaders of the D.L.P., B.A. Santamaria describes how at the 1956 A.L.P. Federal Executive inquiry into the New South Wales branch, J.P. Ormonde had given evidence that 'in 1926 Santamaria had organised a "Rexist" movement at the University of Melbourne' (p. 199). In answer to questions, 'Ormonde, evidently unaware that the "Rexist" movement was a Belgian organisation set up during World War Two by Léon Degrelle, answered that it was an Italian organisation which aimed to set up a monarchy in Australia. Mr. Ormonde apparently did not go on to explain whether I — in 1926 aged eleven and still at primary school — intended to install the British or the Italian Royal House' (*ibid.*). There is no way of knowing whether it was Kane's account or Ormonde's informant who was astray in some details, but even if '1926' should really read '1936', it is likely that B.A. Santamaria, committed to bringing out the just-launched CW every month, would have had the time and interest to be launching a Rexist group at the University where he was already a graduate. In fact there is no evidence, anywhere that one might expect to find it, that he did anything of the sort. This makes all the more inexplicable the obfuscatory nature of his riposte, which regarding Léon Degrelle, whose name he nevertheless provides, is palpably false. Even had his memory of the Rexists become hazy since 1936, when he would certainly have at least heard of them, it was jogged in 1970 by Robert Murray's *The Split — Australia in the Fifties* (p. 45), where the outstandingly successful *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* is contrasted with the 'Rex Party'.

The Rexist movement had its origins in the publishing house *Christus Rex* (Christ the King) set up by Belgian Catholic Action in 1931, with as its director Léon Degrelle, who had come strongly under Maurras' influence while a student at Louvain, but loyally submitted to the papal ban in 1926. In 1935 he used this position to launch an anti-Communist and anti-Capitalist political movement advocating a limitation of the powers of Parliament, control of banks and big business, protection of the workers and the middle classes, and suppression of political parties. As *Rex* had moved outside the framework of Catholic Action by becoming involved in politics, it was denied approval by the Belgian hierarchy early in 1936 (see *Advocate*, 6 February 1936, p. 7). Priests and religious were forbidden to attend its meetings, it was asked that the magazine *Rex* not be sold at church doors, and heads of educational institutions were to seek to keep their students free of its influence. Scholars differ as to whether it was a Fascist movement or simply a reactionary one feeding on discontents similar to those in Italy and Germany.

In the 1936 elections the Rexists won 11 per cent of the vote and returned twenty-one deputies, but this success was soon dissipated by the revelation of links with big business and subsidies from Mussolini, who also allowed Degrelle to use a Milan radio station when he was refused time on Belgian state radio, hence possibly the garbled Ormonde reference to an Italian organisation. There was also a strong suspicion of subsidies from Hitler. In the April 1939 elections the Rexists lost seventeen of their seats, and with the German invasion of Belgium Degrelle and some other party chiefs became committed collaborators. What Degrelle did in World War Two was to enlist, and eventually become a high-ranking officer, in the 'Wallonie' Legion of French-speaking collaborators formed to fight for the Germans on the Russian Front.

The person who *was* interested in *Rex*, with his unerring flair for the reactionary and anti-democratic, was D.G.M. Jackson. In his 'Notes on the News' in the *Tribune* (24 September 1936, p. 4), the privately owned Melbourne Catholic weekly which he edited, he had cause to refute a misplaced suggestion in the *Argus* that what he described as 'another allegedly "Fascist" movement' was directly inspired by the Pope. After outlining the attitude of the Belgian hierarchy, which fell short of 'actual condemnation', he suggested that circumstances might modify this attitude, dictated mainly by prudence, but meanwhile the Church had no responsibility for 'the activities of the brilliant M. Degrelle'.

At most then, B.A. Santamaria may have deferentially given some verbal endorsement to Jackson's interest, but even that hardly seems to explain his peculiar ill-founded overkill of the late J.P. Ormonde (see Jan-Albert Goris, (ed.), *Belgium*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1945, Chapter VII: 'Political Parties' by René Hilaire, pp. 105-7; F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, pp. 212-17; Pierre Milza and Marianne Bentelli, *Le Fascisme au XXe siècle*, Paris: Editions Richelieu, 1973, pp. 244-5; S.L.

- Larsen et al (eds), *Who Were the Fascists: Social Roots of European Fascism*, Bergen-Oslo-Troms: Universitetsforlaget, 1980, pp. 517-19, 522-3).
13. In *The Puzzled Patriots — The Story of the Australia First Movement* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1968), Bruce Muirden relates that Niall Brennan, one of the early members of the CW, belonged to a University group called the Eureka Society, consisting mostly of Irish Catholics of anti-British tendencies, 'who regarded themselves as "faintly affiliated" with the Australia First group. . . . The society had no "attitude" to Jews and Germans' (p. 74). At a later stage, S.J. Ingwersen, one of the founders of the CW, was to contribute an article to Australia First's magazine, the *Publicist*, advocating as part of post-war reconstruction a widespread retreat back to the land in keeping with ideals that were to be embodied in the 'Whitlands' movement (see 'The New Agriculture — Post-war problems of national reconstruction', *Publicist*, 1 July 1941, pp. 8-9).
  14. See Lazare Landau, *De l'aversion à l'estime: juifs et catholiques française en France de 1919 à 1939*, Paris: Le Centurion, c.1980, pp. 64-5.
  15. See Oscar Arnal, *Ambivalent Alliance: The Catholic Church and the Action Française, 1899-1939*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, c.1985, p. 125.
  16. Developments in France following the ruling were reported frequently in 1927 (24 February, p. 7; 31 March, p. 7; 5 May, p. 11; 19 May, p. 11), while in 1928 the force of the ban was re-emphasised (26 January, p. 8) and a full-page article gave its background in some detail (12 April, p. 3). By 2 March 1933, Denis Gwynn was reporting that the ban was effectively changing attitudes. A new note was introduced in 1934, with Jackson writing leaders which praised the Royalist line while glossing over the full import of the ban (15 February, p. 17) and rejected the 'Fascist' tag (17 May, p. 17; 28 June, p. 17). On 16 October he gave a sympathetic lecture on Action Française, provoking a lengthy corrective reply: 'Why has the Action Française been condemned? The philosophy of M. Charles Maurras' by George O'Neill (25 October, p. 8).
  17. See Campion Society box, Heffey and Butler Papers, University of Melbourne Archives.
  18. *Ibid.*
  19. Information from Mr. K.T. Kelly: Notes of interview, 12 July 1991. (By 'Young Jews' the Jewish Young People's Association, JYPA, is probably meant. — Ed.)
  20. Santamaria, *op.cit.*, p. 17.
  21. The metaphors of armed conflict and military campaign marked the creation and emergence of the CW. Signed by Stan. J. Ingwersen as Hon. Treasurer and B.A. Santamaria as Editor-Elect, a circular letter dated '30-v-'35' from a Provisional Committee of nine men proposing to launch a new paper is headed 'The Front' and speaks of the necessity 'to fight Communism on its own ground'. The same trend is evident in the very title of 'Orders of the Day', which appeared in August and October 1935, when planning for the CW was well under way. A few items from it were to be used in early issues of the CW, which also carried features entitled 'General Headquarters' and 'The Advanced Sector' (see Catholic Action folder, Hackett Papers, Jesuit Archives).
  22. While the daily press may not have reported this particular case, it was to comment extensively on the widespread concern about sweating in the garment industry; see for example 'The Sweating Evil' in the *Age*, 3 February 1936, p. 8, and 4 February, p. 10.
  23. Jean Lacouture, *Léon Blum*, Paris: Seuil, 1979, translated by George Holloch, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982, p. 225.
  24. Joel Colton, *Léon Blum — Humanist in Politics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press, 1974, p. 115.
  25. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 375.
  26. A bizarre confirmation of the campaign's effectiveness is that the former Austrian chancellor Schuschnigg, on meeting Blum in Dachau in April 1945, spoke to him with naive admiration of the golden dinner service off which he was reputed to eat (see Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 182).
  27. Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-4.
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. See *Action Française*, 14 February 1936, p. 1.
  30. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
  31. See e.g. *Action Française*, 6 March 1935, p. 1, where Blum is twice referred to as 'Baron' in a piece contemptuous of his Jewishness.
  32. According to *Action Française*, 10 February 1936, p. 1, he received Extreme Unction, but the diocesan authorities would not allow a religious funeral unless his family endorsed a declaration that he had simply been a casual collaborator with Action Française, which they refused to do (*ibid.*, 13 February 1936, p. 1). While there were many instances of members of the clergy disobeying directives that adherents of Action Française were to be denied the sacraments, in this case it seems more likely that the diocesan authorities were doing their best to reconcile private succour with public holding of the line. See Adrien Dansette, *Religious History of Modern France*, Vol. II: *Under the Third Republic*, New

- York: Herder & Herder, 1961 (trans. by John Dingle of *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, Paris: Flammarion, 1948, with abridgements approved by the author), p. 406.
33. *Tribune*, 20 February 1936, p. 4.
  34. *Advocate*, 26 March 1936, p. 14.
  35. *Ibid.*
  36. *Advocate*, 2 April 1936, p. 6.
  37. When at the end of 1933 the *Advocate's* usual leader writer, P.I. O'Leary, fell ill, the editor, Father Moynihan, offered the position to Jackson, who used it to push his own political line, including the ideal of the Corporative State and the cause of the French Royalists. A pretext was used to drop him from the full-time staff, with O'Leary, now restored to health, supplanting him. It was an approach to Dr. Mannix on his behalf by Mr. K.T. Kelly which led to Jackson's becoming editor of the *Tribune* (see Jory, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 71, 135nn.).
  38. *Advocate*, 30 April 1936, p. 25.
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
  40. *Ibid.*
  41. *Ibid.*
  42. *Ibid.*
  43. *Ibid.*
  44. "'Postal Advocate' lies', *CW*, 6 June 1936, p. 1.
  45. *Ibid.*
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. Dansette *op. cit.*, p. 407.
  48. Oscar Leon Arnal, *French Catholics Left and Right: Ralliements and the Action Française*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Xerox University Microfilms, 1974, p. 536, quoting *Documentation Catholique*, 17 March 1934, p. 684.
  49. The federation of Christian Socialists was an understandably small group which claimed to be aiming at a synthesis between Christianity and Marxism. Its organ *Terre Nouvelle*, carried on its cover a hammer and sickle superimposed on a cross, and frequently called Church authorities from the Pope downwards to account for having a false fear of Bolshevism (see Arnal, *op. cit. supra*, pp. 590-93; Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy*, Cambridge, U.K; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 259).
  50. *Age*, 18 February 1936, p. 11.
  51. Lacouture, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
  52. Hilary L. Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987, p. 69.
  53. An interesting sidelight on conditions in the clothing trade is cast by the following extract of interview:  
*Jessie, clothing trades worker*: '... Anti-Semitism in the clothing trade in the 1930s was very strong, very strong indeed! I thought it might have been an anti-boss thing! No, it was just ignorance. My sister and I liked working for Jewish bosses. They were good to work for. There was no argument about money. You could talk about wages and come to an agreement with them. Amongst Australian bosses wages were hardly mentioned. It was a dirty word. (Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour — An oral record of the 1930s depression in Australia*, Melbourne: Hyland House, 1978, p. 133).
  54. According to B.A. Santamaria, the Central Catholic Library made available to the Campions, along with the works of Christopher Dawson, Chesterton and Belloc, 'the works of the French Catholic writers, . . . , Maritain, Bernanos and Mauriac among them' (*Against the Tide*, p. 14), which suggests that they would have gained some knowledge of the issues confronting French Catholicism. However, by the date 1931 which is referred to, most of the major works of these three Frenchmen were yet to be written. Even were texts available in the original French, they would have been accessible to comparatively few of the members, while the vast majority of translations began appearing long after 1931. The accessions registers of the Central Catholic Library show that by the end of 1935 it had acquired five works by Maritain and one by him and his wife Raïssa, none by Mauriac and none by Bernanos. This erroneous memory of a familiarity, either on the part of B.A. Santamaria himself or among other Campions, with the subsequently most outstanding French Catholic writers of their generation is particularly ironic in that Maritain was already highly critical of Action Française, and Mauriac and Bernanos were to become so.
  55. This notion comes straight from Belloc; see his *Survivals and New Arrivals* (1929), London: Sheed & Ward, 1939, pp. 177-8.
  56. *CW*, April 1938, p. 1.
  57. Pierre Pierrard, *Juifs et catholiques français, de Drumont à Jules Isaac (1886-1945)*, Paris: Fayard, 1970, p. 260.
  58. *Age*, 14 November 1938, p. 11.

59. CW, December 1938, p. 2.
60. *Age*, 11 November 1938, p. 11; the front page report in the *Argus* on the same day mentions 'shops and restaurants'; both papers concentrate on the burning of the synagogues.
61. For two fairly similar coverages of such material, see: E.M. Andrews, *Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia: Reactions to the European Crises, 1935-1939*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1970, pp. 150-2; Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1939-1948*, Sydney: Croom Helm Australia, 1989, pp. 73-6.
62. Information from Mr. K.T. Kelly: notes of interview, 12 July 1991.
63. See Jory, *op. cit.*, p. 137n, quoting memorandum to author from K.T. Kelly, and CW, August 1959, p. 11.
64. See Ormonde, Paul, *The Movement*, Melbourne: Nelson, 1972.
65. 'Advance Australia', Gearon, Patrick J., O. Carm., *Communism — Why Not?* (second and greatly enlarged edition), Melbourne: [no pub.], 1943.
66. In 1969 Father Gearon, by now author of over forty books and recipient of various ecclesiastical felicitations, published *The Wheat and the Cockle — The Liberal Assault within the Post-Conciliar Church* (Devon: Britons Publishing Company) with a *nihil obstat* and *imprimi potest* by fellow Carmelites, a *nihil obstat* from the diocesan censor, and an *imprimatur* from J.R. Knox, Archiepiscopus Melburnensis. In this he still maintains that there is a sinister nexus between Communism and International High Financiers, but the old Jewish link is not mentioned. Instead, he advises readers to explore further ramifications by reading various authorities, some of which he had mentioned in *Communism — Why Not?*, including Msgr. Jouin, *Le Pêril judeo-maçonnique*. Monsignor Jouin in 1909 founded the *Revue internationale des sociétés secrètes*, which was the main purveyor in France of Catholic-inspired anti-Semitism after Action Française, with which it had close links; its specific purpose was to expose the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. In 1920 the review published a new translation of the *Protocols* . . . , then in 1921 Jouin republished this, along with explanatory appendices, as the first in an eventual series of five volumes entitled *Le Péril judeo-maçonnique*, which subjected the main early versions of the *Protocols* . . . in Russian, German, and Polish to careful comparison and commentary. A fourth French translation in 1921, this time from the original Russian, by a member of Action Française was the most popular of all. Two popes were to become victims of what were presumably local recommendations regarding Jouin. After World War One, Benedict XV elevated him to the prelacy in recognition of his work in exposing enemies of the Church, while Pius XI appointed him an apostolic prothonotary after he had become known as a disseminator of the *Protocols* . . . (see Pierrard, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-3; Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, 1967, London: Penguin Books, 1970, pp. 181-2.
67. 'Nazis, Communists, Catholics and Jews', *Twentieth Century*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, Spring 1964, pp. 5-21.



## AUSTRALIAN REACTIONS TO REFUGEE VICTIMS OF NAZI PERSECUTION AND WAR: A LOCAL STUDY

Lionel E. Fredman

Australian reactions to the victims of Nazi persecution and war remains one of the most controversial topics in twentieth century Australian history. The many articles, theses and books or part-books on the subject present a sorry picture of prejudice, hostility and unwillingness to open the doors or show concern when reluctantly pushed ajar. At best, a more searching explanation indicates our then obsession with the Depression and British characteristics or may go further and warn of present-minded expectations of the Holocaust to come or the difficulty of accepting persons who may have fought for Germany in World War One, whatever their later circumstances. I am not aware of any discussion which concentrates on one, non-metropolitan region and so adds interaction with this particular environment and reasons why the newcomers chose it to this controversial and difficult topic.

I have therefore concentrated on sources and in-depth interviews with persons in the Newcastle area, the largest, non-metropolitan centre in Australia and recognised capital of a self-conscious, Hunter Valley region. For population purposes Newcastle extends beyond the municipal boundaries to be known both as an 'urban centre' and 'statistical subdivision'. It includes a Jewish community established in 1905 following a Maitland community, active in the 1840s, which erected a synagogue, now restored by a commercial company for its offices, in 1879, or virtually as old as the Great Synagogue in Sydney. Newcastle's own synagogue was erected in 1927 and is regularly used.

I have tried to use the time-span of 1933, from the Nazi assumption of power, soon followed by hostile, anti-Semitic laws which showed its hand, until the year when the Labour government lost office leaving a mass-immigration programme in place, which might signify the beginning of the Menzies, or true, post-War years. For the Newcastle Congregation, 1949 signified the end of an era. The foundation Rabbi, Isack Morris, after 44 years, less ten at Hobart, retired.

The *Newcastle Herald*, for many years known as the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, is a major source for local activities and what information was available to local people. Then as now it gave the essentials of national and international news, much less parochial than the *Maitland Mercury* published up the river, founded in 1843, an afternoon daily since 1893, and one of Australia's oldest newspapers. The interviewees included some non-Jewish people because so few came forward and because this indicated how much refugees and post-War migrants, whatever their religion, had in common. Perhaps this perception was accentuated outside the chief metropolitan centres of Sydney and Melbourne.

Whatever the restrictions and discriminatory forms, the Jewish population of Australia made a remarkable leap doubling between Census 1933 and 1954. In Newcastle, the increase was even larger, from 63 to 234, or more than treble, to be followed in the 1960s by another drift to the metropolis. The community eventually became stable and viable with a lower number including former victims who deliberately choose to remain even when retired.

In 1933, the subscriptions to the Newcastle Congregation were a scant 43; however, this increased to 83, counting as singles, in 1949. Morris' successor in 1950, Rabbi Bernard Gottschall, himself a survivor from Prague, was naturalised in Newcastle, and maintained the numbers and activity in the Congregation and larger community. Offerings, rites of passage and *cheder* might double the number of users. In November 1958, Gottschall left for Wellington.

The most striking Jewish community involvement occurred early in May 1933, when Rabbi Morris, who acquired English at the age of 19 after leaving his native Latvia, gave a long and forceful speech to the Town Hall meeting called to protest the Nazi outrages. He later attended a similar protest meeting at the Sydney Town Hall. The Annual Reports praised his initiative. In the late 1930s they note a visit by the first President, Sir Samuel Cohen, to launch the German Refugee Appeal Fund and efforts by the current President and Rabbi to find jobs for them. Newcomers known to the community were welcomed by name.

Active members with a recollection of the 1930s and early 1940s are now few. D., a former President in his eighties and retired to Sydney, entrained for Newcastle within hours of arriving from his native England in 1913. He found little outward anti-Semitism in a community little aware of its few Jews and a remote Europe. When interest increased after Munich there were too few refugees to arouse comment. He emphasised that he enjoyed Newcastle and the business begun there, and regularly visits family.

One influential opinion leader is a provincial Bishop, especially where the diocese is old and his cathedral physically dominates the city. Francis Batty was alert to social and current issues during his long term between 1931–58. In 1939, he rejected the regular argument that refugees would increase unemployment and supported the recent undertaking to admit 15,000 Jews over three years. In May 1941, he declared before Australia was fully involved that the War was a spiritual conflict between free and enslaved peoples in which our very civilisation was at stake. This was an affirmation which Jews well understood. I cannot find any references to immigration in his addresses to the Synod in the late 1940s.

Another important local source is the annual reports to the Chamber of Commerce, which have been given for more than a century; however, they offer little that is relevant.

The main source of information for local people and a main opinion-leader was of course the *Newcastle Herald* operating as a daily from Bolton Street since 1876. Having reported the Nazi outrages against Jews and other threats it called in an editorial of 30 March 1933, exactly two months after Hitler became Chancellor, for universal indignation at their pernicious doctrine of 'blood feeling' and its results. Similar editorials followed on 6 April and 12 May, and the protest meeting was reported at length. The Mayor of Newcastle presided and the motion was moved by the Mayor of Hamilton, who had requested the meeting, and seconded by a representative of the Trades Hall. A group of clergy moved a similar motion to support it. Editorials on 10 August and 6 September warned that Hitlerism raised the stark alternative between dictatorship and democracy and could occur elsewhere given the nationalist and economic stresses of the time.

In March 1935 an editorial criticised the modest increase in the British defence vote, despite the situation in Germany, which was a familiar Left-wing response. Verbal opposition is satisfying and cheap. However, the former Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, told a Newcastle Show audience in February 1936 that we should arm in a menacing world, taking care to link his advice to the industrial development of the region. (Minister Kim Beazley successfully adopted the same tactics

more recently). The European news was being adequately reported in this ominous year and the *Herald* returned to attack Hitler's expansionist aims on 14 September.

It is interesting to note that the Australian historian, Stephen Roberts, author of the just-published and remarkable book, *The House that Hitler Built*, described the dictator and his mythic power with great insight at Cessnock, reported in August 1937.

However, in October 1938 the news format and editorial praised Neville Chamberlain's settlement and desire to maintain peace. The mood was short-lived, for the *Kristallnacht* outrages were reported and strongly attacked on 18 November. On 2 December, the news carried the McEwan refugee proposals and a letter from Sir Samuel Cohen but no editorial, perhaps mindful of opposition from the ALP in New South Wales. The New Year editorial continued to praise Chamberlain while supporting increased defence spending.

That Cohen's long letter was printed in full and in the news columns attests to the continuing importance of his firm, David Cohen & Co., in Newcastle. On behalf of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society he rejected group settlements of refugees and insisted that their aim was to bring only those assimilating the British viewpoint and becoming useful citizens. Australian Jews had no intention of embarrassing the fair-minded Australian people and government.

News in the 1940s reported the few statements concerning post-War immigration, including an article written by minister Arthur Calwell in late December 1944, in which he urged a change in local attitudes and exclusive British origins of those entering. The *Herald*, like the government, seemed cautious in the way it presented such views and in the few editorials on the subject. Immigration was quite unimportant during the election of September 1946, when ten candidates contested the seat of Newcastle. Eventually an editorial did take a stand, on 6 October 1947, to approve Calwell's programme for a population increase of 140,000 a year half by immigration and predominantly of British origin. This just anticipated protests by local ex-service groups at the selection procedures and the extent of non-British and Jewish immigrants; however it renewed its approval on 3 January 1948. A different local viewpoint from a different pressure group was the Country Women's Association at their annual meeting in Newcastle in December, when speakers urged Australians to overcome their habitual intolerance towards strangers. Immigration was again unimportant during the election campaign of December 1949 as reported here, especially from the Opposition which targetted other issues and secured a large swing for victory. Labour has held the federal seat of Newcastle since Federation, and for the first 55 years the members were a pair of loyal backbenchers, David Watkins father and son.

And now let us have some interviews-in-depth. As they proceeded, I found that I was recording copious details of early life, career, and escapes from crisis and disaster. But the eventual question was why they chose to live in Newcastle and the Hunter. It was a question about local history and society and why some people avoided the massive drift to the metropolis which is a basic and distinctive feature of Australian life. For conscious minorities and particularly Jewish people the drift operates with even stronger pressure. How did it affect the victims of persecution?

Many Jews seem to feel that concentration of numbers is essential for viable congregations, schools and charities and the due performance of Orthodox observance and *kashruth*. Yet modern communications and the extraordinary diversity of Jewish experience and consciousness may ensure provincial survival for some time

to come. Some victims seemed to appreciate the more relaxed mode of life. As Sydney was to Vienna, hectic world metropolis and for Jews called 'the tragedy of success', is it too fanciful to compare Newcastle as to Sydney?

R., the wife, and S., her husband, live in the inner suburbs of Newcastle. Now retired, they have been moderately successful as partners in a clothing and tailoring business. There is an only son who obtained his first degree at Newcastle, is married with several children, and now teaches in Israel and occasionally visits. S. is a stalwart of the Synagogue services. Their reaction to the Holocaust reveals the familiar opposites. Though both survived harrowing experiences in the ghetto and Auschwitz, R., with a little prodding, will recall at length, but S. will not be drawn and politely but firmly rejects an interview. They arrived in 1952 and soon came to Newcastle, preferring the scale and opportunities of a small and changing city. For similar reasons they preferred Australia to the United States where they had relatives. 'We like it here', said R., and though retired, comfortable and with an investment house in Sydney, here they remain.

Another Polish-born survivor and active member of the Congregation is L., from the outskirts of Maitland. She is somewhat different, being more gregarious, speaking four languages and belonging to a number of networks. With her late husband she came to Maitland soon after their arrival in 1949 and opened a small knitwear factory, so they had plenty of time to develop a small-town outlook. She belongs to the local Polish ethnic organisation and last year received a Heritage award for the period restoration of the premises which they once occupied as workplace and home. There is regular contact with a son, married to a Jew with several children living in Sydney, and a sister, widowed and re-married, who also lives in Maitland. She also maintains contact by letter and overseas visits with various relatives. The recent San Francisco earthquake struck while visiting one. She told the local paper that there must be a 'guiding hand' for she had survived Auschwitz, the record Maitland flood, and now this disaster. The Newcastle earthquake was to come, but left only a few superficial cracks. She can recall her early life and the camps in detail. But her summary is that she is proud of being Polish despite the prejudice there encountered, adding 'we made a good life here' with few problems adjusting to local people.

L.'s sister, E., is an interesting contrast, her education and professional background reflected in her more orderly answers to questions. She and her first husband, H., an architect, disliked the prejudice in Poland and left in 1939, arriving in Australia just before the War. There was a lack of professional work and the Welfare Society was not helpful, so she decided to use her skill with embroidery and he learned to maintain the machines by doing a course at the Technical College. With official encouragement, they introduced a small garment factory to Maitland and later opened a successful fashion shop. H. was active in local Rotary and in promoting local swimming and music. After his death the family endowed a prize for these pursuits at Maitland High School which their sons attended. Like her sister, E. gets on well with local folk and belongs to the Polish ethnic organisation; it was at a function there that she met her second husband, who is not Jewish. She and both husbands became agnostic.

Another member of the Congregation living outside Maitland and involved in the same industry is J., who left Sudetenland for Czechoslovakia then moved again to England just before the War. He still retains a consultancy with the local if precarious textile mill where he spent years as a section manager. He and his wife, O., express delight in the Australian bush and their rural hill-top home. Two children



grew up in Australia, married, but not to Jews, live in the district and have children. They married in England before emigrating to Israel where they spent ten years which they recall with great affection.. It was here in 1960 that he answered an advertisement for the mill and was accepted. A small age difference is expressed in accents; though neither is English-born, O. would pass as English and J. would not. Though he visits family in Manchester and Israel, J. has never revisited his native country. They belong to local groups, O. being active in crafts, but do not consider themselves joiners. Like H. and E., they found the local folk warm but limited in outlook but this has been changing.

A different Polish-born survivor is B., a successful doctor still in practice, though in his mid-seventies, in an inner suburb. He has recently written his extraordinary story and kindly lent me the manuscript to prepare for the interview. I can also thank him for drawing my attention in his reading list to the even more extraordinary memoirs of Samuel Pizar. Believe it or not, I knew him well at Melbourne University, but we have not met for many years and I read his book only this year.

B. avoided the *numerus clausus* or Jewish quota by attending Medical School at Bologna, returning before the War. With the aid of a loyal lady friend who is not Jewish and is now his wife, and forged papers provided by another friend, he walked out of the ghetto and settled on a rural estate for nearly three years. The Degree would have disclosed his real name so he passed as a Christian, partisan and final-year medical student who was forced to flee but could provide much-needed medical care. He lived in regular fear of exposure and attended church, while uncomfortable in his new Christian skin. At times he believes he was suspected but somehow outlasted the War. He worked on his pronunciation which was often a give-away, and was careful where undressing, for circumcision, unlike the country to which he emigrated, was then rare among gentile male Poles.

I have seen many photos of his loyal wife and Australian-born children, both professionals, and they are a striking trio. He changed the name and baptised the children. Arriving in 1947, B. is still annoyed by the requirement that European graduates pass the three clinical years, including Italian graduates hitherto recognised. After doing a *locum* in the Hunter he squatted at Swansea near the entrance to Lake Macquarie and after five years could move practice and residence closer to the centre of Newcastle. He is not observant nor a member of the Congregation but very conscious of Jewish origins and anxious to tell his story and pleased that his daughter recently visited Poland. He remains concerned about religious intolerance. Nor does he feel much attraction, even after all these years, to the local Jewish community.

While preparing this study I also had to write two reviews this year for the *Newcastle Herald: Journey Back from Hell* which is written and edited by Anton Gill from interviews with 120 survivors, and *I Shall Live*, the memoirs of Henry Orenstein. B. could be compared with the professional background and orderly presentation of some of Gill's respondents. Although he did not share Orenstein's experience of five concentration camps and the Sachsenhausen death march, both were alarmed by their experience of the Russian occupation of Eastern Poland between 1939-41 and resent the glib dismissal by the Left that one can for good reason be both anti-Nazi and anti-Communist.

Among the German victims is F., a stalwart of the Congregation and Jewish National Fund and general good citizen, tall and precise in manner (dare one say 'Germanic'!), with two children and grandchildren, one living in Sydney and one in

Israel. His wife, a German-born nurse, was long active in the National Council of Jewish Women. F. was trained as a fitter and turner at a Technical College in Berlin and is good with his hands. He came to Australia in 1937 with the required landing money of fifty pounds lent by the Welfare Society in London. Two years later he came to Newcastle to take a job secured through his Trade Union. Later he opened an electrical and TV repair shop in a busy suburban shopping street, becoming active in the Lions, of which he is a Life Member, and Neighbourhood Watch. They found some hostility at first but folk were friendly on closer contact and they see this as part of a great change towards newcomers. They had no difficulty with the local Jewish community but criticised their early encounters with the Sydney establishment. L., his wife, said it took some time to adjust to Newcastle after marriage; now comparable housing and location and a move to Sydney is beyond them, having retired. For a long time, F. resisted a return to Germany but did so in 1984 to see his sister.

U., another German victim, is something of a contrast. She is a member of the Congregation but much less active. She is married to an Australian-born medical practitioner she met at an ex-servicemen's dance, has an only child who is married to a non-Jewish man in Sydney, and is involved in her outer suburban network. Her sister in America was married to a recently-deceased rabbi who is well-known in New York and as an alumnus of the notorious *Dunera*. She may have avoided the quota at school due to her fair 'Aryan' appearance but was expelled after Kristallnacht. The family left for England and then Australia in 1939; though then aged thirteen she speaks English without accent. She will not visit her birthplace in Northern Germany and speaks the language only when necessary, including a trip in 1974. With a relative's help her father established a clothing factory in which all the family worked. Having been posted to Williamtown Airbase, her husband decided to begin a practice in the Lake Macquarie area and then moved nearer to Newcastle. She declares she has no regrets about the places in which they have chosen to live; that one should adapt and mix with the folk around, and criticised some refugees who do not.

H., a retired colleague at the University, is an interesting contrast. I had known him for years but had never discussed his background until this study so did not know the circumstances of his coming to Australia, or that his family knew the family of L., F.'s wife. He is not Jewish, but represents those forced to flee Germany for other reasons. His father, after service in World War One, did not join the *Freikorps* but on the contrary became active for peace and in the Social Democratic Party. In religion they were declared Humanists. After 1933, they found the conscription and pressures to conform were intolerable. Arriving on 1938, H. studied in Sydney and on a scholarship in England, coming to Newcastle, like me, for his first academic appointment; and like me, he stayed. He recalls their 'enemy alien' status during the War as a result of which his father was sent to a prison camp before enlisting in the C.C.C., and he lost his University Exhibition, although he successfully protested. He married a local nurse who shares with him his consuming leisure-time interest in traditional Scottish country dancing. He and his parents were very anxious to adapt to their new society. However, he has the precise manners and marked accent of F., and offers his guest some delicious Viennese biscuits. Three times he has visited Germany while in the course of study leave.

I then interviewed a mutual friend, a Czech-born and retired widow, to represent the immigrant intake of the immediate post-War and participants in the Calwell programme. I recalled their original delicatessen in an sinner suburb where the



Newcastle rye-bread fancier in the late fifties could buy a loaf from the bi-weekly delivery. We owe much to such people, Jew and non-Jew, in escaping from the stodgy English diet and cuisine, even more for those living outside Sydney and Melbourne. H. laughs to recall her early years in business persuading conservative Australian customers to try 'hard bread' (rye), 'sour milk' (yoghurt) and 'stinky cheese' (which was anything not Kraft processed cheddar in packets).

Disliking Communist rule, they arrived in 1949 and spent the two years of directed labour under the scheme at Cowra camp, then at Greta camp, spartan accommodation in a former army barracks about fifty kilometres west of Newcastle. Like others, jobs in heavy industry, local contacts and familiarity with the area persuaded them to stay.

S., E.'s second husband, who arrived in 1950, was critical of the required labour at Greta camp and splitting of families. It is today a pleasant backwater begun by vinedressers about 1850, then from the 1870s until World War II a sometimes busy mining town with decaying courthouse, council chambers and other public buildings c1900. The camp closed in 1961 after twelve years, during which about 100,000 immigrants passed through. To some it was indeed a dreary camp but to others the first stage in a new life resembling the mixed feelings German internees had of Hay and Tatura..

Why should Jewish and other refugees aim for and remain outside the metropolitan areas, doubly compelling in arid Australia and trebly compelling for Jews concerned about the resources for observance and communal organisations? What stands out is the positive attitude of the newcomers and the diversity and versatility of Judaism. It represents a civilisation, ethnic group and formal religion in various combinations. Modern communications bind the group while dispersing it, in accordance with individual life-styles. There can be mutual respect for location as well as observance. In the words of Louis Newman, a prominent New York rabbi of the 1960s, 'Jewry has great latitude in matters of personal belief and permits each individual to hold whatever personal judgments he may choose, being confident in the ultimate appeal, power and authority of Judaism'.

## THE FIRST HABONIM IN AUSTRALIA

*Eliyahu Honig*

Over the last year there were gatherings in Australia and Israel to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the *Habonim* Youth Movement in Australia.

People recalled the very early days of the movement in Melbourne, in Herzl Hall opposite Cohen's Cafe in Drummond Street, that old store-front which had once served as the home of the *Kadimah*, and later as the centre of the Victorian Zionist Organisation, and which now resounded on Saturday afternoons and evenings with the singing and dancing of enthusiastic young people, shaking the building to its very foundations.

There were the memories of the 'Polish' boys<sup>1</sup> who brought with them the songs, the spirit and ideology of the Zionist Youth movements of Europe.

Those gathered surely also recalled the young Shmuel, Michael and David in Melbourne, as well as Yehudah and Betty in Sydney<sup>2</sup> and all the others who established the basis on which this remarkable youth movement was built.

Much will be written of these beginnings which provided such a unique platform for the Zionist movement as a whole in Australia, and also for the structure of Jewish education in the wider sense.

Very few of those celebrating the *Habonim* Jubilee could have been aware that there were actually at least two undertakings to establish the *Habonim* movement in Australia some ten years earlier, that is, in 1929 and 1930.

In January 1930, Mark Ettinger, who had been sent out by the Jewish National Fund-*Keren Hayesod* to act as the first Organising Secretary of the newly founded Zionist Federation of Australia, received a remarkable letter from the then Secretary of the *Kadimah*, Regina Goldman. 'It is my fortune to have for the last six months a circle of young Jewish boys and girls (9-17) under the wing of the Jewish National Library *Kadimah*, of which I am Secretary' she wrote.

I have already forty-five financial members and very often we have an audience of about sixty . . . it is very difficult for one person, and the greatest difficulty are the parents. You see, although the *Kadimah* bears the name of "Jewish National", it is anything but National: Zionism on this platform is taboo — to them Zionism and National have nothing in common . . . the variety of members is tremendous and all have their individual and fixed ideas on every possible subject.

Thus the *Kadimah* is a purely "literary club". This is the environment the *Kadimah* Juvenile Section is confined to . . . it is impossible to keep a crowd of youthfuls in a club without an ideal — there must be a *raison d'être*.

Fortunately the parents have an implicit trust in me . . . they think I am involved in the luke-warmth of the adults . . . the children . . . are ignorant on Jewish matters as any little gentile . . . no home influence.

I had to step cautiously. I began with Jewish history, beginning from pre-historic times . . . this gives a foundation. Then I told them about Herzl, and gave them to learn the *Hatikvah* with the translation. When the problems of Palestine came<sup>3</sup> I was open and spoke freely and nobody objected . . . I started a library and need your help . . . suitable books (real blue-and-white), folk songs and sheet music, Jewish biographies, plays, poems . . . Do you think you could link us up with some club in Palestine? We could correspond.<sup>4</sup>

This was surely a most remarkable description of a single-handed effort within the *Kadimah* organisation that functioned as the Jewish community's centre for Yiddishist cultural and political activities, with a very strong anti-Zionist bias.

Ettinger decided to refer the request to his Head Office in Jerusalem. The matter was then passed on by them to England.<sup>5</sup> 'I have asked Mr. Wellesley Aron, Assistant Political Secretary of the Zionist Organisation, a former teacher at the Tel Aviv Gymnasium to supply you with all the particulars regarding the *Habonim* scheme of which he is the originator in England, and by means of which he is trying to organise a healthy Jewish youth movement. Most of his material should be helpful even though you may have to adapt it to some extent to local conditions and needs — I have further asked the Jewish National Fund Head Office in Jerusalem to send you copies of their English publications ... and hope this will be of help'.<sup>6</sup>

The *Australian Jewish Herald* at the time carried many notices of the activities of the *Kadimah* Juvenile Section, noting the leadership of Miss Goldman, but with no mention of the actual name *Habonim*.<sup>7</sup> This effort in Melbourne appears to have faded out after some months, mainly due to the fact that the prime mover, Regina Goldman, who saw herself as a dedicated Zionist, decided to go to Palestine to try living there.

She left at the end of May 1930,<sup>8</sup> and from that point on the programmes of the Juvenile Section as presented in the Jewish Press show little 'Zionist' or cultural content. It became a social club for young people with emphasis on sport and dancing. Regina Goldman returned in May 1932; there was a reunion, but apparently it was too late to revive the group, and soon after the *Jewish Herald* announced the Juvenile Section of the *Kadimah* had ceased to function.<sup>9</sup>

This was in Melbourne. In Sydney there was an interesting parallel development, apparently unrelated to Regina Goldman's initiative, and which reached hundreds of young people all over Australia. At the Second Annual Conference of the Australian Zionist Federation, held in Sydney in May 1929, Mr. H. Vajda was to have presented a paper on Youth Movements. 'Technical' reasons precluded the reading of the paper at the Conference, but the editor of the Conference Report decided to include the paper in the published Report.<sup>10</sup>

Vajda made the following points:

1. Youth Movements are usually built around two foundations — political and sporting.
2. The Zionist Youth Societies are political, united in the international Zionist Youth Organisation centred in London.
3. Most important Youth Groups are connected with the *Halutz* (Pioneer) Movement.
4. In Australia the Youth movement is weak — lack of Zionist information and lack of interest on the part of the senior Zionist organisation.
5. Suggests that the Federation appoints special Honorary Officers in each State to deal with Zionist work among the young. Should have Youth representatives on the Zionist Federal Executive, and link all Zionist Youth groups in all States into a Federal body.
6. Set up a programme through the Jewish National Fund with songs, dances and games of truly Jewish character, to make children think of Palestine. Many a child singing Hebrew songs has converted his parents to Zionism. By gaining the younger generation we can assure the future of Zionism in Australia.

While none of the above organisational suggestions were implemented, the Zionist Federation did act, but in a most unusual manner for setting up a youth movement.

In April 1930, the Secretary of the Federation, I.K. Sampson reported to Jerusalem: 'The weekly propaganda in the *Jewish Chronicle* is of vital importance . . . the attempt at organising children that we have made in the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* through the *Habonim* has met with remarkable success . . .'<sup>11</sup>

The *Australian Jewish Chronicle* had set out to be the official organ of the Zionist Federation, and was trying to challenge the anti-Zionist *Hebrew Standard* of Sydney as the leading Jewish weekly in the community. It decided to organise a youth movement through the vehicle of a Children's Page. Through 'Aunt Hannah', the Editor ran a section in the paper entitled *Young Israel*. The paper published an announcement explaining *Habonim*, the League of Australian Jewish Children, and invited children to become members by writing to 'Aunt Hannah' at 86 Pitt Street, Sydney. To join, a child was asked to write, in his or her handwriting: 'I wish to join *Habonim*. I am a Jewish boy (or girl) and was born at . . . . . on . . . . . in the year . . . . .

1. I will do my best to make myself worthy of being a Jew or Jewess.
2. I will do my best to train myself in the knowledge of my people.
3. I will do my best to uphold the good name of my people.
4. I will do my best to serve my people for their good and for the good of all men.

Signed: . . . . . The notice concluded: 'Every member of *Habonim* will receive a badge so that all members may know one another. No entrance, badges free'.<sup>12</sup> This was repeated every week in the *Young Israel* section of the paper.

From February until the end of 1930 there appeared in each issue of the *Australian Jewish Chronicle* lists of names of the children who wrote in to become members of *Habonim*. By June, the number reached two hundred, and in August the paper could report that membership was over three hundred. Badges were sent to all, and the paper encouraged correspondence on various subjects. 'Aunt Hannah' would reply in her column and provide good and sensible advice on various subjects.

The paper also published editorials directed at parents and the adult community, strongly supporting the development of the movement:

*Habonim* is an attempt to provide English speaking Jewish children with the elements of Jewish culture in a form which is suited to their particular needs. It is a cultural movement which aims at supplying the Jewish child with the opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of many aspects of the Jewish heritage. We are particularly proud that we have founded this movement here in Australia, and that such rapid progress has been made. Up to the present over three hundred children have joined the League and we expect a larger membership as soon as we have put the whole scheme into operation.

To parents:

1. This is a voluntary system offering the child self-expression.
2. It appeals to Jewish children offering a practical opportunity for identification with the ideals and aspirations of their people.
3. It does not clash with Jewish educational activities — it will foster knowledge and involvement in the community.

The *Habonim* is primarily a youthful spirit in which a feeling of brotherhood and sportsmanship is combined with a deep attachment to everything Jewish. THE CHILDREN OF TODAY ARE THE BUILDERS OF TOMORROW.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the programmes and encouragement provided by the paper, the activities were limited to wearing the badge and writing to the paper, although there do appear to have been some initiatives to bring the young people together. One member recalls: 'I remember the badge of *Habonim* reached Australia. It came via the *Jewish Chronicle* which had taken *Habonim* and the Children's Corner under its auspices at the time. A few of us were made members. I can't say the activity was

great but I remember getting the badge. We met at Herzl Hall, which was then the *Kadimah* . . . we formed also the *Nordiah* in the *Ivriya* as a youth club.<sup>14</sup>

In December 1930, the paper published a special call asking *Habonim* members, each of whom was assigned a number, to write in and give details of *Habonim* members living in their area. It would appear that some plan for organising members was being formulated. The call was now from the *Habonim* leader (no name was provided) who wrote: 'It is a long time since you heard from me . . . I am anxious to form you into groups and I would like those *Bonim* and *Bonoth* who are friendly with and know personally ten or more other members of our League to write to me and give me the names. I want the following members to write to me and let me know how many members of our League live close to them: numbers 1, 12, 33, 56, 151, 176, 299, 331, 346. *Hazak Veametz*, the Chief *Boneh*.'<sup>15</sup>

The membership was Australia-wide — Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane and the smaller communities were all represented. Yet Australian *Habonim* remained essentially a 'correspondence movement'. Reports of these activities in the Commonwealth were received with enthusiasm in England, and were somewhat exaggerated in the material published by *Habonim* in England: 'In Melbourne there was in existence a body of about four hundred *Bonim* and *Bonoth* who were organised on lines similar to those laid down in the *Habonim Handbook*.'<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted that at that time the total number of members of *Habonim* for the whole of England is given at only about three hundred. There the movement was organised along lines laid down in the Handbook, with a network of small groups led by leaders and working with intensive programmes on Zionism and Jewish history.

By the beginning of 1931 the Zionist Federation in Australia was seriously weakened by a number of factors, including the economic depression, lack of professional leadership and the folding of the *Australian Jewish Chronicle*; with it ended the *Habonim* League.

While there had been substantial interest and even enthusiasm for this youth league, as is evident from the letters published in the paper during 1930, there was no way this could continue in such a passive mode. Without a functioning organisation, without educational programmes, trained group leaders and meetings as set out by Wellesley Aron in the material he had sent out from England to the Zionist Federation, there was no chance of establishing, sustaining and developing a real organisation. All this would have to wait some ten years when the initiative came from the new arrivals from Europe.

One interesting point: in going over the names of the hundreds of children who joined and received their *Habonim* badges, one finds the names of many who later played important roles in developing the Zionist movement, and those who filled top leadership positions in the Jewish and general communities.<sup>17</sup>

#### NOTES

1. This refers to the twenty boys who were brought out by the Jewish community late in 1939. Many had been in Zionist youth movements in Europe, and it was they who gave impetus to the establishment of *Habonim* and later *Betar*, the Revisionist-Zionist youth movement.
2. Reference to Shmuel Rosencranz, community leader in Melbourne; the late Michael Porter (Doari) of Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi; and Professor David Tabor of Cambridge; Yehudah Feher, businessman and researcher in Sydney and Jerusalem; and Betty Kezelman Doari of Kfar Hanassi.
3. This refers to the 1929 Arab riots and the terrible massacre of Jews in Hebron, Motza and other Jewish communities.

4. Central Zionist Archives, KH4/295, 8 January 1930.
5. *Ibid.*, Z4/2926, 18 February 1930.
6. Leo Herrmann to Regina Goldman, *Ibid.*, KH4/295, 19 February 1930.
7. *Australian Jewish Herald*, 30 June 1929, 1 August 1929, 8 August 1929.
8. *Australian Jewish Herald*, 29 May 1930.
9. *Australian Jewish Herald*, 21 June 1932.
10. Report of the Second Zionist Federation Conference, 1929, p.27, editorial note.
11. Central Zionist Archives, KH4/295, 17 April 1930.
12. *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, 30 January 1930.
13. *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, editorial, 14 August 1930.
14. Interview with I. Rischin, Jerusalem, 20 November 1985. *Ivriya* was the *Eretz Israel* Society, the Hebrew-speaking Zionist group formed by Palestinian immigrants to Melbourne.
15. *Australian Jewish Chronicle*, 18 December 1930. The phrase, *Hazak Veametz*, 'Be strong and of good courage', was the official cry used by *Habonim* in all countries. Chief *Boneh* was the term for the senior movement leader.
16. Beit Tabenkin Archive. *Habonim* report, 6 August 1930, and first Council meeting of *Habonim* in England, 9 October 1930.
17. A random selection of some of the names shows an interesting cross-section of the community: Betty Rapke, Baron Snider, Zelman Cowen, June Cowen (Helmer), Lionel Marks, Simeon Lenzer, Jack Dabscheck, Hanna Zmood, Sam Havin, Rivkah Brilliant, Mark Southwick, Norman and Sam Haskin, June Snider, Sam Cohen, Susie Winston, Isaac Stone.



## THE LUBAVITCH-CHASSIDIM OF MELBOURNE: JEWISH ACTIVISTS AGAINST SECULARISATION<sup>1</sup>

Helen Sharp

Secularisation has been one of the distinguishing features of modern society. The term secularisation refers to the process whereby religion has declined in social significance in modernity, i.e., the diminishing role of religion both in social life and in individual consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Within this model of secularised society the Lubavitch-Chassidim represent a religious community who have taken an activist position to counteract this process.

The word *chassid* literally means 'pious one', and Chassidism is the common name given to the movement which developed during the mid-18th century, quickly rising to become a major force in modern Jewish history. All Chassidim adhere stringently to age-old *halachic* beliefs and practices and in modern secular society their main objective is the perpetuation of *Yiddishkeit* — traditional Orthodox Judaism. However, unlike other Chassidim who prefer an enclave environment,<sup>3</sup> the Lubavitch ideology emphasizes the active dissemination of *Yiddishkeit* to disaffiliated Jews throughout the whole Jewish community. Using all means of modern technology, their leader, the Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, has mounted a world-wide mission to spread *Yiddishkeit* to all Jews, and each Lubavitcher has become an activist working for this cause.

The Chassidic movement emerged following an era of relentless political and economic oppression. During the previous century, some 250,000 Jews had been massacred during the Chmielnicki Cossack uprising (1648). The widespread hope of redemption from constant harassment and persecution enabled the movement led by the pseudo-Messiah, the Turkish mystic Shabbatai Zvi (1686–1716), to flourish. A kind of mass hysteria spread through the Jewish world, to all classes and countries of the Diaspora, as Jews joined a frenzied movement of repentance engaging in excessive fasts, constant ritual baths, even selling off all personal property to ready themselves for the journey to the Holy Land. Following the sudden collapse of this Messianic phenomenon when Shabbatai Zvi converted to Islam (in order to save his life after being arrested by the Turkish sultan), the Jewish population was devastated — left in a state of religious and social turmoil. The intellectual elite retreated to the study of *Torah* and Talmud as a means of regaining a sense of structure and purpose in their lives. However, the masses of impoverished and uneducated Jews living in the *shtetls* were faced with failed hopes of salvation from a miserable existence, and were left in a state of disarray, despair and spiritual torpor.<sup>4</sup>

Against this bleak social landscape, the philosophy of Israel ben Eliezer, commonly known as the *Baal Shem Tov* (Master of The Good Name) or in short *Besht*, the founder of the Chassidic movement, offered an avenue of hope and re-assurance. He was born in 1698 near the Carpathian mountains in the Ukraine in what is today Southern Russia. According to tradition, he first revealed his powers at the age of 36 when he became part of a group of wandering preachers who travelled the country side, going from *shtetl* to *shtetl*. The *Baal Shem Tov* became known as a great

healer and teacher, and gathered a large following not just from the poor masses but also from a number of scholars who became his disciples.

Chassidism combined the principles of *Torah* with the doctrines of *Kabbalah* (Jewish mysticism), particularly the precepts of the great sixteenth century Kabbalist, Isaac Luria. Relying largely on parables and Talmudic folktales, the *Baal Shem Tov* popularised the Kabbalistic doctrines which had for centuries been the province of a select spiritual elite, and he communicated a unique and compelling approach to Judaism. His teachings, which form the basis of all Chassidic belief, emphasised the mystical aspect of God in all aspects of life, for example, eating, praying, lovemaking and social interaction. Although Chassidism did not introduce any new fundamental Ideas into Judaism, the focus was on feeling and emotion, rather than the traditional emphasis on rationality, intellect and learning.<sup>5</sup> What mattered was purity of heart and joyfulness in devotion, not the ability to memorise tractates of Talmud. Central to the *Baal Shem Tov*'s philosophy was the basic Judaic principle of *Ahavos Israel* — love for all fellow Jews. He taught that each individual Jew had a specific mission to accomplish on earth and that no two persons have the same ability. Thus, each Jew could equally gain proximity to God, no matter their background or ability, as sincerity in prayer was regarded as a greater asset than scholarship. This ideology had great appeal, serving to allay personal and group anxiety, for Chassidism presented each Jew with the scope for personal salvation within the framework of everyday life. As well, Chassidism taught that through wholehearted devotion and performance of God's commandments — the 613 *mitzvot* which are codified in the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Code of Laws — each person could become an agent in the coming of *Moshiach*, the process of ultimate redemption for all mankind. As the scholar Gershom Scholem stated, in Chassidism the *mitzvot* had been imbued with mystical significance whereby each *mitzvah* became 'an act of cosmic importance . . . which had a bearing on the dynamics of the universe', and each *chassid* 'became a protagonist in the dynamics of the world . . .'<sup>6</sup>

The *Rebbe* is the charismatic leader of a Chassidic community. The term 'charisma' as applied by the sociologist Max Weber refers to a certain quality of a person who is set apart from ordinary man by virtue of the belief that he is endowed with extraordinary or supernatural powers.<sup>7</sup> The *Rebbe* is revered as a *Zaddik* (righteous man, saint) and is believed to possess superior spiritual powers and prophetic insight. He is the central figure around whom the community is organised. His followers turn to him to only for advice on spiritual matters, but also for guidance in such pragmatic everyday decisions as moving house, plans for travelling, a new job or business venture. He is the protector and source of inspiration for his *Chassidim*, and the *Chassid-Rebbe* relationship is one of uncritical obedience and deep devotion. His authority is absolute and based on the pure faith of his followers in his direct contact with God.<sup>8</sup> 'Nobody questions the *Rebbe* — his every word is an order. He doesn't say things that could have remained unsaid, or could have been said otherwise'.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of the *Zaddik* (the term formerly used for the *Rebbe*) as a mystical mediator between man and God, was introduced by Rabbi Dov Baer (The Great *Maggid*), the principal disciple and successor to the *Baal Shem Tov*. He believed that the *Zaddik*, the perfectly righteous man completely free of sin, could most effectively commune with God and supplicate for earthly and spiritual favours on behalf of his people. Those seeking his aid also believed that his superior soul enabled him to make judgments untainted by human error. Hence, ordinary Jews attached

themselves to the *Zaddik* who could guide them toward a more spiritual and praiseworthy life.

On the Sabbath and Festival days, devotees gathered at the *Zaddik's* 'court' for a *farbrengen* (meeting) around a communal table. They would hear him 'say *Torah*, his commentaries on the weekly readings and relate tales and parables of the *Baal Shem Tov* and his teachings. They would drink with the *Zaddik* and receive his blessings; chant Chassidic songs and hum mystical wordless melodies (*niggun*). There would be joyous clapping and dancing, and the cares of *shtetl* life would recede as the *chassidim* rejoiced in an intensely spiritual and communal life.<sup>10</sup> Those who came for specific help or advice presented a *kvitl* (prayer note) which was usually accompanied by a *pidyen* (donation, redemption money) to the *gabbai*, the assistant. The *kvitl* identified the petitioner by his mother's name, for the soul is traced through the maternal line and it is her name that is needed to direct the prayers. The *kvitl* served as a means of mystical communication to souls in the past and ahead in the future.<sup>11</sup> The *pidyen* also served as a source of income for the *Zaddik* and support for his charitable causes, allowing him to direct all his efforts to prayer and pious works.

Dov Baer had many disciples, and after his death the movement was decentralised into numerous autonomous courts. The social patterns established during this period of Chassidism have survived, and remain as an integral part of the contemporary Chassidic community; the *Zaddik* (now *Rebbe*) as an institutionalised form of leadership continues to be the movement's most distinctive feature. Once the Chassidic courts were established the pattern of succession became dynastic rather than by disciple. When a *Rebbe* died, he was usually succeeded by a son, a nephew or even a son-in-law. This dynastic pattern follows the traditional importance of *yi-chus* (lineage, status) in Jewish culture.<sup>12</sup> As the Chassidic movement became decentralised so too did differences appear amongst the dynastic courts, individual *Rebbes* emphasising different aspects of worship. Each *Rebbe* directs all decisions regarding policy, communal goals and attitudes, for he is in every way the leader of that particular Chassidic community.

One of Dov Baer's foremost disciples was Rebbe Shneur Zalman of Liadi (known as the *Alter Rebbe*), the philosopher of Chassidism and founder of *Chabad*. Shneur Zalman was a master of Talmud who introduced Chassidism into his native country of Lithuania, then the stronghold of rabbinism under the leadership of the great Talmudist, the *Gaon* of Vilna. His efforts were met with strong opposition by the *mitnagdim* (opponents), who upheld the traditional rabbinic and community structure and who considered *chassidim* to be heretical. Within this hostile environment, Shneur Zalman expounded his theoretical doctrine in the *Tanya* — the textbook of *Chabad*, which synthesised the pure emotional and spiritual momentum initiated by the *Baal Shem Tov* with a more intellectual approach to the service of God. The word *Chabad* is an acronym for the Hebrew words *chochmah* (wisdom), *binah* (understanding) and *daat* (knowledge) and the *Tanya* is studied alongside the *Torah* and Talmud. The followers of *Chabad* are also known as 'Lubavitch', for Chassidic groups were commonly named after the town of origin — Lubavitch being the town to which Shneur Zalman's son moved in 1814.

The present *Rebbe* of the *Chabad*-Lubavitch dynasty, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, is the seventh in direct lineage of spiritual leaders, and the son-in-law of his predecessor. Both he and the previous *Rebbe* share the same last name because they share the same lineage; both are descendants of different sons of the third Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Menahem Mendel, after whom he was named. He was born in Russia

in 1902, and by the time he reached Barmitzvah as regarded as an *illui* — a Torah prodigy. He derived an extensive secular knowledge through private study, mastering several languages and gaining a reputation as a brilliant mathematician.

He first met his predecessor, Rebbe Joseph Isaac Schneerson, in 1923, and six years later he married the Rebbe's daughter. The previous Rebbe had already embarked on an intensive campaign to found *yeshivot* (rabbinical academies), in order to spread the influence of Chabad in Europe, America and Canada. He remained resolute in his endeavours, despite extreme harassment by the Russian government and several terms in prison. (Five out of the seven Lubavitcher Rebbes have been imprisoned, as their activist policy brought them into constant conflict with government officials and Jewish opponents).

The previous Rebbe took the unusual step of sending his son-in-law to the Berlin University and later to the Sorbonne in Paris, where he gained an engineering degree. This emphasis on a secular education was unprecedented in Chassidism and continues to be frowned upon by non-Lubavitch *chassidim*. It would appear that the Rebbe was preparing his successor for what he believed would be a crucial period, and felt that an extensive knowledge of contemporary scholarship was vital, in order to communicate with all types of Jews in an increasingly secular world.<sup>13</sup> In 1940, the Rebbe transferred his headquarters to New York in order to ensure the continuation of Chabad, as America had the only sizable Jewish community outside Europe. His son-in-law joined him in 1941 and was appointed head of the Lubavitch agencies including publishing, social service and education. After his father-in-law's death in 1950, Menachem Mendel succeeded him as the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Under his leadership the movement has expanded into a world-wide organisation. The Lubavitch motto is *Uforatzto* — 'and ye shall spread out', and the Rebbe has used modern technology and innovative campaign strategies towards the spread of *Yiddishkeit*.

The Rebbe embarked on a proselytising campaign, sending emissaries all over the world, wherever Jewish people lived, in order to 'bring the genuine meaning of Torah to the lost and unlettered, to the alienated and disenchanted'.<sup>14</sup> A Lubavitcher *yeshiva* has become not only a place which teaches Torah, but a training ground for *shlichim* (emissaries). Chabad houses have been set up on university campuses and in the cities as informal meeting places for any Jew seeking spiritual, emotional or material assistance. The Lubavitch publishing arm *Kehot* has grown to be one of the world's largest. It prints translations of Chassidic philosophy and other religious works in over a dozen languages, and publishes a wide range of literature for children as well as a multitude of educational material.

The Rebbe initiated his 'Mitzvah Campaign' by exhorting the laying of *tefillin* (phylacteries) during the Israel-Arab Six Day War in 1967, capitalising on the increased intensity of Jewish identification which that conflict generated. Lubavitchers everywhere became activists, trying to persuade Jewish men to perform this *mitzvah*. (The Rebbe's followers believe that the willingness of many Israeli soldiers to take part in this campaign was a significant factor towards victory). The campaign has grown to include ten *mitzvot*: lighting of candles before the Sabbath, also before *Yom Tov*; affixing a *mezuzah* to doorposts; abiding by the dietary laws of *kashrut*; the giving of *tzedakah* (charity); Jewish family purity in accordance with the laws of *mikvah* (ritual bath); receiving a Torah education; the provision of Jewish Holy Books in the home; and of special importance, *Ahavas Israel*, the love of one's fellow Jew, for it has the effect of hospitality and active spiritual or material help to any Jew.

'Mitzvah Tanks' against assimilation, carrying religious books and articles, fitted

with loudspeakers that broadcast Jewish music are a familiar sight in American and European cities. The Lubavitchers in Melbourne also operate one, and another of these mobile *Chabad* houses cruised through the site of Brisbane's Expo 88,<sup>15</sup> as a means of reaching Jewish people from all over the world. Television, videos, public lighting of *menorahs* in cities around the world during *Chanukah*, newspaper and billboard advertising are all used to disseminate *Yiddishkeit* and combat assimilation within secularised society. The *Rebbe's farbrengen* now reaches far beyond the Lubavitch headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, New York as *Chabad* houses all over the world simultaneously receive his words by international telephone hook-ups. He has intensified and accelerated *Chabad's* traditional activist policies to fight secularisation, and the whole of the Lubavitch movement has been mobilised into an army with an urgent Messianic mission; each one feels they are a personal emissary of the commander-in-chief — the *Rebbe*.

Although many people may be familiar with different aspects of the background of *Chabad-Lubavitch* in Melbourne after World War II, the history of the Lubavitchers who visited and even settled in Melbourne in the nineteenth century is not so well known.<sup>16</sup> During the 1880s a number of Lubavitcher emissaries travelled from Palestine to Australia to raise funds for various projects. The first to arrive in 1857 was Rabbi Chaim Zvi Schneerson, a great-grandson of Shneur Zalman, who came to raise funds for the *Chabad Yeshiva* in Hebron. He returned to Australia in 1861 and stayed for over a year, travelling to various cities and country centres with Melbourne as his headquarters. His mission was to build homes for destitute Jews on Mt Zion with the stated hope that this would be the beginning of the restoration of the Jews to their own land. He was well supported by both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, receiving quite a deal of publicity through letters to the editor in the *Argus* newspaper, one of which described him as 'a respectable rabbi whose costume is picturesque and whose name is unpronounceable'.<sup>17</sup> The Anglican Dean and the Chief Justice of Melbourne attended his public meetings, where Reverend Rintel, the founder of the East Melbourne synagogue, acted as translator. After sending all the money raised to Jerusalem, Rabbi Schneerson found himself stranded, and the East Melbourne congregation presented him with half the contents of the Jerusalem Box, while two members also solicited donations to send him home.<sup>18</sup>

Rabbi Gedaliah Yosephson came in 1880 and 1889 to raise money for *yeshivot*. Apart from his formal mission, he earned money privately in order to finance his daughter's wedding. He began an *etrog* (citrus fruit used during the festival of *Sucot*) export business and his local Melbourne agent was an ex-compatriot from Hebron — Yosef Mysels, the first known Lubavitcher to settle in Australia, in 1875. Mysels broke the stereotype of the religious Jew when he enlisted as an artillery man in the Port Phillip Battery in 1916.<sup>19</sup>

The second Hebron Lubavitcher to migrate to Australia at the end of the nineteenth century was Yaakov Slonim, who was the great-grandson of the second Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, Dov Baer. Rabbi Slonim settled in Ballarat and was a staunch supporter of the strictly Orthodox synagogue there before moving to Melbourne in the 1920s.<sup>20</sup>

Four other emissaries came to Melbourne between 1878 and 1886 with varying degrees of success. The last one, Rabbi Avraham Shaulson — a great-nephew of Shneur Zalman — arrived in 1888. He was soliciting funds for the project *Knesset Israel* which was building low-cost housing in Jerusalem. The significant contributions of the prominent Melbourne businessmen Wolf Davis and Joseph Kronheimer enabled the first two stages of the project to be completed.<sup>21</sup> Joseph



Kronheimer was also the president of the Victorian branch of the Jewish Territorialist Movement which set out to buy land for Jewish settlement in Australia. In 1913 he donated £2000 towards the pioneer Jewish agricultural settlement in Shepparton where nine families from Russia and Palestine settled.<sup>22</sup>

Among those settlers were the Lubavitcher families of Moshe Zalman Feiglin and his brother Ber who had left Russia for Palestine in 1889 when the brothers were young children. The Feiglin family had been involved in agriculture in Palestine where Moshe Feiglin ran his own orchard. Concerns of a world war with a focus on the Middle East caused the brothers to migrate to Australia in 1912. They lived in Carlton and Moshe found work in a factory in Footscray.<sup>23</sup>

Life in Melbourne was problematic for the Feiglins. Apart from the differences in culture with the local Jewish community, Moshe was faced with financial difficulties for, as an Orthodox Jew, he could not work on Saturday. Also, having to start work at 7.30 a.m. during the winter, he was unable to *daven Shacharit* at home (morning prayers which must be performed after dawn while wearing *tefillin*).<sup>24</sup> The new settlement in Shepparton provided an opportunity for the Feiglins to overcome these difficulties and enable them to lead a traditional Jewish life. With his background in Palestine, Moshe Feiglin turned to fruit growing, and after some meagre years while the orchard became established and the trees grew to fruition, the enterprise flourished.

The Shepparton farm, where the Feiglin venture prospered, also saw the beginning of the Lubavitcher movement as we know it today. In keeping with the strong religious perspective which initiated the Feiglin's move, Moshe tried to ensure there was always a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) at the settlement, who also acted as a teacher of Jewish studies. Because of the remote location, there was a large turnover of *shochtim*. During the Depression, an immigrant from Russia, the late Myer Polonsky, joined the Feiglins. He recommended that a Lubavitcher *chassid* he had met at a *cheder* (school) prior to leaving Russia should be contacted to take up the position of *shochet*.<sup>25</sup> This was done and Rabbi Wilshansky agreed to come once a landing permit was granted. Efforts to gain such a permit continued until the outbreak of World War II.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, the scene in Eastern Europe during this period was one in which the historical harassment of Jews had intensified in the aftermath of World War I and the Russian Revolution. The town of Lubavitch had to be evacuated when German troops invaded White Russia in 1915. Later, in 1921, religious Jews like the Lubavitchers came under severe attack from the anti-religious Jewish branches of the Communist Party, the *Yevseksia*, who regarded them as enemies of the new state. The previous *Rebbe*, Joseph Isaac Schneerson, who had at this time just become the leader of *Chabad*, spearheaded many legal battles in the Soviet courts in an effort to maintain some religious freedom. In 1927 he was arrested as a 'counter-revolutionary' and would have been executed except for pressure put on the Russian government by an international protest group which included President Calvin Coolidge. Upon his release he began to decentralise the *Chabad* organisation, establishing a main *yeshiva* in Warsaw. He also travelled through Europe to the Holy Land, America and Canada organising *Chabad* institutions. His followers were urged to leave Russia if they could. However, he also established an underground network of staunch supporters among those who could not get out of Russia who continued to maintain an autonomous religious organisation without a synagogue or *yeshiva*.<sup>27</sup> A few hundred of these Lubavitchers, who managed to survive during the Stalinist regime, planned a mass escape immediately after the war in 1946. At



the time, the Russian government was allowing families who had sought refuge during the war to be repatriated to their country of origin. The Lubavitchers obtained false Polish passports and papers from Poles wishing to remain in Russia or who had died. They changed their identities to fit in with these documents, and many managed to cross the border into Poland with the assistance of the *Bricha*, a group of young Israelis who risked their lives to help the Lubavitchers and others to escape the country. As stateless refugees, the Lubavitchers were sent to displaced persons' camps in Austria and Germany where they remained, constantly fearful that they would be returned to the Russian Zones. Eventually, through the intervention of a Catholic bishop (who was a convert from Judaism; now the Archbishop of Paris), they managed to gain access to that city in 1948. From Paris, which was a main point of transit for Europe's refugees, Lubavitchers with families in the United States were able to obtain visas to join them; others left for England and Canada. The *Rebbe* advised sixty-eight families to go to Israel and start a settlement there — several months before the State gained its independence. Moshe Feiglin sent a visa to Rabbi Wilshansky who finally arrived in Australia in 1949 to become the *shochet* at Shepparton. The Feiglins also sponsored other Lubavitcher families: Rabbis Althaus, Kluwgant and Gurewicz, who were also advised to come by the *Rebbe*, came to the settlement in July 1949. A few months later, just before *Rosh Hashanah*, Rabbis Zalman Serebryanski and Pliskin and their families also arrived.<sup>28</sup>

When Reb Zalman Serebryanski was advised by the previous *Rebbe* to come to Australia, he had planned to leave his sons behind to continue their Jewish education at the *Chabad* institutions in Paris. However, he received a letter from the *Rebbe* strongly telling him to come with both his sons, as well as his daughter, and to bring as many religious books as possible with him as there would be a need to establish a *yeshiva*. Upon his arrival at Shepparton, Reb Zalman contacted the *Rebbe* to ask his advice regarding this proposed *yeshiva* for it was obvious that there would be very few pupils. An immediate reply directed Reb Zalman to start at once, no matter the number of students. Reb Althaus then proceeded to organise a public meeting to be held at the Carlton *Talmud Torah* in order to discuss the official establishment of a *yeshiva* at Shepparton.

Not unexpectedly, the reaction of the local Jews to this proposal was that it was absurd — these Lubavitchers who had just arrived, spoke no English and knew nothing about Australia, actually believed they could establish a *yeshiva*. Nevertheless, despite initial opposition, the plan was accepted and a few days after *Simchas Torah* the first *yeshiva* commenced operation with three full-time students: Reb Zalman's elder son, Arel, and the two brothers, Yaakov and Shraga Herzog. Some months later they were joined by a few others as well as some part-time students who came during their school holidays.<sup>29</sup> The *Rosh Yeshiva* (head) was Reb Pliskin, and Reb Zalman acted as chief administrator (which included washing clothes as well as raising funds), while continuing to work in the orchards. The *Yeshiva* used the Shepparton Synagogue and Jewish hostel as well as other buildings provided by the Feiglins. Among a number of boys from Melbourne who became regular visitors to the *Yeshiva* were Jonathan Sheink, Alf Slonim and Louis New.<sup>30</sup>

Within two years it was apparent that the Shepparton community was in decline. It was difficult to increase the number of pupils and it became obvious that a move to Melbourne was required. In 1951 a large house was acquired on ten acres in Burwood (close to the present site of Mount Scopus College). The numbers of students did increase with about twenty-five boarders (including two from Sydney)



*Reb Zalman Serebryanski, photographed by Sam Cylich about 1975.  
(Courtesy Helen Sharp)*

and some boys coming from Mount Scopus after school. However, distance continued to be a problem and the *Yeshiva* found it was not attracting the mainstream of Jewish children. Therefore, towards the end of 1954 they began looking for a suitable property in the heart of the Jewish community, around the Caulfield area. The *Yeshiva* was at this stage still a fledgling organisation, mainly run by the same small group of Lubavitchers, but it was slowly growing.

Another thread of the history of Lubavitch in Australia began in 1940 in Brisbane with the arrival of Chaim Gutnick, who was joined a few years later by his younger brother Sholem. Despite the non-chassidic, 'modern' appearance of the Gutnick brothers until the 1960s, they came from a Lubavitcher family. Their father had been a prominent Lubavitcher scholar who also held a number of secular degrees including a Doctorate in mathematics. Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Ze'ev Gutnick worked in a Jewish community in Georgia (Russia) and was well known to the previous *Rebbe*. During the turmoil following the Russian Revolution he barely escaped being shot by the *Yevseksia* — unfortunately, his wife's two brothers were not so lucky. He and his family made their way illegally to Palestine where he later contracted pleurisy. Because of continuing health problems, he was sent by the previous *Rebbe* to run *Chabad* in London in 1927. Unfortunately, he never fully recovered and died in 1932 at the young age of thirty-five.<sup>31</sup>

Chaim was about eleven years old at the time and a very good scholar. The board of the *shul* organised that he should be sent to the Telz *Yeshiva* in Lithuania (a non-chassidic *yeshiva*) to continue his studies after his Barmitzvah; the style of that *yeshiva* rubbed off on Chaim. His brother Sholem, who was very young when his father died (about seven), was also studious and obtained his *smicha* (ordination) in a *Mussar yeshiva* — hence the non-Lubavitch appearance of the Gutnick brothers as young men in Australia.

At the outbreak of war Chaim, as a British subject, worked at the British embassy for a while helping those Jews attempting to flee Lithuania. Later, in 1940, he and his comrades from the *Yeshiva* were evacuated by train to Vladivostok and, travelling by a rather circuitous route, they found themselves in Brisbane. The Australian Jewish leaders were hospitable but not overly enthusiastic about finding employment for this group of very Orthodox Talmudic scholars, and they were encouraged to follow their own predisposition to move onto America. But Chaim had sent a telegram to the previous *Rebbe* advising him of his arrival in Australia and received an answer urging all the young students to stay. He was told that seeing Providence had brought them to these shores, it was a sign that his place was here to prepare the ground for the many refugees who would arrive after the war. Chaim, the only Lubavitcher in the group, was one of the few to stay (as did Reb Chaim Silver).<sup>32</sup>

With the support of Rev. Wollman of the Brisbane congregation, Chaim left for Sydney where he joined the army and was sent to Norfolk Island to be trained to fight the Japanese (his intention had been to fight the Germans). However, he did not see combat but instead became an army chaplain under the late Rabbi. Danglow. When he was to meet Rabbi. Danglow for the first time, Chaim carefully prepared a *halachic droshe* (sermon) to show his capabilities. He was quickly informed that this was of little interest; what was needed was that he should learn how to be an officer and, above all, he should wear a clerical 'dog-collar'. The type of Orthodox establishment in place in Australia was quite foreign to Chaim Gutnick, and after the war he decided against continuing in the rabbinate. Nevertheless, he remained actively involved in the Jewish community as a teacher of



*Rabbi Chaim Gutnick (in Army Chaplain's uniform) and Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, photographed about 1975 in Brooklyn, New York, by Itzhak Berez. (Courtesy Helen Sharp)*

religious instruction in Sydney. During the course of his teaching he met his bride-to-be, Rosie Chester, then a Form Five student at Sydney Girls' High School. There was a mutual attraction, an introduction was arranged and they were engaged while she was still at school, marrying soon after in 1944. His father-in-law had a jewellery business which Chaim joined while continuing to work part-time as an honorary rabbi at the Mizrahi Synagogue.

Meanwhile, his mother had remarried in England to Rabbi Osher Abramson, and in 1948 the family decided to join Chaim in Sydney. They travelled via America where Sholem visited the *Rebbe* whose words stirred him deeply and convinced him that his future lay in Australia. Sholem, who was the rabbi of a *shul* in the East End of London, found nothing suitable on his arrival and decided to study at the University of Sydney (a rather radical move for any *yeshiva bocher*), where he majored in Philosophy. During this period of time, a Lubavitcher *shaliach* from America, visiting Australia to raise funds for the *Yeshiva*, spent a number of months in the home of Sholem Gutnick as well as six months with Abraham Feiglin (Moshe Feiglin's son), who had a young daughter. In traditional style, a *shidduch* (match) was arranged between Sholem and Dvora Feiglin.

They set up house in Caulfield where Sholem started a *Talmud Torah* in his home. The *Yeshiva*, which had by this time moved to Burwood, asked him to join them and he travelled there daily to teach. In 1952 the Caulfield congregation, then housed in a small army hut, invited him as a guest speaker. He was duly appointed as their

rabbi and has now been associated with the synagogue for thirty-nine years. He maintained his growing attachment with Lubavitch, continuing to teach for *Yeshiva* at Burwood and later in Hotham Street, East St Kilda.

Back in Sydney the Gutnicks' step-father, Rabbi Abramson (who worked with the late Rabbi Porush and became head of the *Beth Din* in Sydney when Rabbi Porush retired), was urging Chaim to become a full-time rabbi. In 1956 Adelaide was looking for a rabbi and Chaim went to discuss the position, but talks reached a stalemate when Chaim refused to wear the required clerical collar. The Elwood Congregation had also invited him for a *Rosh Hashanah* service and Melbourne soon gained a new rabbi. With the continuing growth of the *Yeshiva*, Chaim's contact with *Chabad* became more frequent and he was gradually influenced to return completely to his Lubavitch heritage, especially after a long private session with the *Rebbe* in New York in the mid-1960s. From that time he began to grow his beard and adopt more of the outward appearances of Lubavitch as did his brother Sholem, although they both continue to serve non-chassidic congregations.

It was Sholem Gutnick who began searching for suitable premises for the *Yeshiva* in 1954 and, with the help of the late Leo Newman, came across the present site at 92 Hotham Street which was owned by an English-born Jew, the late Henry Leber. He was asking £25,000 for the property and a Catholic school had expressed interest, but Mr Leber, a traditional Jew who kept a kosher home, felt uncomfortable with the idea of such a change for his former residence. Several members of *Yeshiva* felt this was an ideal site, but they only had limited funds. After selling their present premises to Mount Scopus College and repaying their mortgage they were left with approximately £6,000; the most they felt they could afford to spend was £10,000. The steering committee of the *Yeshiva* project, which included the late David Feiglin (son of Moshe Feiglin), met with Mr Leber. They negotiated to buy the property at a most reasonable price under very favourable conditions. Knowing of their financial difficulties, Mr Leber sold them the property for £18,352 (*chai*), on only about £9,000 deposit, the rest to be paid off at £1,000 per annum interest free. His son later became an active member of the *Yeshiva*, and when he and his mother became executors of Mr Leber's estate in 1957, they cancelled the remaining debt.<sup>33</sup>

Within four months of purchasing the property the school opened its doors for after-school classes with Reb Zalman as its first principal. In February 1955 three classes — prep to grade 2 — were begun with twelve pupils under the direction of Mrs. E. Rintel and with about 150 boys coming for tuition after school. By 1956 two further classes had been added and there were fifty-five students; in 1965 they had their first Matriculation class. Today, *Yeshiva College*, which stresses the equal importance of religious and secular studies, has 350 students.<sup>34</sup>

During 1956, once *Yeshiva College* was established, and despite continuing severe financial restraints, attention was focused on providing a similar day school for girls. Moshe Feiglin and his son David were advised, at a private meeting with the *Rebbe*, to organise a first, second and even a third mortgage to get the project underway. They were told that 'whereas mortgages could be redeemed by the passage of time, the loss of Jewish learning . . . could not be redeemed'.<sup>35</sup> On their return, discussions were initiated with Mrs Suzie Herz who had been running a private kindergarten and sub-primary group at her home in Glen Eira Road. *Yeshiva College* took over the financing and administration of the project and Mrs Herz became the headmistress of Beth Rivkah College. In 1959, a large donation of



£20,000 was obtained from the Sydney businessman and philanthropist Adolph Basser (later knighted) which enabled the present site in Balaclava Road to be purchased, and a year later 165 girls moved into the new primary school. In 1968 the late Sadie and Raymond Ellinson pledged £18,000 to start construction on a secondary school in the grounds behind the present building — not ideal for the playgrounds would be greatly reduced. Building was about to commence when an auction sign appeared unexpectedly on a nearby property in Balaclava Road between Empress and Alexandra Streets. Thanks to the generosity of Raymond Ellinson, whose donation eventually increased to \$100,000, Yeshiva College was able to buy that property and build Beth Rivkah Secondary School. The new school opened in 1965 with 96 girls including ten matriculation students. In 1970, after fifteen years of service, Mrs Herz retired, and Shmuel Gurewicz (son of Reb Nachum Z. Gurewicz who came to Australia in 1949) became the principal.<sup>36</sup> His sister, Mrs Ella Blesofsky, is head of the primary school; Mrs Sima Paltiel (daughter of Reb Kluwgant who also arrived in 1949) is directress of Jewish Studies. Beth Rivkah College now has a population of 450 students.

As can be seen, Yeshiva College and its organisation experienced substantial growth from 1950 due to the dedicated efforts of the original families (especially Reb Zalman), the support of Moshe Feiglin and his family, Rabbi Sholem Gutnick and other committed members of the community. However, a large measure of the success of the Lubavitch movement in Melbourne today must go to the dynamic leadership of Rabbi Yitzchak Groner, sent by the *Rebbe* to Melbourne in 1959 to be chief administrator.

Rabbi Groner was born in America into a Lubavitch family who had arrived from Hebron in the 1920s. He visited Australia in 1947 as a *shaliach* for the previous *Rebbe*, to raise funds for *yeshivot* in the United States. During the early 1950s he came again to help raise funds for the *Yeshiva* organisation in Australia. He apparently made a great impression on the local supporters who saw him as just the person they needed in order to achieve their aims. The family left Buffalo with their six children and Rabbi Groner began to make his considerable mark on Melbourne.<sup>37</sup>

The next major step, after the establishment of Yeshiva and Beth Rivkah Colleges, was the founding of the *Yeshivah Gedolah* — the post-graduate college of Jewish learning for young men, which started in a small house in 1965 with about six students. Among them were Chaim Zvi Groner (the rabbi's son) and Mordechai Gutnick (Chaim Gutnick's son, now the rabbi of the Yeshurun Synagogue in Doncaster). Mordechai Gutnick had intended to continue his studies in America, but was told by the *Rebbe* that it was important for him to stay and help establish this new project which was again led by Reb Zalman. It was extremely difficult for this small group, which included two young men from Sydney, to live and learn together without the atmosphere and stimulation of a large *yeshiva*. In 1967 the *Rebbe* sent six of his best students from New York to join the boys in Melbourne. Sending *yeshiva* students to study at a small insignificant establishment in Australia instead of Israel was a unique innovation at the time. The immediate impact that these young Americans had on the boys at the *Yeshiva* and in the Lubavitch community was immense. They provided religious role models, not only as knowledgeable Jews involved in learning, but as young men who could also be seen relating positively to ordinary Jews in the street. They began to actively work within *Chabad's* outreach programme, visiting Jewish prisoners, going to Flinders Lane and involving Jewish businessmen in *shiurim* (talks on religious issues), encouraging



them to lay *tefillin*, interacting with students at Yeshiva College by discussion or through sport.<sup>38</sup> The *Yeshivah Gedolah* attracted increasing numbers of students not only from Yeshiva College but also from other Jewish schools. They moved twice into larger premises and now occupy a large historic building in Alexandra Street. Some of the many students who have attended the institution in the last twenty-five years have gone on to become rabbis, others have just become strongly involved community members.

A former student, well-known in the community especially through his articles in the Jewish press, is Rabbi Laibl Wolf. He had attended Mount Scopus College and, although he came from a traditional home, as a rebellious youth he was non-observant. In the late 1960s, during his final year at university doing Law, he was influenced by Reb Zalman to attend a few sessions at the *Yeshivah Gedolah*. He continued these Jewish studies over a period of time and after finishing his degree, spent eight months increasing his Jewish knowledge. He was part of a new phenomenon — the *Baal Teshuva* movement (returnees to Orthodox Judaism) which has occurred world-wide in quite significant numbers (not all of them are Lubavitch). Laibl Wolf went on to become a Hillel director in America for several years. As a young married man in the early 1970s, Laibl contacted the *Rebbe* to ask his advice about pursuing his studies in a *Kollel* (rabbinical college), as is the usual practice for most Lubavitcher young married men who study full-time for one or two years. The unexpected answer he received was: 'God forbid!!' The message continued, 'at a time of war, a person cannot desert from the front'. Laibl was told that 'as he was working with youth and students — an area of great gravity at that particular point in time, when the faster a student would carry out *mitzvot* would have an effect on his or her life and, indeed, the whole of *Klal Israel* — he had no right to take time off in the middle of warfare just to please himself. However, if Laibl happened to have some spare time, he could do some extra learning'.<sup>39</sup> It was not until 1979 that he was able to take leave and go to Jerusalem to further his studies. Rabbi Laibl Wolf continued to work for Hillel in Australia until 1985 while also participating in the *Chabad* outreach programmes. After spending the last few years in the family's property development business, he has become full-time director of the newest *Chabad* House which opened in 1991 in Caulfield.<sup>40</sup>

A tertiary institution for girls, the *Ohel Chana*, was started in 1971 and by the 1980s, young women were also coming from America to study there. Melbourne appears to have spearheaded the movement of young American Lubavitchers to study in centres (other than Israel) outside the United States. Women from various parts of the world now come to *Ohel Chana* because of its excellent reputation as a Jewish teaching institution — a reputation it also shares with the *Yeshivah Gedolah*. Indeed, during the 1970s, Melbourne was ahead of many cities which had much larger Jewish populations, e.g. London, but did not have any Jewish tertiary institutions.

In 1979, the Melbourne *Kollel Lubavitch* opened where young married men could study full-time for a couple of years. The *Rebbe* now sent young couples from America for two years to strengthen the new *Kollel*. A number of Lubavitchers who have studied at these institutions, and others who have married into Melbourne families, have settled in Australia working for *Chabad* or other Jewish congregations and organisations; for example: Rabbi Gorelik, originally from Russia, married Reb Gurewicz's daughter whom he met in America, returned to Melbourne and set up the 'Friends of the Refugees from Eastern Europe' (known as F.R.E.E.); Rabbi Feitel Levin from the *Yeshivah Kollel* is rabbi of the Brighton Hebrew Congregation; Rabbi

Raskin began the first Melbourne *Chabad* House in 1986 in Bentleigh; Rabbi Shimshon Yurkowicz, married to Rabbi Groner's daughter, started the *Chabad* House in Malvern in 1988; Rabbi Yossi Gordon is in charge of *Chabad's* activities in Tasmania; Rabbi Yossel Gutnick, Chaim's son, a well-known businessman who has contributed to numerous projects for *Chabad* and the general Jewish community in Australia and Israel, is married to Reb Kluwgant's grand-daughter; Rabbi Pinchas Feldman married Chaim Gutnick's daughter and heads *Chabad* in Sydney; Rabbi Rafael Aron, a former student of the Yeshiva College, is director of the Jewish Crisis Centre.

The *Chabad*-Lubavitch organisation has grown immensely since those first few families arrived in Shepparton in 1949. Some of their offspring have formed marriage ties with several branches of the Feiglins and Gutnicks as well as other religious families forming a strong familial and communal network. When considering the diversity of activities and organisations with which *Chabad*-Lubavitch is involved, it would appear that the movement has had a considerable impact on the structure of the Jewish community in Melbourne.<sup>41</sup>

## NOTES

1. This paper, parts of which are taken from an ethnographic study of the Lubavitch community in Melbourne carried out in 1988 for an Honours Thesis in Sociology, was delivered at a meeting of the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc., on 6 June 1991.
2. See some of the sociological debates surrounding the modernisation and secularisation theories in Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, Doubleday & Co. Inc., New York, 1967; B. Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1982; also Max Weber's theory of the progressive rationalisation of modern society and his concept of 'the disenchantment of the world' in H.H. Girth & W.C. Mills (eds) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1948.
3. See studies of Chassidic communities such as Satmar in S. Poll, *The Hasidic Community of Williamsburg*, Schocken Books, New York, 1962, and S. Isaacs, 'Hasidim in Brooklyn' in *A Book of Many Colours*, Greenwood Press, U.S.A., 1977; also H. Steinberg's description of the Squarer Chassidim in 'New Square: Bridge Over the River Time' in *A Coat of Many Colours*; and W. Shaffir's discussion of the Tash in 'Separation from the Mainstream in Canada: the Hassidic Community of Tash' in *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, vol. xxiv(1), 1987, pp.19–33.
4. I. Epstein, *Judaism: A Historical Presentation*, Pelican Books, London, 1966; S. Sharot, 'Hasidism and the Routinisation of Charisma', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, (16), 2, 1977, pp. 325–336.
5. Epstein, *op.cit.*, p. 270.
6. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Schocken Books, New York, 1941, pp. 29–30.
7. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 253.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Uforatzto Journal*, Lubavitch Youth Organisation, New York, 1980, p. 16.
10. M. Zborowski and E. Herzog, *Life is With People: The Jewish Little Town of Eastern Europe*, International University Press, New York, 1953, pp. 166–188.
11. J. Mintz, *Legends of the Hasidim: An Introduction to Hasidic Culture and Oral Tradition in the New World*, The University of Chicago Press, U.S.A., 1968, p. 108.
12. Mintz, *op. cit.*, p. 54 and p. 89; Zborowski and Herzog, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–79.
13. *Uforatzto*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
14. I. Spiegel, 'The Rebbe: In his Torah There is Room for All Jews', *A Coat of Many Colours*, (ed.) A. Lavender, Greenwood Press, U.S.A., 1977, p. 203.
15. *Australian Jewish News*, 5 August 1988, p. 76.
16. See Shmuel Gorr's article 'Holy Land Lubavitchers in 19th Century Australia', in *The Chabad Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 2, February 1988, pp. 4–6, which traces the history of the *shlichim* and early Lubavitcher settlers in Victoria.
17. L.M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*, The Author, Melbourne, 1954, p. 155.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 346; also Gorr, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
20. Gorr, *Ibid.*
21. Gorr, *Ibid.*, p. 5.
22. Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, Collins Australia, Sydney, 1988, p. 91, citing Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835-1985*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986, p. 100.
23. Peter Kohn, 'The Feiglins, a Jewish Australian Saga', *Australian and New Zealand Jewish Year Book*, 1985, pp. 96-97.
24. *Ibid.*
25. A conversation with Mr Jacob Polonsky on 5 September 1991, and the family history written by Mr Alec Polonsky of Sydney, show that Myer Polonsky had arrived in Australia in 1923 and joined two other brothers in Hay, New South Wales, before later moving to Shepparton.
26. Kohn, *op. cit.*; also David Feiglin's article 'Origin and Development of Lubavitcher Yeshivah College Melbourne', *Let's Shed Light on the Yeshiva Centre*, Melbourne, n.d., p. 8.
27. E. Hoffman, *Despite All Odds: The Story of Lubavitch*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1990, pp. 23-24.
28. This information comes from interviews conducted between April and June 1991 with Reb Zalman Serebryanski (who has since passed away), Binyomin Althaus and Rabbi Feitel Levin (*whose father was sent from Paris to Ireland by the previous Rebbe*). The Kluwgants had originally intended to migrate to Canada, but as the late Mrs Kluwgant was Mrs Althaus' sister, they decided to go together to Australia.
29. Interviews with Reb Arel Serebryanski, April 1988, and Reb Zalman Serebryanski, April 1991.
30. During the 1930s and 1940s many teenagers from Melbourne came fruitpicking at the Feiglin orchards during the summer holidays (see Kohn, *op. cit.*, p. 99).
31. This history of the Gutnick family comes from interviews with Rabbis Chaim, Sholem and Mordechai Gutnick, conducted April-May 1991.
32. For another account of this journey see S. Gorr, 'From Kelme to Melbourne', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* Vol. XI part 2, 1991, pp. 299-311.
33. Feiglin, *op. cit.*; also Reb Arel Serebryanski in an interview 2 May 1988 stated that a historical account of Lubavitch in Melbourne should have a record of Mr Leber's generosity and support to the Yeshiva.
34. Feiglin, *op. cit.*, p. 9; also interview with Reb Zalman, April 1991.
35. Feiglin, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
37. Interview with Rabbi Yossel Groner, 26 May 1991.
38. Groner, *Ibid.*
39. Interview with Rabbi Laibl Wolf, 13 May 1991.
40. Another *Baal Teshuva* now working for the Yeshiva is Rabbi Shimon Cowen, the son of Sir Zelman Cowen who, while studying for his Ph.D. in Politics in Canberra, came into contact with members of Chabad's outreach movement, sparking an intensified interest in Judaism.
41. The Doncaster Jewish Day School, which opened four years ago at the North Eastern Jewish Centre and now has about fifty students in prep. year to grade 3 is also funded by the Yeshiva.

## THE MELBOURNE JEWISH LEFT 1967-1986

*Philip Mendes*

In the last years of the sixties, the pre-eminent Australian Jewish Left organisation, the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism lapsed into sharp decline and eventual dissolution.<sup>1</sup> As in the fifties, its nemesis was the issue of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Bloc.

In 1968, a vicious, overtly anti-Semitic campaign was launched by the Polish Government against the remnants of Polish Jewry.<sup>2</sup> These events caused a split in the Jewish Council between its pro-Soviet hardliners and those who felt the Council should take a strong active stand against Polish anti-Semitism. One of the latter, Norman Rothfield<sup>3</sup>, invited Henry Zimmerman, Chairman of the Jewish Progressive Group for Peace in the Middle East<sup>4</sup>, to address the Council Committee on this matter. Zimmerman had recently placed an advertisement in *Tribune* condemning Polish anti-Semitism.

Zimmerman presented evidence of Polish anti-Semitism from Polish sources and called on the Jewish Council to issue a public condemnation. Norman Rothfield suggested that the Council make a contribution to Zimmerman's advertisement. This suggestion was rejected by two hardline Committee members who attacked Zimmerman personally and suggested that his real purpose was 'anti-Sovietism'. Zimmerman took umbrage and walked out of the meeting, afterwards sending a letter of protest to Council President Lou Wilks.<sup>5</sup>

As a consequence of this disunity, the Council held only a handful of further public meetings. Its last annual dinner was held in 1969 and featured Monash University Vice-Chancellor Louis Matheson as guest speaker.<sup>6</sup> The Council's final publication was a thirteen-page pamphlet titled *Hungarian Jew-Haters in Australia* published in 1970, which exposed the presence of anti-Semitic movements amongst Hungarian migrants. The pamphlet was based on the research of Dr John Playford from Monash University. In late 1970, Lou Jedwab and Lou Wilks (the Council's last Treasurer and President respectively) donated the Council's remaining funds to the Jewish Welfare Society and the Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament (CICD).<sup>7</sup>

The 1967 Six Day War heightened the importance of the Middle East as an issue of key concern to the Jewish community. During the war, the Jewish Council joined with eight other Melbourne Jewish Labor organisations to form a United Emergency Committee for Israel. The Committee saw its main task as 'securing — in close co-operation with the Australian Labor movement — full support for and solidarity with Israel on the part of the Australian people at this crucial hour in the history of the Jewish State'.<sup>8</sup>

Shortly after the war, Norman Rothfield attended the Stockholm Conference of the World Peace Council as a representative of CICD.<sup>9</sup> CICD had recently passed a resolution on the war similar to UN Resolution 242. The Arab and Russian delegates at the Conference attempted to pass a motion condemning Israel as the aggressor in the war. Rothfield intervened in the debate, condemning any attempt

'to urge a solution merely by applying pressure on Israel without requiring the Arab States to do anything at all'.<sup>10</sup>

Rothfield subsequently urged the Jewish Council to change direction and involve itself more actively in the Middle East issue, and other issues such as Aboriginal rights and International Peace.<sup>11</sup> The suggestion was apparently rejected, although the Council did issue a lengthy statement on 'Israel and the Middle East' just prior to its demise.<sup>12</sup> Rothfield himself was extremely critical of the Australia Communist Party, which had asserted that Israel was the aggressor. In July 1968 he addressed a meeting of the Jewish Progressive Centre<sup>13</sup> and condemned the inaccurate, biased and coloured reporting of the Six Day War by the Australian Communist Press.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in an article in *Tribune*, Rothfield rejected EPA Secretary Bernard Taft's argument that Israel's survival was not in jeopardy. Rothfield pointed out that the people of Israel believed that 'not only their own lives and their families', but the survival of their State was at stake'.<sup>15</sup> In August 1969, Rothfield addressed a meeting of the Orah WIZO Group and stressed that 'the only people in Israel who hold the view that Israel is the aggressor and should withdraw are members of the new Communist Party'. He also suggested that Israel was not being responsive enough to Arab peace suggestions.<sup>16</sup> Rothfield subsequently asserted that 'a clear statement now, of a willingness to trade territory for security, and all that goes with it, with justice for the refugees, might win a positive response from certain Arab quarters and, at very least, help to isolate the extremists in the Arab camp'.<sup>17</sup>

1971 saw the formation of an organisation called the Australian Committee for Peace in the Middle East. Its members included Norman and Evelyn Rothfield, Jake Zemel, Jack Rezak, Max Teichmann and Gordon Bryant MP.<sup>18</sup> The Committee issued a three-page pamphlet titled *Palestine, Israel and Zionism* which called for co-operation between Palestinians and Israeli socialists, leading to the recognition of Israel and the achievement of the just rights of the Palestinians.<sup>19</sup>

The Committee also organised the visit to Australia of Israeli Arab journalist Ibrahim Shebat, editor of *As Mirsed (On Guard)*, the Arabic-language organ of *Mapam*. Shebat spoke to a number of public meetings, stressing that the conflict in the Middle East represented 'a confrontation between two just causes'. Shebat called on Israel to recognise the Palestinians' identity and rights and for the Palestinians to clearly declare their readiness to recognise the existence of Israel.<sup>20</sup> Shebat's viewpoint met with a great deal of sympathy in the Australian Jewish community and from the Jewish press.<sup>21</sup>

In late 1971, the Jewish Radical Association (J.R.A.) was formed, to fill the need for a progressive Jewish voice.<sup>22</sup> The founding Statement of Aims stressed the need to confront the growth in anti-Israel propaganda emanating from sections of the Left. The Statement also expressed concern regarding the influence of the Nazis and the League of Rights, denounced anti-Semitism in the U.S.S.R and Poland, and called for greater Jewish activity concerning Vietnam, problems of racism, apartheid and discrimination against Aborigines.<sup>23</sup>

J.R.A. activists included Norman Rothfield, Henry Zimmerman, Jake Zemel, Arnold Milgrom and David and Sue Zyngier. A group of Sydney Jewish Left activists consisting of Nate Zusman, Hyam Brezniak and Simon Prokhovnik also appear to have been involved in early discussions.<sup>24</sup>

Despite being small in numbers, the J.R.A. appears to have made a significant contribution to the Melbourne Jewish community in 1972. For example, public

meetings were held on 'Israel as an Occupying Power', 'Radicalism and Racism in Australia', Moshe Sneh Commemoration, Warsaw Ghetto evening, and 'Jewish Radicalism in the United States'. Speakers included David Rothfield (from Israel), Dr Jim Cairns, Lorna Lippmann, Jake Zemel, Jack Rezak, Henry Zimmerman, David Zyngier and Barbara Marsh.<sup>25</sup>

Early in the year, the J.R.A. became involved in a sharp controversy with the State Zionist Council, concerning an anti-Semitic statement made in Federal Parliament by Liberal Senator Sim.<sup>26</sup> The J.R.A. alleged that Prime Minister McMahon had attacked a Jewish M.P., Joe Berinson, for raising the 'sectarian issue', in an attempt to divert criticism from Senator Sim.<sup>27</sup> The J.R.A. demanded an apology from Mr McMahon and action from the E.C.A.J.<sup>28</sup> When this was not forthcoming, it inserted a public advertisement in the Jewish Press urging that Mr McMahon should not be a special guest of the State Zionist Council at the Israel Independence Day Celebration.<sup>29</sup> Strong criticism was also voiced by *Hashomer Hatzair* and the Radical Zionist Alliance.<sup>30</sup> The State Zionist Council dismissed this criticism as reflecting the views of a small 'splinter minority'.<sup>31</sup>

The J.R.A. also complained constantly about the tolerant attitude of the Liberal Government to racist groups such as the League of Rights, the Ustasha and the Nazis.<sup>32</sup> In August 1972, Norman Rothfield drafted and helped to promote a petition against Nazis and Racism launched by the Association of Victims of Nazi Persecution. The petition requested the Commonwealth and State Governments to (1) implement the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 18 December 1971, which called on all member states to prevent the activities of Nazi organisations and racist groups; (2) forbid the wearing of Nazi uniforms and the display of swastikas, symbols of oppression, murder and genocide; (3) take action (including the enforcement of existing laws) against all persons taking part in or fostering any para-military training or activity.<sup>33</sup> Over 20,000 signatures were gathered, including those of Dr Jim Cairns M.P., the Hon. J. Galbally, Ted Innes, Professor Ian Turner, Gordon Bryant M.P., Walter Lippmann, Bruce Silverwood, John Lloyd and Senator Brown.<sup>34</sup>

Other J.R.A. activities included representations to the Polish, Czech and Russian Governments regarding Eastern Bloc anti-Semitism<sup>35</sup>, and public opposition to those Australian Leftists who advocated the replacement of Israel with a so-called 'Democratic Secular Palestine'.<sup>36</sup> The J.R.A. also produced a twelve-page newsletter titled *Conflict* in November 1972 which promoted its views on a wide range of subjects.

In the latter part of 1972, the J.R.A. seems to have devoted much of its time to the promotion of support for the A.L.P. within the Jewish community. For example, it strongly criticised E.C.A.J. President Nathan Jacobson, claiming that he was engaging in political advocacy on behalf of the Liberal Party.<sup>37</sup> The J.R.A. also endorsed a group called 'Jewish supporters of the Australian Labor Party'<sup>38</sup>, issued a brief statement supporting the A.L.P.<sup>39</sup>, published a broadsheet titled *Attempts to Mislead Jewish Voters*<sup>40</sup>, and organised a public meeting to hear Labor's case. Speakers were Dr Moss Cass, Gordon Bryant, Mottel Roth (Yiddish), Jack Rezak and Norman Rothfield.<sup>41</sup>

The J.R.A. met its demise in early 1973. Its last action appears to have been a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir in March 1973, calling on her government to initiate fresh peace moves with the Arab states.<sup>42</sup> At this point, the Melbourne Jewish Left seems to have declined into virtual non-existence, except for the occasional show of support for the Whitlam Government.<sup>43</sup>



In June 1974, Norman and Evelyn Rothfield launched *Paths to Peace: An Independent Middle East Journal*, with Peter Weiniger as editor. *Paths to Peace* stated its intent as: 'We want to see peace in the Middle East. We want to see Israel accepted by the Arabs as a neighbour in the Middle East. We want to see Israel recognise the rights of the Palestinian Arabs.'<sup>44</sup>

*Paths to Peace* aimed to provide a forum for expressing the new realities in the area which had emerged after the Yom Kippur War. Peter Weiniger (who had covered the war for Reuters in Israel) believed that the war had shattered the myth of Israeli military invincibility. Now, it was important to exchange ideas and information which could serve as a catalyst for eventual Jewish/Arab co-operation and reconciliation. Peter also sought to utilise a whole range of information from *New Outlook* and other progressive Israeli Zionist magazines which were not gaining access to the Australian Jewish press.<sup>45</sup>

On the local scene, *Paths to Peace* tried to provide a middle-of-the-road view between the heavily polarised pro-Israel Jewish community and the pro-P.L.O. Australian Left. In particular, it aimed to provide pro-Israel source material from a Left-wing viewpoint that would undermine Bill Hartley and other sources of extreme anti-Israel propaganda.<sup>46</sup> This role was particularly appreciated by Sam Lipski, then the newly-appointed Director of Australia-Israel Publications. Lipski saw *Paths to Peace* as valuable in that it maintained 'a credible presence on the Left, whilst sticking to a broad pro-Israel viewpoint on the issues that mattered.' Lipski saw *Paths to Peace* as the equivalent of an 'Australian Peace-Now Movement'.<sup>47</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 1, June 1974, contained a reprint of two articles, one by an Egyptian woman, Sana Hassan, entitled *An Egyptian's vision of peace*, the other by the President of the World Jewish Congress, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, *Israel Facing a New Reality*, urging Israel to find security, not only in retaining occupied territory but in finding a new relationship with the Arab world. There was a further reprinted article by Barry Cohen M.P., urging Israel to come to terms with the Palestinians.<sup>48</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 2, August 1974 strongly criticised Bill Hartley who had recently obtained notoriety for claiming that Israel should be converted to a Palestinian-Arab state to form part of the Arab world.<sup>49</sup> *Paths to Peace* also featured part two of Nahum Goldmann's article *Israel facing a new reality*, an interview with Perla Cohen, the political organiser for the World Union of Jewish Students, and a report by Evelyn Rothfield on her attendance at a recent Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Conference.<sup>50</sup>

In October 1974, *Paths to Peace* held its first public meeting. The lead speaker was Zvi Solow, a former Melbourne Jewish youth leader now resident in Israel as a member of Kibbutz *Nirim*. Sam Lipski and Bernie Taft also participated in the discussion.<sup>51</sup> Solow's talk was published in the third edition of *Paths to Peace*, released in November 1974. Solow called for mutual recognition of the legitimate rights of both the Palestinian and Jewish people to national independence and self-determination within the territory of historic Palestine.<sup>52</sup> *Paths to Peace* also reported on a meeting organised by *Hashomer Hatzair* on 27 October to hear John Halfpenny, State Secretary of the Amalgamated Workers Union, report on his visit to Israel and the Middle East. Halfpenny said he believed that the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel was the only solution possible in the short run. Similar views were expressed by Mervyn Cassidy, member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, and Norman Rothfield.<sup>53</sup>

In a subsequent letter to the *Age* following Arafat's speech at the United Nations,

Norman Rothfield strongly criticised Arafat's demand for the elimination of Israel to make way for a larger Palestine, stressing the need for 'recognition of the rights of both Israel and the Palestinian Arabs to self-determination'.<sup>54</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 4, February 1975 commended the Australian Government for its refusal to grant visas to a P.L.O. delegation. *Paths to Peace* stressed the need for the P.L.O. 'to 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'.<sup>55</sup> Rothfield followed up by vehemently criticising a *Tribune* editorial titled *Reaction wins on P.L.O.* Rothfield and thirty-six other Jewish readers called on the P.L.O. and *Tribune* to support the Australian Government's call for the recognition of Israel and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.<sup>56</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 5, June 1975, examined the Kissinger Shuttle Mission, concluding that it failed because it dubiously envisaged Israel making a separate deal with Egypt, rather than negotiating a comprehensive settlement with all the Arab states and with the Palestinians at the Geneva Peace Conference. *Paths to Peace* also referred to the recent visits by P.L.O. spokespersons to Australia. An article by A.L.P. activist John Zeleznikow criticised Prime Minister Whitlam for granting visas to two representatives of the General Union of Palestinian Students, stressing the violence that ensued. Zeleznikow also noted the criticisms of Whitlam's policy by Bob Hawke and the Labor Friends of Israel.<sup>57</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 6, August 1975 criticised the Australian Government for supporting a motion at the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico calling for the elimination of colonialism, imperialism and Zionism.<sup>58</sup> *Paths to Peace* also criticised the 'mistaken view that those to the left of the Labor Party or even on the left of the Labor Party, invariably support the policy of the Palestine Liberation Organisation'. *Paths to Peace* reported on a seminar at which C.P.A. activists Ralph Gibson, Mark Taft and Dave Davies all supported the existence of a sovereign independent State of Israel and criticised the extremist views propounded by Bill Hartley. Similar views were also expressed by Aboriginal leader Charles Perkins on his return from a visit to Israel.<sup>59</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 7, November 1975 heralded the emergence of 'fresh voices for peace'. Under the heading 'Palestinian Strategy for Peaceful Co-existence?', *Paths to Peace* reported on a lecture delivered by P.L.O. representative Said Hammami in London in which he declared his readiness 'to consider a Palestinian State in part of Palestine side by side with Israel'. Hammami's statement was described by Israeli peace activist David Shaham as an 'important opening for dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli moderates'.<sup>60</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 8, December 1975 condemned the U.N. Resolution equating Zionism with racism. Norman Rothfield stressed: 'The best defence against attacks on Zionism are steps which lead not only to the maintenance of the rights of Israel, but also the right of self-determination of the Palestinians'. *Paths to Peace* also reprinted from *New Outlook* an interview with Said Hammami in which he stated: 'The Israeli Jews must recognise the fact that the Palestinian Arabs exist as a people which has the right to live in peace in their own country, Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs must recognise the fact that there is an Israeli people and that this people has the right to live in peace in what they consider to be their own country'.<sup>61</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 9, March 1976 affirmed that Israel was not without friends around the world, pointing out that the U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism had been condemned from Melbourne to Zurich, from Kenya to Peru, from

Bombay to Boston. *Paths to Peace* also included an interview by Norman Rothfield with King Hussein, and an interview by Peter Weiniger with Zvi Solow, a member of the Israel Council for Israel-Palestine Peace.<sup>62</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 10, May 1976 condemned the emergence of Israeli Right-wing religious fanaticism in the guise of *Gush Emunim*, stressing that their settlements on occupied Arab territory would destroy any hopes of peace. *Paths to Peace* also reported on an A.B.C. radio programme which presented the views of Elias Freij, Mayor of Bethlehem, and Meir Pail, dovish member of the Israeli Parliament. Both Freij and Pail called for the establishment of a Palestinian State alongside Israel.<sup>63</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 11, July/August 1976 commented on Moshe Dayan's recent visit to Australia, criticising his support for a continuation of the Israeli occupation and an increase in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Norman Rothfield stressed that 'the Palestinians will hardly offer peace in exchange for such terms'. *Paths to Peace* also featured interviews by Norman and David Rothfield (whilst travelling through the West Bank) with Palestinian Mayors Elias Freij and Passam Shahak, and published a resolution of the Australian Union of Jewish Students. A.U.J.S. called on the 'Arab world to accept Israel's legitimacy and Israel to recognise the legitimacy of Palestinian national aspirations'.<sup>64</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 12, September/October 1976 featured a talk given by Norman Rothfield on 3CR titled 'Israel and Palestine — Challenge to the Palestinians'. The talk was in response to the extreme views presented twice weekly on 3CR by the Palestine-Australia Solidarity Committee. Rothfield called on the Israelis and Palestinians 'to struggle, not against each other but in favour of each other's rights, the right of each people to have its share of land, its own state, its own self-determination'. *Paths to Peace* also featured an interview by Norman and Evelyn Rothfield with Lord Caradon, the author of the famous U.N. Resolution 242.<sup>65</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 13, December 1976 reported on a *Paths to Peace* forum titled 'Israel/Palestine — Is Co-existence Possible?'. Speakers included academics Denis Altman and Max Teichmann and Sydney writer Hyam Breznia. *Paths to Peace* also featured a message of friendship from Said Behur (former leader of the Palestine-Australia Solidarity Committee), condemned an advertisement published in the *Australian* by Baghdad University alleging that Zionism was a form of racism, published an article by Jewish student activist Michael Danby condemning Bill Hartley as an apologist for the Iraqi Government's suppression of the Kurds, and referred to the attacks made by the Palestine-Australia Solidarity Committee on *Paths to Peace* following Norman Rothfield's broadcast on 3CR.<sup>66</sup>

In December 1976, 'Paths to Peace' applied for affiliation to 3CR. This application was denounced by P.A.S.C., which alleged that 'Paths to Peace's' views were 'not statements of peace, but of war'.<sup>67</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 14, February/March 1977 referred to 'encouraging reports that the P.L.O. themselves are moving towards some kind of recognition of Israel'. Apparently, Isma Sartawi, on behalf of the P.L.O., had advised Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky that the P.L.O. were ready to accept a mini-state consisting of the West Bank and Gaza and two enclaves, and live at peace with Israel. Norman Rothfield stressed that 'the ball was now clearly in Israel's court to respond to the P.L.O.'s offer'. *Paths to Peace* also published an answer to Rabbi Rapaport's attack on the recent *Paths to Peace* Middle East forum, and an article by Michael Danby on the Australian Union of Students debate. Danby contrasted the ultra-Left views of

A.U.S. leaders with the statements made by leading P.L.O. *cadres* such as Said Hammami, Sabri Jiryis and Farouk Kaddoumi in favour of a Palestinian state alongside, not instead of, Israel.<sup>68</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 15, May 1977 focused extensively on the 3CR saga. The application of 'Paths to Peace' to join 3CR was rejected by 3CR's management committee by seven votes to six. An attempt to reverse the decision was made at the annual meeting of the Community Radio Federation on 27 May. Again, those opposed to 'Paths to Peace' just had the numbers and voted to exclude it on the grounds that it was Zionist and therefore racist.<sup>69</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 16, July/August 1977 discussed the charges of torture levelled against Israel by the (London) *Sunday Times* and concluded that the main issue was in fact the subjugation of one million Arabs under Israeli military occupation. Norman Rothfield called on Israel 'to grant real freedom to the Palestinian people in exchange for real peace'. 'Paths to Peace' also reported a statement by Andrew Peacock to a Jewish audience calling for the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and published a letter to affiliates of 3CR showing broad support for 'Paths to Peace'. The letter was signed by Dr Jim Cairns, John Ryan, Caroline Hogg, Noel Counihan, union official Neil Marshall, and young *Bund* leader Michael Zylberman. (The anti-Zionist *Bund* had been admitted to 3CR membership, but felt compelled to resign in protest at 3CR's 'undemocratic and biased structure' and its denial of membership to 'Paths to Peace').<sup>70</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 17, October 1977 commented on recent moves by the Superpowers towards a common Middle East policy and urged Israel and the P.L.O. to accept a compromise settlement. Israel would need to end its occupation of the West Bank and the P.L.O. would have to renounce its claims to the whole of Palestine.<sup>71</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 18, December 1977 lauded President Sadat's peace initiative, featuring an interview conducted by Norman Rothfield with Sadat in Jerusalem. *Paths to Peace* stressed that it was now up to the Begin government to make bold moves for peace to ensure that this historic opportunity for peace was not squandered.<sup>72</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 19, March 1978 criticised the Begin Government's stance on the Occupied Territories as falling 'far short of what can reasonably be described as meaningful concessions capable of ensuring the basis for an eventual settlement'. Norman Rothfield warned that it would be a disaster if the Sadat mission failed. The collapse of negotiations could lead to 'a renewed and heightened conflict coupled with increasing hostility to Israel, even from its traditional supporters in the Western world'. *Paths to Peace* also featured an article by Henry Zimmerman condemning allegations of Zionist/Nazi collaboration raised by the extreme Left, and a discussion of A.U.S. policy on the Middle East by Michael Danby.<sup>73</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 20, May 1978 headlined the recent Peace Now demonstrations in Israel, calling on the Begin Government to 'shrug off the ideological shackles and face up to the challenges required for Israel to capitalise on the momentum towards peace'. *Paths to Peace* also reported on a local meeting of Peace Now supporters addressed by Senator John Wheeldon, and condemned the Palestine-Australia Solidarity Committee's call for 'a war of genocide against the Jews of Israel'.<sup>74</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 21, August 1978 reported on Norman Rothfield's meetings with Peace Now leaders in Israel, headlining its front cover 'Better a Land of Peace Than a Piece of Land'. *Paths to Peace* also featured further information on the 3CR

controversy, stressing that 3CR was controlled by a small clique of Maoists who refused to permit access to 3CR to anyone who challenged the view that Israel must be destroyed by armed struggle.<sup>75</sup>

Subsequently, the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies issued *3CR: A Matter of Public Concern*, a twenty-six page compilation of monitored quotations mostly from 'Palestine Speaks' (a pro-P.L.O. programme on 3CR). The V.J.B.D. alleged that the quotations represented 'direct incitement to acts of violence and racial and political hatred'. The booklet was circulated among politicians, academics and journalists, and accompanied the V.J.B.D.'s application to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal for an inquiry into 3CR's activities.<sup>76</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 22, October/November 1978 endorsed the Camp David Agreements as important steps towards peace, whilst stressing the need for a specific provision for Palestinian self-determination. *Paths to Peace* also featured a dialogue between Jewish and Arab student leaders from Latrobe University, condemned the Maoist *Vanguard* newspaper for its propagation of the 'Holocaust hoax' myth, and published an 'Open Letter on 3CR', which called for 3CR to 'permit the expression of views other than those advocating violence and terror'.<sup>77</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 23, January 1979 highlighted the growing 3CR controversy. In November 1978, 3CR distributed half-a-million leaflets throughout Melbourne calling for support for the station against alleged attacks on 'freedom of speech'. The leaflet denied allegations of anti-Semitism, claiming that there was an enormous difference between Judaism and Zionism.<sup>78</sup> *Paths to Peace* responded by organising a position calling on 3CR to 'ensure freedom of expression on the station for those asking for recognition of Israeli and Palestinian rights'. The petition was signed by leading politicians, trade unionists, academics and writers including A.C.T.U. President Bob Hawke and the leader of the Australian Democrats, Senator Chipp.<sup>79</sup> The signatories were denounced by the 'Palestine Speaks' programme as 'supporters of racism, colonialism and imperialism'.<sup>80</sup>

Subsequently, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal decided to hold a public inquiry into the allegations of 'anti-Semitism' raised by the V.J.B.D. against 3CR.<sup>81</sup> 3CR's response was to appeal to the United Nations to provide it with assistance in the forthcoming inquiry.<sup>82</sup> In the meantime, John Bennett, the Secretary of the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties and an active propagator of the 'Holocaust hoax' theory came out publicly in support of 3CR, claiming that the Palestinians' case had been censored in Australia.<sup>83</sup> It was only after Bennett had been favourably quoted in at least three 3CR programmes<sup>84</sup> that the station decided to publicly dissociate itself from his views.<sup>85</sup>

In April 1979, a meeting of *Paths to Peace* subscribers set up a 'fighting fund' to enable *Paths to Peace* to be represented at the forthcoming tribunal inquiry into 3CR. The fund was set up under the patronage of Professor Max Charlesworth, Walter Lippmann M.B.E., Rev. John Westerman and David Scott.<sup>86</sup> *Paths to Peace's* participation was encouraged by the V.J.B.D. because it wanted to establish that all Jewish viewpoints, including those who were normally critical of the Jewish establishment, viewed 3CR as hostile to Jews, not just to Israel.<sup>87</sup>

In a statement to legal counsel, Norman Rothfield stressed that 3CR broadcasts had been anti-Semitic or likely to promote anti-Semitism, for 'it is inevitable that if this station is successful in arousing hatred against the Jews who settled in Palestine that same hatred will be expressed against the Australian Jews who express as do Jews in every country support for Israel's existence'. Rothfield also claimed that



3CR broadcast racist material or material likely to promote racial discrimination in that 'if 3CR and those who think like it in the matter of the Middle East are successful, the result would be to stir up such intense hatred against Israel that there would be an effort to destroy it by means of the Arab armies or otherwise . . . An all out effort to destroy Israel's sovereign existence would be an act of Genocide — a Genocidal War. This is the ultimate of racial discrimination'.<sup>88</sup>

Rothfield's involvement in the Inquiry surprised and disappointed many of those in 3CR who had supported his right to be heard. It appears, however, that he had little choice. It is almost certain that, had he not made his submission, he would have been summoned by the V.J.B.D.'s counsel as a witness to strengthen the Board's contention that Jews — even Left-wing ones — were actively discriminated against by 3CR.<sup>89</sup>

Eventually, an agreement was concluded between 3CR and the Jewish Board of Deputies providing for the inclusion in the station's guidelines of clauses inhibiting the broadcasting of material 'which is threatening, abusive or insulting and promotes hatred against or hostility towards groups of persons distinguished by their sex, race, religion, colour or national origin'. Reference was made to the former application for membership of 3CR by 'Paths to Peace', and it was stated that a fresh application by 'Paths to Peace' would be considered on its merits by members.<sup>90</sup> The agreement was denounced as a 'sell-out to the Zionists' by the Palestine-Australia Solidarity Committee and its Maoist allies.<sup>91</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 24, April 1979 reported on the Rothfield's recent visit to Arab countries and Israel, including their meetings with P.L.O. leader Yasser Arafat and P.L.O. Foreign Minister, Farouk Kaddoumi. Mr. Peter Salah, Deputy Minister of Information in the Jordanian Government, gave Norman Rothfield a copy of the November 1978 Baghdad Conference report, claiming that all Arab states (including Iraq) were now ready to accept and recognise Israel. Rothfield subsequently spoke at the State Zionist Council's 'This Month Tonight', stressing that 'the Arab states of the Middle East were no longer aiming at the destruction of Israel because they realised that Israel's military strength made such a goal impossible'.<sup>92</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 25, August 1979, functioning under a new, revamped twenty-one person committee, strongly criticised Prime Minister Begin's policy of building settlements on confiscated Arab land. *Paths to Peace* also made reference to a report on *Paths to Peace* in the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*, criticised pro-Palestinian extremists in Melbourne, and published an article on Steve Brook on J.A.Z.A. ('Jews Against Zionism and anti-Semitism') titled 'Jews Against Jews'. Brook stressed that J.A.Z.A. was a small group of seventeen Jews from far-Left fringe groups gathered together by Albert Langer to support 3CR at the tribunal hearing. Brook also referred to a letter by Rachel Merhav, an Israeli supporter of the Palestinian cause and J.A.Z.A. member, which was published in *Farrago* and the *Nation Review*. Merhav claimed she and her family had been betrayed by Palestinian activists.<sup>93</sup>

J.A.Z.A.'s appearance at Monash University appears to have prompted the resurrection of the left-wing Zionist group, the Radical Zionist Alliance (R.Z.A.). R.Z.A. activists including Jeff Warren, Sue Zyngier, Merv Adler, Dick Gross and Jenny Meadows published *An open letter to 'Jews Against Zionism and anti-Semitism'*, questioning the Jewishness of its members.<sup>94</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 26, November 1979 proudly announced its award of the United Nations Association media peace prize for its efforts in promoting dialogue for peace in the Middle East. *Paths to Peace* featured an article by Norman Rothfield



titled 'Thoughts on the P.L.O.', which called on the P.L.O. to 'make clear that Palestinian rights can be reconciled with Israeli rights', a report on the recent A.L.P./*Paths to Peace* Mid-East dialogue which included Labor M.H.R.'s Dr. Moss Cass and Brian Howe as guest speakers, and a report on the 3AR debate between Norman Rothfield and Israeli Trotskyist Ehud Ein-Gil. Ein-Gil, a member of *Matzpen*, the miniscule Israeli Socialist organisation, was brought to Australia by 'Jews Against Zionism and anti-Semitism'.<sup>95</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 27, February 1980 stressed: 'there is no future for Israel or for peace in the Middle East, so long as a million and more Palestinian Arabs are deprived of the fundamental right of self-determination'. *Paths to Peace* also quoted A.C.T.U. President Bob Hawke's support for a Palestinian state, and criticised 3CR for offering only a partial right of reply to attacks made by 3CR broadcaster Tom Ryan on 'Paths to Peace'. Ryan claimed that 'Paths to Peace' wanted to silence 3CR.<sup>96</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 28, May 1980 called on 'Israel's friends abroad, including its Jewish friends and supporters, to make it clear to the Israeli Government that a policy which results in offending every susceptibility and feeling of the Palestinian Arab people is a policy of disaster'. *Paths to Peace* stressed that 'Israel's security lies in retaining the support of its friends — and winning the friendship of its neighbours'. *Paths to Peace* also reported on the Canberra conference on 'The Middle East in World Politics', referring to addresses given by Andrew Peacock, Mohammed Riad, Andrew Mack, Martin Indyk and Dr. Rony Gabbay.<sup>97</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 29, August 1980 blamed the Begin Government for the serious deterioration in the West Bank situation, stressing its denial of basic Palestinian rights. *Paths to Peace* also criticised the Australian Jewish leadership's over-reaction to Labor leader Bill Hayden's meeting with P.L.O. Chief Yasser Arafat. Under the heading *Hayden, Arafat and Leibler*, *Paths to Peace* suggested that the Jewish leadership was engaging in 'anti-Labor politicking'.<sup>98</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 30, November 1980 reported on the joint Seminar organised by 'Paths to Peace' and the United Nations Association. Speakers included Clyde Holding, Sam Lipski, Andrew Mack, Alan Renouf, Max Teichmann and Dr Moss Cass. The Seminar also sought to bring local Arabs and Jews together to discuss the vexed issue of the Middle East conflict.<sup>99</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 31, February/March 1981 published the two keynote addresses of Sam Lipski and Andrew Mack from its recent Seminar, plus shorter statements by Clyde Holding, Stella Cornelius, Sami Carlyle and Norman Rothfield. *Paths to Peace* also reported the statement of Uri Avnery, long-time member of the Israeli Peace Movement, claiming a 'fundamental ideological change in the P.L.O.'s attitude to the State of Israel and the Zionist movement'. In a report to the Israeli Parliament, Avnery maintained that the P.L.O. was now calling specifically for a peace between the State of Palestine and the State of Israel.<sup>100</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 32, June 1981 called on Israel to negotiate directly with the representatives of the Palestinian people to facilitate Palestinian self-determination and Israeli and Palestinian security. *Paths to Peace* also reported on a Middle East debate at Swinburne Institute of Technology which included Dave Davies, Albert Langer, Norman Rothfield and Ali Kazak as speakers, and reported on the renewed efforts of 'Paths to Peace' to gain access time to broadcast material on 3CR.<sup>101</sup> 3CR subsequently rescinded its decision to allow 'Paths to Peace' broadcasting time, claiming that 'Paths to Peace' had attacked 3CR's right to the airwaves.<sup>102</sup> On 23 June, the Community Radio Federation Members Meeting passed the following

resolution: 'In view of the evidence presented to this meeting of 3CR affiliates, the application of 'Paths to Peace' be rejected. This decision should stand until 'Paths to Peace' publicly and totally withdraws all allegations against 3CR affiliates and 3CR Community Radio in writing in their journal'.<sup>103</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 33, September 1981 praised the ceasefire agreement arranged through intermediaries between the Government of Israel and the P.L.O., stressing the need for further agreements between the two sides to safeguard the national rights of both peoples. *Paths to Peace* also published an article by Brian Howe opposing Australian involvement in the Sinai peacekeeping force, and reported on three separate talks given by Norman Rothfield, Bill Hartley and Evelyn Rothfield on 3CR's 'Yarra Bank', "Par Avion" and "W.I.L.P.F." programmes. Rothfield debated pro-P.L.O. Frans Timmerman and quoted statements by leaders of the P.L.O. and articles by Palestinian academics in support of his call for a separate and independent state for the Palestinians alongside Israel. Timmerman urged that the whole of Palestine should revert to an Arab state in which Israelis (or some of them) could live.<sup>104</sup>

In November 1981, 'Paths to Peace' held a private function for Bill Hayden, the leader of the Australian Labor Party. 'Paths to Peace' endorsed Hayden's recent meeting with Yasser Arafat and called for mutual recognition between Israel and the P.L.O.<sup>105</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 34, December 1981 discussed the Saudi peace plan and concluded that 'whatever its limitations, it recognised the two vital factors — the need for satisfying Palestinian national rights and the need for giving security to established states — which of course includes Israel'. *Paths to Peace* also quoted Mark Leibler as publicly affirming the 'possibility of a Palestinian state' in contrast to Menahem Begin, and criticised Leibler for his attack on Dr. Nahum Goldmann in the pages of the Jewish Press. Leibler stated that any public ventilation of 'views which are critical of the Israeli government are counter-productive, provide ammunition to our enemies and cause positive harm to the State of Israel'.<sup>106</sup> In reply, Norman Rothfield pointed out that 'Dr Goldmann is not alone in hoping that exposure of the folly of certain actions of Mr Begin's government may help to effect progressive change in Israel'.<sup>107</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 35, February 1982 featured a letter from Mark Leibler in which he denied that there was any difference between his own view and that of Mr Begin in relation to the issue of a Palestinian state. Leibler stressed: 'If the Palestinians wish the Government of the State of Israel to canvass the issue of a Palestinian state as a serious possibility, then the Palestinians must first take the initiative in recognising Israel's right to exist'. In reply, *Paths to Peace* suggested that Mr Leibler might contribute more to Israel's welfare if he could use his talents and energies to induce Mr Begin to endorse what Leibler himself has said, that 'a Palestinian state is possible . . . and autonomy could lead to sovereignty'. *Paths to Peace* also published an interview with Dr Isam Sartawi (adviser to Yasser Arafat) in which he called on the P.L.O. to strengthen the Israeli peace camp by demonstrating its concrete commitment to a just peace acceptable to the two parties.<sup>108</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 36, April 1982 publicised the inauguration of the I.C.P.M.E. (International Centre for Peace in the Middle East) and called for 'mutual understanding' between the Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>108</sup> 'Paths to Peace' subsequently released a statement 'deploring the loss of lives, the injuries, and the destruction of homes brought about by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon . . . Not only humanity but common sense shows that the war in Lebanon must be stopped and Israeli forces

withdrawn. The problems of peace must be tackled taking into account the legitimate rights of Palestinians as well as of Israelis'.<sup>109</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 37, July 1982 reported on a public meeting called by 'Paths to Peace' and *Hashomer Hatzair-Mapam* to welcome the formation of the newly established I.C.P.M.E. The speakers — John Ryan, Jack Rezak, Max Teichmann and Norman Rothfield — all stressed that mutual recognition of each other's rights was essential to achieve a secure future for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.<sup>110</sup> *Paths to Peace* also published Australian Jewish and Israeli opinions critical of the Lebanon war, and criticised Jean Mclean for moving a motion at the A.L.P. State Conference calling on Israel to return to the 1947 borders. Norman Rothfield stressed that such a policy 'would divide Israel into three separate small parts and would in effect mean Israel's dismemberment'.<sup>111</sup>

In August 1982, the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies passed a resolution calling on all Jewish people to refrain from criticising Mr Begin and his government outside the community.<sup>112</sup> Following this resolution, an article written by Michael Gawenda appeared in the *Age*, claiming that 'a significant minority of Australian Jews believe that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was a tragic mistake, that the invasion and the military operations around Beirut in particular have cost too many lives, and that the war in Lebanon will not lead to a lasting peace in the Middle East'. Gawenda cited interviews with Dr. Moss Cass, the M.H.R. for Maribyrnong, Bono Wiener, President of the Jewish Labor *Bund*, and 3EA Yiddish broadcaster, Alex Dafner.<sup>113</sup>

In September 1982, 'Paths to Peace' issued an appeal to 'Friends of Free Speech'. The appeal criticised the August 1982 V.J.B.D. resolution as an attempt to stifle freedom of expression and asked for support for a declaration objecting to this restriction. This declaration for free expression was signed by some hundreds of people from a variety of occupations and representing many different political positions.<sup>114</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 38, October 1982 condemned the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Norman Rothfield stressed that 'a political solution must be negotiated, and this requires the recognition that just as Israel rightly expects its national existence to be recognised, so too do the Palestinians'.<sup>115</sup> *Paths to Peace* also paid tribute to the late Dr Nahum Goldmann as a 'great Jewish leader, but also one whose humanity and breadth of vision classed him as a world statesman'.<sup>116</sup>

In November 1982, 'Paths to Peace' co-sponsored the Australian visit of American Rabbi Albert Axelrad, a prominent advocate of Arab-Israeli reconciliation. Axelrad addressed a number of public and private meetings in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, and participated in a public debate with pro-Palestinian academic Andrew Mack. Axelrad described the conflict as one of 'two competing national rights — Jewish and Palestinian — with each side fighting for the same territory. The only equitable solution is two states, side by side'.<sup>117</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 39, February 1983 criticised the Victorian Jewish leadership for not only its unthinking support for the policies of the Begin government, but also for its 'attempts to restrict, and even villify, any expression of alternative views — not only outside but also within the Jewish community'. *Paths to Peace* also praised the Reagan peace plan as a 'valuable basis for a compromise solution', and reported on Rabbi Axelrad's visit to Australia.<sup>118</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 40, May 1983 invited readers to write to Dr. Moss Cass to 'discuss the approach of Jewish communal leaders to problems such as peace between Israel and its neighbours and wider international questions such as the

danger of nuclear weapons and their proliferations'. *Paths to Peace* also featured an interview with Palestinian journalist Hana Siniora, in which he called for a Palestinian state to exist side-by-side with Israel, and an article by Norman Rothfield which condemned the construction of luxurious low-cost government-financed housing on the West Bank for Jewish settlers, labelling it 'bribery for future disaster'.<sup>119</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 41, August 1983 announced the formation in Australia of a 'Friends of Peace Now' group. *Paths to Peace* described 'Peace Now' as the 'conscience of the Israeli people'.<sup>120</sup> *Paths to Peace* also condemned Sharon's invasion of Lebanon, citing 'Peace Now's' call for an immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon and for a radical policy change — 'a serious effort by Israel for negotiation and reconciliation'.<sup>121</sup>

In August 1983, State Zionist Council President Mark Leibler, speaking at the Hakoah Club in Sydney, declared that 'criticism of the Israeli government, indiscriminately aired, is used as a weapon against Israel by those committed to its destruction'. Leibler severely criticised Norman Rothfield of the 'Paths to Peace' movement, calling him 'the great champion of Yasser Arafat'.<sup>122</sup> Rothfield replied by bracketing Mark Leibler with Bill Hartley as persons 'suspicious of ideas for the peaceful resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict'.<sup>123</sup>

In December 1983, a great controversy broke out over the publication of a 'Friends of Peace Now' declaration in the *Jewish News*. More than two hundred persons signed the declaration expressing their 'support for "Peace Now" and similar movements in Israel, which place peace before the acquisition of territory'. The declaration also called for a 'moratorium on any further settlement and expropriation of land in the West Bank, and for the stringent safeguarding of the well-being, property and dignity of the residents of the West Bank and Gaza, currently under Israeli control'.<sup>124</sup>

The organisation was immediately condemned by the State Zionist Council<sup>125</sup> and immense pressure was placed on members of left-wing Zionist youth movements to dissociate themselves from the organisation. Attempts were also made to prevent the publication of the advertisement in the *Jewish Press*.<sup>126</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 42, December 1983 lauded the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East conference held in Jerusalem. *Paths to Peace* stated 'In Jerusalem today several international Jewish community leaders held a public meeting to denounce Israel's occupation of the Jordan River West Bank, saying the occupation threatens the democratic values of the Hebrew State and the hopes of the Jewish people'. *Paths to Peace* also compared unfavourably the independent approach displayed by American Jewish leaders towards Israeli policies (according to the 1983 Survey of American Jewish Attitudes to Israel), with the conservative approach of their counterparts in Australia. Some mention was also made of the 'Friends of Peace Now Group' convened by Dr. Moss Cass.<sup>127</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 43, March 1984 stated: 'Those in Australia whose support encouraged Begin and Sharon and who sought to prevent any Australian encouragement for the peace forces in Israel carry a heavy responsibility for their actions. The pretence that aiding the aggressive policy of Begin, Sharon and Shamir is "support for Israel" should be dropped . . . Support for Israel requires support for compromise and conciliation and support for those in Israel who say peace-now'.<sup>128</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 44, June 1984, condemned the Jewish underground, maintaining that it was an inevitable outgrowth of the *Gush Emunim* settlement movement which was 'in itself "a movement of violence against the Palestinian Arabs".'

*Paths to Peace* also referred once again to the V.J.B.D. Resolution of August 1982 on 'Jewish unity', claiming that 'there has been a deliberate and planned effort to restrict the right of free speech of Melbourne Jews who wish to criticise policies of the Government of Israel and express support for those in Israel who have campaigned against the invasion of Lebanon and the continuing military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza'. Finally, *Paths to Peace* reported on the Australian visit of Elias Freij, the Mayor of Bethlehem, stressing his call for an independent Palestinian state living at peace with Israel.<sup>129</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 45, October 1984 announced the formation of a new Australian Jewish organisation — the Australian Jewish Democratic Society — which 'aims to provide a democratic Jewish voice in the local community'. Henry Zimmerman (convenor of A.J.D.S.) stated: 'At the present time when racism is showing itself in Australia, when attempts are made to deny the reality of the Holocaust, when world war is an ever-present threat, when attempts are made to silence a dissenting voice in the Jewish community — such an organisation is more necessary than ever'. *Paths to Peace* also featured two articles by Norman Rothfield titled 'Israel Before the Elections' and 'Israel After the Elections'. Rothfield concluded that 'the conflict can be resolved only if there is mutual acceptance of the fact that there are two peoples in the area, Israelis and Palestinians, each with national aspirations demanding satisfaction. It is neither morally tenable nor physically possible to destroy either people'.<sup>130</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 46, February 1985 focused on 'Israeli Arabs today' and the work of the I.C.P.M.E. in promoting Jewish-Arab dialogue. *Paths to Peace* also criticised as unbalanced a recent article in the *Australian* by Jeremy Jones of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies. According to *Paths to Peace*, 'in assessing the reasons for the continuing conflict, Jones completely ignored Israel's continuing occupation of the West Bank, the Jewish settlements on Arab land, the refusal to recognise Palestinian rights to a homeland; and the invasion of Lebanon'.<sup>131</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 47, May 1985 criticised those Australian Jewish leaders who had defended and encouraged the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, stressing that they would have to 'share the grave responsibility for the disastrous consequences'. *Paths to Peace* also publicised the activities of the Australian Jewish Democratic Society and featured an article by peace activist Harry Redner on the 40th anniversary of the Holocaust. Redner stressed the importance of the younger generation learning about the Holocaust and taking up the 'burden of remembrance'.<sup>132</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 48, September 1985 denounced the growth of Kahanism in Israel, stressing that 'Kahane's philosophy is the natural extension of the Begin philosophy that seizing Arab land is more important than peace'. *Paths to Peace* also published papers delivered by Norman Rothfield and Cameron Forbes at the recent A.M.E.S.A. Conference in Melbourne and condemned the American Star Wars project as a waste of time and resources that could otherwise be devoted to human development.<sup>133</sup>

*Paths to Peace* No. 49, December 1985 headlined 1986 as 'the International Year of Peace', and called on Israel to take the advice of such prominent citizens as Professor Harkabi and Abba Eban and achieve peace via negotiations 'with the enemy' — the P.L.O. *Paths to Peace* also discussed the activities of the newly-formed A.J.D.S., stressing that it aimed in the coming year 'to intervene in the debates in the Jewish community and in Jewish organisations in a much more forceful way . . . and to present an alternative Jewish position to both government and the non-government sections of the Australian community'.<sup>134</sup>

*Paths to Peace's* final issue No. 50, March 1986 published an article by Norman

Rothfield titled *Jewish Fascism — Why Not?* which condemned the growth of the Kahanist movement. *Paths to Peace* also published three different statements regarding the visit of a group of Australian Council of Churches delegates to the Middle East. the A.C.C. statement claimed that the Palestinians were willing to compromise and accept a peaceful two-state solution to the conflict, but Israel, or at least its government, was less flexible. Therefore, it believed people of the West should reconsider their attitude to 'Palestinian problems'. Mark Leibler (Zionist Federation President), attacked this statement, claiming that it showed 'abysmal ignorance' of the true state of affairs in the region and contributed to an escalation of tension. The A.J.D.S. criticised the 'intemperate nature' of Leibler's attack, stressing 'there are some Israeli government actions such as creating new Jewish settlements on the West Bank, which are criticised by Israelis, and by Israel's closest friends. Unquestioning support for such actions by an Australian Jewish leader helps neither Israel nor the Australian Jewish community'.<sup>135</sup>

### Conclusion

Between 1967 and 1986, a small, loosely organised Jewish Left maintained an active presence in the Melbourne Jewish community. Lacking a formal organisational framework after the demise of the Jewish Council, the Jewish Left focused most of its attention and energies on the Middle East via the pages of the quarterly magazine *Paths to Peace* published by Norman and Evelyn Rothfield. The Rothfields were supported in their endeavours by Henry Zimmerman, Peter Weiniger, Steve Brook, David Zyngier, Jack Rezak, Dr Moss Cass, Amir Morris (in later years), and many others.

'Paths to Peace' maintained a two-pronged focus throughout its twelve-year existence. It sought to influence Israel and the local Jewish community towards the recognition of Palestinian rights, whilst simultaneously attacking extremists in the P.L.O. and their supporters who refused to accept the reality and legitimacy of Israel's existence.

Its relationship with the mainstream Jewish community, whilst never a cosy one, appears to have been a reasonably cordial one, up to and including the 1979 Tribunal Inquiry into 3CR. During this period, 'Paths to Peace's' Left-wing credentials made it a useful weapon for the defense of Israel against pro-Palestinian extremists on the Left. After 1979, however, 'Paths to Peace' placed greater emphasis on criticism of the Israeli Government as a barrier to peace. This overt public dissent inevitably led it into sharp confrontation with mainstream Jewish bodies. By the time of the Lebanon War, the Jewish community as a whole seemed far less tolerant of dissent. This hardening of communal attitudes was reflected in the attacks on the 'Friends of Peace Now' group.

In spite of this inter-communal polarisation, the mid-eighties also saw the revival of the organised Jewish Left under the banner of the Australian Jewish Democratic Society. This re-emergence of a viable Jewish Left reflected the decline of anti-Zionist fundamentalism on the Left. In the seventies, the hostility of the Left had virtually debarred Jewish involvement. By 1984, however, the P.L.O. had indicated its interest in a compromise solution and the mainstream Australian Left followed suit. The process was set in motion by which the Jewish Left would eventually advocate a solution to the Middle East conflict more acceptable to the moderate pro-Palestinian Left, than to the increasingly hardline Jewish community.



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4. Peter Weiniger, 23 January 1990
5. David and Sue Zyngier, 23 January 1990

## NOTES

1. The Council's last productive year was 1967 when it held five public meetings, including a 25th Anniversary Dinner which featured Senator Lionel Murphy as guest speaker. See *Australian Jewish News* (henceforth 'A.J.N.'), 10 March 1967, 26 May 1967, 25 August 1967, 29 September 1967, 3 October 1967 and 27 October 1967.
2. See Josef Banas, *The Scapegoats: The Exodus of the Remnants of Polish Jewry*, translated by Tadeusz Szafar, edited by Lionel Kochan. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1979.
3. See his letter to A.J.N. 11 May 1968 criticising Judah Waten who had denied that there was anti-Semitism in Poland.
4. The small Yiddish-speaking Jewish Progressive Group for Peace in the Middle East emerged out of the ruins of the Jewish Progressive Centre which had split during the Six Day War. The J.P.G.P.M.E. publicly criticised anti-Semitism in the Soviet Bloc and the use of anti-Zionism as a cover for anti-Semitism. Activists included Henry Zimmerman, Mark Langsam, S. Zajdow, J. Bilander and Mr Moskowitz, who contributed a number of articles on Poland to the *Yiddish Jewish News*. The group dissolved in 1971. See A.J.N. 21 June 1968, 13 September 1968, 11 July 1969, 25 July 1969 and 27 August 1971.
5. Interview with Henry Zimmerman on 16 January 1990. The Council did send four letters of protest to the Polish Consulate General in late 1968 condemning 'the grave injustice being perpetrated on Poland's Jewish citizens by your government' and asking for an interview. All four letters were ignored. (See letter by Norman Rothfield to *Tribune*, 28 October 1970).
6. See A.J.N. 23 May 1969 and 17 October 1969. For the death of Council stalwarts Ernest Platz and Senator Sam Cohen, see A.J.N. 5 September 1969, 12 September 1969 and 17 October 1969.
7. Interview with Lou Jedwab on 26 January 1990.
8. A.J.N., 9 June 1967 and 21 July 1967.
9. Stockholm World Conference on Vietnam (6–9 July 1967).
10. Interview with Norman Rothfield on 18 December 1989; *The Middle East.*, report by Norman Rothfield, 1967; A.J.N. 26 April 1968.
11. Interview with Norman Rothfield on 18 December 1989.
12. The statement called on 'friends and supporters of Israel to implement a more flexible approach in order to create an alternative to war and destruction'.
13. For the Jewish Progressive Centre's position on the Middle East, see A.J.N. 13 September 1968.
14. A.J.N., 5 July 1968.
15. *Tribune*, 24 July 1968.
16. A.J.N., 1 August 1969.
17. A.J.N., 9 January 1970. See also Leftist forum on Middle East, A.J.N., 12 December 1969, and Friends of Hashomer Hatzair Symposium on 'Cease-fire: Crossroads to Peace', A.J.N., 4 September 1970.
18. Interview with Norman Rothfield on 18 December 1989.
19. *Tribune*, 25 August 1971, and A.J.N., 24 September 1971.
20. A.J.N., 11 June 1971, 18 June 1971, 25 June 1971, and 16 July 1971.
21. See A.J.N. Editorial, 'Mission Shebat', 25 June 1971, and Norman Rothfield, Summary of anti-Israeli campaign in Australia, late 1971.
22. At this stage the only functioning Jewish Left group was the pro-Soviet Itzik Wittenberg Group. See, for example, Saul Factor's letter to *Tribune*, 25 January 1972, denying accusations of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.
23. See 'Statement of Aims', August 1971.
24. See letter from Simon Prokhovnik to Henry Zimmerman, 25 August 1971.

25. See *A.J.N.*, 29 March 1972, 14 April 1972, 21 April 1972, and the *Age*, 17 April 1972.
26. Sim had asked: 'When did Australian foreign policy rest in the hands of two Manchester Jews?' (*A.J.N.*, 17 March 1972).
27. See *A.J.N.*, 30 March 1972.
28. See letter to *A.J.N.*, 14 April 1972, and Letter to V.J.B.D. on 29 March 1972.
29. See letter to State Zionist Council on 9 April 1972; 'Open Letter to State Zionist Council', *A.J.N.*, 14 April 1972; and 'Don't ask McMahon, say Jews' in the *Age*, 17 April 1972.
30. About 100 Radical Zionist Alliance members distributed a leaflet outside the Independence Day Celebration condemning McMahon's presence as 'an attempt to gain political mileage from our festival', *A.J.N.*, 28 April 1972.
31. *A.J.N.*, 21 April 1972.
32. *A.J.N.*, 12 May 1972, 16 June 1972 and 15 September 1972.
33. See 'Petition to: the Commonwealth Government and State Governments of Australia, Initiated by the Association of Victims of Nazi Persecution and the Social Action Committee'. See also *A.J.N.*, 30 June 1972 and 31 October 1972, and Norman Rothfield: 'The National Socialist Party of Australia, what does this body stand for?' (1972).
34. Interview with Norman Rothfield on 18 December 1989, and letter by Norman Rothfield to A.L.P. branches and trade unions, September 1972.
35. See letter to Polish Consulate, 7 March 1972, supporting war hero Leopold Treffer's appeal for permission to leave Poland and be reunited with his family in Israel. See letter to Czechoslovakian Embassy, 26 September 1972, criticising the presence of anti-Semitic overtones in the trials of Czech political dissidents. See letter to *Herald*, 12 October 1972, endorsing the right of Soviet Jews to migrate to Israel.
36. See *Tribune*, 25 January 1972 and 5 November 1972.
37. See *A.J.N.*, 16 June 1972 and 15 September 1972, and unpublished letter to *A.J.N.*, 2 October 1972.
38. The group was convened by Paul Court.
39. See 'Why Labor?', November 1972.
40. See 'Conflict (Special Election Issue)'.
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42. See letter to Golda Meir, 1 March 1973, and reply from Prime Minister's Bureau, 18 March 1973.
43. See, for example, broadsheet titled 'Should the Jewish community be made a political football?', John Zeleznikow and Norman Rothfield on behalf of a group of Jewish Labor supporters, May 1974. The broadsheet criticised the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies for its attack on Whitlam's 'even-handed' Middle East policy. See also the names of Norman Rothfield and Rabbi John Levi amongst the sponsors of a public meeting called by 'Citizens for Democracy' in November 1975 to protest the sacking of the Whitlam Government.
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51. See promotional broadsheet, 'Important Symposium on Israel and the Middle East'.
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53. See *A.J.N.*, 25 October 1974 and 1 November 1974. Halfpenny and Rothfield also spoke alongside Shimshon Kamil, State Zionist Council President, at a WIZO function on 8 December 1974.
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58. See letters from Norman and Evelyn Rothfield to Senator Willesee, Minister for Foreign Affairs (6 August 1975), and R.H. Robertson, First Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs (24 September 1975).
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[Editor's Note: Norman Rothfield, perhaps the *doyen* of the contemporary Australian Jewish Left, requested permission to offer a few comments on Philip Mendes' article. Because of Mr Rothfield's close involvement with the events described in Philip Mendes' article, as well as with those surveyed in his lengthy history of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, we are pleased to publish these remarks, which add further details to Mendes' account. Norman Rothfield was one of the founders of the Jewish Council in 1942, served as its President some years later, and has more recently been associated with 'Paths to Peace' and the Jewish Democratic Society.]

## PHILIP MENDES AND THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH LEFT

Norman Rothfield

Philip Mendes' survey, 'The Melbourne Jewish Left 1967–1986', tempts me as an active participant in the events he described, to add a short comment.

The policy adopted by the Australian Jewish Left of supporting Jewish and Israeli interests while remaining actively concerned about peace and human rights, is in the best tradition of Jewish history.

'Love thy neighbour as thyself'; 'Do not oppress the stranger in your midst . . .'; turning swords into plough shares; 'do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you' — these ideas have been expressed long ago by Hillel and before that, and in this century by Judah Magnus, Martin Buber and Dr Nahum Goldmann among many others. Abba Eban, Chairman of the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East, has linked these concepts (as does the Australian Jewish Democratic Society today) to the problems affecting Israel. Israeli security, while requiring a strong defence force, in the final analysis is dependent on establishing good and just relations with the Palestinians and other Arab neighbours. This has been the constant philosophy of the Australian Jewish Left.

Twenty-five years ago, within the early period of Philip Mendes' survey, the situation was different from today. Israel's right to exist, now taken for granted in Australia, was often a matter of troublesome dispute.

I vividly recall the bitter conflict with the Palestinian and Arab community and its supporters in the sixties and seventies. The Palestinian movement at that time challenged Israel's right to independent statehood, and their supporters exerted significant influence in the universities, in the trade unions, and in the Victorian Labor Party. Bill Hartley's influence in these areas was appreciable. He was also a force in community radio 3CR.

Year after year, through the medium of *Paths to Peace*, we struggled to obtain broadcast time on that station in order to counter mischievous and misleading anti-Israeli propaganda broadcast on many of its sessions. We wanted to defend the basic right of the Jewish State to exist — a right proclaimed by the world community in 1947–48.

We made representations not only to organisations such as the Labor Party, but to the highest level of government. I recall in particular that Walter Lippmann and I drafted a memo for Gough Whitlam which was discussed with Race Matthews, his close associate at the time. On different occasions representations were made to senior parliamentarians of both political parties. I recall a lengthy luncheon discussion with Jim Cairns, at the time a very influential figure, in which I set out for him the errors which many supporters of the Vietnam movement were making in their analysis of the conflict in the Middle East. Cairns was not unsympathetic to the view I expressed, but he clearly showed that he had been subject to pressure of contrary ideas.

In June 1975 (before the 'Zionism is racism' resolution was put at the General Assembly of the U.N.), an important conference for International Women's Year was held in Mexico. At this conference a proposed resolution was put, embodying a number of important conclusions. Included among them was the 'Zionism is racism' slur.

Evelyn Rothfield, a delegate at the conference, lobbied strenuously at the meeting to the Australian delegation. The Australian government authorised its

representatives to speak against this clause of the resolution, but when they were unable to have it amended, they gave their support to the resolution as a whole.

We protested most strongly and rejected the Australian government explanation that it did not want to distance itself from the main positive principles of the resolution. Finally we received assurances that our point of view would be taken into account on future occasions.

The Jewish Left in Australia was prepared to criticise the Australian government, and the Israeli government too, if it seemed in the interests of Israel's future. In this respect we have differed from the conservative Australian Jewish Establishment.

The invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was a case in point. We echoed the view of those Israelis who said on *this* occasion Israel had a choice, war or no war, and under Sharon's influence the wrong choice was made. Three years later an opinion poll in Israel showed four out of five Israelis believed the war had been a mistake. The Israeli Peace Movement and its supporters here were vindicated.

The Jewish Left in Australia was concerned that Ariel Sharon was encouraged in his adventurism by the support given by, among others, leading members of the Australian Jewish community, and in particular by the V.J.B.D. That body called on 'Jews and non-Jews of goodwill to refrain from criticising Israel'.

This attitude of 'my country right or wrong' (adopted by many nations and peoples over the years) has resulted in endless turmoil and wars. To end this, people everywhere have to speak out against chauvinism and narrow nationalism.

The Jewish Left in 1991 has been identified with the Australian Jewish Democratic Society. Whether properly so or not (some think not), the A.J.D.S. has certainly taken an independent and progressive stand on certain issues. It has tried to identify Jewish values of humanity and the striving for international peace.

#### ADDENDUM (February 1991):

An excellent example of the important role of the Australian Jewish Left (which should perhaps be understood as groups of non-Establishment Jews) can be seen in the activities of the A.J.D.S. in the Gulf crisis.

I have personally been involved in many debates (and a good deal of correspondence) with many Australian organisations who have questioned the resolutions of the United Nations, and argued against the actions taken against Iraq.

The A.J.D.S. has written to the Press and made public statements backing Australian support of the United Nations in its efforts to restore the sovereignty of Kuwait, even when this involved military action against Iraq. So far as I am aware, no Jewish organisation in Australia has played a comparable role.



## THE JEWISH POPULATION OF AUSTRALIA

*Charles A. Price*

During the years 1841 to 1930 there was little contention about how many Jews were living in Australia. According to the census questions on Jewish faith (asked in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania from at least 1841 onwards, South Australia from 1844, Queensland from 1861, Northern Territory from 1881, and Western Australia from 1891 onwards), those of Jewish faith stayed relatively steady around an average of 0.43 per cent of the total population; and because those saying they were Agnostic or Atheist — that is, had No Religion — remained few (0.5 per cent or less), and because the religious question was usually compulsory (in fact about 3 per cent of the population did not answer it), there was little argument about how much the Jewish population was being understated because persons of Jewish origin were either not answering the question on religion or else were declaring themselves to have No Religion.

With the religious question becoming voluntary in 1933, however (from then on 10 to 12 per cent of the population have refrained from answering), and with the advent of many German and Austrian refugees unwilling to have their Jewish faith recorded in any government documents, there arose the possibility that an appreciable number of Jews were not answering the census question. Moreover, from the 1960s onwards, when the number of persons specifically stating they had no religion steadily increased from 0.9 per cent in 1966 to 14.5 per cent in 1986, there was a growing likelihood that some persons of Jewish descent and identification were answering the religious question but as Agnostics or Atheists rather than as Jews.

An additional concern arose in the 1970s when the total of those declaring the Jewish faith fell steeply from 62,208 in 1971 to 53,441 in 1976; that is, a drop of 14 per cent or nearly 9,000. Even when allowing for inter-censal increases in the proportions of No Religion and No Reply, and for more Jews travelling overseas at census time — allowances which reduced the fall to less than 3,000 — this was still a worrying decline.<sup>1</sup> Happily, census numbers picked up again — to 62,125 in 1981 and 69,088 in 1986 — so quietening the fear that Australia's Jewish population was facing rapid decline, either by falling natural increase or else by conversion to other religions.

Nevertheless, the question still remains. How many Australian Jews are not in the census totals, either because they do not answer the question on religion or else because they declare themselves to be Atheist or Agnostic? Various surveys have been helpful here,<sup>2</sup> but the 1986 census, too, can tell us more, notably from its question on Ancestry. This was a question asked for the first time in Australia — somewhat on the lines of the United States ancestry question of 1980 — and was especially designed to discover the ethnic origins and characteristics of persons whose ethnicity was missed by questions on birthplace, birthplace of parents, and language used at home. With the 500,000 persons of German ancestry, for instance, over 280,000 were of the third, fourth and later generations (i.e. born in Australia of Australian-born parents) and so beyond the reach of census information on persons born in Germany or on parents born there. Moreover, because only 3,600 of this

280,000 were using German at home, the language question was also of little help. Similarly with groups such as the Maoris: not only were the 26,000 or so persons of Maori origin lost, in birthplace terms, in the 350,000 total of persons of New Zealand birth or parentage, but less than 4,000 of them used the Maori language at home, and some of these were Maoris from the Cook Islands, not New Zealand. With ethnic groups such as these the Ancestry question has proved invaluable, especially when cross-classified by birthplace, birthplace of father or first and second ancestry (as in the census microfiche of validation tables, FV035-VF039), or when cross-classified by demographic, economic, religious and language characteristics, as in the special matrix tapes created by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (A.B.S.) for a consortium interested in Ancestry.<sup>3</sup>

With the Jewish people the matter is somewhat different because the census question on religion gave much valuable information; in fact, more persons described themselves as Jews in the Religion question — 69,088 — than in the Ancestry question — 38,766. (I have added the 3,000 persons giving their ancestry as 'Israeli' to the 35,766 giving their ancestry as 'Jewish'). This came about because many persons of Jewish faith gave non-Jewish ancestries, the full percentage distribution being as follows: Jewish ancestry 42.3; English, Scots, Irish, Welsh, British 11.9; Austrian and German 4.0; other Western European 1.3; Polish 8.7; Russian 6.1; Hungarian 3.0; other Eastern European 2.3; Spanish 1.0; other Southern European 0.4; Arab 0.3; other Western Asian 0.4; other Asian 0.5; American 0.7; South African 1.2; Other 5.7; Australian 6.3; Ancestry Not Stated 3.9. In other words, less than half of those of Jewish faith gave their ancestry as Jewish.

This is understandable in families who had lived for many generations in British or Western European countries with a certain amount of religious and ethnic toleration; in such countries, over time, the bonds between religious faith and ethnic identity may become quite weak, allowing persons to think of themselves as Jewish by religion but Australian, English or Dutch by ethnicity. It is less understandable with people from countries where restrictive government policies, special occupations and ghetto living areas keep certain minorities constantly aware that, because of their religion, they constitute a very distinct people or ethnic group.

It is interesting to see that relatively few persons of Jewish faith — only 3.9 per cent — did not give an ancestry; this compares with 12.3 per cent for the total population. It is also interesting to see that some persons of Jewish faith gave their only ancestry as 'Arab'. ('Arab' here includes Arab, Iraqi, Jordanian, Palestinian and Syrian). There were nearly 220 such persons, slightly more than the 180 or so who gave their only ancestry as Jewish but their religion as Muslim. These numbers, though small, show that despite years of hostility and tension between Jew and Arab, there has been at least a little intermixture and religious interchange.

It is also possible to assess the census statistics in terms of the religious affiliations of the 29,580 persons giving their only ancestry as Jewish or Israeli. The percentages are interesting: Jewish faith 90.2; No Religion (Agnostic, Atheist, etc.) 5.2; Catholic 1.5; Anglican 0.8; other Christian 1.5; Muslim 0.6; other non-Christian 0.2. The proportions for the 9,189 of mixed Jewish and other ancestry were very different: Jewish faith 41.5; No Religion 19.1; Catholic 11.3; Anglican 13.1; other Christian 13.6; Muslim 0.5; other non-Christian 0.9. This suggests that when persons of Jewish ancestry marry persons of non-Jewish ancestry there is considerable weakening of the Jewish faith amongst the children; part of the reason here is that, because membership of the Jewish people comes through the maternal line, the

children of a Jewish man marrying a gentile woman are only reckoned as full members of the Jewish community if they go through an official conversion and admission.

It is worth spending a moment on these 9,189 persons of mixed origin, 2,848 of whom had ancestries recorded as Jewish and something else, leaving 1,341 whose ancestries were recorded as something else and Jewish. Some of the 6,341 may have been using the first ancestry as an adjective and were really of unmixed Jewish descent. For example, some of the 430 or so persons whom the census recorded as 'Australian-Jewish' may well have been of unmixed Jewish origin using the word 'Australian' not as a distinct ancestry but as an adjective to describe what kind of Jew they were. So also with others: English-Jewish, about 1,200; Irish-Jewish 550; Scots-Jewish 420; German-Jewish 800; Polish-Jewish 830; Russian-Jewish 520; Hungarian-Jewish 240. Other groups were much smaller: French-Jewish, about 90; Dutch-Jewish 80; Austrian-Jewish 90; Danish-Jewish 30; Czech-Jewish 40; Roumanian-Jewish 50; Lithuanian-Jewish 30; Spanish-Jewish 60; Italian-Jewish 55; Greek-Jewish 40; Chinese-Jewish 40; and so on.

On the other hand, it seems unlikely that the 7 or so persons coded as 'Arab-Jewish' were using 'Arab' as an adjective; they were much more likely to be the children of Arab and Jewish parents.

The 2,848 coded as being Jewish and something else were more likely to be of mixed ancestry; for instance, the 300 or so persons coded as having 'Jewish-English' ancestry are less likely to have been using Jewish or English as adjectives than as two distinct ancestries. Some of 300 or more persons coded as 'Jewish-Australian', though, may have meant they were persons of unmixed Jewish descent living in Australia.

In short, it is not always clear what these double ancestries mean, or how many were Jewish on the maternal side and therefore more acceptable as genuine Jews by the Jewish community. What is clear is that the persons giving double ancestries are less likely to maintain the Jewish faith down the generations than those of single Jewish ancestry (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Jewish Ancestry  $\times$  Religion  $\times$  Generation: %

Genera- tions	Jewish Ancestry Only				Jewish and Other Ancestry			
	Jew	Christ- ian	No Religion	Other	Jew	Christ- ian	No Religion	Other
I	89.9	3.5	6.5	0.1	66.7	15.4	16.7	1.2
II	94.8	2.3	2.8	0.1	54.8	25.3	19.3	0.6
III+	80.1	13.8	5.7	0.4	12.1	66.2	20.9	0.8
Total	89.6	5.0	5.2	0.2	41.5	38.5	19.1	0.9
Numbers	26,504	1,480	1,538	58	3,813	3,538	1,755	83
		29,580				9,189		

Notes:

- I = first generation = the foreign-born immigrants;
- II = second generation, i.e. children born in Australia of one or two foreign-born parents;
- III+ = third, fourth and later generations, i.e. persons born in Australia of two Australian-born parents.

This Table also shows that persons of unmixed Jewish ancestry were less likely than those of mixed Jewish ancestry (or, at any rate, those giving a double response) to become Atheist or Agnostic.

We are now in a better position to tackle the question of how many Jews do not appear in the census total of Jewish religious adherents, either because they did not answer the question at all or else because they declared themselves to be Atheist, Agnostic or some such. On the whole, persons of unmixed Jewish ancestry did answer the Religion question — compared with a national average of 12.3 per cent, only 2.9 per cent of persons of unmixed Jewish ancestry failed to answer the Religion question. The proportion for those giving double ancestries was higher — 7.6 per cent — though this was still well below the national average. We cannot, however, argue that most Jews were readily inclined to answer the Religion question because some of the non-Jewish ancestries given by persons of Jewish faith had considerably higher proportions of No Reply: Australian 12.7; English 11.1; German 10.2. Russians and Poles were somewhat lower at 8.6 and 7.4 per cent. We must also remember that some Jews may have answered neither the Ancestry nor the Religion questions.

We would get involved in long and elaborate estimates of how all these factors affect the real Jewish total. There is, however, a very simple way of using the census statistics; namely, taking the ratio of those who are Jewish by ancestry but not by religion (9,128) to those who are Jewish by both religion and ancestry (28,954), and combine it with the similar ratio of those who are Jewish by religion but not by ancestry (39,430). These three totals together make 77,512 and to this we can add the extra 12,430 suggested by the ratios — see end-note 4 — to reach a total of about 90,000 Jews all told. Some of these could be of mixed origin — gentile on the mother's side — and therefore not recognised as full members of the Jewish community even though they themselves think of themselves as part-Jewish by ancestry. They are unlikely to be many, as children of a gentile mother more probably gave a non-Jewish ancestry.

This total of 90,000, of course, excludes the much greater number of persons who, being only one-quarter, one-eighth, or one-sixteenth Jewish by descent, have long since ceased to think of themselves as Jewish in any sense; adding them in would give a Jewish total nearer 250,000 which, when translated into terms of ethnic strength, makes a total of 120,000 (see end-note 5).

It is probable that many of these missing 12,500 or so Jews are third, fourth and later generation persons giving their ancestry as 'Australian'. This would certainly resolve one difficulty; namely, that because of the substantial number of Jews in Australia since the 1840s there should be more than the 10,000 III+ generation Jews given by the matrix tapes; in the Jewish Religion total of 69,088 they make up less than 15 per cent. A future census question on ethnic identification, rather than ancestry, might help a little to find the missing number but it seems likely that, if many of those missing are III+ generation persons, they would give their ethnic identification as 'Australian' and continue to elude Jewish leaders anxious to find them.

In short, census statistics will never give the complete picture. But they can help considerably, both in terms of numbers and in terms of characteristics. This article has concentrated on numbers. It would take several other articles to discuss language, age, fertility, marital patterns, income, qualifications, labour force, status and all the other interesting topics covered by the ancestry matrix tapes.

# NOTES

1. *Australian Immigration: A Bibliography and Digest*, Number 4, 1979 (ed. Charles A. Price), Canberra 1980, pp. A102-5.
2. See, for instance, W.D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Volume II: 1945 to the Present (Melbourne 1991), pp. 91-93.
3. Anyone interested in these matrix tapes may write either to me or to Social Data Archives, R.S.S.S., Australian National University, Canberra.
4. The Ratio Method works as follows: Jew x both Ancestry and Religion = 28,954; Jew x Religion and not Ancestry = 39,430; Jew by Ancestry and not Religion = 9,128. Now, 9,128 divided by 28,954 = 0.31526 and 39,430 divided by 28,954 = 1.36182. So,  $1.36182 \times 0.31526 = 0.4293 \times 28,954 = 12,430$ .
5. There are three main ethnic measures: (1) Unmixed = all persons of unmixed Jewish ethnic origin; (2) Total Descent = all persons of Jewish origin even if only one-eighth or one-sixteenth; (3) Ethnic Strength = all persons of Jewish origin but those who are part-Jewish are counted according to their ethnic fractions; i.e. a person who by ethnic descent is one-half English, one-quarter Scots and one-quarter Jewish counts as one-quarter in the Scots and Jewish totals and as one-half in the English total. Ethnic Strength is the best measure for comparing the strength of the ethnic contribution to the population of various immigrant peoples.

## COMMENT BY THE EDITOR, PROF. W.D. RUBINSTEIN

In kindly submitting this interesting discussion to our *Journal*, Dr. Price has agreed to let me add a few comments about his findings.

Dr. Price approaches the question of overall Jewish numbers in Australia from a slightly different perspective than other previous estimates. This is possible because in the 1986 Census (and only this Census), respondents were asked to name their 'ancestry'. (This question was non-optional, and had to be answered by all respondents; the 'religion' question was and is, of course, optional). By taking the number of persons who gave 'Jewish' (or a similar answer) as their ancestry, and adding this to persons who are Jewish by religion but whose response to the ancestry question was either ambiguous or some other designation, and by adding these to other missing categories of Jews in 1986 (absent abroad on Census day, etc.), Dr. Price suggests that the number of persons who were Jewish by religion or ancestry was about 90,000 in 1986.

This figure is especially significant because it accords extremely well with the other approaches which have been taken to this question, which have been three in number. The first is to add to the persons who stated they were Jewish by religion (69,088) a figure for 'no religion/religion not stated' respondents equivalent to their proportion in the whole population (about 25 per cent). The second, which I employed in my analysis of the 1981 Census for the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, is to design high and low parameters for foreign-born groups from countries of Jewish or former Jewish population among those giving 'no religion' or 'religion not stated' as answers to the religious question, and adding in estimates for Australian born. The third is to make use of the Jewish Welfare Society's master list of Victorian Jews (numbering about 41,000 in 1988, and believed to be about 90-95 per cent complete), comparing this to the Census number of Jews in Victoria (32,358 in 1986) and prorating an equivalent shortfall for the other states.

The remarkable thing about all of these methods is that they arrive at almost precisely similar figures — about 90-95,000 Australian Jews in 1986. It thus seems clear that this figure is accurate. There are probably over 100,000 today.

Many of the other findings discovered by Dr. Price are also very interesting and deserve more study. For instance, there were, according to the 1986 Census, 122

Muslims who claimed to be of Jewish ancestry. Perhaps some of these were former Sephardic Jews from the Middle East who converted. It seems incredible that 122 Jews could have converted to Islam in Australia; none, so far as I am aware, are known to the mainstream Jewish community, even by rumour.



## INTERMARRIAGE AND PRIMARY JEWISH DAY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN PERTH

Oswald B. Tofler

(This paper was delivered as the G. Korsunski Memorial Lecture 1990-5750.)

When parents send their children to a Jewish day school they expect their children will not only receive a first-class secular education but that, with the knowledge of Judaism gained, they will be more likely to choose a Jewish wife or husband.

With the latter end point in mind, I compared the marriage patterns of the first one hundred students, present average age thirty-two, who attended the G. Korsunski-Carmel Primary School, with a control group composed of the *halachically* Jewish students of the same present, average age of thirty-two, who were living in Perth during this period and whose parents did not send them to Carmel School.

During the years 1969-72, when the Jewish population at that time was 3200, family trees were compiled of at least ninety per cent of all the Jewish families which had lived in Perth for more than five years, from 1870 onwards. These family trees have been regularly brought up to date, enabling information on marriage patterns to be extracted without too much trouble.

The G. Korsunski-Carmel School opened in 1959 with eleven students and gradually increased in numbers. The number of students in Perth attending the primary Jewish day school from the late 1950s to the early 1960s represented forty per cent of those eligible to attend — eligible in the sense that they were Jewish according to halachah and not because of any financial consideration. Almost all of the non-Carmel students were exposed to some Jewish education, either at the Perth Hebrew School Sunday School, the Temple David Sunday School, or Right-of-Entry classes held in the State schools.

In 1989 only 75 per cent were married, and because of this I write of trends and do not apply statistical criteria of significance.

The percentage of singles was greater (34 per cent) in the ex-Carmel group than in the non-Carmel group (23 per cent). Of the students who have married, 73 per cent of ex-Carmel primary students chose a Jewish-born partner compared with 64 per cent for non-Carmel students.

	Total	Single	Married Non-Jewish born Partners	Married Jewish born Partners
CARMEL 100	<div> <div>60 Males</div> <div>40 Females</div> </div>	<div> <div>25</div> <div>9</div> </div>	<div> <div>6+7* = 13</div> <div>4+1* = 5</div> </div>	<div> <div>22</div> <div>26</div> </div>
NON-CARMEL 146	<div> <div>79 Males</div> <div>67 Females</div> </div>	<div> <div>21</div> <div>13</div> </div>	<div> <div>19+6* = 23</div> <div>17+0* = 17</div> </div>	<div> <div>35</div> <div>37</div> </div>

\*converted to Judaism before marriage, either *halachically* or non-*halachically*.

The percentage who chose a non-Jewish-born partner was lower in the Carmel group (18) than the control group (27) with the female percentage lower in both groups. It looks as though the males are letting the side down. There was a higher percentage of converts, both *halachic* and non-*halachic*, in the Carmel marriages, 17 per cent versus 8 per cent for controls. When conversions are taken into account, the 'marriage-out rate' for non-Carmel students was double the rate for ex-Carmel School students — 30 per cent versus 15 per cent. Perhaps this trend will increase as time passes.

It is well known that the rate of intermarriage increases with the number of generations a Jewish person is removed from the older Jewish centres.

PERCENTAGE "MARRIAGE-IN" RATE  
(EXCLUDING CONVERSIONS) IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
DURING THE YEARS 1870 TO 1970

Country of Origin	Migrants	First Generation	Second Generation
Russia	80	77	56
Israel	87	80	64
United Kingdom	73	56	53
Poland	84	90	71

This was shown to be true in an analysis of these data in 1973 and it is also true for the 246 discussed here. This factor could not account for the trends mentioned above, because neither group was significantly different with regard to generation, status and country of origin.

The problem of singles is a general community problem. It was estimated by a non-Jewish author that for a non-Jewish person born in the 1960s there was a 25 per cent possibility that they would never marry. One wonders why more Carmel students are not married.

Whether a Jewish high school would achieve better results in terms of in-marriage rates is a question which springs to mind. In my opinion, a Jewish high school education would have a greater positive influence on marriage patterns than primary education, but it is too early in Perth to obtain any meaningful figures.

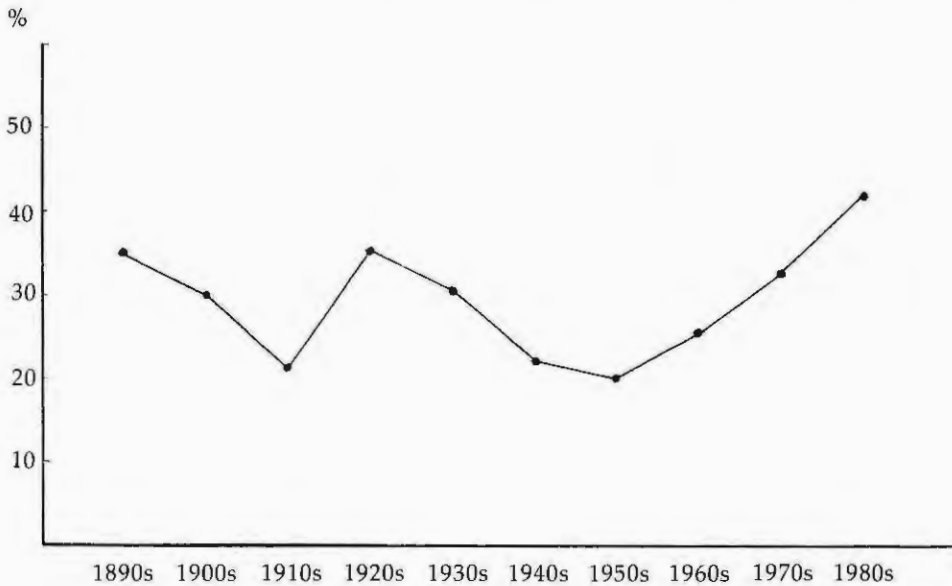
This study can be viewed against the background of total marriages in the community. The percentage of marriages to a person not born a Jew in the 1980s in Western Australia can be seen in relation to the previous decades.

The fall in the 1950s was probably due to the arrival of Polish-born families in the 1920s and 1930s. Before 1970 there were very few conversions.

This student study does not measure the influence on marriage patterns of parents and rabbis or other influences, such as membership of a Zionist youth group or Jewish sporting organisation, the work place, or final level of education.

It is difficult to separate the influence of parental attitude from those of education. One could assume that parents who send their children to a Jewish school would be more concerned that their children would 'marry-in'. On the other hand, such parents might be easing their conscience by only providing a Jewish day school education and leaving the whole responsibility to the school.

However, there is no selection bias in the groups studied because sampling was not involved. The whole population was studied. In this respect this study is unique in this very important field of Jewish education *vis-à-vis* marriage patterns.



*Percentage of individuals whose marriage partner was not born Jewish*

I suspect that a similar total-community-embracing controlled study in the larger Jewish communities of Sydney or Melbourne might yield similar results.

By comparison with Sydney and Melbourne, Perth is a small Jewish community, now just over 5000. Of those who married a Jewish-born partner, only 45 per cent of the ex-Carmel students are living in Western Australia compared with 76 per cent of the non-Carmel students. From this one can deduce that in order to find a suitable Jewish partner the Carmel students were more prepared to leave Perth. Sixteen per cent of this group of ex-Carmel students are in Israel, compared with five per cent of the similar non-Carmel group.

In conclusion, if I were a parent of high school students, I would see to it that they had a Jewish high school education in the hope that the odds favouring choice of a Jewish-born partner would be greater than the odds following primary Jewish education only.

## JEW IN THE JUDICIARY

*The Hon. William Kaye, A.O., Q.C.*

*(This paper was read before the A.J.H.S. — Victoria Inc. on 15 August 1991.)*

The title of my address was suggested by your Secretary, Mrs Beverley Davis, leaving open to me any other topic dealing with Australian Jewish history. I accepted Mrs Davis' suggested title, but without giving full consideration to the implications associated with the topic.

However, upon reflection some time after conveying my acceptance, it occurred to me that there are at least two problems inherent in the topic. The first problem which presents itself is the ever recurring question: 'Who is a Jew?'. This is so because, as occurs in other professions and walks of life, there have been, and there are presently, persons occupying judicial office who, although born of Jewish parents, have entirely distanced themselves from all things Jewish, or expressly denied or renounced their Jewishness.

For present purposes I have taken as a criterion such persons who, born of Jewish parentage, acknowledged in one meaningful form or another that they were or are Jews.

The second problem arises out of the circumstances that this is the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and, as Mrs Davis reminded me, the topic left open to me was one dealing with Australian Jewish History. This suggests that the scope of my address might be confined to persons occupying or who have occupied judicial office in Australia. However, by so confining the scope, I would be excluding Jewish judges who, either directly or indirectly, have had an important influence upon doctrines of law applied in Australian Courts. This is so because the Australian legal system is based primarily upon English common law, and statutory law which often reflects legislation of the United Kingdom. There are therefore close connections, historical and otherwise, between the Australian judicial system and that of the United Kingdom and, to a lesser degree, that of Canada and the United States of America. Indeed, the Australian judicial system, as operating throughout the several states of the Commonwealth, has been and continues to be influenced by judgments concerned with principles and doctrines of law made by superior courts of English-speaking nations and in particular the United Kingdom.

There is one further preliminary matter which relates to the scope of this address. Persons exercising judicial functions as magistrates of the magistrates' and the coroners' courts, and judges of the County Courts and the District Courts constitute part of the judiciary of Australia. The jurisdiction of those courts is limited by statute. However, I will confine the scope of this address to those judges who have held or those who presently hold judicial office in superior courts. Those courts are the Supreme Courts of the several States, the High Court of Australia, the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia, the House of Lords, the High Courts of Justice of the United Kingdom, the Supreme Court of the United States of America, and the Supreme Court of Canada.

Finally, I do not pretend that the researches which I have made for the purposes of this address have been exhaustive. It follows that I may omit to refer to some judge who falls within the criteria I have selected. If I do so, it will be by inadvert-

tence, and it should not be taken that the place in the judicial system of such judge was, or is, any less important or significant than those to whom I shall refer.

Until the second half of the 19th century, the provisions of the several Test Acts, dating back to 1673, required persons holding or seeking to hold office or place of trust under the Crown to receive publicly the sacraments according to the rites of the Church of England. This was one requirement which prevented a Jew in England from receiving judicial appointment. By the middle of the 19th century, however, all the Tests Acts had been repealed, so that there was no longer any legal impediment to a Jew holding public office. It is doubtful whether the Test Acts were ever applied in the colonies of Australia, and as far as my researches have taken me, there were no similar statutory exclusions in the United States of America or Canada. Be that as it may, with the repeal of the Test Acts, Jews became eligible for judicial appointment in England. This paper is therefore at the outset concerned with the first Jews appointed to the several jurisdictions in England and Australia. Each of those first appointees made considerable contributions to the development of the law.

The first Jew to hold judicial appointment in the English Courts was George Jessel. From 1873 upon his appointment until his death on 21 March 1883, he was the Master of the Rolls, being the third in the judicial hierarchy, after the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice.

On the day following his death it was said of Sir George Jessel in the leading article of the *Times* newspaper:

He was one of the greatest English judges, possessed of a very genius for the work of the Bench . . . It was his unique distinction that he was one of the most erudite of case lawyers and also the most courageous of judges in handling authorities.<sup>1</sup>

Almost seventy years later, Professor A.L. Goodhart, who subsequently became Master of University College Oxford, wrote questioning whether Sir George Jessel 'was not the greatest of all' the great equity judges.<sup>2</sup>

The leader writer of the issue of the London *Jewish Chronicle* of Friday 6 April 1883-5643 recorded:

The illustrious annals of the judicial Bench of England can point to no life in which the ideal of devotion to duty was more nearly approached than in that of Sir George Jessel. Herein, then, seems to us the lesson of his life to us Jews and to England in general. Sir George Jessel has shown that it is possible for a Jew to be as devoted to the highest ideal of civil duties as any of the greatest of his predecessors. He has displayed in the most eminent degree the specific qualities of that most English of all offices — a seat on the English Bench. His life is at once a justification of the Emancipation which rendered his career possible and a complete answer to all the mean objections which were urged against it so glibly by the opponents of that measure.<sup>3</sup>

In the House of Commons the then Attorney General, Sir Henry James Q.C., stated that he did not believe a judge ever sat on the English bench who showed a greater combination of legal knowledge, industry and a determination to do justice to every suitor than the late Master of the Rolls.<sup>4</sup>

It is significant that such public tributes were paid by those qualified to assess and appreciate the discharge of Sir George Jessel's judicial duties. Although he was not Australian many of Jessel's judgments have been, and no doubt will continue to be, followed as precedents by judges within the several Australian courts. His place in legal history is therefore of importance, not only for all judges and lawyers of the common law countries, but more particularly for Jewish lawyers and academics. Indeed the high standard of his performance of his judicial responsibilities continues to be exemplary and inspirational for all judges.

Any reference to Sir George Jessel in this context would not be complete without

a brief account of some personal matters pertaining to his upbringing and career in the law and in the wider community in which he lived.

George Jessel, who was born in London in 1824, was the son of Zadok Aaron Jessel, a successful diamond merchant. He was educated in a Jewish school, matriculating at the age of 16. Being precluded by religious requirements imposed by the several Test Acts from full enjoyment of the privileges of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, he entered London University. There he graduated with the degree of Master of Arts and with gold medals in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. In 1847 he was called to the Bar taking chambers in Lincoln's Inn. There he developed a large chancery practice. Eighteen years after his admission, he took 'silk', that is, he became one of Her Majesty's Counsel (in abbreviated form 'Queen's Counsel'). In common with other contemporary members of the English Bar, he sought a parliamentary seat and in 1868 he was elected member for Dover. Three years later Mr Gladstone appointed him Solicitor-General; he thus became the first Jew to share in the executive government of the United Kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

During the first eight years of his term as Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel sat as a judge of first instance in the then Rolls Court and he also presided over the Chancery Division of the Court of Appeal. It was in that court that he made his greatest contributions to English law, dealing with almost every phase of Equity.<sup>6</sup> Arguments in cases before him were said to be short due to the speed with which he heard and determined issues. One case occupied twenty-three sitting days, during which time one hundred witnesses were called before him, and submissions of counsel embraced statutes dating back to King John; at the conclusion of counsels' final addresses to him, Sir George Jessel delivered his sixteen page oral judgment — a most remarkable performance.<sup>7</sup> In 1881 he ceased to be a judge of first instance, thereafter presiding over the Court of Appeal.

It has been said that but for his untimely death, Sir George Jessel would assuredly have been elevated to the House of Lords as a Lord of Appeal-in-Ordinary, that is, the final appellate court of the United Kingdom. He was a member of the committee empowered to draft the new Rules of the Supreme Court under the Judicature Act of 1873. Those rules, which came into operation after his death, effected substantial changes to the procedures required to be followed by litigants in the High Court of Justice. The rules formed the model of the 1883 Rules of the Supreme Court of Victoria, and of the superior courts of other English speaking countries.

In addition to his judicial duties, Sir George Jessel maintained an active interest in education. During the last two years of his life, he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of London. He participated in the establishment of Jews College, and from the time of its inception in 1855 until 1863, he was a member of the College Council; the objects of the College were to train English-speaking ministers and laymen in Jewish and secular subjects. Sir George Jessel advised in the drafting of the constitution of the United Synagogue, being the association of Ashkenazi congregations in London; he was Vice-President of the Anglo-Jewish Association and a Fellow of the Royal Society.<sup>8</sup>

As a judge, Sir George Jessel's pre-eminent place in the legal system of the common law has endured for more than a century and is likely to continue to do so. Whether or not, undoubtedly his career as a judge will long remain an inspiration to all judges, regardless of their religious persuasion.

Three years after the passing of the first Jewish judge in the British system of Justice, Julian Emanuel Salomons was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, becoming the first Jew to be appointed to a judicial



office in Australia. However, his term of office was brief, being terminated by his resignation, without having exercised judicial authority, by unfortunate circumstances not of his own choosing.

Julian Salomons was born in Birmingham in 1835; at the age of eighteen he emigrated to Sydney. There for two years he was employed by a bookseller, after which he became the secretary of the Great Synagogue. As an active and successful debater he gained recognition as a gifted public speaker. In 1858, with funds provided by several members of the Sydney Jewish community, he went to England where he studied law. In 1861 he was admitted to the English Bar. A short time later, on returning to Sydney, he was admitted to the Colonial Bar.<sup>9</sup> He quickly built up a common law and criminal law practice, and he held a general retainer from the Crown. Salomons conducted a Royal Commission into the affairs of a mining company which led to the expulsion of a member from Parliament. In 1868 he appeared for Henry James O'Farrel, an Irish nationalist, who was charged with shooting with intent to murder the then Duke of Edinburgh, a son of Queen Victoria.

Salomons combined his legal learning with an exceptional retentive memory, enormous industry, and outstanding powers of advocacy. So equipped he became the undisputed leader of the New South Wales Bar. Wilfred Blacket, the anecdotist of the Sydney Bar, described Salomons as 'the most brilliant man of his generation and the most voluble'.

An episode in his life which operated against his acceptance of his judicial appointment was the period of some months during 1866 when he was treated in a mental hospital for what was then described as a nervous breakdown, attributed to overwork. Later he made health trips to Europe, occasioned by similar cause.

It was on 4 November 1886 that the announcement of Salomons' appointment as Chief Justice was made public. Both the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Bulletin* greeted his appointment with approval, while other newspapers alleged that he 'lacked aristocratic position, judicial balance, and dignity'. Twelve days later, before being sworn-in, Salomons resigned. When doing so he stated that he had been made aware that his appointment was distasteful to other judges, especially Mr Justice William Charles Windeyer, who had uttered opinions and expressions which would have made any future discourse between them impossible. This was a reference to what was said by Windeyer when Salomons made a courtesy call on him. Salomons also stated that his own temperament would not permit him to bear the additional strain and irritation that would be caused by unfriendly relations with another member of the Court. The New South Wales Bar resolved unanimously to request Salomons to withdraw his resignation, and solicitors by letter addressed a similar request to him; however, he remained adamant.

J.M. Bennett, in an article entitled 'Sir Julian Salomons, the fifth Chief Justice of New South Wales'<sup>10</sup> offered the opinion that neither in temperament nor in constitution was Julian Salomons equipped for the Bench, and he reported 'No evidence has been uncovered to suggest that religious differences or anti-Semitism played any part in the matter'.

It would appear that Salomons' manner and address to the Court in the course of litigation during the period preceding this unfortunate incident were not calculated to cause judges before whom he appeared to view favourably his suitability for judicial office. Material about his conduct on some such occasions suggest that at times he was brash and vain, and that his expressions were abrasive and condescending towards members of the Court.

However, it is clear that Salomons' career, both at the Bar and in public life, did

not suffer as a result of his resignation of the Chief Justiceship. He continued to be Leader of the Bar and was returned to the Legislative Council in 1887, remaining a member for a number of years. It was during that period that he was reviled in the House with being a Jew, to which he made the following memorable rejoinder:

I am a Jew; I was born a Jew; and I hope to die a Jew. I belong to that race from which the revered founder — though I do not think him divine — of Christianity sprung . . . I should be a poltroon and a coward, as well as a fool, if I were not proud of belonging to a race which has given Isaiah to the world, the Psalms of David, and all the mighty mysteries of the Bible upon which civilization, the consolation and the happiness of the word depends.<sup>11</sup>

In 1891 Salomons was knighted and he served as Agent-General for New South Wales in London. Salomons opposed Federation on grounds that it was inimical to the best interests of New South Wales.<sup>12</sup> Yet, after the passage of the Constitution Act 1900, he as senior counsel received a general retainer from the Federal Government. In his address of welcome to the first judges of the High Court, he was particularly gracious. Throughout his lifetime, Sir Julian remained an active member of the Sydney Jewish community.

Whatever disappointment arising out of Sir Julian Salomons' resignation of the Chief Justiceship was felt by members of the New South Wales Jewish community, it might have been mitigated a few years later by the appointment of Henry Emanuel Cohen as a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

Unlike Sir Julian, Henry Emanuel Cohen was an Australian by birth, having been born in 1840 in Port Macquarie. Thus he was the first Australian Jew to be appointed a judge of a Supreme Court of the colonies. On the other hand, he shared with Sir Julian a long and close association with the Great Synagogue. In 1874 he replaced his father on the Board of the Synagogue; between 1884 and 1886 he was the President, continuing his membership of the Board throughout the remainder of his lifetime.

Henry Emanuel Cohen, after some years in business, studied law at Middle Temple (London). On returning to Sydney, he was admitted to the Colonial Bar, where his practice was mainly in the field of mercantile law. He combined his legal practice with a parliamentary career. In 1877 he was appointed Colonial Treasurer, and then for two years held the portfolio of Minister for Justice. In 1885 he retired from Parliament and returned to the Bar.

On 26 October 1896, after having served for some months as an acting judge, Henry Emanuel Cohen was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court. In that Capacity, Mr Justice Cohen was the first presiding judge of the New South Wales Industrial Arbitration Court — a judicial office — doing so during 1902 to 1905. The New South Wales legislation introducing judicial mediation in industrial disputes preceded the establishment of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. Mr Justice Cohen has been described as having made history as the centrepiece of a great social experiment in employer-employee relations. In 1904 he returned to the Supreme Court and continued sitting until his death in 1912.

Mr Justice Cohen, as well as being a judicial innovator, maintained active involvement in the Montefiore Homes, and the Sydney Jewish Education Board. He also held office as Treasurer and President of the Sydney branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association.<sup>13</sup>

On 11 October 1906, Isaac Alfred Isaacs was appointed a Justice of the High Court of Australia, being additional to the three founding judicial members of the Court. To the present time, he is the only Jew to have occupied a seat on the High Court.

It was on 6 August 1855 that Isaac Alfred Isaacs was born in Melbourne, the son of Alfred and Rebecca Isaacs. Alfred Isaacs was born in Russian Poland, and he and Rebecca Abrahams were married in London before they migrated to Australia in 1854.

The brilliant career of Isaac Alfred Isaacs as a barrister-at-law, Queen's Counsel, Member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, Solicitor-General, Attorney-General and Acting Premier of Victoria, member of the Convention which framed the Commonwealth Constitution Act, member of the first House of Representatives, Attorney-General for the Commonwealth, Justice of the High Court from 1906 to 1930, Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (1928), Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia from 2 April 1930 to 21 January 1931, and then first Australian-born Governor-General from 22 January 1931 to 23 January 1936, has been well recorded and is no doubt well known to members of this Society. To those who might be unfamiliar with this brilliant career, and particularly to Jewish lawyers and law students, Sir Zelman Cowen's biographical work *Isaac Isaacs* published in 1967<sup>14</sup> would undoubtedly prove to be both enlightening and intellectually rewarding.

Judgments of Sir Isaac Isaacs, as a member of the High Court were, and continue to be, among the essential foundations of Australian constitutional law. In other branches of the law, he added to the growth and development of the common law with a degree of liberalism. Sir Zelman, in the following passage, fittingly and succinctly described Chief Justice Isaacs as having had 'a great mastery of the law', adding

The range of his knowledge and interest in the law was very great and his handling of case law, statutes and the technical material of the law was confident, comprehensive and very impressive. But he insisted that technique must serve broader ends of principle and justice, and he reiterated this theme from the Bench in constitutional and non-constitutional cases alike.<sup>15</sup>

Much has been written — mainly adversely — about Sir Isaac Isaacs' public expressions during the controversy over Zionism in the period leading up to the establishment of the State of Israel. In fact he died on 11 February 1948, very shortly before the proclamation of the State. His seemingly uncompromising position ought to be understood having regard to the fact that he was a proud Australian nationalist and a King's man. I offer for consideration whether Sir Isaac Isaacs' views concerning Zionism might not have changed if he had lived to witness the War of Independence and the subsequent struggles to survive of the newly-born Jewish State.

Mr. Chairman, at this point I permit myself the indulgence of an *excursus*. One morning during 1947, while a very young barrister, I was present in the Supreme Court Library. There I recognised Sir Isaac Isaacs standing on a ladder and reaching for a volume on the highest shelf — some twenty feet from floor level. With the volume in one hand, he descended to the floor, looked into a Law Report, and stepped onto the ladder again.

As he did so, I offered to get for him whatever book he required. In precise and staccato-like terms, he replied, 'I am quite capable of doing so myself, young man; thank you'. With seemingly increased agility, he began again to ascend the ladder. Sir Isaac Isaacs was then ninety-two years of age.

Last April, I was in a similar section of the Library, and about to step onto a ladder to secure for myself a Law Report. A young lady standing nearby kindly offered to get the book I was looking for. I thanked her and declined her offer. We then got into conversation. She confided that she was only recently admitted to the Bar, and told

me of her progress and ambitions. After some further small-talk, I scampered up the ladder — but I did not disclose to her that I had then only turned seventy-two years of age!

There were several features in common between the legal careers of Sir Isaac Isaacs and that of Rufus Daniel Isaacs. After a remarkable career at the English Bar, member of the House of Commons and Attorney-General, in October 1913 Rufus Isaacs was appointed Lord Chief Justice of England and created Baron Reading, ranking second to the Lord Chancellor in the judicial hierarchy. In that capacity he was the head of the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice, and presided in the Court of Appeal.

During much of the seven and a half years when he held judicial office, however, Lord Reading was engaged advising the government about matters relating to World War One and performing special missions on behalf of the government. In September 1915 he led an Anglo-French mission to the United States to negotiate and secure a loan of £1 Billion which was much needed by the Allied Forces for the prosecution of the war; and in 1917 he was the High Commissioner to the United States taking charge of the delicate and complex Anglo-American financial arrangements. Between February and May 1918 Lord Reading held office as Ambassador Extraordinary and High Commissioner on Special Mission to the United States. In January 1921 his judicial career ended when he became Viceroy of India. It was on his return to England on completion of his vice-regal office in April 1926 that he was made Marquess of Reading.

Rufus Isaacs was the first Jew to become Attorney-General, Lord Chief Justice of England, and the King's Representative in India. Lord Reading's reputation in the law was predominantly as an advocate. This was due to the spectacular successes which he quickly achieved after being called to the Bar. Eleven years later he took silk, then being the outstanding leader in the commercial causes jurisdiction. He was leading counsel for the Crown in the successful prosecution of Whitaker Wright, a company promoter and one-time millionaire, charged with several offences arising out of the publication of false balance sheets of various companies controlled by him.

Notwithstanding the several interruptions to his term of judicial office, Lord Reading's judgments in a number of cases established precedents which have survived more than seventy years. In particular he was the presiding judge at the trial of Sir Roger Casement in 1917,<sup>16</sup> charged with high treason. His ruling concerning the elements of the crime of treason committed by an accused person outside the King's dominion remains law to this day.<sup>17</sup>

At this point I mention four American judges who made important contributions to the law.

On 1 June 1916, Louis Dembitz Brandeis became the first Jew to take his seat in the Supreme Court of the United States of America, which he continued to occupy for twenty-three years.

The work of the United States Supreme Court is primarily concerned with the constitutional validity and interpretation of Federal and State statutes. Consequently, personal political, philosophical and sociological preferences often influence the decisions of many judges of the Court. Brandeis, of Liberal persuasion, was during most of his years of judgeship in minority with other members of the Court.

Professor Goodhart wrote of Brandeis that he was 'a man who refused to be bound by traditional prejudices of the past and who believed with all his heart that

intelligence and a clear understanding of facts were essential if we were to build a better world for the future'.<sup>18</sup>

In 1912, after meeting Jacob de Haas, a long-time English Zionist who had been associated with Theodor Herzl, Brandeis became a supporter of the Zionist cause. Throughout his later years, Zionism, next to the law, was his major concern.<sup>19</sup>

On its founding in 1948 in Massachusetts, the Brandeis University — the first non-sectarian Jewish-sponsored institution of tertiary learning in the United States — was named in memory of Justice Louis Brandeis. The national headquarters of the American Jewish Historical Society is situated on the campus of the University.

In February 1932, Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, who had been born in New York City, also joined the Supreme Court of the United States. He then had been a judge of the Supreme Court of New York, the State Court of Appeal, since 1913, when he was elected by popular vote. For eighteen years Cardozo served as a judge of the State Court of Appeal. During the last four years of that period he was Chief Justice of the Court.

The New York State Supreme Court was recognised by contemporary lawyers as the strongest court in the United States of America.<sup>20</sup> Judgments of the Court as then constituted were followed in leading cases not only in the United States, but also in other English-speaking countries, including the United Kingdom and Australia. In particular, it was judgments of Chief Justice Cardozo, being among the greatest interpreters of common law,<sup>21</sup> which were quoted and followed in other courts, including those of the Australian State Supreme Courts. As a judge of the State Court, he made his greatest contributions to the common law.

In 1946 the library of Inner Temple was destroyed as the result of an air raid on London. Cardozo's executors presented his library to the Inn as a memorial to a judge who had made so great a contribution to the common law, and who had expressed sincere affection and admiration for England.

Justice Cardozo was an observant Sephardic Jew who throughout his lifetime maintained membership of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York.

Among the shared characteristics of Sir George Jessel, Justice Brandeis, Lord Reading and Justice Cardozo, Professor Goodhart identified a fundamental liberalism. This the learned author described as 'not a revolutionary wishing to destroy or even alter in any radical degree the great system of law which he was helping to administer but not prepared to accept the established rules merely because they had been long established'.<sup>22</sup> Professor Goodhart also noted the part they played in 'enobling the tradition of the law'.<sup>23</sup>

Following Justice Cardozo's death while in office during 1938, Felix Frankfurter's nomination to the United States Supreme Court by President Roosevelt was confirmed in January 1939. It has been observed that during his twenty-four years of judicial office, Frankfurter subordinated his personal philosophy when determining matters of constitutional validity affecting liberties of speech, assembly and religious belief, on the grounds that those personal rights and convictions ought to be assessed against the legitimate concerns of society expressed through government. Until 1921 he was closely associated with the Zionist movement; thereafter he maintained an active interest in the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine. In 1962, due to an incapacitating illness, Justice Frankfurter resigned from the Court. His library forms part of the library of the Law Faculty of the Hebrew University.

Arthur Joseph Goldberg followed Justice Frankfurter to occupy what in some quarters was described as 'the Jewish seat' on the Supreme Court of the United States. He had served as Secretary of Labour in President Kennedy's administration. Although an expert on labour law, during his three years as a member of the Court, Justice Goldberg's decisions revealed him to be a master of constitutional law. He resigned his judicial office to become the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. In that capacity, following the Six Day War, Justice Goldberg clearly articulated American friendship and commitment to ensure the survival and wellbeing of the State of Israel against the threats of the United Arab States and the Third World front.<sup>24</sup>

Although he identified himself as a Reform Jew, Arthur Goldberg gave his name and support to both Orthodox, Conservative and non-denominational causes. For many years he served as President of the Jewish Theological Society. He was the first President of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists.

Albert Asher Wolff was born in Geraldton in the State of Western Australia. In the course of his education, he attended the Perth Hebrew School. After his marriage to a gentile woman in a Cathedral, his identification with the Jewish community ceased. Before his appointment in 1938 as a justice of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, he held several legal offices under the Crown; he was the author and draftsman of the Western Australian Matrimonial Causes Code and Rules. In 1959 he was knighted and appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, retiring from the Court in 1969. Sir Albert's period of Chief Justiceship was marked by his re-organisation of the Court to meet the increased volume of litigation, which resulted from the unprecedented expansion of mining and commerce in the State.<sup>25</sup> From 1968 to 1974 Sir Albert Wolff was Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Western Australia. Shortly before his death at the age of seventy-eight in October 1977, Sir Albert held communications with the then Chief Minister of the Perth Hebrew Congregation. He was given a traditional Jewish burial.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to Sir Albert Wolff, the second Jewish appointee to the Supreme Court of Western Australia was, and continues to be, a constant and observant Liberal Jew. In August 1989, David Ipp was appointed to the Supreme Court and he is presently a member of the Court. In 1981 Mr Justice Ipp emigrated to Perth from South Africa where he was born and educated and practised law for almost twenty years. Four years after commencing practice at the Perth Bar, he was made Queen's Counsel. Before his appointment, he held office as an active member of the Council of the Law Society of Western Australia, and the Australian Law Council. He is a member of the Temple David, Perth.

I now return to some members of the English Judiciary:

In 1943, Lionel Leonard Cohen commenced his judicial career as a judge of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice. Three years later he was elevated to the Court of Appeal. In 1951 he was created Baron of Walmer, and thereafter until 1960 he sat in the House of Lords as a Lord of Appeal-in-Ordinary. Lord Cohen was the author of legislation which introduced several important amendments to Company Law. The English statute became the model for subsequent company legislation in several states of the Commonwealth of Australia. He was Chairman of the Royal Commission on Awards to Inventors and of the Council on Prices, Productivity and Incomes, which was known as the Cohen Committee. Lord Cohen was President of the Jewish Historical Society of England, Jewish Board of Guardians, and of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, as well as one-time Vice-President of the British Board of Deputies.



In addition to Lord Cohen, there have been several distinguished Jewish members of the British judiciary:

The professional career of Cyril Barnet Salmon followed closely that of Lord Cohen. In 1957 Sir Cyril Salmon was appointed a judge of the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court, and several years later he was appointed to the Court of Appeal. In 1972, as Lord Salmon, he was elevated to the House of Lords as a Lord of Appeal-in-Ordinary. His judgments, both as a member of the Court of Appeal, and of the House of Lords, were marked by their legal scholarship and clarity of expression. He retired in 1980.

During World War Two, Seymour Edward Karminski served in the Royal Navy with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. In 1951 he was knighted on his appointment as a judge of the Divorce Division of the High Court, and in 1969 he was elevated to the Court of Appeal of which he was a Lord Justice of Appeal until his retirement in 1973. Sir Seymour was President of the London Jewish Welfare Board, and a prominent member of the West London Reform Synagogue.

Sir Alan Abraham Mocatta, a member of an English family of *Marrano* origin, was a judge of the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court from 1961 until his retirement in 1981. He was President of the Board of Elders of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue and Chairman of the council of Jews College. His communal interests included Anglo-Jewish historical affairs.

After conducting a successful practice as Counsel at the English Criminal Bar, in 1958 Dame Rose Heilbron became the first woman to be made a Recorder. Then in 1974 she was appointed a judge of the Family Division of the High Court, retiring in 1988.

Present Jewish members of the Court of Appeal are Sir Harry Kenneth Woolf and Sir Peter Murray Taylor, both of whom were previously for a short time members of the Queen's Bench Division. From time to time they have been responsible for conducting Royal Commissions on behalf of the British Government concerning important national questions and issues.

In 1965 the distinguished jurist and teacher of law, Bora Laskin, was appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal. In 1970 he was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada and three years later he was elevated to the office of Chief Justice of the Court. By the latter appointment, the Right Honorable Bora Laskin P.C. became the first Jewish member of the highest tribunal in the Canadian judicial system. In 1984, while still in office, he died.

Chief Justice Laskin was recognised by the legal profession as one of Canada's foremost legal thinkers. In a tribute to him on his death, it was recorded that Chief Justice Laskin would always be remembered as the great Canadian constitutional authority, and that his passing was a severe loss to Canada and Canadian jurisprudence, particularly then when important appeals under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms were beginning to reach the Supreme Court.<sup>27</sup> In Jewish affairs, Chief Justice Laskin was active as Chairman of the Legal Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress and of the Toronto Friends of the Hebrew University.<sup>28</sup>

Another member of the Jewish community to hold high judicial office in Canada was Samuel Freedman, who was born in Russia. He was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Province of Manitoba between 1971 and 1983.

Returning now to Australia, thirty-five years elapsed after the death in 1912 of Mr Justice Henry Emanuel Cohen before the third Jew was appointed to the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Mr Justice Bernard Sugerman was the first of six Jews

appointed to the Court over a period of thirty-six years. His appointment was made in 1947. In 1966 he was elevated to the newly-created New South Wales Court of Appeal. In 1970 he was appointed President of the Court of Appeal, becoming the second judge to hold that office. Later in the same year he was knighted. He retired from the Court in 1972. In the years before his elevation to the Bench, Sir Bernard Sugerman taught law at the University of Sydney, founded and edited the *Australian Law Journal* — to which he also was a contributor of many scholastic articles — edited the *Australian (Law) Digest*, and edited the 1942–1946 volumes of the *Commonwealth Law Reports*, which contain reports of judgments of the High Court of Australia. He was greatly respected and admired for his invaluable contributions to the law, both as a judge, teacher, author and member of the council of the New South Wales Bar Association.<sup>29</sup>

In 1962 David Mayer Selby became the second Jew in this period to be appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Between 1973 and his retirement in 1976, Mr Justice Selby was the Chief Judge of the Matrimonial Division of the Court. During World War Two, he served with the rank of Major in the 2nd A.I.F. His courageous leadership as a young Lieutenant both while in command of the only anti-aircraft battery possessed by the small and outnumbered garrison of Rabaul by the invading Japanese force, and during the withdrawal of his troops after the Battle of Rabaul while harassed by the enemy force and through hostile vegetation and climate, have formed part of Australian history.<sup>30</sup>

Mr Justice Selby's extra-judicial activities were several, including Deputy Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Life Vice-President of the Marriage Guidance Council of New South Wales, President of the New South Wales Medico-Legal Association, member of the Medical Ethics Review Committee, and member of the New South Wales Parliamentary Remuneration Review Committee.<sup>31</sup> In recent months the University of Sydney conferred upon Mr Justice Selby the honorary degree of Doctor of the University.

Between 1964 and 1975, Mr Justice Simon Isaacs was a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Before his appointment his practice at the New South Wales Bar was diverse, embracing all jurisdictions. The discharge of his judicial responsibilities reflected his wide experience as senior counsel, gaining for him the reputation of a very competent lawyer and shrewd judge of facts. In the course of his retirement address to the legal profession, Mr Justice Isaacs articulated his firmly held convictions that the exercise of civil liberties could not mean individual licence, and that no individual freedom was secure or lasting except freedom under the law in an ordered society.<sup>32</sup> He was a Vice-President of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, and a founder of the New South Wales branch of the Association. He died in July 1987.

In 1972 Mr Justice Gordon Jacob Samuels was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales; since 1974 His Honour has been a member of the Court of Appeal. Born and educated in England, he served as a Captain in the British Army during World War Two. After being called to the English Bar in 1948, he settled in Australia, and in 1952 he was admitted to the New South Wales Bar. Immediately before his judicial appointment he was the President of the New South Wales Bar Association.<sup>33</sup> For the past fifteen years Mr Justice Samuels has been the Chancellor of the University of New South Wales; in that capacity he has been an acknowledged champion of the interests of Australian universities, their academic staffs and students. He has held office in several organisations connected with the law. His judgments have been, and continue to be, cited with approval by

judges of Supreme Courts of the several States. In 1983 Mr Justice Samuels was made a Companion of the Order of Australia.

In the year following his appointment to the Supreme Court in 1973, Mr Justice Harold Hyam Glass joined Mr Justice Samuels as a member of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. Due to a terminal illness he retired from the Court in 1987 before reaching the statutory retirement age.

Mr Justice Glass was described by those well qualified to do so as 'one of the most brilliant lawyers to become a member of the New South Wales judiciary in the present century'. It was further said of him, 'By a series of illuminating judgments, distinguished by the elegance of expression and range of legal scholarship, he made a signal contribution to the development of the law in New South Wales'.<sup>34</sup> To that description, I would add my own opinion that Mr Justice Glass' contribution to the development of the common law throughout Australia was indeed outstanding. There are to be found in reported cases of the Victorian Supreme Court, several judgments of Mr Justice Glass which have been cited with approval and followed.

Between 1942 and 1946 Lieutenant Glass served in the Royal Australian Navy in a seagoing capacity. At the end of World War Two, while practising at the Sydney Bar, he continued to serve the Royal Australian Navy. In 1978 he was promoted Rear-Admiral, and during the following five years he was the Judge Advocate General. Both before and during his tenure of office as Judge Advocate General he made a most significant contribution to the legal administration of the Navy.

At the time of his appointment to the Supreme Court, Mr Justice Glass was President of the New South Wales Bar Association. Throughout his career, he maintained an active interest in legal education. During the last year of his life, while stricken with a debilitating illness, he conducted a course of lectures to law students at the University of New South Wales. He was the author of a legal textbook, and several articles published in the *Australian Law Journal*.<sup>35</sup> Under the pseudonym of Benjamin Sidney — his father's given names in reverse order — he wrote a novel and a collection of short stories based on life at the Bar. He was fluent in several languages, including Hebrew. His interest in the judicial system and the administration of justice in the State of Israel was a meaningful one. It was my privilege to have been associated with him in the organisation and presentation of a set of Commonwealth Law Reports to the Supreme Court of Israel, with funds subscribed by Jewish members of the New South Wales and Victorian judiciary and legal professions.

In January 1988 Mr Justice Glass was created an Officer of the Order of Australia; he died on 29 March 1989.

For three years before his appointment in 1975 as a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, Henry Laurence Cantor was the Master of the Common Law Division of the Court. Between 1940 and 1946 he served in both the 2nd A.I.F. and the Royal Australian Air Force. Mr Justice Cantor was the presiding judge at the trial of the late Mr Justice L.K. Murphy, a member of the High Court, on two charges of attempting to pervert the course of justice. In September 1986, shortly after the conclusion of the trial, Mr Justice Cantor died. He is remembered by judges and members of the legal profession as an able, experienced and highly respected judge.<sup>36</sup>

Mr Justice Brian John Keith Cohen is presently a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, having been appointed in 1983. During the previous seven years he was the Master-in-Equity of the Court.

The Supreme Court of Victoria was established by statute on 6 January 1852. During the following one hundred and twenty years, fifty appointments of judges were made to the Court. My appointment on 1 March 1972 was the fifty-first, and the first Jewish appointment to be made to the Court. Since then there have been three further appointments of Jews, all of whom continue to be members of the Court.

Mr Justice Kenneth Henry Marks has been a judge of the Court since 1977. Between 1943 and 1946 he served in the Royal Australian Air Force in operations out of Great Britain. During the period 1976–1977 he was Chairman of the Victorian Bar Council. Mr Justice Marks, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Judges of the Court, has been the originator of many innovations affecting the functioning of the Court.

In 1983 Mr Justice George Hampel and Mr Justice Howard Tomaz Nathan were appointed to the Court. Mr Justice Hampel was born in Poland and educated in Melbourne. He has been closely identified with legal education in Victoria. Mr Justice Nathan, as his second given name suggests, is of Sephardic ancestry, connected with the ancient community in central Portugal. Before his appointment to the Court, His Honour was counsel assisting the then Victorian Attorney-General.

Dr Elias Godfrey Coppel, C.M.G., Q.C., served as an Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria for periods during 1950, 1951 and 1952, and as an Acting Judge of the Supreme Court of Tasmania for two periods in the years 1956 and 1958.<sup>37</sup> For some years Dr Coppel was a member of the Melbourne University Council and the Warden of Convocation.

On 17 May 1973 Samuel Joshua Jacobs became the first Jew to be appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of South Australia. On 5 December 1990 when he reached the statutory retiring age, it was said by the State Attorney-General of Mr Justice Jacobs that he had contributed much to the life, law and culture of the State of South Australia. Those contributions were indeed many and varied. They included his service between 1940 and 1944 in the Middle East as a Captain in the 2nd A.I.F. Then, while practising as a barrister and later as a Queen's Counsel, he was a part-time lecturer and examiner in law. For two years up until his judicial appointment he was President of the Law Society of South Australia, and a member of the Executive of the Law Council of Australia.<sup>38</sup> During his term of judicial office, Mr Justice Jacobs was, and continues to be, Regional Chairman of the Winston Churchill Trust and Deputy Chancellor of the University of Adelaide. Recognition of his services to the University was made by conferring upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of the University.

On several occasions during his term of judicial office he was appointed and acted as Acting Chief Justice of the Court, and in latter years he was the senior puisne judge of the Court. Judgments of Mr Justice Jacobs were noted for their combination of learning and practical wisdom. It was said of the judge that his strong sense of justice and desire to reach a fair and just result were the hallmarks of his judicial decisions and judgments.<sup>39</sup> He made a great contribution to the development of planning law in the State of South Australia.

In 1982 Mr Justice Jacobs was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. At the present time, as the Royal Commissioner, he is conducting an enquiry into the affairs of the State Bank of South Australia.

My researches and enquiries have failed to establish that there has been a Jewish member of either the Supreme Court of Queensland or the Supreme Court of Tas-

mania. It may be that hitherto there have been few Jews practising law, or eligible for judicial appointment, in those states.

Mr Justice Marcus Richard Einfeld is presently a member of the Federal Court of Australia. Between 1986, when he was appointed to the Court, and 1990, Mr Justice Einfeld was President of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Mr Justice Steven Strauss, Mr Justice Joseph Victor Kay, Mr Justice Nahum Moshin and Mr Justice John Morris Cohen are members of the Family Court of Australia. Mr Justice Strauss was one of the youngest of those men who came to Australia in the *Dunera*. Before his judicial appointment in 1976, he conducted at the Victorian Bar a wide and extensive general practice.

This paper would not be complete without acknowledgement of the Supreme Court of Israel, and the development of doctrines and principles of law made by judges of the Court since its inception in 1948, upon the establishment of the State of Israel.

The first President of the Court was Justice Moshe Smoira. He migrated in 1922 from Germany to Palestine. During the period of the Mandate he was President of the Jewish Bar Association, and of the Honorary Court of the World Zionist Organisation. For six years Justice Smoira was President of the Israeli Supreme Court. Those who have succeeded him as President of the Court — Justice Isaac Olshan, Shimon Agranat, Joel Sussman, Moshe Landau, Isaac Kahan and the present incumbent, Meir Shamgar — have each filled Israel's highest judicial office with distinction and have been zealous in ensuring the application of the Rule of Law and the fair administration of justice for all, Moslem, Christian and Jew, within Israel's territorial boundaries.

Members of the Court have included several whose contributions to legal doctrines and legal learning have attracted international recognition. Perhaps foremost amongst those judges is Justice Haim H. Cohn. Born and educated in Germany, he also undertook rabbinical studies at *Merkaz Harav Kook Yeshivah* in Jerusalem. His judgments as a member of the Court between 1960 and 1981 reflect his profound knowledge of *Halachah* and his liberal approach to questions concerning *Halachah* and common law doctrines. His published works include *The Trial and Death of Jesus*. Those familiar with his publications look forward to an English translation of his recently published examination of *Halachah* and Jurisprudence, written during his retirement. Between 1965 and 1967 Justice Cohn represented the State of Israel at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. He is the Honorary President of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, of which he was a founding member.

In the judgments of Justice Menachem Elon are to be found clear statements of and commentaries upon *Halachah* and its applications to contemporary legal situations and problems. Justice Elon's work as editor of and contributor to the publication *The Principles of Jewish Law* (1975) has made available to lawyers in the Diaspora an area of law which hitherto was not within the knowledge of many.

Justice Moshe Landau was the presiding judge of the trial of Adolf Eichmann between April and December 1961. Many unusual questions of law concerning, *inter alia*, the jurisdiction of the Court to hear and determine charges of offences committed outside Israel and before the establishment of the State of Israel, the abduction of the accused illegally from Argentina, and the alleged manifest unfairness of the accused being tried on those charges by Jews were the subjects of rulings made by the Court. Those rulings, in addition to the conduct of the trial, won the

acclaim of lawyers in other parts of the world interested in the administration of criminal law.

It was the Supreme Court of Israel, under the presidency of Justice Landau, which was the first court in the English-speaking world to hold as a matter of law that a husband may properly be convicted of rape of his wife while the matrimonial relationship existed between the accused and the victim.

This year Justice Landau, now in retirement, was a recipient of the highest Israeli civil award, the Israel Prize.

In the short period of forty-three years since its inception, there have been two appointments of female judges to the Supreme Court, namely Justice Miriam Ben-Porat, who is now the State Controller, and Justice Shoshanah Netanyahu. Justice Netanyahu was the Chairman of the Commission appointed to report to the Government on the functioning of the medical and health services in Israel. It is understood that recommendations of the Commission are in the course of being implemented.

The Court has been unfailing in protecting the rights of all persons, without distinction between Arab and Jew, living in Israel, and frequently contrary to the expressed political interests of the government of the day. From time to time, judges of the Court have conducted enquiries into many sensitive national issues and situations; underlying their findings has been total commitment to the Rule of Law and the fearless administration of justice.

I am not familiar with decisions and judgments of all the Jewish judges to whom I have referred. In the judgments of those which I have in the past studied, I have detected a similar liberal application of law and doctrines and principles of law which characterised the judgments of Sir George Jessel. However, there is no justification for concluding that Jewish judges have been consciously influenced by the judicial work of the Master of the Rolls. Nevertheless it is a justified conclusion that those judges to whom I have referred did not depart from the high standard of judicial conduct which characterised the performance of his judicial duties by the first Jewish judge, Sir George Jessel.

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## MY ZIONIST EDUCATION: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Mark Braham

Though my parents attended the same Jewish school in South London, their backgrounds were very different. My father's family, the Abrahams, had been Londoners for several generations, originally from Amsterdam and of Sephardic stock. My paternal grandfather, Isadore Abrahams, married Dinah Joseph. The Josephs, of ancient Anglo-Jewish lineage, were affluent middle-class; they lived in fashionable Bayswater and owned their own carriage. Despite this they were loyal and, by Anglo-Jewish standards, observant Jews. Dinah's mother, Rebecca Joseph, *née* Benjamin, had nineteen children, though not all survived to adulthood. Some went to the United States of America and prospered greatly: one grandson, Judge Charles Wyzanski, of the Boston High Court, was considered for the U.S. Supreme Court in the Roosevelt administration; he married a Warburg. We lost trace of most of the family; many undoubtedly married out and assimilated.

The Abrahams were poor. My grandfather was easygoing, unintellectual, kind and unambitious; he was quite at home sitting in a pub with a glass of beer in one hand, a cigarette in the other. He mixed easily with gentiles. He was in turns an incompetent cabinet maker, a failed salesman, and *shamash* of a North London *shul*. He never owned a home; his five children were raised in a rented terrace in Kennington, South London. Yet they kept an Irish live-in maid, and in the obituary of my grandmother the *Jewish Chronicle* noted that she 'was famous in her life for her benevolence and charitable deeds'.

Around the mid-nineteenth century the Abrahams family split between the 'middle-of-the-road' United Synagogue and the new West London Reform. My wife, born Pamela Abrahams, came from the Reform part of the family; we share a great-great-grandfather Abrahams. Her other forebears, the Prince and Rodriguez families, were also of Anglo-Sephardic stock, originating in Amsterdam and Portugal respectively.

My mother's parents, Isaac and Clara Mohnblatt, came from Roumania and were married in London in the last decade of the nineteenth century. My mother, Pauline (Polly), was born in the East End, but the family soon moved upmarket to Peckham; my mother was also shifted from the Jewish school to a grammar school, St. Olave's. My grandfather was a good businessman: he made money in grocery and a gift scheme linked to the trade. He seems to have been the originator of the gift stamp promotion trade, now big business in the U.K.

My father's family, in the Anglo-Jewish tradition, tended to patronise my mother's. The old Anglo-Jewish families were smugly confident of their superiority. It was not an ill-natured or unkind attitude, but rather, in the British tradition, a tacit agreement that allowances had to be made for those not fortunate enough to have 'British' forebears.

My father served with Military Intelligence (MI5) in World War One and was still in uniform when he married my mother in 1919. His father-in-law bought him a men's wear shop in the Old Kent Road, South London; there was a flat above the shop where I was born in 1921. My maternal grandfather, Isaac Mohnblatt, in addition to a retail grocery shop had pioneered the 'savings stamps' business in the

gorcery trade, but this branch of his business was under management by a gentile, Walter Watkin. My grandfather died in his early forties., and my father took over his interests and went into partnership with Watkin. They became close friends and my father would bring 'Uncle Wally' home for dinner on Friday nights. I had a great admiration and affection for this handsome, powerfully built Welshman who had served in submarines during the war and 'sailed the seven seas'. He had the Welsh flair for poetry and was an eloquent speaker. I still have the beautifully penned and worded letter he wrote to me on my Barmitzvah. He encouraged me to box and followed by school and army career with interest. Around the Christian festive season he would arrive loaded with the annuals put out by the publishers of the boys' magazines we consumed so voraciously all the year. My brother and I would be invited to his children's Christmas parties, and on at least one occasion we had our own party with a tree. These happy memories from one's most impressionable years are not easily erased despite one's reversal of values in adulthood. It is, I suppose, precisely because I was so involved emotionally with western gentile culture, in later years tempted by the comfort and convenience of Reform, that my views today are considered 'extreme'. I know the temptations and dangers of assimilation too well.

Watkin and my father were a brilliant business partnership. They built up a big business with branches all over the United Kingdom, hence my brothers and I were raised in the lap of middle-class luxury. even during the Depression. We had three live-in servants and my elder brother and I were taken to our preparatory school by chauffeur-driven car. Before my Barmitzvah we moved from Dulwich to Brondesbury, then emerging as a fashionable suburb with large custom-built houses largely occupied by newly affluent Jews from the East End and Stamford Hill. The grandparents of such families — those with foreign accents — were kept hidden so far as was possible. My parents were blessedly free from such snobbery. Our Roumanian grandmother came to live with us in her later years; she thought the world of her son-in-law, also of 'Uncle Wally'. She shared in the growth of the business and, though there was never any legal obligation to do so, the partners gave her a handsome annual income.

In the 1930s, the newly prosperous Jewish middle-class of North West London pursued British status symbols with a determination and vigour their forebears had reserved for *Torah*. High on the list of status symbol priorities was the choice of school for the children. Nowhere in the world did the 'old school tie' carry the same status clout as it did in Britain in the 1930s; I doubt this has changed much. Shortly after my Barmitzvah I went to St. Paul's School, an ancient Anglican foundation (1509) much sought after by Jewish families, even from strongly Orthodox backgrounds. Among the great English public schools, St. Paul's was undoubtedly the most cosmopolitan. Situated in West Kensington, it was conveniently located for day boys from most parts of inner and suburban London and was therefore the choice for many overseas parents temporarily stationed in London. It was popular with the sons of diplomats from the Empire, and also with German Jewish refugees who could afford it. I was at school with Freud's grandson, S.G. Freud, whose ambition was to win the hurdles in the annual athletic sports, which was my speciality. He ran second to me in 1937 (under 16s) and 1938, but in 1939, though I won the High Hurdles, I fell at the last hurdle of the 220 yards Low Hurdles and Freud ran past me to collect his cup. Some years ago, in London, I met his brother, Sir Clement Freud, and asked what S.G. was doing. 'Selling hand-painted doorknobs in Baker Street', he replied.

Despite the rise of Hitler and the emergence of a high profile Fascist party in Britain, Zionism played no part in our lives. My friends were other Jewish boys from more or less affluent middle-class families, mostly school friends, or from other London public schools such as University College School or Haberdashers. My closest friend, however, went to a grammar school as his parents had fallen on relatively hard times and chose to economise on school fees. I do not think he ever came to terms with the blow to his pride this downgrading caused him. He spent his life pursuing status, power and prestige, and did in fact become one of Britain's leading property developers. This enabled him to give elaborate receptions at leading hotels at which one would trip over an extraordinary assortment of the rich, the famous and the titled. His ambition and pursuit of status led to his downfall in the property crash of the early 1970s; he died in his early fifties, a broken man.

Looking back on those years, I marvel at the essentially self-centred lives we led. We were terrible snobs. We patronised Jews who did to have our advantages, and even resented the influx of refugees from Germany who, we believed, were a source of increased anti-Semitism in Britain. In this respect there was an immense generation gap: my parents not only took in Jewish refugees and kept them, for months on end, they were also the prime movers in opening a hostel for refugee children. I took little interest in all this as I was too much absorbed with becoming an 'Englishman of the Jewish faith', hot in pursuit of athletic honours as a means of acceptance into gentile 'society'.

Zionism in our lives meant it was a movement we vaguely supported because it promised to solve the problem of the German refugees, and we sycophantically went along with government policy lest we be accused of 'dual loyalties'. In this respect we were all 'Reform Jews' because, prior to World War Two the Reform movement was officially anti-Zionist and had formally banished Zion from its ideology and liturgy. I did not know any Zionists among my contemporaries, though I had a second cousin who belonged to *Habonim* and, to her parents' grief and amazement, went on *Aliyah*. One of nine children, she was the only one to take Zionism seriously.

Those were the days when Jews of my generation, whose parents had made it, were in full retreat from public Jewish identification. I would sooner, for example, have been noticed reading a pornographic publication than the *Jewish Chronicle* on a bus. English Jews found the presence in their midst of 'foreign' looking Jewish types an embarrassment: this included German refugees dressed in long overcoats and carrying briefcases as well of course as collectors from Jerusalem with black hats and beards. The latter would call on Sunday mornings, my father being a generous donor to all Jewish appeals, in particular *Torah* institutions, despite his own lapsed observance.

Though brought up in a home where *Shabbat* and *Kashruth* were observed in the Orthodox tradition, my father drifted, largely one suspects under the influence of his gentile partner and other gentile business and Masonic associates. He and his partner lunched every day at Simpsons in the Strand, famous for its roast beef. He became a founder member of a gentile Masonic lodge where, of course, he mixed freely with gentiles. At the same time, he was a prominent and active figure in Orthodox Jewish circles. Since his early twenties, he had never been without an executive role in a synagogue, either as an honorary officer ('in the box') or as president. He was also a member of the Council of the United Synagogue.

As children, my elder brother and myself were raised in a mixed tradition. Formally Orthodox, we rode to synagogue, and went to the cinema in the afternoon.

Our father sat in the box and went to business after *shul*. He also smoked on *Shabbat*, but not at home. *Kashruth* was observed at home, in the Anglo-Jewish Orthodox style of the period: that is, we had *kosher* meat, which my mother *kashered*, and separate milk and meat, but knew nothing of kosher cheese, wine or bread, and we bought cakes from Lyons Corner House.

In the mid-1930s my father had a severe nervous breakdown; this was shortly after my Barmitzvah when I was at St. Paul's. He would come home from the office and retire to his sitting room/study upstairs. We saw little of him in those years, except on Friday night. The family would come for dinner and one or two friends would come in after dinner. The men retired to the billiard-room to play snooker; we had a full-size table in a mock-Tudor room.

My mother rented, then bought, a house at the coast where she would take my father for weekends. My brother and I did not always go down, but during the summer we lived there and came up to London every day on the train to school. We had a great deal of freedom for boys of our age (my brother was eighteen months older).

Father's health did not improve; the doctors were helpless. Such was his mental state that he wanted to commit suicide, but refrained from doing so because he realised that his problem was spiritual and that death was no way out. Then he made a 'pact' with God. If God would heal him he would become a better Jew. He became a *Baal T'shuvah*, kept *Shabbat* and abandoned his previous lifestyle. It was tough going at first: at the height of his social and business success, in the prime of life, he had to give up most of his old friends because he could no longer share their pleasures, i.e., eating in *treife* restaurants or *treife* homes. But an old schoolfriend of his used to say about his 'pact' with God that no man ever kept his side of a deal more honourably, and certainly God kept His: from that time on father was a mentally happy man, nothing worried him.

My brother and I went our own ways. By the time my father became *Shomer Shabbat* I was at St. Paul's and in various teams — rugby, water polo and boxing — which meant that I went to school on Saturday to play in matches or box. Father did not try to stop me. My mother would give me money and off I would go for the day. In a large house, I would only see my father at mealtimes, anyway, and this was usually only in the evening.

War broke out just before my eighteenth birthday. I was a lazy and undisciplined student and though I obtained my School Certificate was just short of sufficient credits to enable me to go to university. I tried to enlist in the Army, but they were not taking volunteers at that stage, only twenty-year-old conscripts. So I went to a university crammer in an attempt to get to Cambridge via the university Little-go entrance exam. My weakness was the compulsory Latin, which I loathed. I failed, and then discovered an alternative to Latin was Divinity. I had private tuition in the Gospel of St. Mark, and passed easily.

At Cambridge, I read for an Economics Tripos with the intention of following an uncle into the civil (public) service, a career for which, I now realise, I was most unsuited. Economics, like Latin, bored me. I scraped a third in First Year and after Dunkirk decided that with Hitler just across the Channel poised for invasion, learning how to fire a Bren Gun was more important than mastering theories on the trade cycle. Together with my closest friend, a gentile, I joined a Young Soldiers battalion specially formed for Home Defence. My friend, Roger, had a distinguished Army career, being awarded a Military Cross in Burma fighting the Japanese at the head of a company of Punjabi Indians. A brave soldier, he could not

cope with the pressures of civilian life at the head of a company taken over by a multinational. He was forcibly retired, prescribed Valium, and eventually shot himself.

My other close gentile friend, Nigel, once said to me that he envied me my purpose in life. 'What was that?' I enquired. 'Zionism', he answered to my surprise. Frankly, I had not given it much thought and it puzzled me that he assumed I must be a Zionist because I was a Jew. He was searching for something and finished up a member of the Oxford Union, a right-wing Christian group. Nigel transferred to the Indian Air Force later, became a fighter pilot, and was killed in an air crash.

At Cambridge I rarely mixed with any Jews; my friends were all gentiles. I have never been inside the Cambridge *shul* and doubt whether, in my day, such a thing as a Jewish Society existed, and even if it had I doubt that I should have been interested. I never denied my Jewishness, and certainly never descended to eating the foods specifically forbidden by *Torah*. Of course, the standard response, 'I am proud to be a Jew' came easily to my lips when challenged, but it was hardly true. The fact is we admired and respected Western culture; we were infatuated. And Western culture had traditionally, with some honourable exceptions — Galsworthy, George Eliot — despised Jews and Judaism, and what the average Jewish boy of thirteen knew about Judaism in those days was absurdly little, and what he did know had often been filtered through the Western cultural system. Hence Pharasaical meant hypocritical: that is what Judaism in its authentic Orthodox form spelled out to Jewish boys from average Jewish homes in England of the 1930s. At eighteen I knew the Gospel of St. Mark, but could barely read Hebrew and struggled to learn one short portion for my Barmitzvah. I was never taught a *Haftarah*. Our literary heritage in those days (has it really changed?) was Fagin, Shylock and set schoolbooks by the anti-Semitic John Buchan (later Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada). For relaxation we read Dorothy Sayers and other fiction writers who were rarely satisfied with a plot unless a sly Jewish stereotype could not be introduced somewhere. Our values, from childhood, were set by our voracious consumption of the weeklies: the *Gem*, the *Magnet* and *Boys' Own Paper*. Our heroes were tall, fair-haired, blue-eyed, 'clean-limbed', brave, strong, honest Englishmen who had been to public schools and were destined to go out and govern Britain's far-flung Empire.

My reading and public school education notwithstanding, I had one advantage over most of my Jewish contemporaries. I had a father whose obvious sincerity and integrity made a lasting impression on his sons, however far removed from Jewish life they might have become in their youth, and a mother who had a Jewish 'heart'. In these days of heart transplants, it would clarify this phrase if we referred to it more accurately as a 'Jewish mind'. If she lapsed from the high standards set by my father after his 'conversion' it was not because she was rebelling against *Torah*; it was simply a matter of the willing spirit and weak flesh. She never sought to justify her lapses via some strained interpretation of *Torah*. There is an important distinction here, which the Rabbis draw, and which Rabbi Avigdor Miller has focussed on in his histories and works on Jewish ideology to explain the difference between pre-Holocaust European Jewry and that of the U.S.A., and why the Holocaust occurred in Europe while American Jewry was untouched.

I suppose we were an unusual family in that three brothers who had all, in their youth and early middle age, departed from *Torah* life (and in my own case the separation was almost complete), eventually returned, undoubtedly due to the strength and sincerity of purpose we had seen in our father. My younger brother,



Don, for example, who was educated at Harrow, is almost certainly the only Old Harrovian who is today president of a major *Chabad* congregation in the U.S. I doubt that he has interest today in wearing his Old Harrovian tie which, in any case, would be completely obscured by a magnificent beard which I have envied but not tried to emulate.

Of course we were all 'proud to be Jews', but it was a meaningless Pavlovian response, an act of defiance. Had we really been proud to be Jews we should not have gone to such lengths to conceal it publicly. My father commenced using the name Braham in 1919 when he opened a shop, and the name was changed legally about 1933 after the advent of Hitler. The truth is we had been successfully brainwashed by gentiles, which is why in later years, when I came to study the life and thought of Herzl, I understood his anti-Semitism and why he conceived a movement to change the identity of the Jew. Its success can be gauged by the rebuke Golda Meir gave to Israelis some years ago when she said that Israelis who returned from overseas trips and said smugly they were not taken for Jews were making anti-Semitic remarks. In the circles in which we moved in the 1930s, the highest compliment you could pay someone was to say, 'You don't look Jewish' or 'I wouldn't have taken you for a Jew'. I wonder if this has really changed?

I spent a year in the ranks; we were guarding key centres and an airfield during the Battle of Britain, equipped with a variety of ancient machine guns of various types left over from World War One. Then came Sandhurst and a commission into a home county infantry regiment. I found Army life insufferably boring: the war was a bore. Junior officers were invited to volunteer for the Indian Army and I grasped the opportunity early in 1942.

Before sailing for India two anti-Semitic incidents, sent just to remind me who I was, come to mind. My company was encamped on the estate of Sir Herman Lebus, a Jew who had founded a large furniture manufacturing company and doubtless received his title for charitable work, but so far as I know he was little if at all involved in the community. Certainly his family gave every appearance of being English landed gentry, despite the fact that Lady Lebus was American. One day, walking with an attached artillery officer in the grounds and approaching the house (the officers were billeted in the centrally-heated servants' quarters; the men under canvas), he said to me: 'If the original owners knew that their estate had fallen into the hands of Hebrews they would turn in their graves'. I am ashamed to admit that I remained silent. But I was not silent when, together with the other officers of the company, were drinking in the private bar of a pub in St. Neots, and I heard a woman reading out a poem blaming the war on the Jews. It referred to an Army 'Fed by Joseph Lyons [the Jewish catering multiple], clothed by Monty Burton [the multiple tailors, also Jewish], and led by Hore-Belisha from the rear'. Hore-Belisha was the Jewish Minister of War in 1940-41. I strode across the room and confronted the woman. An argument commenced and she quoted from Belloc: 'How odd of God to choose the Jews'. I said: 'At least you admit He did choose them'. At this point, with real trouble on the point of brewing, two other officers from my company grabbed me, one by each arm, and rushed me out into the street. The company commander had apparently decided he did not want trouble. I learned that the woman was Lady Jersey, a notorious pro-Fascist anti-Semite, later interned with other Fascists.

In India, after a short course at the Indian Military Academy, I was posted to an elite Gurkha regiment. From there I volunteered for the newly formed Gurkha Parachute Battalion, the elite of the elite. The senior officers were all professionals, regular Indian Army types. As usual, I found myself the only Jew. The Indian

Parachute Brigade, however, of which we were part, had two Jewish HQ officers. One, Capt. Harry Posner, the Medical Officer, was from London; the other, Capt. Bob Biusky, Signals Office, from South Africa. We had little to do with Brigade HQ, but I met Posner when he took me to hospital in Rawalpindi. After the war, we met in London and he came to my wedding. He had married out. While in London in 1988, my wife saw his death announcement in the newspaper; I would have gone to his funeral had he not been buried in a country churchyard. He had stayed on in the Army and became a Brigadier.

My contacts with Jews in India were almost non-existent, though I did not leave to Calcutta in 1943 and found my way to the Jewish centre to take my fast for *Yom Kippur* then to *shul* the next day. It was a brief visit; I had no idea how to follow the service, and found it boring; nor did I complete the fast.

My year with the Gurkha Parachute Battalion was hardly a success. Parachuting in India, in those days, was a chancy business due, I now know, to faulty packing of the parachutes. For a long time we were running an average of one fatal casualty to every major training jump, and we were jumping out of old bi-planes with holes cut in the floor for exits. I did ten jumps and fail to understand why people do this for sport. The parachuting, however, was not the major problem: my political views and Jewishness were. In those days, my views were Leftish and fiercely anti-racist: they clashed with those of a very Right-wing mess. A cartoon on the mess notice-board satirising the Leftish views of an English bishop was answered by me with another satirising the views of the Blimpish Right; this did nothing for my social life. There was a not uncommon view among professional officers that we had made a mistake in fighting Hitler; Russia was the real enemy.

Towards the end of 1943 I went into hospital with a severe bout of infective Hepatitis (they called it 'chill on the liver'). I was badly discoloured and suffering from severe dysentery too. This was not properly diagnosed until I got to Italy: it was the worst form, amoebic dysentery. Discharged from hospital, I soon went back with a relapse. When I was finally discharged I was sent back to the Gurkha depot, then put on to a small draft of reinforcement officers bound for Italy.

I joined the 1st Battalion of the 5th Gurkhas in the winter line near the Adriatic coast in January 1944. It was a hard winter, particularly so in the Appennines. The Germans were well dug in and we were always under observation, so we were constantly engaged in night patrols, either in intense cold or through rain and slush. In May we were switched across to act as the leading division to cross the River Gari in assault boats thereby by-passing Cassino, an obstacle that had held up the advance to Rome. I was acting as Intelligence Officer at Battalion HQ and two days after we had crossed was sent to make contact with the British battalion on our left. I took a wrong turning in the early morning fog and emerged out of the mist just in time to catch a glimpse of German helmets behind a hedgerow in front of me. I dived behind a tree simultaneously with a burst of gunfire. One bullet went through the flesh part of my thigh, another through the magazine of my Tommy Gun; all the bullets fell out. I drawled back to a ditch and lay there until I was discovered by a Sikh patrol and evacuated to a regimental aid post of the British battalion I had been looking for, then to a military hospital under canvas. When I was wounded, my Gurkha orderly had disappeared and left me for dead. I never saw him again.

When I came out of hospital, after convalescence at Sorrento, I was posted to the divisional reinforcement camp near Taranto, and was for a time acting adjutant. In that capacity I opened the camp post one day and was horrified to find in it an adverse report on myself, signed by the CO and Brigadier. It referred to two patrols I

had led and which, so the report said, I had failed to complete. The Brigadier referred to me as 'a Jew who should be good at figures' in the report and recommended me for a base job. The report on my patrol work was of course entirely wrong, and it was a blatant and obvious anti-Semitic conspiracy which I refused to take lying down. I wrote a four-foolscap-page, close-typed, protest to the divisional Commander (Major-General, later Sir, Dudley 'Pasha' Russell) setting out in detail what had occurred in the course of the two patrols mentioned in the report. In one case, I had taken out a fighting patrol with orders to cross a valley and attack a house halfway up a hill on the other side. Soon after we set off it commenced to pour with rain, and at the bottom of the valley we hit a stream and a bog. I walked into the bog in the dark and began to sink up to my thighs. The Gurkhas, seeing my plight, lay down in the bog and managed to pull me free. By then I was covered from head to foot in mud, my Tommy Gun completely clogged. Then we were fired on from the flank, and I assumed our presence had been observed from the house. I decided it would be suicidal to attack under those conditions, and ordered the patrol back up the hill where we returned fire. This was the core of the report.

The other patrol was a trivial matter. I had gone out with one man into no-man's-land at night, and reported back what we had seen and heard of the enemy positions. It was considered I did not bring back enough information. In my letter to the divisional Commander I also pointed out that I had applied for, and been recommended for, a job with the special forces operating from Bari across the Adriatic into Yugoslavia. As a trained parachutist I considered myself qualified for the work. This recommendation hardly supported the adverse report. I was ordered to take a truck and driver and go for an interview with General Russell, and I drove up to divisional HQ, then situated in a mansion just south of Florence. The General was most sympathetic and asked me what I wanted to do. I asked for a transfer to a battalion of my old British regiment, also serving in his division. He agreed. After the war, and his retirement, we corresponded.

The CO of the British battalion knew under what circumstances I had left the Gurkhas and was most sympathetic. He was delighted when my platoon won the battalion competition for best platoon; this was a few weeks after my arrival. Then came a traumatic event: our intelligence reported the Germans had pulled out from a key position in a ruined castle at the top of a steep hill and were in fact shelling the village below. I was ordered to take out a patrol and occupy the position. I took one section of ten men, under command of a corporal, and intended to put them in position and leave them in occupation. We set out on a glorious Italian summer morning, in single file up the steep hill leading to the castle. I led the way carrying a portable radio set with larynx microphone netted into our battalion HQ. Our information being that the Germans were pulling out fast we made no attempt to do other than walk straight up the hill to our objective. We came over the brow of the hill and about one hundred yards from the castle I stopped and raised my binoculars to my eyes to get a close look. Immediately I stopped, fire came from the castle: at least one Spandau machine gun and an automatic rifle. They were waiting for us. The Bren gunner went down with about six bullets in him; the Bren gun went over the side of the hill. He managed to crawl into an old slit trench. The other target hit was myself. One bullet, coming straight between my eyes, was deflected onto my wrist by my binoculars; otherwise I was unhurt. It was around 8.30a.m.; we could not move. I failed to get HQ on the radio; all I could get was the nine o'clock news from London informing me that on the Italian front there had been 'light patrol activity'. We lay all day until, as dusk fell, about 6p.m, I gingerly rose to my feet and

the rest of the section began to appear from their various hiding places. We found the Bren gunner in his slit trench, still alive and cheerful, having done his best to dress his wounds with his field dressing and handkerchief. Two men linked arms and we half-carried him back along the route to the farmhouse whence we had come. The CO apparently went around saying that I had remained on the objective all day, within sight of the enemy, in order to rescue a wounded man, which was of course not quite true. We were pinned down and dare not raise our heads in daylight lest we be picked off like rabbits; nor did we even have a machine gun to defend ourselves, simply rifles and my pistol. The Bren gun had disappeared over the side of the hill and the Bren gunner lay seriously wounded. As I was using a radio set and had not expected any problems I had not even brought a Tommy Gun along with me. Anyway, the story went round the division as the CO described it, and this gave me great satisfaction as it would obviously have got back to my former battalion.

After the war, meeting an old friend from the Gurkha battalion, he told me everyone believed I had been awarded a Military Cross, which of course I had not, and would not have deserved, though it might have been true had the CO lived on. In the event, he was killed by a mine shortly after. Over the years I have often asked myself whether in fact, had I been able to get away I would have done so and left the wounded man where he was. It is a question I cannot answer; I don't know. Shortly after this we were pulled out of the line for a rest, which we badly needed. I went down with a severe recurrence of my dysentery and was evacuated to the military hospital at Casserta, near Naples. There I was correctly diagnosed as having contracted amoebic dysentery in India. Had it been diagnosed as such in India it would have meant more or less automatic repatriation to England. In those days, it was virtually incurable as the amoebae lodge in the bowel. I was six weeks in hospital where, despite some very unpleasant forms of treatment I thoroughly enjoyed the rest from the hard slog and constant nerve-wracking routine of the junior infantry officer in the line. I remember the physical comforts of clean sheets, regular meals, warmth, toilets and running water; but more importantly, it gave me time to do some soul-searching.

The affair of the adverse report had taken a great deal out of me: I understood how Captain Dreyfus must have felt. I was more fortunate; there had been a 'righteous gentile' in the form of a General who had been prepared to back me. On top of this came the second brush with death, and I began to think seriously about the meaning of two such miraculous escapes. After the Gurkha episode, I suppose I once and for all time abandoned, with some reluctance, my belief in an identity described as an 'Englishman of the Jewish faith'. Yet it was something I harked back to for years after. From hospital I wrote to my father explaining my problems and asking various questions. There were things I could write to my father which I could not have discussed with him; we were much too 'English' and reserved. To show emotion was bad form.

My father wrote at length, quoting extensively from the Hertz *Chumash*. He was no Hebrew scholar, and had studied no Talmud, but had an intense feeling for the Jewish spiritual approach and seemed to arrive at Talmudic truths intuitively. The Hertz commentary in English was a boon to such as he, as it proved to be to me in those years.

In hospital I became, intellectually, a *Baal T'shuvah*. It took years, long after I married, before my lifestyle more than remotely resembled my ideology but from that time on I was intellectually committed.

I knew that I could never completely devote my life to the vain pursuit of material goals: the meaning of all that occurred to me during 1944 became apparent and the message was burned into my soul. From that time on it became for me a question of a kind of spiritual *noblesse oblige* to pursue truth, as I saw it through the eyes of the *Torah* Sages, regardless of the consequences. Which is why I have so often pursued 'lost causes' to the amazement of friends, the dismay of family, the disgust of vested interests.

From my father, too, I inherited a 'crusading' spirit in communal life. He wrote to me what he had expressed to us all as children: his disgust and anger at the decline in ethical standards in communal life; at the manner in which deference was paid to monied upstarts whose business dealings were sometimes dubious; at the way in which some lay leaders lorded it over, and sometimes persecuted, learned rabbis.

When I got back to England in the latter half of 1945, I was stationed at various training depots. By this time the *Irgun* was operating against British troops in Palestine, and Jewish officers like myself were embarrassed by their activities, as indeed was the Anglo-Jewish community. Each week we had to give a lecture on current affairs, for which purpose a pamphlet setting out the basic details of the subject was issued. I approached the subject of Palestine, when it came up, with some trepidation, and sketched the background to the problem with what I imagined was objective neutrality. At the end of the lecture there was a consensus among the troops that Britain should get out of Palestine and leave the Jews and Arabs to 'fight it out between them'. In 1945, the British had had their fill of war, wanted the troops home and no more overseas involvements, which is why Churchill, to the astonishment of the world, lost the 1945 election in a landslide win to Labour. There were no serious questions at the end of the lecture; they were not really interested. There was one comment, inevitably: 'You never see a Jew with the arse 'anging out of his trousers'. I cannot remember how, or if, I answered.

My last posting prior to demobilisation was to the Parachute Regimental training centre. Many of the men of the Parachute Regiment had recently returned from Palestine; I carefully avoided involvement in discussions about Palestine.

In late 1946, after I had started work as an unauthorised clerk on the London Stock Exchange, things were hotting up in Palestine. The Anglo-Jewish community were becoming increasingly embarrassed by, and hostile to, the *Irgun*. After the assassination of Lord Moyne by the Stern Gang my wife, who had worked at the BBC during the war, met anti-Semitism at work for the first time. Then came the parcel bomb incident, sent by the *Irgun* to a Major Farran, who no doubt deserved it for his activities in Palestine; unfortunately, the parcel was opened by his brother, with fatal results. When the British hanged two *Irgun* men, the *Irgun* retaliated, snatched two British sergeants and hanged them. Years later it was discovered that one sergeant, Sgt. Martin, was in fact a Jew: he had been born in Cairo to a Jewish mother.

My parents were staunch *Mizrachists*, not politically minded but good fund raisers. My father believed in the *Mizrachi* principle, nowadays almost forgotten, that a State not founded on *Torah* lines, and run according to *Halacha*, would not last. However, at the same time as they were organising fund raising meetings for *Mizrachi* (I once collected Richard Crossman, a cabinet minister, from the House of Commons, to address a Zionist fund raising meeting in my parents' home in St. John's Wood), my father was also a member of a small committee raising funds for the families of the hanged sergeants. Begin's name in the Anglo-Jewish community

was mud at this time; as late as 1972, when Begin visited Britain as Israel's Leader of the Opposition, his supporters were forced to cancel a dinner scheduled to be held in his honour, such was the opposition to his visit by the community; Begin cut short his visit.

These were years when I was very uncomfortable with Zionism. The creation of the State of Israel posed a threat to my comfortable British Diaspora identity. I was proud to have fought as a British officer, but I resented the idea of Jews fighting as Jews in a nationalist cause against the nation to which I felt I belonged. To some extent I think all British-born Jews who had made it in British society felt this way. I was resentful, too, of the men who had not gone to war and had contrived to stay in England and establish themselves while the competition was overseas at His Majesty's invitation. The enthusiasm with which some of these stay-at-homes greeted the establishment of the State of Israel, by force of arms and the courage of young Zionists, contrasted strangely with their lack of enthusiasm when it had come to expressing their Jewish loyalties by grabbing the opportunity to fight the Nazi menace when the opportunity was there. In later years, I recognised the hypocrisy of the mainstream Zionists: their refusal to recognise that the State of Israel was the direct outcome of the policies of the Stern Gang and *Irgun*. Then they had the nerve to continue to condemn Begin while welcoming the State he had in fact created. If it had been left to Ben-Gurion, the British would still have been there. For at least twenty years after 1948 I could not forgive Begin and the Revisionists. In later years, with growing understanding of Holocaust survivors, I understood Stern and Begin, and often wonder whether, had I been born in Warsaw, I would not have joined them. But I cannot change my view that it was the pace set by the *Irgun*, few as they were, that forced Britain out. I have written at length elsewhere about the morale of British troops in 1945, the shortage of manpower and the popular view that Britain should bring the troops home and leave the rest of the world to sort itself out. This view cost Churchill the 1945 election, in a shock landslide defeat. I was serving on the Italian-Yugoslav border at the time of the forced repatriation of the Cossacks and pro-German Yugoslavs in 1945, and maintain their illegal forced repatriation (mostly to slave camps or immediate execution) was forced on the British because the British 8th Army was no longer an effective fighting force and a fight with Tito or the Soviet could not be risked. Not that I could shed any tears for the Cossacks or pro-German Yugoslavs. I could understand them wanting to fight against Communism, but could never forgive them fighting for Nazi Germany.

Meanwhile, I had married into a Reform family in 1947. My wife was third generation Reform on both sides; her background was totally divorced from basic Jewish observances such as *Kashruth* and *Shabbat*. There was always a strong pull for us to go over to Reform and give up the struggle. It was due to my father's example and the convictions I had acquired under stress of war that determined the path we would ultimately follow. But this would have been insufficient had my wife not been so intensely loyal, modest in her demands, and quite free from social ambitions. Had she been otherwise, like my contemporaries I should have become a London stockbroker, trading on my family, school and Army connections — a 'pillar' of the Reform or pseudo-Orthodox London Jewish establishment. The Jewish line, I fancy, would have ended with us, as it has with so many of our family and friends.

It is a fact, as could be shown with the Abrahams family, that once *Torah* Judaism is abandoned in Western society it takes one to four generations for complete assimilation. Of the hundreds of descendants of the mutual great-great-grandfather



of my wife and I, those who remain Jews are the ones who have maintained Orthodoxy or, if Reform, like my wife, have married back into the Orthodox.

Zionism was unimportant in our lives until 1960. I was living in London at the time (there was still a strong pull from my wife's family), and I began to read articles that were appearing purporting to prove that the expulsion of the Arab refugees was deliberate Zionist policy. They made convincing reading; worse, the Zionist response was inept. Had the Zionist answer accepted the indisputable fact that *some* Arabs were deliberately put to flight, and pointed out the inevitability of this in a war for survival, the emergent State having to fight five Arab invading armies, the Jews, like myself, who were shocked at the 'revelations' would not have taken it so badly. In the event, the Zionists continued to promote the partially true story that the Arab leaders had told the Palestinians to get out. I was influenced by Arab propaganda less by their persuasiveness than by Zionist folly.

On our return to Sydney I was invited to write a column for the two Jewish newspapers, the *Australian Jewish Times* in Sydney, and the *Australian Jewish Herald* in Melbourne. I was paid by the *Times* but donated the money to the United Israel Appeal (UIA). It is my principle never to take money for what I consider to be a communal service.

I attacked many aspects of communal life, from declining moral standards to pseudo-Orthodoxy, and was occasionally censored. When I began a series of articles attacking secular Zionism the storm in Melbourne in 1968 set in motion events which ended in the closure of the then ninety-year-old *Australian Jewish Herald*.

The *Herald* 'affair' made headlines in Australia; it was even reported overseas. My public persona emerged besmirched and riddled with distortion, though I do not blame the Victorian leadership of the day for this. Melbourne had the highest concentration of Holocaust survivors of any community, and in 1968 anyone, especially a columnist in a Jewish newspaper, who dared criticise any aspect of Israel's policy, let alone its very existence, was a 'traitor' in the eyes of those who had emerged from the Holocaust with confused feelings about God and, more often than not, had substituted the State of Israel for *Torah* Judaism. The Zionist credo, in those days, was 'pay up and shut up'. I had committed the ultimate sin of questioning the very existence of a secular 'Jewish' State, and then went on to make one or two somewhat naive political suggestions to accommodate the State to a world opinion now beginning, ominously, to discover the Arab refugees.

I was still afflicted with a 'ghetto mentality' — something of which the Zionists purported to have rid themselves. I worried about what the *Goyim* thought. Ironically, the wheel has now turned full circle. It is the Zionists who worry about 'what the *Goyim* think' while I, frankly, am only concerned that Israel should take steps to secure its people regardless of what the *Goyim* think. One suggestion I did make in 1968 made sense to me then, and still makes sense to me now. In the aftermath of Israel's massive victory in 1967 I proposed, bearing in mind Churchill's dictum 'magnanimity in victory', that Israel compensate the Arabs who had left property behind when they fled Israel in 1948. If necessary, I suggested, we should sell half our synagogues in the Diaspora to raise the money. Israel's mistake, I still feel, has been to link this moral obligation to a final settlement. Had Israel in fact used the abandoned Arab property in Israel to compensate the Jews who had been forced to leave their homes and property in Arab countries it would have seemed less hypocritical than the policy of continually pleading that there had been a fair exchange. Tell that to the impoverished *Sephardim* in Israel. There is an opportunity even now,

especially now, to utilise the enormous expertise built up to trace Nazi war criminals and divert those resources to recording the owners and their heirs of all Arab property abandoned in Israel in 1948, and all Jewish property left in Arab countries since. This could then be handed over to the United Nations for *contra* claims to be adjusted and just compensation made to both Jews and Arabs. Of course the Arab States will refuse: let them — in the full glare of world opinion.

What irked me in particular in 1968, and still does, was the idea of a secular government of Israel having the *chutzpah* to vote and legislate on *Halachic* issues, such as Jewish identity. Even learned rabbis tread with awe and trembling in such areas: that Arabs and atheists vote on them has reduced Zionism to a historical absurdity.

Following the *Herald* affair, life became difficult for me and my wife, and seeing an opportunity to sell my business we went to London, where I wrote a book. I now had time and opportunity to do research. I had read Domb's *The Transformation*, lent to me in Sydney, and gained a friend in London in the shape of the Talmudic sage and *tsaddik*, Emile Marmorstein, whose *Heaven at Bay* is a classic of the genre. Then I was introduced to the books and tapes of Rabbi Avigdor Miller and managed to get hold of Ben Hecht's *Perfidy* and Moshe Shonfeld's *The Holocaust Victims Accuse*. These powerful works gave me a new understanding of secular Zionism: what I had previously sensed intuitively I now knew to be true. The facts of Zionist history, and the sacrifices of Jewish lives made by Zionist leaders in order to create the State, aroused powerful emotions in me. This was not the drawing-room, cucumber-sandwich, English Zionism in which my parents had been involved.

Nevertheless, I had to live in a mainstream Jewish — and Zionist — community, and I had four children at Jewish schools. There was also a growing awareness that I had been forced into a false position. My reputation as a Jewish 'anti-Zionist' led me into situations which embarrassed me. I was expected to be some sort of scholar and expert, not only on Zionism, but on Judaism, and received invitations to address gatherings. The more I tried to tell people that I was simply a part-time journalist and, Judaically speaking, uneducated, the more highly I became regarded as an 'expert'. We returned to Sydney in 1973 and, by this time, I was involved intellectually with the *Agudah*. I wrote a number of articles for the *Agudah* paper, the *Jewish Tribune*, published in London. At the same time I was studying the books of Rabbi Avigdor Miller and listening to his taped *shiurim*, and gaining an insight into the attitude towards Zionism of a *Torah* Sage who is not identified politically with any grouping. Rabbi Miller comfortably straddles positions adopted by *Neturei Karta*, *Satmar*, *Agudah* and *Lubavitch*. Until I read his histories I did not realise how little I knew of Jewish history. His histories, based on Talmudic scholarship, are a revelation for those, like myself, with little or no formal Talmudic training.

Then, in Sydney, I came under the influence of a rabbi who is as learned as he is beloved: Rabbi Tobias Silberman. This, too, had an important influence, if not on my knowledge of Zionist history, certainly on my attitude towards 'heretics'. This was further developed when, on Rabbi Silberman's retirement, his successor became Rabbi Benzion Milecki, a Lubavitcher *Chassid* — a man who can only see good, both in Jews and events.

This second spell in London, 1970–73, marked an important change in our attitudes and lifestyles, as indeed had the first, 1960–63. The first break with Australia had given us the opportunity to cut the tie with our previous friends, who were mostly either members of the Temple, or, purely nominally, 'middle-of-the-road' Orthodox synagogue members. We were fond of these friends, and indeed remain

so today, but our tastes were changing as we began to realise what shallow lives we were leading. I was on the Board of Deputies and held a minor executive position at the Montefiore Home, but we were not serious Jews.

We went to, and held, parties at which our friends, edging towards middle-age, pursued their lost youth with pathetic fervour. The wine flowed freely and *treife* food was consumed in abundance. The intellectual climate rarely rose above the level of an exchange of the latest dirty jokes; when it did, the scoffers turned any serious debate into an angry exchange: it was best to keep quiet. Wives and husbands were exchanged on the dance floor: harmless? On one occasion my wife and I were invited to complete the logic of such exchanges. Of course it went on and the tragic consequences of this form of 'entertainment' can be seen throughout the community. Nor were we interested in the 'harmless' pastimes: cards, poker machines . . . all time-wasting activities for Jews who have reached an awareness of the meaning of their identity, the purpose of their existence during this brief stay on earth. So long as we were in Australia it was difficult to sever our connection with this life; I realised what strength my father must have had to do so without moving away, and how tolerant my mother must have been of his new ideas.

But I, too, was blessed with a loyal wife who made no demands on me, even when I went back to university in 1959 and to a very large extent abandoned the desperate pursuit of wealth. She had no interest in competing for status, and to this day we try to avoid those massive gatherings of the Establishment where you commence a conversation and note that the person with whom you are talking is surreptitiously (if politely) glancing around the room out of a corner of the eye to see whether his or her position can be improved by shifting to someone more important.

This was the time, too — 1959 — when my wife, who had already had three Caesareans, fell pregnant again, despite the fact she had had her tubes 'tied'. This miracle was something of a medical event; the gynaecologist was embarrassed and did not want to send me a bill, though I insisted. Some of our friends were shocked when my wife decided to have the baby: it was sheer folly to have four children, let alone four Caesareans. This attitude helped us to decide that our future friends would be more attuned to our developing way of thinking. Our fourth child, Rachel, today has seven children, *Baruch Hashem*.

When we returned to Australia in 1973, my views on Zionism had not basically changed. Much as I should have liked to go along with the mainstream *Mizrachi*, religious Zionist view, I could not be so hypocritical as to deny my innermost thoughts — and fears. It was *Mizrachi* which in the thirties had continually warned the Zionists what would be the consequences of setting up a secular State. They even referred specifically to a 'third dispersion'. Everything I had ever learned about *Torah* and the consequences of disobedience made me apprehensive about Israel's situation. While I feel comfortable among *Mizrachists* as observant Jews in an authentic 'middle-of-the-road' sense I avoid in-depth discussions about Zionism in their company because I find their thinking shallow. Not, however, quite as shallow as the 'Zionism' of Reformers and secularists who continue to pursue the illusion, the creation of Herzl, that it is possible to 'normalise' the Jew via nationalism. Logically of course it is possible: you can 'normalise', i.e. 'gentilise', the Jew by the disarmingly simple process of putting him in his own State, accepting inter-marriage, with or without an undemanding conversion process, and *voilà!* — you have a 'Jewish' nation. *Mutatis mutandis*, this is precisely what the Christians did and called themselves the 'true Israel', which is one reason why they were so angry

when the people they had 'replaced' continued to exist and thrive. They became Toynbee's 'archaic fossil'. It is pertinent to note that the Jewish Christians broke with the Pharisees not over Jesus, but over their pseudo-conversions. 'Messiahs' in Jewish life have come and gone, and provided the followers of false Messiahs have not abandoned *Halachic* authority they have remained Jews as have their progeny. Jewish continuity depends on *Halachic* authority, hence the Reformers and kindred movements are doomed, as a collective, to disappear from Jewish history. The peaceful end of Zionism would simply be that the State would become another Levantine State, its inhabitants increasingly intermarried with Arabs and other Israeli gentiles, of Jewish origin. It is pertinent to recall that the tribe of Reuben, separated from the main body, became a Bedouin tribe. A worrying factor is how much real anti-Semitism will develop in Israel against authentic Jews, the 'ultra-Orthodox', already under great pressure from the secularists. As with Christianity, once the bastard offspring severs its connection with the parent by creating its own 'Jews', it turns on the parent.

During the seventies and eighties I continued to study the various strands of Zionist thought. My lack of knowledge of Hebrew restricted my research. However, a great deal of the Jewish 'underground' literature was finding its way into English translations. I use the term 'underground' advisedly: so far as was possible the Zionists had, at least since the 1930s, contrived to silence the *Torah* Sages who were, almost to a man, opposed to Zionism.

They did this largely by gaining control of the Jewish Press. Between the wars, while there were hundreds of Socialist, Bundist, Zionist and secularist Jewish newspapers in Europe, the *Torah* Press was reduced to one or two. It is constantly stated that Europe was a great centre of *Torah* and the question is asked: why did God permit the righteous to perish. The answers to such questions are clearly answered by the *Torah* Sages, but Rabbi Avigdor Miller, who was in Europe in the thirties, and whose eyewitness account is undoubted, states categorically that European Jewry had been largely lost to the anti-*Torah* forces between the wars, and that the *Yeshivot* and *Torah* communities were isolated pockets in a sea of heresy.

The Zionists even managed to keep Ben Hecht's vital book *Perfidy* off the market for years after its publication in 1960 — and that work, terrible reading as it is for a Jew, had already been self-censored by Hecht, on the advice of friends, before he published it. Hecht was not an 'ultra-Orthodox' anti-Zionist; he was a fervent and dedicated Zionist, a supporter of Begin and the Right-wing of the movement. He comes across as an honest man despite a tendency to over-dramatise (he was a famous Hollywood scriptwriter).

Despite an inability to come down with absolute conviction on the side of any of the main streams of Zionist, or Jewish non-Zionist thinking during those years, my reading and research convinced me of certain truths which are basic to Judaism. It was quite obvious from the writings of the *Torah* Sages that the Holocaust had been foreseen, even to some degree predicted in all its horror. The very idea, therefore, that it is a unique event in Jewish history — unique, that is, from the point of view that it challenged the *Torah* teaching that God is omniscient and omnipotent — is blasphemous. In 1989 when Rabbi Benjamin Blech of Yeshivah University wrote in the New York *Jewish Press* that the Holocaust was an event over which God had no control, and that to suggest otherwise was an exercise in Jewish 'self-hatred', he was taken to task by a flood of letters from rabbis and others steeped in *Torah*, quoting from *T'nach*, Talmud and contemporary *Torah* Sages to prove him wrong. One writer (M. Soifer) quoted the Chofetz Chaim, who wrote in 1930: 'I see what will be

ten years from now. You don't see; but I do. A great conflagration will burn! . . . ' Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, also writing in the 1930s, said in his classic *Epoch of the Messiah*

Nowadays, the Jews have chosen two 'idols' to which they offer up their sacrifices. They are Socialism and Nationalism. The new gospel of Nationalism can be defined very briefly as: 'Let us be like the nations'. All that is required of the Jew is national feeling. He who pays the *Shekel* and sings *Hatikvah* is thereby exempted from all precepts of the *Torah*.

It is clear that this idea is to be considered fundamentally idol-worship from the point of view of *Torah*. These two forms of idol-worship have poisoned the minds and the hearts of Hebrew youth. Each one has its tribe of false prophets in the shape of writers and speakers, who do their work to perfection.

A miracle has happened: in Heaven these two idolatries have merged into — National Socialism. There has been formed from them a fearful rod of wrath which hits at the Jew in all corners of the globe.

The abominations to which we have bowed strike back at us. 'Thy sins shall punish thee . . . '.

At the same time, I was also coming strongly under the influence of Lubavitch, both from Rabbi Milecki, one of Australia's most brilliant and dedicated rabbinical products, an inspiring teacher, and also from my son-in-law, Zev Simons, about whose abilities and zeal it were better that strangers testify. The influence of Lubavitch in our family even penetrated the home of my elder daughter, Debi Foxman. I say 'even' because neither she nor my other son-in-law, Phillip, showed any signs of leaning in that direction in their early married life but, *Baruch Hashem*, they are today, if not Lubavitch, a powerful team in Yeshiva affairs and genuine 'fellow travellers'.

The Lubavitch influence directed my thinking into more positive channels: Israel is a reality, and even if one could hardly describe oneself as a Zionist, one could — and should — devote oneself to assisting the security of the State which, whatever its defects, is all that stands between the lives of Jews and a hostile bloc of cruel, unscrupulous, untrustworthy Arab States.

While this did not mean a departure from my previous convictions, it was emphatically a change of emphasis — a change which in due course directed my thinking towards the writings of Rabbi Meir Kahane. It seemed to me that if one were to order one's priorities setting the security of Israel above all other considerations, he was the one man in Israel who was unafraid to race realities and draw the logical conclusion: the Arabs had to go. I had enough experience of total war — six years of it — to realise that the presence in Israel, a State besieged, of a potential Fifth Column the size of Israel was, and remains, an unacceptable risk.

I remembered Britain's situation in 1940: it is the stuff of legend. Yet I consider Israel's position today far more dangerous than Britain's in 1940. Britain had a loyal Empire, a population fifteen times that of Israel's Jews, and the near certainty of U.S.A. support, come what may. Yet, with a mere 15,000 German and Italian nationals in her midst (many, German Jewish refugees), Britain immediately interned or transported the lot.

When I had studied Kahane I realised that the essential truth of what he was saying was to be measured in direct proportion to the hysterical opposition he aroused among the Establishment, both in Israel and the Diaspora. He was a radical in the very best sense of the word: he went to the root of a problem and said there was no possibility of living together with an expanding Arab minority, dedicated to the destruction of the State, and with equal voting rights. He was, in Zionist terms, the heir to Nordau, Jabotinsky, Begin and Shamir. But he was, too, a learned and dedicated rabbi, which none of the others were, or are. It is easy to forget now that

the Right-wing of the Zionist movement, the Revisionists, proclaimed that the Land would have to be won by force of arms: their symbol was a map of Palestine, including Jordan, a rifle held aloft. It was this policy that created the State: Britain was forced out, the Arab armies defeated, the Land held — all by force of arms. Whatever shifts and stratagems the Arabs may adopt as tactical moves, their 'grand design' (to use Professor Harkabi's phrase) remains to obliterate Israel from the map of the Middle East. Any 'peace' with the Arabs will therefore be of a temporary nature, pending the day when war can be resumed.

I therefore decided, some years ago, that Israel had two — and only two — real choices. She must act with the swiftness and ruthlessness a besieged state must adopt when confronted by an enemy with overwhelming superiority in terms of manpower, money and support (as Britain did in 1939–40). The alternative is to surrender, 'salvage what can be salvaged' (as Chief Rabbi Jakobovits phrased it). In the 1970s when Rabbis Kahane and Hirsch, respectively *Kach* and *Neturei Karta* leaders, were in prison at the same time, I observed that *one* had to be right.

Why is this truth, so obvious to radical thinkers, not generally accepted? Because mainstream Zionists lack vision and their priorities are not those of *Torah* Jews. The *Torah* Jew's priority is his dedication to the wellbeing of the Jewish people and, through them, the completion of the Jewish 'mission' in terms of the spread of *Torah* and bringing the world to its ultimate goal as stated in the thrice-daily prayer of *Oleynu*:

Let all the inhabitants of the world perceive and know that unto thee every knee must bow, every tongue must swear . . . the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be One and His name One.

He is not wedded to the idea of the State of Israel, therefore, except in terms of its value in furtherance of the Jew's ultimate destiny. If he is convinced, as Kahane was, that the State is integral to our destiny, then its integrity as a Jewish State' must be defended at whatever cost.

The non-Orthodox mainstream Zionist movement has a different set of priorities. This is dominated by the U.S. Reform, Conservative, etc., movements whose rabbis' ideologies range across a bewildering spectrum of positions. Many are atheists, others are agnostics. The history of these breakaway movements, dating back to nineteenth century Germany, is that their priorities are set by the need to adapt to, and live within, the Western liberal democracies. That is why, in the illusory euphoria of acceptance in nineteenth century Germany, Zionism was dropped by Reform altogether, and was reintroduced under pressures of Nazism which coincided with its acceptability by the Western democracies. There never was a time when Reform made any major change of direction in its ideology that was likely to do other than fit comfortably into the attitudes and *mores* of current liberal thinking. Hence their acceptance of homosexuality, euthanasia, intermarriage . . . It is therefore predictable that these movements will shortly turn against Israel if the choice is between the comfort and security of Jews in the U.S. and the security of Israel.

This is of particular significance in the light of a growing anti-Semitic movement among intellectuals — a movement closely connected with 'anti-Zionism' and pressure on Israel to make 'peace' with the Arabs. This 'peace' call, now being promoted by a sizeable minority of secularists in Israel, and of course Reformers in the U.S., points the finger at the Orthodox Right and accuses them of being 'intransigent', unwilling to make sacrifices for 'peace'. The nauseating sycophancy of the Reform leaders is nowhere more visible than in the recent advertising campaign launched by Alexander Schindler, Reform leader in the U.S., to express his 'shame'



at the Lubavitcher Rebbe's reference to the 'miracle' of Israel's survival in the Gulf War. Schindler's crocodile tears for the Iraqi dead were expressed in a full-page advertisement in the New York Times.

I have been bitterly attacked for my unyielding opposition to Reform 'rabbis' and their acceptance in Jewish life as authentic spokesmen for a 'branch' of Judaism. My earliest recollections of what the Orthodox were saying when Hitler arose in Germany was that this was the traditional response to assimilation and intermarriage, clearly stated in *Torah*, historically identifiable in all cases where it occurred. In later years, I learned the source: Rabbi Yisroel Salanter predicted the Nuremberg Laws in 1884 when he said, commenting on the convention of Reform leaders in Braunschweig, Germany in that year: 'They created a new *Shulchan Aruch* and permitted mixed marriages. There will come a time when gentiles will also draft a code of laws; how bitter and woeful it will be for the Jews when that time arrives'.

There is a great blindness among Jews today. This is partly the fault of the Reform Jewish Press (in Australia we have a monopoly). Can people not see that the average Reform leader is a career man? I accept the fact that much the same could be levelled at some of the mainstream rabbis of the Orthodox, but the dedication and concern for *Torah* values, often at great personal sacrifice, is more often the rule than the exception among the Orthodox rabbis. I have personal knowledge of many who have suffered greatly in terms of sheer persecution from synagogue officers whose lifestyle has come into question following a rabbi's sermon. Moreover, the trend is in a positive direction as young rabbis from *yeshivahs*, many *Lubavitch*, come into pulpits with a new sense of purpose and thereby indirectly give moral support to their older colleagues, often beaten into submission by years of quiet — sometimes not so quiet — moral pressure to compromise *Torah* values.

I have yet to see an Orthodox rabbi from a comfortable position see the 'light' of Reform, or even Conservatism, and switch across to a less well-paid position in such a congregation. Surely, if the future of Judaism lay with these breakaway movements it would long ago have attracted conscience-stricken rabbis of the Orthodox. In practice, the breakaway movements have largely gained their rabbis by offering highly paid positions: the 'call' has taken the form of an offer they could not refuse. The position has required, and paid for, a rabbi with a flexible conscience, a glib tongue and a taste for the good things of life.

My Zionist education continues. In 1968 I wrote an article for the *Australian Jewish Herald* taking a critical look at Sam Lipski's article in the *Bulletin* called 'A New Kind of Jew'. My article created a furore. Chief Rabbi Elect Jonathan Sacks writes in his *Arguments for the Sake of Heaven*:

Amnon Rubinstein charts the corresponding collapse of an earlier image of the secular Israeli as a new being, indomitable, the product of the soil, unbeset by *galut* hesitations, collectively minded, and courageous. He calls it 'the end of the *sabra* myth. Amos Oz, Israel's leading novelist, reflects on the strength of *haredi* life, still resurgent after the Zionist revolution. 'In a conversation twenty years ago, my teacher . . . said that Zionism was nothing more than a passing episode, a temporary mundane phenomenon of history and politics, but that Orthodox Judaism would re-emerge, would swallow Zionism and digest it'. Then Oz dismissed the remark; now he can no longer do so. Leonard Fein's remark that 'the rest of us have become defensive in the presence of the Orthodox' applies equally to secularists in Israel.

## THE ROLE AND RECORD OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY: HOW HAVE AUSTRALIAN JEWS REMEMBERED THEIR PAST?

Paul R. Bartrop

*(The following paper was presented by Dr. Bartrop as a public lecture at the annual conference of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society, held in June 1991 at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. The author is grateful for the financial assistance provided by the University of South Australia which enabled him to attend the conference, and for the hospitality offered by the Canadian Jewish Historical Society during his stay in Canada.)*

In the December 1964 edition of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, the following announcement was made:

It is . . . with much interest that we note that in Montreal on 3 June last, the reorganised Canadian Jewish Historical Society held its inaugural meeting. There was an overflow attendance and the entire proceedings were recorded by a local radio station . . .

The Canadian Jewish Historical Society will attempt to collect, preserve, publish and popularise material relating to the settlement and history of Jewish history in general [*sic*]. It will aim to interpret the contributions of Canadian Jews to the Development and progress of Canada. It will also play an active role in stimulating original research of Jewish history in Canada. University students will be encouraged to write theses on Jewish subjects and Public lectures and the reading of papers will be sponsored.

Interest in the Society, which functions under the *aegis* of the [Canadian Jewish] Congress, is being shown in other centres of Canada. A suggestion for the formation of a national group is being considered.

The above plans and progress augur well for the future of this new historical body, which our own Society welcomes in anticipation of useful liaison and co-operation in the field of Jewish historical research.<sup>1</sup>

No further mention of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society was ever made in the pages of the *Journal*, and Canada was only mentioned fleetingly in articles published over the next quarter-century. Whether or not the ambitions of the C.J.H.S. were ever realised remains to this day unknown to the general membership of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (A.J.H.S.).<sup>2</sup>

That this should be so is of course unfortunate, perhaps even disgraceful: but, within the context of the Society's priorities, it is not surprising. Precedence has always been given to the recording of Jewish topics directly related to Australia or (less frequently) eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain in its relationship to the southern colonies. One could have been forgiven for thinking that Jewish communities did not exist in France, Latin America, Asia, South Africa or Canada. Only rarely were references made to the Jewish communities in Poland, Russia, Germany, the United States or Palestine/Israel. As the Society's brief was to be an *Australian Jewish Historical Society*, it was the history of that community which had to be paid more attention than others.

The rules set down at the formation of the Society were to be the guiding principles of this attitude, an attitude which was to last for at least the next forty years. Volume I, part 1 of the *Journal*, issued in September 1939, reported on the Society's inaugural meeting in Sydney on 21 August 1938. There was only one article in that

first issue, a piece entitled 'The Jews Relief (English) Act, 1858, and Australian Reaction to Same'. It, like so many articles published in the following decades, had previously been read before a meeting of the Society. On the inside back cover was a statement of the Society's objects. These were:

- (a) To encourage the study of the history of Australian Jewry.
- (b) To promote the compilation of authentic records relating to the Jews in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.
- (c) To acquire, either by purchase, donation or otherwise, and preserve for the use of the Society, books, manuscripts, newspapers, records, coins, stamps, prints, pictures, lantern slides, costumes, relics and all such objects and materials as may be considered to have a bearing on Jewish History in the beforementioned countries.
- (d) To use its influence to secure the preservation of places of Jewish communal interest, such as old Synagogue buildings, cemeteries, etc.
- (e) To foster interchange of information among members of the Society by lectures, readings, discussions, and exhibitions of historical interest or value.
- (f) To print, publish and circulate such journals, periodicals, books and other literary publications and undertakings as may seem conducive [*sic*] to any of the objects of the Society.
- (g) To establish branches wherever and whenever it may be deemed advisable.
- (h) To affiliate or cooperate with other Societies and Institutions having object or objects similar to those of the Society.<sup>3</sup>

In nearly all these undertakings the Society was to not only remain constant, but remarkably successful.

Perhaps the most far-reaching was clause (g), concerning the creation of new branches of the A.J.H.S. The expansion of interest in Australian Jewish history would thereby be enhanced by interested groups in other communities forming themselves into branches of the parent body. With the creation of branches, moreover, all the other objectives of the Society became transferred to a wider membership. Then, if for some reason the nature of research, the interest shown by the Sydney Jewish community, the size of that community, the quality of leadership or the state of the parent Society's finances were ever to deteriorate, the existence of autonomous branches could see to it that the objectives of the Society would continue to be met. And, it must be stated candidly, this is what had eventuated by the late 1980s.

The first branch established outside the parent organisation was achieved in Victoria in 1954. According to an article on the history of the Victorian Branch published in 1988, this came with the active encouragement of the New South Wales body, the more so as by the mid-1950s 'a very real awareness' of Victoria's own Jewish history existed owing to a number of theses and shorter pieces which had been written in recent years.<sup>4</sup> In June 1954 an interim committee was elected; on 9 August the first official meeting and lecture took place, and an audience of about fifty people enjoyed a lecture by Rabbi L.M. Goldman entitled *Early Jewish Settlers in Victoria*. In the years which followed, the Victorian Branch would conduct an average of three such meetings annually, much of the time on topics of local Victorian interest. This started broadening into topics with a more national flavour by the 1970s — subjects such as *Australian Jewish Artists*, *The History of Jewish Sport in Australia*, *The 70th Anniversary of Yiddish Theatre in Australia*, *Jewish Broadcasting in Australia*, and *Four Australian Jewish Musicians*.

This development, where the Victorian Branch began increasingly to venture into the exploration of national (rather than local) topics, must have been greeted with some misgivings in Sydney, and not many articles by Victorian authors were published in the *Journal*. It seemed as if there were some in Sydney who felt that only the parent body could produce articles with a 'national' flavour. Not only that, but a

bias against the publication of articles on purely Victorian topics also became increasingly apparent by the 1970s. The *Journal*, control of which was exclusively in the hands of the New South Wales organisation, published some thirty-five articles between its June 1975 and December 1979 issues, and of these only six were on Victorian topics. During this time, no less than five articles were identified as having been first read before meetings of the Sydney Society; only two received similar acknowledgement as emanating from Melbourne meetings.<sup>5</sup> The trend continued into the 1980s. Of fifty-three articles published in the *Journal* between 1981 and 1988, only fourteen were on Victorian topics, while seven lectures given in Sydney were republished as against three from Victoria. For a Jewish community which was by then clearly the largest in Australia, this continued under-representation of the fruits of its historians' labour was becoming increasingly harder to take, and as a consequence the Victorian Branch Executive Committee decided in 1987 that henceforth it would assume publication of one of the *Journal's* two issues per year.<sup>6</sup>

In his first Editor's Introduction, Professor W.D. Rubinstein wrote the following:

Without detracting in any way from the extraordinary achievement of the Australian Jewish Historical Society as it has been organised — the publication for nearly fifty years of a *Journal* devoted solely to the history of an Australian religious and ethnic minority must surely represent a record — there has been a feeling among many that the Society's *Journal* has not fully responded to or reflected the recent growth of interest in this field; it is a fact that the *Journal* has appeared less frequently in the recent past than before.<sup>7</sup> No useful purpose can be served in dwelling on these matters; suffice it to say that this has been most keenly felt in Melbourne, containing the larger branch of the Society in the larger centre of Australian Jewish life . . . <sup>8</sup>

In an understated and diplomatic way this neatly expressed the position. It was not, however, to go without a challenge, albeit an apologetic one. A year after the Victorian declaration of independence, the Immediate Past President and Editor of the Sydney-based editions of the *Journal*, Morris Z. Forbes, produced an historical survey of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in its Golden Jubilee year. After recounting at length the very considerable achievements of the Society throughout the first fifty years of its history, he then responded to Rubinstein's charges:

In the past, and until about five years ago, the relationship between the Society and the Victorian Branch in Melbourne was a harmonious one, the Committees in both places working in co-operation. This is not the place to dwell on the deterioration of that relationship or to examine the causes of the disputes which have since persisted. The cause of Australian Jewish history has been sustained by dedicated leadership and effort on the part of self-effacing persons who sought and obtained no personal reward other than the satisfaction of the importance of their work. It is obvious, however, though quite regrettable, that even historians are not altogether immune from the currents and undercurrents that are able to perplex Jewish affairs. There may be rejoicing, indeed, when a branch body believes that it is large enough to assert its strength . . . Here in Sydney at the centre of the Society's administration, there should be many more potential members who can be induced to join the Society and to assist in its objectives.<sup>9</sup>

This exchange was far more profound than any simple clash of personalities could be; indeed, from the Victorian end there was no question of a personal dimension to any of the developments at this time. The respective positions of Rubinstein and Forbes clearly summarised a shift in emphasis in Australian Jewish historical scholarship over recent years.

An increasing number of serious books on Australian Jewish history was produced during the 1980s, addressing themes which had only very rarely been touched on in earlier times. One was a comparative analysis of the political allegiances of Jews in Australia, Britain, the United States and Israel<sup>10</sup>; three were general or 'survey' histories of the Australian Jewish experience (including, reveal-

ingly, a comprehensive history of the Jews in Victoria)<sup>11</sup>; no less than five dealt with aspects of the Australian response to the refugee crisis of the 1930s and 1940s<sup>12</sup>; and there was also the first book of collected academic essays on Australian Jewish history, which had articles dealing mainly with twentieth century subjects.<sup>13</sup> Earlier historical studies on Australian Jewish topics had not addressed themes such as these, but had rather looked into less comprehensive, more communal (and thus more insular) issues.<sup>14</sup>

As if to highlight further the bias shown by the Sydney Society in the selection of articles for publication in the *Journal*, a cumulative index of all articles published between 1939 and 1985, compiled by the Society's Honorary Archivist, Helen Bersten, revealed the following numerical breakdown of articles: articles on the Jewish community of the Australian Capital Territory, 1; New South Wales, 45; Queensland, 6; South Australia, 2; Tasmania, 7; Victoria, 10; and Western Australia, 8. If all the articles concerning Jewries outside New South Wales were added together, then, the total would still fall significantly short of that for New South Wales alone. Moreover, Victoria since the end of the Second World War the State with the largest Jewish population had 10 articles published on its community, whilst Tasmania, which has at no time ever had a Jewish population of more than a few hundred, had no less than 7 pieces published on its congregation. If this is to be explained, we must consider the nature of the bias on more than simple State rivalry lines. Not to do so would be both immature and unrealistic, especially given that no editor of a serious journal could for long get away with such a thing unless there was a very good reason for it. And in this instance, we look directly into the nature and priorities of the Sydney-based editorship since the very beginning.

The early editors of the *Journal* were Sydney B. Glass (1939–47) and David J. Benjamin (1947–1961). Until 1990 the *Journal* was then edited by just two men: Maurice Harry Kellerman (1963–75) and M.Z. Forbes (1975–90). It was under their direction that the *Journal* was transformed from a chatty, club-like register of news and notes, into a worthwhile amateur historical journal appropriate to a readership of interested people who were not professional historians. Under Kellerman and Forbes, original articles became the accepted norm, with reprints of articles first published elsewhere phased out. To say this is not to diminish the fine work of the earlier editors, particularly David J. Benjamin: but it must be said that it was only from the early 1960s that the *Journal* began to take on a definite character as *the* vehicle for scholarship on the history of Australian Jewry.

And what was the disposition of that scholarship? Put simply, the major focus of the Australian Jewish Historical Society until the late 1980s was an examination of as many facets as possible of colonial and post-colonial Jewry, generally covering the period from 1788 to the outbreak of the Great War. As we have seen, the majority of essays focused on New South Wales during this period, and there should be no surprise at the fact that New South Wales, and to a lesser extent Tasmania, featured so significantly. After all, these two colonies were the first established in Australia (New South Wales, 1788; Tasmania, 1803). There were Jews among the First Fleet of convicts to arrive at the settlement of Sydney on 26 January 1788, and in that context a Jewish presence in Australia is as old as white settlement itself. Many of the early articles in the *Journal* were concerned to retrieve the history of those very early years. Moreover, given that the demographic composition of the Australian Jewish community until the 1920s was essentially a British one, it was natural that the interests and priorities of the early researchers should seek to learn more about the history of British Jews relative to the foundations and settlement of



Australia. It was thus natural that the majority of early essays should be dedicated to chronicling the history of the Anglo-Jewish presence. A few titles, listed quite randomly, should give an idea as to the priorities of Jewish Australian research during the Society's first forty years:

- \* 'Australian Jewry in 1828' (G.F.J. Bergman, vol. V, part 5, 1961, pp. 234-52).
- \* 'Jewish voters in Sydney's first election' (E.S. marks, vol. I, part 8, 1942, pp. 272-77).
- \* 'The (Sydney) George Street Synagogue, Australia's First Synagogue' (G.F.J. Bergman, vol. VIII, part 5, 1978, pp. 272-6).
- \* 'The Genealogy of some 19th Century Australian Families' (Anthony P. Joseph, vol. VI, part 7, 1969, pp. 379-91).
- \* 'Edward Davis, Life and Death of an Australian Bushranger' (G.F.J. Bergman, vol. IV, part 5, 1956, pp. 205-40).
- \* 'John Harris, first Australian Policeman' (G.F.J. Bergman, vol. V, part 2, 1959, pp. 49-66).
- \* 'Jewish Personalities in the Movement for Responsible Government in New South Wales' (M.Z. Forbes, vol. IV, part 6, 1957, pp. 307-20).
- \* 'Esther Johnston, the Lieutenant Governor's Wife; the Amazing Story of a Jewish Convict Girl' (G.F.J. Bergman, vol. VI, part 2, 1966, pp. 90-122).
- \* 'The Earliest Jewish Marriage Document, 1831' (Rabbi I. Porush, vol. VIII, part 7, 1979, pp. 404-9).
- \* 'John Moses and Mary Connolly, the First Jewish Marriage in Australia' (G.F.J. Bergman, vol. VIII, part 7, 1979, pp. 410-12).

To list more would be tempting, but superfluous. The message should be clear that there was a decided propensity towards the publication of articles on the Anglo-Jewish experience in Australia, and that, even when there were Jews from other backgrounds, it was within a thoroughly British milieu that they had to operate. We cannot criticise the early writers for their choice of topics when writing about the nineteenth century: there was no other alternative than to consider the existing population, and to examine its history. Not to do so would be to confound the aims of the Society.

Having said that, however, it is nonetheless unclear why the Sydney Society up to the 1980s did not seem to consider the more recent history of the Australian Jewish community, but rather clung desperately onto this Anglo-Jewish, nineteenth century, New South Wales-centred partiality. By my calculation, there were some 242 articles published in the *Journal* between 1939 and 1979; of these, no less than 173, or a staggering 71.5 per cent, concerned aspects of Jewish life in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The remaining article space was taken up by various topics concerning the Jewish experience in the twentieth century. Some of the latter were indeed pioneering for example, 'Towards Rescue: the Story of Australian Jewry's Stand for the Jewish Cause' [during the Holocaust] (J.M. Machover, vol. VII, part 1, 1979, pp. 1-61); 'Jewish Immigration to New South Wales, 1919-1939' (Suzanne D. Rutland, vol. VII, part 5, 1973, pp. 337-47); and 'Jewish Settlers in Australia, 1788-1961' (Charles A. Price, vol. V, part 8, 1964, pp. 357-412). Yet in spite of the richness provided by the pageant of twentieth century history, in spite of the enormous upheavals which have shaped and almost destroyed world Jewry during that time, even in spite of the fact that in the sixty years following 1841 the Jewish population grew from 1,183 to 15,259, but that from 1901 it grew to the more than 100,000 it is today, the priorities of the A.J.H.S. were to emphasise the history and contributions made by Jews to New South Wales development in the nineteenth century rather than Australian development in the twentieth century. It was and I have no compunction in saying this a most unfortunate denial of the realities of history, demography and geography, and the overall cause of Australian Jewish history was the poorer for it.



In saying this, I must immediately state that I do not wish to deprecate the enormous achievements of the writers of the pre-1980s period in saving early Australian Jewish history from what would certainly have otherwise been oblivion. On the contrary, while hoping not to seem patronising I should say that the majority of the authors, editors and office-bearers who contributed to the output of the A.J.H.S. between 1939 and 1979 did a remarkable job in this rescue work, especially given that so few of them could in any sense be described as professional historians. To illustrate this, consider the academic qualifications of five of the Society's most prominent figures before 1980: David J. Benjamin, LL.B., M.Z. Forbes, B.A., LL.B.; Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush, O.B.E., Ph.D. (in mathematics); M.H. Kellerman, O.B.E., B.Ec.; and Dr G.F.J. Bergman, D.Ec., LL.B. From time to time leading professional historians did contribute articles, but to generalise it could be said that the majority of articles in the *Journal* were from interested amateurs, some possessed of good writing skills, some not, but all consumed by a love of Jewish history and a desire to make a contribution to the chronicle of the Australian Jewish experience.

And herein lay a dilemma for the future of Australian Jewish historical writing. It was not until 1987 that the first-ever academic position in modern Jewish history was established, a lectureship in the History Department at the University of Melbourne. Prior to then, there had been nothing. Professional historians with an interest in Jewish history always had to combine that interest with other, more mainstream, areas. By way of example, Professor W.D. Rubinstein was first and foremost a scholar of nineteenth century British social history; his wife, Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein, had earlier written on seventeenth century Britain; Dr. Suzanne D. Rutland had been involved in the history and theory of education, particularly Jewish education; Associate Professor Michael Blakeney was a member of a Law School; Dr. John Foster taught German history; Associate Professor Lionel E. Fredman taught American history; and my own interests began with twentieth century Australian political history. Until recently, the brunt of the work in Australian Jewish history has been borne by non-professionals, most often working alone, usually without financial assistance (and always without financial reward). Given that, the contribution made by the small group of amateurs who sustained the Society throughout most of its history must be both praised and never overlooked.

Nevertheless, the image of the Society by the 1980s had begun to be that of a tired, inward-looking and outdated circle whose priorities seemed more rooted in the 1950s than the end of the twentieth century. Although M.Z. Forbes cautioned readers in 1981 that 'the impression must be avoided that our major work lies in antiquarian studies',<sup>15</sup> that is precisely where the Society had seemed headed for a long time. There was a great emphasis on the chronicling of events, rather than in their analysis, and little work had been done which placed Australian Jewish history into a national (even less, an international) context.

It should be said that this approach fitted in perfectly with that of one of the greatest of modern Jewish historians, Simon Dubnow, who held strongly to the view that analysis must be preceded by the thorough, painstaking and detailed acquisition of as much primary data as possible. The message was not lost on the Society, and was actually reinforced in an article on Dubnow published at the centenary of the great historian's birth.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the *Journal's* articles for much of its history were anecdotal, antiquarian and narrative, relating events which were often insignificant in the wider scope of Australian history but which were often elevated into monumental occasions in the country's development. In short, for over forty

years the Australian Jewish Historical Society was strong on narrative, but comparatively weak on analysis or evaluation.

Throughout this paper I have referred to the decade of the 1980s as a period of watershed, a time after which the priorities of the Society underwent change. The assertion of the Victorian Branch in the latter part of the decade contributed greatly to this, but other developments took place which must also be examined. Firstly, there was an increase in the availability of archival material as a result of the progressive release of government documents, and the establishment in the early 1980s of an Archive of Australian Judaica at the Fisher Library of the University of Sydney. The creation of two Jewish museums in 1982 (the A.M. Rosenblum Jewish Museum, Sydney, and the Jewish Museum of Australia, Melbourne) saw the widening of interest in Australian Jewish history beyond the membership of the A.J.H.S., as members of the public could now see and physically participate in bearing witness to the history of the community.

Two additional organisations established a little later acted in such a way as to enhance the work of the A.J.H.S.: 1983 saw the appearance of the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs (A.I.J.A.), a research body and think-tank dealing primarily (though not exclusively) with contemporary secular issues affecting the Jewish community; and the Australian Association for Jewish Studies (A.A.J.S.), founded in 1986, began conducting annual academic conferences from 1987 for the purpose of bringing together scholars interested in Jewish studies from across a variety of disciplines. Both these organisations now publish their own journals: the A.I.J.A. produces *Without Prejudice*, which 'aims to enlighten and inform public opinion on problems associated with prejudice, to combat bigotry and to protect human rights'<sup>17</sup>; and the A.A.J.S. publishes the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* (formerly known as *Menorah*), which is 'devoted to the study of Jewish culture in all its aspects and in all periods'.<sup>18</sup> A very active B'nai B'rith organisation in Australia (District 21) also saw to it throughout the 1980s that matters of Jewish interest were displayed before the wider Australian public, and linkages were established wherever possible. Another way in which this was done was through the vigorous efforts of the Victorian Council of Churches, which during the 1980s published two small (though widely-disseminated) books on Christian-Jewish relations and the future.<sup>19</sup>

A final point must not be overlooked in establishing why the historical priorities of Australian Jewry began to turn to more probing, analytical issues: the influence of overseas scholarship. The appearance, especially, of an increasing number of books concerning the record of the Free World during the Holocaust played a key role in stimulating Australian scholars to undertake their own research in this regard. This involved investigations into the part played by Australia during the Holocaust, and also at other times of crisis. The work of Bernard Wasserstein, Martin Gilbert, Irving Abella, Harold Troper, Michael Marrus, Colin Holmes, Walter Laqueur and Yehuda Bauer was in this sense highly influential in showing the way towards the future direction research could take. Added to this was an increase in the number of Holocaust-related documentaries, feature films and dramas, which again acted as vehicles for the stimulation of interest.

Change for Australian Jewish historians was not immediate, though as the 1980s progressed it did become more apparent. Thus in 1983 Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein's paper on 'Zionism and Australian [Jewish] Spiritual Leaders 1896-1950' was published in the *Journal* (vol. IX, part 5, 1983, pp. 327-40), and the following year saw her 'Australian Jewish Reactions to Russian Jewish Distress 1891-1913' (vol. IX,

part 6, 1984, pp. 444–56). These pioneering papers were unusual in that they were by a Victorian author, on non-Victorian themes, and involved Australian Jews relative to events in the outside world. Similar papers had appeared from time to time in the past, but the environment in the 1980s was such that articles on topics like these should have been increasing, rather than appearing as occasional oddities. For reasons already discussed, the Victorian Branch Committee, could see this, where that in New South Wales could not or did not want to. It was only with the appearance of the first Victorian-based issue of the *Journal* in November 1988, however, that the difference in focus became most apparent.

To begin with, the Victorian Committee decided the *Journal* needed a change of name. The change was only a small one, but it nonetheless signified much. Instead of the earlier *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal of Proceedings* (or *Journal and Proceedings*, from which the name had been changed in 1975), henceforth the Victorian-based issues would be known by the more academic *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*. The numbers would still run concurrently (so that the Sydney-based volume X, part 3 would be followed by the Melbourne-based Volume X, part 4), the different name showing the origin of the respective issues as they were released.

More important changes were to be seen in the content of the *Journal* itself. Two papers in the first Victorian issue concerned topics which were certainly new so far as the Society was concerned: my essay on 'Enemy Aliens or Stateless Persons? The Legal Status of Refugees from Germany in Wartime Australia', and Godfrey S. Lee's 'Rescue or Rhetoric? Australian Jewry's Reactions During the Holocaust'. Also, a revamped Book Review section was included covering no less than eight new or recently released books — a giant leap forward from the days when one or two books, which may or may not have been more than twelve months old, received reviews. W.D. Rubinstein's new editorial policy for book reviews was that any new book of Australian Jewish interest would, wherever possible, be reviewed in the next issue of the *Journal*, bringing it into line with other learned periodicals.

Succeeding Victorian-based issues of the *Journal* continued where the first one left off, as indicated by the titles of some of the articles:

\* "'Not a Problem for Australia': The *Kristallnacht* Viewed from the Commonwealth, November 1938' (Paul R. Bartrop, Vol. X, part 6, May 1989, pp. 489–99).

\* 'Australia and the Refugee Jews of Europe, 1933–1954: A Dissenting View' (W.D. Rubinstein, Vol. X, part 6, May 1989, pp. 500–23).

\* 'The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism: An Historical Re-Appraisal' (Philip Mendes, in three parts: vol. X, part 6, May 1989, pp. 524–41; vol. X, part 7, November 1989, pp. 598–615; vol. XI, part 1, November 1990, pp. 160–79).

\* "'To Find the Hand Unseen': Guidelines for Australian Jewish History' (Lionel E. Fredman, vol. X, part 7, November 1989, pp. 616–26).

\* 'The Dunera Affair: A Scandal for Whom?' (Paul R. Bartrop, vol. XI, part 1, November 1990, pp. 14–19).

\* 'Critchley Parker (1911–42): Australian martyr for Jewish Refugees' (Hilary L. Rubinstein, vol. XI, part 1, November 1990, pp. 56–68).

\* 'The "Jewish Race" Clause in Australian Immigration Forms, 1939: Reasonable or Racist?' (Paul R. Bartrop, vol. XI, part 1, November 1990, pp. 69–78).

\* 'The Contribution of Italian Jewish Refugees to Anti-Fascist Activities in Wartime Australia: An Introduction' (Marcello Montagnana, vol. XI, part 1, November 1990, pp. 82–92).

\* 'The Revolution of 1942–44: The Transformation of the Australian Jewish Community' (W.D. Rubinstein, vol. XI, part 1, November 1990, pp. 142–54).

The November 1990 Victorian-based issue was the largest ever produced by the Society, whether from Sydney or Melbourne: it comprised 252 pages, eighteen articles, and reviews of no less than nineteen new books. No finer demonstration of

the energy characterising the writing of Australian Jewish history at this time can be found, unless it is in the phenomenal growth of membership of the Victorian Branch, which in 1977 had about 60 members, but only four years later had risen to 240. In 1987 a membership drive saw numbers ultimately increase to their present position, a figure of about 450 paid-up members. Undoubtedly a large part of this growth was due to the new character of the *Journal*, its revamped style and articles which seemed more relevant to the interests and priorities of the late 1980s and 1990s.

If this paper appears to elevate Victoria and downgrade New South Wales, it is not intended to. Each has had its part to play, and each has done so at the appropriate time. Sydney's was in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s; Victoria's has been since the 1980s. Talk of interstate rivalry, of the 'natural' oscillation of leadership between Sydney and Melbourne, of personality clashes or of hijacking 'traditional' preserves adds little if anything to the resolution of the differences which have clearly existed between the two cities: it is simply to be hoped that the two Editors, Professor Rubinstein and a new incumbent, Dr Suzanne Rutland in Sydney, can reach an early *modus vivendi* which will accommodate both the traditional and the topical. Initial indications would suggest that there is a very good chance of this happening.

In 1960, a short piece by L.E. Fredman on 'The Origins and Aims of the American Jewish Historical Society' was published in the *Journal*. Among his comments were the following:

Suggestions by the [American Jewish Historical] Society can . . . guide the Australian body in its tasks for the future, within the limits of our inferior resources of population, finance, scholarly materials and capable researchers. Thorough biography, the growth of representative and other organisations, the movement of immigrants from specific areas and their subsequent adjustment are among the wide-open fields. From the statements of the Society's leaders and scholars past and present, we should also see the necessity for an awareness of the problems of selection and style, and of the general background of Australia, Commonwealth and world history.<sup>20</sup>

His words were not heeded until nearly thirty years later. In the meantime, a great deal of work went on in such areas as archives collection and maintenance, the publication of monographs, genealogy, the collection and preservation of tombstone inscriptions, and the establishment of new branches. But so much still remained undone that the interests of the Society simply had to progress beyond a deference to the founding families of nineteenth century Australian Jewry. In this, possibly the most crowded century in Jewish history since the Middle Ages (if then), a body such as the A.J.H.S. had a responsibility to do so.

Glorification of the deeds of the ancestors, known in historical jargon as 'filiopietism', is in fact common to the historical consciousness of many countries: the Americans look back to the Pilgrim Fathers or the homesteaders, the Afrikaaners to the Voortrekkers, the Canadians to fur trappers and Mounties, the Quebecois to Samuel de Champlain and pre-Revolutionary France, the Latin Americans to the *grandees* and *conquistadores*. Even the Israelis look fondly back to the exploits of the pioneers of the First and Second *Aliyot*. Why should Jews in other parts of the world be any different? Perhaps, for some, it is even natural that the activities of peddlers, drapers and merchants should be lauded and given an importance beyond what their station should expect. That is, after all, within the nature of filiopietism as practised in the lands of recent settlement. In this, Australian Jewry has been little different from Jewries in Canada, South Africa, Newfoundland, Argentina, the United States and elsewhere. The time has come, however, to move on, and it is pleasing to see in the Australian case that this has begun.

The lessons to be found in the history of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, as I see them, are clear and threefold. First, in countries which are federal entities the focus of any publications produced by an association must be *national* rather than provincial. No body which claims in its title the name of the country should concentrate the bulk of its attention on a single state or province, particularly when its claim to do so has grown weaker than in earlier times. Secondly, it is obvious that if interest is to be stimulated and maintained, an association such as the A.J.H.S. must be alert to the changing priorities of the reading public. In saying this, I do not mean to suggest that one should allow the market to dictate the priorities of the association, but rather that the association's leadership should be aware of the folly of remaining static. We live in an age of information revolution, and a body involved in information retrieval and dissemination cannot operate without taking cognisance of that fact. For this reason, with so much additional material coming our way, and with newer and newer insights and approaches being offered to aid in our explanation of events, it is incumbent upon an association such as the A.J.H.S. to lead the way in freshness, originality and inspiration — not wait until the membership demands it, and then to doggedly resist it.

Finally, the past experience of the A.J.H.S. indicates an obvious and urgent need to keep apprised of relevant developments in related areas outside the confines of the association itself, and to utilise such developments to the advantage of the association's overall aims. It is important to acknowledge that other bodies in the community may exist, and that co-operation rather than competition should be the goal. This is the more vital given that no single body has a monopoly on the search for historical (or any other) truth, and that the ultimate objective must be to increase our understanding of events rather than engage in their perennial commemoration. The Australian Jewish Historical Society has been lucky: it has been given a second chance, without surrendering its continuity or legitimacy as the body capable of bearing the torch of memory for the Australian Jewish community. But, as I hope I have shown here, it was a near run thing — and its experience, I would argue, is instructive for us all.

#### NOTES

1. *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal and Proceedings* (hereafter *Journal*), vol. VI, part 1, December 1964, p. 50.
2. Much earlier, a paper on 'Jews in Canada' had been published in the *Journal* (vol. I, part 6, 1941, pp. 184–92). This was a reprint of an article by Louis Rosenberg, and had been republished 'by special permission of the author and under authority of the Dominion Council of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Montreal, Canada'. Why it was published, sandwiched between two articles on the history of Jews in Toowoomba (Queensland) and Goulburn (New South Wales) is unclear, and it certainly sits uncomfortably in the pages of the *Journal*.
3. *Journal*, vol. I, part 1, 1939, inside back cover.
4. Isidor Solomon, 'The Australian Jewish Historical Society (Victorian Branch): A Retrospect', *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*, vol. X, part 4, November 1988, p. 224.
5. One other, a lecture by Dr Serge Liberman on 'Seventy Years of Yiddish Theatre in Melbourne', was not listed as having first been read before the Society, though in reality it had.
6. The inaugural Editorial Committee of the Victorian *Journal* was comprised of a number of active Melbourne-based scholars of Australian Jewish history: Professor W.D. Rubinstein (Editor), Dr. Paul R. Bartrop, Rabbi Dr. John S. Levi, Dr. Serge Liberman, Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein, Dr. Howard Freeman (ex-officio as President of the Victorian Branch) and Mrs Beverley Davis (Honorary Secretary of the Victorian Branch).
7. In 1985, 1986 and 1987 only one issue of the *Journal* had appeared each year. The norm had always been two issues, and it was in part to rectify this situation that Victoria offered to take over production of one issue annually.

8. W.D. Rubinstein, 'Editor's Introduction', *Journal*, vol. X, part 4, November 1988, p. 221.
9. M.Z. Forbes, 'The Australian Jewish Historical Society, A Golden Jubilee Survey: 1938-1988', *Journal*, vol. X, part 5, 1989, pp. 379-80.
10. W.D. Rubinstein, *The Left, the Right and the Jews*, London: Croom Helm, 1982.
11. Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria, 1835-1985*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986; Hilary L. Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987; Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, Sydney: Collins, 1988.
12. Ben Zion Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, Sydney: Cassel, 1979; Cyril Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal: Deported by Mistake*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1983; Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948*, Sydney: Croom Helm Australia, 1985; Konrad Kwiet and John A. Moses (eds), 'On Being a German-Jewish Refugee in Australia'; Special Issue of *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1985; John Foster (ed), *Community of Fate: Memoirs of German Jews in Melbourne*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986.
13. W.D. Rubinstein (ed.), *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987.
14. Examples of these would include J.S. Levi and G.F.J. Bergman, *Australian Genesis: Jewish Colonists and Settlers, 1788-1850*, Adelaide: Rigby, 1974; Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* [the history of the Great Synagogue, Sydney], Melbourne: Hawthorn, 1977; Suzanne D. Rutland, *Seventy-Five Years: The History of a Jewish Newspaper*, Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1970; William Katz, *And the Ark Rested: The Story of a Jewish Community Born During the Holocaust in Europe* [the history of the North Shore Synagogue, Sydney], Sydney: the Author, 1965; Newman Rosenthal, *Look Back with Pride: The St Kilda Hebrew Congregation's First Century*, Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1971; Newman Rosenthal, *Formula for Survival: the Saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation*, Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1979.
15. M.Z. Forbes, 'From the President', *Journal*, vol. IX, part 1, June 1981, p. 1.
16. David J. Benjamin, 'Simon Dubnow A Centenary Essay', *Journal*, vol. V, part 6, April 1962, pp. 273-80.
17. 'Statement of Aims', *Without Prejudice*, no. 1, September 1990, inside front cover.
18. Editorial Statement, *Menorah*, vol. 1, no. 1, August 1987, inside front cover.
19. J.W. Roffey (ed.), *When Jews and Christians Meet: Australian Essays Commemorating Twenty Years of Nostra Aetate*, Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches, 1985; and John W. Roffey (ed.), *Jews and Christians: Creating a New Spirit*, Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches, 1987.
20. L.E. Fredman, 'A Note on the Origins and Aims of the American Jewish Historical Society', *Journal*, vol. V, part 3, July 1960, p. 150.



## 100 YEARS AGO: EXTRACTS FROM THE JEWISH HERALD

Compiled by Lorraine Freeman

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*The Jewish Herald.*

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*MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 2nd JANUARY, 6651-1891.*

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ON Sunday, 31st January, 1875, the annual distribution of prizes to the children then attending the Melbourne Hebrew School took place at the Bourke-street Synagogue. The building was well filled, nearly all the seats on the left-hand side being occupied by the school children, and the other parts of the building by spectators. The galleries were well filled with ladies. In the unavoidable absence, caused through ill-health, of the Hon. EDW. COHEN, Mr. SIMEON COHEN, the President of the Congregation, presided. The proceedings were commenced by the afternoon service being read by the Rev. RAPHAEL BENJAMIN and the Choir. This being concluded, Mr. LOUIS ELLIS read the annual report, from which it appeared that the school was attended by 122 boys and 36 girls, or a total of 158 pupils. On the 11th of the following month a well-attended banquet in aid of the school took place, in the course of which donations amounting to £120 were announced. The foregoing facts are taken from the *Australian Israelite*, and their accuracy admits of no doubt. Let us compare with them what took place on the 23rd December last. Since the first-mentioned date, that is within a period of fifteen years, the Jewish community has grown considerably, both in number and wealth. It is by no means unreasonable to expect that the school formerly attended by 158 pupils should now have twice that number of pupils, or should, perhaps, have developed into something like a college with classes for elementary education attached to it; and, above all, that the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, with larger numbers and ampler means, should take a deeper interest, nay, a pride, in its school. We are sorry to say nothing of the kind is the case. The spectacle presented on the last-mentioned date must have been a sad disappointment to those who witnessed a similar demonstration fifteen years ago. In the present instance there was room enough, and to spare, in one of the school-rooms, both for pupils and spectators. The latter numbered about forty persons, amongst whom were only two members of the committee, while the children attending the Hebrew school, to judge from the examiner's report, have dwindled

down to 36. It may, perhaps, be said that the Hebrew schools attached to the other congregations in and around Melbourne are not so well attended as they should be; still, for a large congregation a school of 36 children is tantamount to no school at all.

No one need be told that such a state of affairs must seriously affect the future welfare and stability of the congregation. Nor would it serve any purpose to ask who is to be blamed for it. The proper question is, "What can and should be done to effect an improvement?" At a public meeting of the Jewish community held on 9th June, 1889, the following resolution was carried:—

"That the present means for imparting Jewish instruction and religious education to the youth of Melbourne and suburbs are unsatisfactory and inadequate, and that this meeting is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to remedy its defects based upon the resolutions adopted by the Conference, and to be forthwith submitted."

But those who proposed, seconded and spoke so strongly in favour of this resolution have since gone to sleep. Nothing has been or is likely to be done by them. Are there no others who will take this matter in hand? Have we to be told by CARDINAL MANNING that education is essentially a work of religion? Or is not this principle as old as Judaism itself? It has been abundantly proved that the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation can have no school, unless it be a school for secular and religious education combined. No doubt such a system, to be efficiently carried on, requires money; but, we submit, the funds of the congregation could not be used for a better purpose; and although we are almost sure that the Congregation will obtain assistance from outside, it cannot expect others to pay the whole, or even the greater portion, of the cost, as the school is bound to be a source of strength to the congregation. From the school mainly the congregation "recruits its empty hives;" therefore, what it does for the school it does for itself. It is all nonsense to say that our children should be sent to the State schools, so as to mix with the children of other denominations. The same argument would apply to the amalgamation of places of worship. There are plenty of opportunities for our children to come in contact with other children. But when the training of youth is concerned, when we have to lay the foundations for a vigorous Jewish community in the future, we have to look after our religious requirements in the first place. If in certain localities schools for only religious instruction answer the purpose, let our children by all means attend the State schools, but where, as in the case of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, that system has proved a failure, and cannot be made a success, something else must be tried, whatever the cost may be.

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JUDAISM, in common with other religions, might well say : "Save me from my avowed, but ignorant friends!" The illustration it has received and sometimes still receives, either theoretically or practically, from such persons, cannot fail to do it a great amount of injury. At the inquest held the other day at Manchester on the body of a Jewish woman, it transpired that the deceased met with an accident, and that her husband refused to assist her in any way beyond sending for the doctor, *because it was the Jewish Sabbath*. Anyone who is in the least acquainted with our religious laws (*Dinim*) knows that this is not Judaism; that, on the contrary, the Sabbath laws, stringent as they are, must stand aside in case of danger to life or limb. It is hardly credible that the husband of the deceased woman should have been ignorant of this well-known rule. It is far more likely that he sought to hide his brutality under the cover of some shallow pretence of religious scruples. But it is certainly surprising that the coroner should have taken this fellow as a fair exponent of Jewish principles, for in addressing him he is reported to have said:—"Whether it was the Jewish Sabbath or any other day it ought to have made no difference, and the woman ought to have had her wounds at once washed and attended to. If the religion of the Jews taught them to neglect people who stood in need of help because it was Saturday, the sooner that religion was abolished the better it would be." In all charity the coroner might have premised his remarks somewhat in this way:—"I can hardly believe that the religion of the Jews teaches them to neglect people," & &c. It is wonderful how little the Jewish religion is understood, and sad, indeed, that it should be misrepresented, and even slandered, by some of those who profess to have a regard for it!

WITH reference to the proper burial of Jewish persons married outside their religion, a point raised in our London correspondent's letter, we think it desirable, in order to prevent any misunderstanding, to quote the ruling of the late Chief Rabbi ח"י. Under date 23rd April, 5639 (No. 5255) Dr. Adlor, wrote:—"Although there ought to be a distinction made in the burial of persons who were not married כרת משה ישראל, and this, not in order to inflict punishment on the dead, but to deter the living from acting wrongly, I will, still, take a lenient view of the matter, and, therefore, observe—If the parties were married by the registrar *only*, then not with 'maimed rites'; if in church, however, then with 'maimed rites.' By "maimed rites" is understood burial in a separate portion of the Jewish cemetery, and the service to be read by the second minister (חזן שני).

A NUMBER of tombstones in excellent preservation have been found in the disused Jewish cemetery at Inowrazlaw, Prussia. The inscriptions contain dates between 250 and 300 years ago. This was the period when the Jews in Great and Little Poland suffered terrible persecution at the hand of the Cossack tyrant, Chelmnicki.

## EAST MELBOURNE HEBREW CONGREGATION.

ON Saturday, the 3rd January, the Rev. J. Lenzer addressed the members of the Albert-street Synagogue for the first time in English. Prefacing the Chief Rabbi's prayer for the Jews of Russia, Mr. Lenzer said:—"My dear brothers and sisters,—With feelings of grief and pity we have heard of the terrible persecutions and troubles which have come upon our brethren in Russia; and again our hearts rejoiced when we read of the heroic efforts which the Nobles of England intended to make in order to obtain an improvement in the condition of the poor unfortunates. But alas! the benevolent messengers who had bravely determined to go and beseech mercy for our brethren even from the mighty Czar himself have found all doors closed against them. We can truly say with the prophet Jeremiah: 'It is a time of trouble for the children of Jacob,' and none can help them but our God, even as the prophet continues: 'through that trouble they will be helped.' For is it not written: 'In their distress they cried unto the Lord and He delivered them.' Therefore, as it is our duty to pray for one another, as laid down in the Talmud, *כל כי שיש לו לבקש חסדים בעד חברו ואמר מבקש נקרא חסידא*—'He who has it in his power to implore mercy for another, and fails to do so, commits a wrong'—I will ask you to rise and join me in the following prayer, which I have received from the Chief Rabbi." Then followed Dr. Adler's prayer, which was read with much feeling by Mr. Lenzer.

The East Melbourne Hebrew School will reassemble on the 25th January, with Mr. S. A. Marks as acting head-teacher, and under the active supervision of the Rev. J. Lenzer as principal. The acting head-teacher will attend at 9 a.m. on the above date to enrol new pupils, in addition to which an active canvass of the members residing in East Melbourne will also be made.

## ART.

BY the *Damascus*, which left Melbourne on the 4th March for London, Mr. Aby Altson, the distinguished young artist, goes to Europe to pursue and complete the study of his profession. Mr. Altson's career at the Melbourne National Gallery was a singularly successful one. Originally entered in a Melbourne commercial firm, he left to enrol himself as a junior student under the late Mr. Follingsby at the National School of Art. Rapidly acquiring a mastery of the *technique* of drawing from the round and from life, he entered into the painting school, and here his success was as steady and gratifying as in the drawing class. His first study, "The Fisher Boy" (painted when the artist was only eighteen), was instantly noticed by the critics and the judges, and received a special award. The next year his picture, "Reading the Will," obtained the first prize; last year, "Children's Children" achieved a similar distinction; and at the exhibition of the students' work just closed, Mr. Altson carried off the students' blue ribbon by being awarded the Travelling Scholarship (of three years at £150 per annum) and the Gold Medal. A career of such consistent and gratifying progress is not only satisfactory to the young artist himself, but is noteworthy as showing that, given free scope, the artistic genius is as likely to be part of the Jewish mental endowment as is that of the sister art of music. Mr. Altson is going to Paris, and will there attach himself to the *atelier* of some French artist of repute, and his career will be watched with much interest. Mr. Altson,

in accordance with the terms of his scholarship, must, in the first and second years, furnish the local gallery with a copy of a work by one of the masters, and with an original picture the third year. Although Mr. Altson is the first Jewish student who has carried off the travelling scholarship, he is not the only one who has come to the fore from the local gallery, as Mr. E. P. Fox has achieved the distinction, dear to artists, of being "hung" at the Paris *salon*.

F. Luck, Wholesale and Retail Fruiterer and Confectioner,  
330 Lygon-street, Carlton.

## The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 13th MARCH, 5651—1891.

ONE need not be a pessimist to hazard the opinion that the interest in communal matters amongst the Jews of Melbourne is coming to a very low ebb indeed. We need not go far nor look about long to find plenty of indications of that fact. Whatever communal institution or society we look at we find the same workers, and while from time to time their ranks, already thin enough, are further reduced by the inexorable hand of death, fresh recruits are, like angels' visits, few and far between. Last Sunday there was to be a meeting of the subscribers to the Orphan and Neglected Children's Aid Society. Of the necessity of such a society there cannot be two opinions. No Jewish community in the world allows its orphans to be either neglected or to drift away from their ancestral faith. Jews have at all times carefully borne in mind what the ancient adage so pithily says—הורו בנני ערים שכרם תצא תורה—  
"Bestow ye all possible care upon the children of the poor, for the prospective welfare of Judaism lies in their hands." But what do we find in Melbourne? The meeting on Sunday last was attended by six persons all told, and no business could be transacted. Perhaps the severity of the heat had something to do with it; still we venture to think that many of our co-religionists would have braved even such weather in order to attend a meeting of the Victoria Racing Club. But then, you know, circumstances alter cases.

But though no business was transacted, one significant fact transpired which should open the eyes of the Melbourne Jews and induce them to ask themselves the timely question, whither are we drifting? A poor widow woman, like many other people, had been invited to the meeting, but, unlike many others, she did put in an appearance, though she hardly knew what for. She brought her two little boys with her, and fine, intelligent looking little fellows they were, and evidently well cared for, the one 10 the other 12

years old. Did she want to place them in charge of the Society? Oh, no, she did not wish to part with them, though she had to work very hard to make ends meet, and was only to a small extent supported by the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society. She did not, however, send the boys either to the Synagogue, or to the Hebrew School, nor did she herself teach them the essentials of their religion. In fact, neither of them could recite the first line of the *yow*. The information thus volunteered has led to the President of the Albert-street Congregation being communicated with, in order, if possible, to induce that mother to send her boys to the East Melbourne Hebrew School. In fact, just as we were going to press we learned with much satisfaction that this desirable end had been attained. But it is no more than reasonable to suppose that this is not an isolated case, and that there are scores of Jewish children in and around Melbourne who are allowed to grow up without religious education. The deplorable results of such neglect are easily imagined. It means that a generation of Jews and Jewesses will grow up who will be perfect strangers to their ancestral faith. Are we as a community to allow this? Are we to rest satisfied as long as the synagogue is filled on two days in the year, while no provision is made for the future welfare of Judaism? There is a great deal of real mission work to be done in and around Melbourne, but who does it, or who is willing to do it? Echo replies, "Who?" We consecrate tombstones in the most punctilious fashion; but we allow *חורבן בית*, the very life blood of Judaism, to go to the dogs.

Again, efforts are at present being made to resuscitate the Melbourne Branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association. That there should be occasion for this is in itself evidence of the scant recognition which one of the best and noblest institutions meets with from the majority of Melbourne Jews. It is now proposed to convene a general meeting of all classes of the Jewish community to bring under their notice the claims of the Association, and to enlist their co-operation in furtherance of its objects. But it needs not the gift of prophecy to foretell that, unless very strenuous efforts are made to ensure a large attendance the meeting will not be a success. Those that wish it to be—those that are the head of affairs—must show that they are in real earnest and that they are prepared to put their shoulders to the wheel as to make success a moral certainty. Enthusiasm kindles enthusiasm, and earnestness of purpose always commands respect. No good object has ever been attained without untinted effort. And while the community at large is, beyond doubt, extremely apathetic, it has yet to be proved that it cannot be induced to support a worthy object if but those who take, or are supposed to take, the lead will devote themselves to its furtherance to the best of their ability.



THERE is one item in our Adelaide correspondent's report which deserves more than a passing notice. A Jewish young lady of that city, Miss Susan E. Moss, has obtained the degree of Bachelor of Science, and has in addition gained honours in physiology. Since the days of Samuel Alexander and Felix Meyer we have become so used to our young men carrying off a large share of the academical honours that it almost escapes our notice when from year to year some more come to swell the already long list. But that one of our girls should follow in the same direction is at least a novelty and reflects great credit upon her. It proves, if proof were necessary, that our girls are no less endowed with superior intellects than our boys. Care should, however, be taken lest, in their eagerness for learning, our young women may neglect to cultivate those domestic virtues for which Jewish matrons have always stood pre-eminent, and which have contributed so largely both to the happiness of Jewish marriages, and to the vitality of the Jewish race. Nor should they neglect the cultivation of those religious feelings which are innate in women, and which in the past have done so much to give our home life, as well as the training of our children, a truly religious tone. If these two points are carefully attended to the desire of our young ladies to gain for themselves a place in the world of letters must be considered a commendable ambition, and deserving of every encouragement.

## MOTZOS FOR PASSOVER.

The Melbourne Motzos and Co-operative Association Limited are prepared to supply Motzos Matl, &c., for the ensuing Passover Holidays (manufactured under the supervision of the Local "Beth Din") at the following rates:—Motzos, 7½d. per lb.; Meal, 8½d. per lb.; Matzavos (six to set), 1s. 6d. per set; Permatzavos Cakes, 2s. per lb.; Almond and Sweet Cakes, 2s. 6d. per lb.; Ground Almonds (in sugar), 1s. 6d. per lb. Terms Cash. Orders to be sent to

BAKESHOP AND STONE—RISLEY ST., Near Church-st., RICHMOND.

SOLOMON M. SOLOMON Secretary.

## The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 27th MARCH, 1891.

THE importance of *Kosher* meat is gaining in recognition from day to day, and, strange to say, more so amongst Christians than amongst Jews. One is almost inclined to think that, in this country at least, the day is not far distant when Christians, and not Jews, will be the largest consumers of *Kosher* meat. We extract the following report from a daily paper of last week:—

Mr. J. M'Kean, at the meeting of the committee of the Melbourne Hospital yesterday, ventilated his views regarding the probability of consumption being very largely disseminated through the use of diseased meat as food. He had noticed, he said, that in very many years no deaths had occurred amongst the Jewish population from consumption, and this freedom from the disease he ascribed to their rigid scrupulousness in choosing their food, especially meat. He had also observed that at the abattoirs the Jews had specially strict inspection provided for their meat, and many of the slaughtered animals discarded as unfit for human consumption by their officers were, he alleged, allotted to the use of the general population whose welfare was not so minutely looked after. Mr. M'Kean stated further that he had seen in ten cases out of a dozen the lungs of animals slaughtered for food in a diseased state, and that so far as the ordinary inspection went it was a farce, as numbers of bullocks were killed in the inspector's absence.

The italics in the foregoing quotation are our own, and the statements so marked should go a long way to convince those of our people who do not confine themselves to *Kosher* meat of the danger to which they thus expose themselves. As a matter of fact neither the average Jew nor any Christian has a full knowledge of the care that is taken in the selection of animal food for orthodox Jews. Many Jews speak of *Kosher* meat without knowing how much it implies. It means, in the first place, that all animals, either temporarily or bodily maimed, are excluded. It means farther that the animal is killed in such a way as will best enable the blood to flow off freely. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood;" we are told, which modern scientists may be pardoned for transcribing, "The germs of disease lie in the blood," therefore "ye shall not eat the life (blood) with the flesh." Then, again, when the animal is thus killed and the blood has been as far as is possible removed, the most minute examination of the internal parts is made by a Jewish officer (*Shochet*), thoroughly acquainted both with the normal as well as the morbid anatomy of the animal. Any abnormal appearance, such, for instance, as an additional lobe of, or a deficiency in, the lungs, an ulcer, an adhesion of the lungs to the ribs, or a foreign body in any part of the intestines, renders the flesh of the animal *trifu*, or unfit for consumption amongst Jews. Disease, even in its incipient stage, is quite sufficient to render the animal so afflicted *trifu*. Our laws and regulations relating to the selection of animal food are particularly numerous, and the officer (*Shochet*) must have them at his fingers' ends, and is not allowed to enter upon his functions until he has passed a stringent examination in this matter. It will thus be seen how much reason there is for accentuating the superiority of *Kosher* meat.

DR. HEEON, in his "Evidences of the Communicability of Consumption," dwells particularly upon the well-ascertained immunity from tuberculosis of carefully conforming Jews, "whose meat," he says, "is inspected in a manner which would require the rejection of the entire carcass if any speck of tubercle were discovered." The fat and healthy appearance of meat is no guarantee whatever of its fitness for food; since every experienced *Shochet* will tell you that the fattest cattle are, as a rule, *trifu*. The meat with which orthodox Jews are supplied is generally that of young cattle, and the only guarantee we have of its soundness is the *Shochet's* stamp.

Now, while much, if not all, of the foregoing is admitted, it is generally said that taking *Kosher* means a good deal of trouble; that you can't always get what you want, and that you have to put up with many incon-

veniences. We admit that there is something in these complaints: By appointing special butchers for the sale of *Kosher* meat the community creates, to a certain extent, a monopoly, and monopolies, everybody knows, do not benefit the public. On the other hand, if but the community would work together, and like one man support the *Kosher* meat supply, the butchers appointed would soon find it worth their while to look after the Jewish trade. The remedy lies entirely in the hands of the Jews. They need but act in unison in this matter, and they will be able to make their own terms. And if, after all, the taking of *Kosher* meat should involve a little trouble, or demand some slight sacrifices, we think, quite apart from the religious obligation we are under, such trouble or sacrifice is out of all proportion to the benefits derived. It means health, and health is everything.

#### LOCAL AND GENERAL ITEMS.

MASTER HENRY CHARLES DYTE, though only nine years old, has obtained the certificate of having reached the standard of proficiency required by the Education Act in Victoria.

At a meeting of the Dental Students' Society a paper was read by Mr. A. Harris on "Alveolar Abscess." The essayist was thanked by Mr. Ludbrook, L.D.S.R.C.S., on behalf of the members, for the able manner in which he had arranged the details relating to the subject. The paper was very instructive, and showed much care in its preparation.

The monthly meeting of the Melbourne Jewish Philanthropic Society was held at the Synagogue Chambers, East Melbourne, on 12th March. Present—Messrs. W. B. Isaacs (in the chair), S. Davis, R. Moss, B. Marks, H. Marks, B. Sniders, L. Crawcour, D. Dyle, H. Ackman, L. J. Levy, L. P. Jacobs (secretary), Revs. Dr. Abrahams and J. Lonzor, and Mesdames Abrahams and Tartacover. The president reported that twenty cases had been relieved since the last meeting to the extent of £24 5s., and the balance at the Bank was reported as being £79 3s. 6d. in credit. Ten applications for relief were considered, two of which were not entertained, and for the remainder different sums, amounting in all to £34, were voted. The action of the president and treasurer in having admitted a certain deserving old man into the Jewish almshouses on their own responsibility was unanimously endorsed. A recommendation from Sir B. Benjamin for the admission of another party was received, but could not be complied with immediately through lack of accommodation. An application was received from the Ladies' Benevolent Society, through Mrs. Abrahams, for assistance in the case of a poor woman undergoing an operation in the Hospital, with an invalid husband and seven young children, and it was agreed to contribute half the cost of their support for three months. Other unimportant business having been disposed of the meeting closed.

#### AN IMPORTANT INVENTION.

MR. REUBEN HALLENSTEIN, of the firm of Michaelis, Hallenstein and Co., of 382 Lonsdale-street, Melbourne, is the inventor of a simple and yet ingenious contrivance for closing up apertures in floors of buildings, such as lift and staircase openings, to prevent the spread of fire from floor to floor. It has long been found that lifts, now so common in modern buildings, are a

source of danger in cases of conflagration, inasmuch as they act as flues, and thus facilitate the spread of fire with increased rapidity. Mr. Hallenstein's invention seems to prevent this danger entirely. As the lift rests on the ground floor, the aperture in each floor is closed by a sort of fireproof trap-door, which open automatically as the lift rises, and close again when it has reached the bottom. Staircases and other openings in floors can be provided with an apparatus somewhat different in construction, but on the same principle. Working models of the apparatus in its different forms were on view at the offices of Messrs. Goldsbrough, Mort and Co. on Friday afternoon last, and were inspected by a large number of property owners and business men, who were unanimous in pronouncing the invention as of the highest value in preventing the spread of fire in warehouses, stores and other places. We are informed that the insurance companies have taken the invention up very warmly, and are likely to reduce the premiums on buildings provided with this apparatus. It has been patented in all the Australian colonies, as well as in several foreign countries, and is sure to come into general use when it becomes more generally known.

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A UNION has been formed in Berlin to oppose the anti-Semitic agitation which is being raised in Germany, and it has issued the following declaration:—"Against our Jewish fellow-citizens an odious fight is being carried on, which is repugnant to the nature of our countrymen, their historic development and their position among civilised nations. In pamphlets, which are distributed by the thousand, as well as in the Press, the Jews, to whom the laws of the country secure full political equality of rights, are pursued with the vilest insults, only because they are Jews. They are represented as strangers, and as men who endanger the moral foundations of the State and society. The abolition of the equality of rights which they enjoy is the object of the anti-Semitic agitation. To look on with indifference and indolence would be fatal neglect. In some districts of the Fatherland the anti-Semitic agitation has assumed large dimensions, especially in the country, and every effort is being made to spread it further. German sovereigns and statesmen have condemned the corrupt and un-Christian policy of the anti-Semites, but, above all, it is a matter of honour for the German people, and especially for us who are Christians, to put a speedy end to it. The undersigned members of different confessions and political parties have called into life this union against anti-Semitism. They wish to oppose the anti-Semitic agitation in word and deed. They will neither conceal nor excuse excesses which have been committed, but by positive action, and especially by economic measures, seek to remove them. They appeal to their fellow-citizens, no matter of what confession or of what party, to support them in these endeavours, and to become members of the union." The names of a number of influential representative men of all creeds are attached to the above document (says the Berlin correspondent of the *Daily News*) to the number of 500.

## DEATH.

COHEN.—On the 11th ult., at Macquarie-st., Hobart, Elizabeth, relict of the late Moses Cohen, and mother of Annie Ansell. Aged 82. R.I.P.

## The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 24th MAY, 1891.

FOR the last fortnight or so the public mind has been considerably agitated by the report, telegraphed from England, that BARON HIRSCH, in conjunction with other prominent philanthropists, has resolved to send no less than 500,000 Russian Jews, partly to South America and partly to Australia. As news is decidedly scarce just now, Parliament not being in session, the report, though emanating from only one English paper, has been eagerly seized and discussed by all classes and by different bodies in these colonies. The Press has commented upon it, the Trades Hall Council has resolved forthwith to wait upon the Premier of Victoria, and present a strong protest against so dreadful an invasion of this country by foreign paupers; while even the youngest and most frolicsome of our social institutions, with the magnanimous motto, "Australia for the Australians!" has raised its voice in condemnation of the scheme. In fact, we have had a repetition of all that was said and done when a ghost, in the shape of a Chinese invasion, haunted our politicians, and when General Booth's scheme was considered on the eve of being practically carried out. A few moments of calm consideration would have probably rendered all this outburst of righteous indignation quite unnecessary, as it would have thrown considerable doubt upon the likelihood of such a step having been offhand decided upon. If thousands of Russian Jews have to leave their native country, which is quite likely, there are places closer at hand than Australia to send them to—countries with which people in Europe are better acquainted than they are with this continent. At any rate, neither Baron HIRSCH nor any other practical man in the old country is likely to support so costly a scheme without being first satisfied that there is room for these people in Australia, or without having some reasonable assurance that he is really conferring a boon upon them. That was the Baron's policy in previous instances of this kind, and it would be strange were he to depart from it in the present.

Should, however, contrary to our surmise, the report prove true, Australian Jews will know how to act. However much they may sympathise with their unfortunate Russian co-religionists, they owe a duty to their country. They will one and all agree with the generally expressed opinion that while these colonies offer a fair field for practical agricul-

tourists with some means at their disposal, there is absolutely no room for small dealers, hawkers and men of no particular trade at all, not to speak of poor people, of whom, notwithstanding our boasted prosperity, we have our fair share. It is not, and cannot be, the desire of any Jew to injure existing interests by foreign immigration, nor to disturb the good feeling that happily exists between us Jews and other denominations by forcing on an unfair and unnecessary competition. Nor would it be possible for the various Jewish charities to cope with the requirements of a large influx of poor people, as our population is limited in number, and our means hardly sufficient to provide for local wants.

In the meantime it is a matter for sincere congratulation that the Australian branches of the Anglo-Jewish Association have lately shown fresh life and vigour. The work of the Association, whether in its educational branch, or in its protection of Jewish interests in foreign countries, needs every possible support, and more so now than at any other previous period. We cannot remain indifferent when we hear of the persecution of millions of Jews. We must do something to assist in mitigating the serious results which, we venture to say, will be felt years hence. And should at any future time Australia be chosen as the destination of large numbers of Jewish refugees, sent out under a proper organisation and provided with the necessary means, the local branches of the Anglo-Jewish Association will be expected to take the poor people in hand. They may possibly call in the assistance of other representative men or bodies, but they will have to take the lead. They will have a fresh opportunity to justify their *raison d'être*. It is well for them to reserve and concentrate their forces in time.

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## The Jewish Herald.

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MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 22nd MAY, 1881—1891.

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THE excitement created a fortnight or so ago by the report that several thousands of Russian Jews are to be sent to Australia has now subsided. As we surmised from the beginning, the report was without rhyme or reason, and those who lashed themselves into something like righteous indignation at the grievous wrong that was to be inflicted on the general community will now find that their action was hasty, and not at all creditable to liberal-



minded citizens of a free and prosperous country. To us Jews the incident has revealed the disappointing fact that even in Australia there is as yet a good deal of prejudice against the Jews. The Melbourne Press in particular has on this occasion not adopted that enlightened view which we find in the leading newspapers in the mother country. One of our principal papers, always boasting of its liberalism, has placed the Jews of Russia on a par with the negroes, designating them both as alien races, but forgetting or ignoring the fact that the Russian Jews are not aliens. Thousands of them were born in Russia, have served in the army, and would at any time be ready to fight again for the throne and person of the Czar. Another of our daily papers allows one of its regular contributors to draw up a strong indictment against the Russian Jews, culled entirely from anti-Jewish sources, without saying a word in their favour. How different is, for instance, the tone of the *London Times*, which is always ready to plead the cause of the oppressed, whatever denomination they may belong to. Facts such as these are by no means evidence of an enlightened public Press in this country.

In the meantime the persecution of the Jews in Russia is carried on with unabated zeal. So far from paying any respect to public opinion in Europe, the Russian Government seems to be unrelenting in its severity against its Jewish subjects. For us, in this distant part of the world, it is impossible to express any opinion as to what may or should be done for the victims of Russian barbarism. We are too far away either to gauge the situation or weigh the possibilities with any degree of accuracy. Nevertheless, it seems to us that emigration on a large scale would not be the wisest plan that could be adopted. It would in reality mean to play into the hands of the Czar, whose only desire seems to be to get rid of his Jewish subjects. European countries already over populated are not likely to be found willing to receive them. Are those unfortunate Jews to be bandied about from country to country as so much worthless chattel, which nobody cares to accept? Or are they to be subjected to all the hardships and privations of a settlement in a distant country merely to gratify the desire of the Czar? The desire is in itself an unrighteous one. There can be no political or social reason for it. Why should the Jews of Russia be a danger to the country any more than the Jews of England, or of France, or of Germany have proved to be to their respective countries? Let Russia, as other countries have done, grant them a full measure of liberty, and watch them for a number of years to see what the result will be. "The feeling of patriotism," as MACAULAY observed, "when society is in a healthful state, springs up by a natural and inevitable association in the minds

of citizens who know that they owe all their comforts and pleasure to the bond which unites them in one community." It would be strange, indeed, if under improved laws the Jews of Russia would not prove themselves as useful to their country as their co-religionists in other parts of the world have done in respect to theirs. But to assist the Czar in his desire to banish the Jews from his dominion would not be a desirable policy, quite apart from its costliness and small chance of success. Large numbers of them belonged to the countries which his predecessors were very glad to annex, and no sovereign has a moral right to take over a country without at the same time taking over the responsibilities resting thereon.

#### LOCAL AND GENERAL ITEMS.

For the first time in the annals of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, the service at the Albert-street Synagogue last Friday evening was performed with the assistance of the choir. It is the intention of the Board of Management to have a choral service every Friday evening.

The result of an interview between a reporter of the *Evening Herald* and Mr. A. Harris, of Elizabeth-street, in reference to the Jewish question in Russia, appeared in that paper on Tuesday last. Partly from personal observation before he came to this country, and partly from private information, Mr. Harris gave the reporter a full and lucid account of the position of the Russian Jews, and the cause of their being persecuted.

A MEETING of the Melbourne Junior Jewish Literary Society was held in the Hibernian Hall on Monday evening, 11th May. There was a very large attendance, and a paper on "Conscience," read by the president (Mr. J. Lazarus), was listened to with great interest, and was discussed by a number of the members and visitors. A vote of thanks, which was carried by acclamation, was accorded the essayist, who suitably responded. A good musical programme brought a most successful evening to a termination. The next meeting will be held in the Hibernian Hall on Monday evening next, the 25th May, when a paper on "The Influence of the Stage" will be read by Mr. D. C. Levy, B.A. A cordial invitation is extended to members and friends.

A GRAND vocal and instrumental concert is to be given at the Melbourne Town Hall on Wednesday, 3rd June, by the Misses Albu. These two young ladies, co-religionists, come to us with high credentials from the mother country. The older sister was a pupil of the Royal College of Music, where she gained a scholarship for singing, and had the advantage of having the late Jenny Lind for her teacher. The younger sister was trained by private tuition. The two young ladies have lately appeared before the Melbourne public, but, as many have not yet heard them, they have been induced to give another concert, which may probably be their last appearance in this city, at any rate for some time to come. An excellent programme is in course of preparation, and every effort will be made to give the public a real musical treat. The members of the Hebrew Choral Society have signified their intention of attending in a body. The box plan is now open at Glen's music warehouse, where seats can be marked off. We trust that there will be a full house on the occasion.

THE fortnightly meeting of the Melbourne Jewish Literary and Debating Society was held at the usual place last Monday evening, when Professor Tucker, of the Melbourne University, read a paper on "Hellenism and Hebraism." There was a good attendance of ladies and gentlemen, Mr. P. D. Phillips, the president, being in the chair. In his opening remarks the Professor remarked that, while he was a specialist as far as Hellenism was concerned, he did not claim to be a Hebraist. He had little knowledge of Jewish history and literature,

and of the Talmud he knew nothing. But, having been brought up as a Christian, he had read and studied the Bible, and from the characters he met therein he had drawn his conclusions on Hebraism. He started by saying that the whole civilised world was penetrated either by Hellenism or by Hebraism, or by both. Both had been mighty factors in moulding the thought of humanity, and it was to be wished that their influence would go on increasing. He then described the chief characteristics of both Greeks and Hebrews, remarking that while the essential qualities of the former was all thinking, and sensuous, not sensual, enjoying those of the latter were intense feeling and devotion to moral principles. There were dangers in both these tendencies, as the one might lead to the sensuality, the other to asceticism and bigotry. He contrasted the writings of the Greeks with those of the Hebrews, and showed that it was impossible for Greeks to have written in the styl of Hebrews, and vice versa. Yet neither the Greeks nor the Hebrews had produced an ideal man. That was to be left to the future. The combined influences of both will have to bring out all that is good and noble in man. The lecture was listened to with the utmost attention, and was heartily applauded at the conclusion. The debate which followed was opened by the Rev. E. Blaubaum, and continued by Messrs M. Hirsch and M. Moses, M.A. Mr. Zox moved a vote of thanks to the learned lecturer, which was carried by acclamation, and briefly acknowledged by the Professor. It was announced that at the next meeting, which is to take place on June 1st, Miss Ellis would read a paper on "George Elliot."

#### HOME AND FOREIGN NOTES.

(A CHORAL Society has been formed in Thorn, Germany, and the means it employs to bring about harmony may be gathered from one of its regulations, which excludes from membership Jews and tradesmen.

THE elections for the partial renewal of the French Senate have not resulted so favourably for Jewish candidates as did the general elections in Italy. Out of five candidates professing the Jewish faith, only one, M. Millaud, ex-Minister of Public Works, has received a new mandate from the select voters who have the power to send members to the legislative body sitting at the Luxembourg Palace. There is but one other Jew in the Senate, M. Lisbounne.

ON the 8th of March, Dr. Boeckel, the notorious anti-Semite, was about to address a meeting of kindred spirits at Windecken. On entering the hall, however, he was seized by the Socialists, and received from them such a sound thrashing that he disappeared from the scene without a moment's delay. To prevent further breaches of the peace the authorities telegraphed for a company of soldiers from the neighbouring garrison, Hanau, who duly arrived, but left again on the following day, as their services were no longer required.

#### THE RUSSIAN JEWS.

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JEWISH HERALD.")

SIR,—The readers of your last issue must have been amazed when they read the senseless resolution carried at the last meeting of the Melbourne branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association. It was then decided to write to the authorities in England and protest against any measures that might bring about an immigration of a purely pauper class of people to cities which are already over-populated. I have no doubt the heads of the Anglo-Jewish Association in England will be grateful for the advice, and thoroughly impressed with this new and original idea. Would you be good enough to inform me, beyond a mere extract from a sensational news-mongering paper, what authority they had for assuming that we were to be inundated with a large class of Russian pauper Jews? Is it the paupers only that are being persecuted and who are being driven out of their native land and

homes? I would also ask is it the duty of the Jew living in a free country, with millions of acres of unoccupied land, to say that this is not the country to send people to who are being persecuted simply because they believe in the Mosaic teachings and the Unity of God? We have room in Australia for millions of honest, hard-working, thrifty people, and would gladly welcome their arrival. Without being thought in any way personal, might I ask the majority of the leading Jewish citizens the amount of capital they had when they first landed in this country?—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,—AN ENGLISH SYMPATHISER WITH  
May 19, 1891. THE RUSSIAN PERSECUTED JEWS.

### THE MELBOURNE JEWISH LITERARY SOCIETY.

A PAPER on "The Russian Jew and His Troubles" was read by Mr. Jacob Goldstein last evening, under the auspices of the Jewish Literary Association. Mr. P. D. Phillips occupied the chair, and about eighty persons were present.

MR. GOLDSTEIN observed that the present action of the Czar against the Jews meant nothing less than the extinction of the Jews within his dominions, and he proceeded to contrast very vividly the freedom and equality enjoyed in British communities with the state of things existing in Russia, which amounted to a scandal to civilisation. When a memorial from the Jews was presented to the Czar, he wrote upon it that the facts disclosed were very distressing, but added, "But we must not forget that the Jews crucified our Lord and shed His precious blood." So, while the stern Mosaic law declared that the children to the third and fourth generation should suffer for the sins of the father, in Russia they were to be made to suffer even to the hundredth generation. Thank God this was not Christianity, as witness the noble utterances of Cardinal Manning, the Bishop of London, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and others. The memorial sent by a great meeting in London through the Lord Mayor to the Czar was returned contemptuously. Quite right, said the scoffers; what right had the people of England to interfere in the domestic affairs of Russia? But, surely, an attempt to crush millions of human beings out of existence was not purely a domestic affair, but rather a matter that concerned all humanity. An article had appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, signed "Anglo-Russian," in which the writer extolled the wisdom and justice and humanity of the Czar, and gave several reasons why the Jews were an undesirable element in the Russian community. It was probably true that the question was not entirely a religious one, so far as the Russian Government was concerned, but there could be no question that a very adroit use had been made of the bigotry and superstitious intolerance of the Russian people. It was said that the Jews were a legacy to Russia from Poland. Well, let Russia dismantle Warsaw and evacuate Poland, and the Poles would no doubt be glad to receive the Jews back with their freedom, for the Jews were among the staunchest supporters of Poland's independence. It was urged against the Jews, in the article referred to, that they were usurers. Not the whole 5,000,000 of them, surely? Granting that money-lending was an unmixed evil, the Jews in Russia did not all have money to lend, and they were restricted to particular localities. The fact was that usury was rendered a necessity to the Russian *ouvrier*; that it was recognised

and protected by laws; and that, as "E. H. Lenin" had shown, the Russian usurers were far more exorbitant and merciless than the Jewish money-lenders. It was said that the Jews controlled the liquor trade. Well, the liquor trade was encouraged by the Government for the sake of the revenue, and where the Jews are not engaged in it, it was carried on by the officials and the priests. It was said that the Jews controlled finance, and were obtaining a predominance in commerce. That might be true, but it was hardly discreditable to the Jews. Among other things, Jews had organised the grain trade of Odessa. Did that injure Russia? Surely the Jews had had other matters to attend to, and we learnt by cable that crops were rotting in the fields, that the Russian peasants were starving, and that the price of corn had risen throughout Europe. It was said that Jews did not enlist as soldiers. Well, 3½ per cent. of the entire population of Russia entered the army. Of Jews in Russia 6 per cent. entered the army; and whilst the family of a Russian soldier had to be supported by his *mir* or village community, there was no relief for those whom the Jew left behind him when he fell on the battle-field. It was quite untrue that the Jew would not take to agriculture, but it might be true that Jews refused to take the place of *serfs* as agricultural labourers. One ridiculous assertion had been made by a writer to the *Argus* that the Jewish usurer in Russia not only extorted money from the poor *moujik*, but afterwards robbed him of his land, the fact being that no Jew could hold land in Russia, while the laws in regard to sequestration were unusually liberal toward the debtors. The fact was that the Jews were an enlightened race compared with the *nyuses* in the Russian community, and the Czar feared them. But to come to the position of affairs to-day. Baron Hirsch had offered £3,000,000 to assist in the emigration of Jews from Russia, and immediately there ensued in Melbourne an exhibition of male hysteria altogether disproportionate to the occasion. Five millions of wretched human beings were to be imported into Melbourne, and men swore that this thing should not be. Australia could not absorb about 5,000,000 paupers. Well, it was never suggested that all the Jews in Russia should be sent to Australia; and why "paupers?" A poor man was not necessarily a pauper. A man who was willing to work was not a pauper. It was monstrous to compare the Jews to the Chinese, or even to the ex-criminals and moral refuse which "General" Booth contemplated in his immigration schemes. Half-a-dozen gentlemen composing the council of the Anglo-Jewish Association in Melbourne had cabled to London that the Australian people would not tolerate the introduction of penniless Jews. In all seriousness, he believed these gentlemen had made a mistake in the action they had taken, and they should lose no time in repairing the mistake. It was to be hoped that this was not the final reply that the Russian Jews were to receive in their cry for relief from this part of the world. For some weeks he had been making careful inquiries as to the possibility of settling Jews in Western Australia. That colony had a million or more square miles of territory, and a population of only 40,000 people. The climate was the healthiest in the world, the country had great mineral resources and vast forests of valuable timber, and its plains might feed and its pastures clothe the world. He would like to see Jewish communities introduced, one hundred families being the unit of each, and these could be selected so that each community would contain all the classes it needed. It should not be difficult to multiply this one-hundred-family unit by thousands if necessary. Each family would produce quite £60 worth of wealth a year, so that each community would add £6000 year at least

to the wealth of the country. The thing could be done, and he knew from advices he had received that there would be no objection on the part of the people in Western Australia. It had even been suggested to him that the southern coast, to the eastward of the present settlements, would be a suitable locality for the experiment, and there was a bay called Esperance Bay which would do as the site of the first Jewish colony. Each family would either possess or be supplied with money to the extent of at least £100. He believed that nothing but benefit would accrue to Western Australia from the presence of such settlements within its territory.

Discussion having been invited by the president,

MR. ALEXANDER MARKS thought that the idea propounded by Mr. Goldstein was a good one, and he should be glad to contribute towards the cost of carrying it out. The persecution of the Jews was a very dreadful thing, and only worthy of savages.

MR. B. SNIDERS thought that the assertion made by Mr. Paterson that the Russian Jews were worse than Chinese should not have been made without some proof. The condition in which the Russian Jews were at present was attributable to the tyranny and persecution which had been practised upon them.

PROFESSOR LAURIE remarked that there did not seem the slightest reason for the persecution of the Jews, and it was remarkable that the Russian Jews had not deteriorated under such unfavourable treatment. He altogether deprecated racial animosities, and hoped that, with advancing civilisation, they would die out.

MR. A. DAVIS said that so far from the Russian Jew being the miserable loafer which he had been represented, he was a hard-working, honest man, who wanted the opportunity to do his duty to himself, his family and his country. If the Russian Jews were such as had been represented by their detractors, then it would be only reasonable to expect to find them enjoying a monopoly of Pentridge, and overcrowding the Benevolent Asylum. He attributed the treatment of the Russian Jews to jealousy, and pointed out that doctors, artists, merchants and manufacturers abounded amongst them. Jews had brought energy, intellect, thought, prudence and thrift to bear on trade, and this was regarded as a disgrace in Russian eyes.

MR. M. MOSES, in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Goldstein, said he had shown, at all events, that the Jews of Russia were not quite so black as they were painted. Three centuries ago Philip II. and the Duke of Alba passed a sentence of death on the people of the Netherlands, and this showed what place Russia was entitled to take in the ranks of barbarism. He alluded to the half-hearted sympathy extended towards the persecuted Jews, and thought it a great pity that the prejudice against the race should still linger in civilised countries. The Jew must be a paragon of virtue before he was accepted as tolerable at all.

MR. WAXMAN, in seconding the vote of thanks, said he considered it the duty of every nation to receive the ostracised people of darkest Russia. It was, he maintained, for those who objected to the settlement of Jews to show that they would be a burden on the community.

The vote of thanks having been carried heartily, Mr. Goldstein, in responding, said that what he had said in favour of the Russian Jews had all been obtained from non-Jewish sources.



## BAR MITZVAH.

THE REV. J. M. GOLDREICH will be pleased to receive his friends and well-wishers on the occasion of the בר מצוה of his second son, Samuel Joseph (D.V. וסמיך "שק" during the afternoons of Saturday and Sunday, 1st and 2nd of August next, קריאת התורה at 10 o'clock precisely,

Synagogue Buildings, Ballarat,  
17th July, 5651—1891.

## The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 17th JULY, 5651—1891.

IT is only now we get, through the home papers, the details of the horrible persecution of our co-religionists in Russia of which the cable has hitherto given us no more than the faintest glimpses. And those details beggar every description. It is quite possible, and, considering the censorship to which the Russian Press is subject, very likely that the full extent of the outrages perpetrated upon our unfortunate brethren will never be known. But the feelings of the Russian refugees and the terrible fear said to be plainly depicted in their faces are sufficiently indicative of what those people must have endured in their native country. The following account of what took place at Berlin on Sunday evening, 31st May, tells a sad story:—

"When the evening train with Russian fugitives arrived, the Aid Committee conducted the emigrants into the waiting-room allotted to them, the barred door of which was as usual locked behind them to prevent them from wandering out on to the line. A family, consisting of husband and wife and four children, on seeing the dark place into which they were being led, seemed to think it was a prison, and when two ladies took two of the children in order to wash them and to furnish them with new clothes, the unhappy mother must have imagined they wished to separate her children from her. She whispered something to her husband, embraced the other two children, and knocking at a door which was opened, they all passed out on to the railway track. The woman gazed quickly round with a frightened look, and then threw herself with the others on to the line. It was only with the greatest trouble that some of the officials and others could drag them away, and so prevent them from being run over. But when, afterwards, her two other children were brought to her, clean and decently clothed, the poor woman wept tears of joy."

The expulsion of the Jews from Moscow has certainly been carried out with a merciless hand, and there seems to have not been the slightest reason for it. Those who have been turned out of their homes had each and all some occupation or means of livelihood. Moscow, we are told, swarms with beggars, but a Jewish beggar is a rarity. The sick and old who cannot work were supported by their co-religionists, as is the case in other Jewish communities. Nevertheless, the Jews of Moscow had to go, and for no other reason than because they were Jews. Indeed, the latest telegrams from the old country are sufficient proof of the fact that the war

which the Czar and his Government wage against the Jews springs from religious motives solely. Holy Russia is to be cleansed from all that do not profess the Czar's religion, from Jews especially. Henceforth, we are informed, those Jews who remain in that happy country must not practise their religious rites, not observe the Jewish Sabbath and other Divine laws binding upon the Jew. The Czar may, however, lay this flattering unction to his soul, that, though he may oppress and treat the Jews with such inhuman severity as he would not apply to his horses, he will never be able to stamp out the Jewish religion. That has been tried by other tyrants before him, equally powerful and equally unscrupulous in their methods, but not one of them succeeded, and no more will His Imperial Highness, the Czar of all the Russias.

It has been asserted that the Czar himself is ignorant of the cruelties inflicted by his officers upon the Jews. No sane man will believe it. The Czar knows everything else that is going on. He knows all that has been and is said in the European press about himself and his government, and it would be strange if he did not know in what manner the expulsion of the Jews from his dominion is effected. History will pronounce the verdict upon him. It will not allow so shallow a plea as ignorance of what is going on; it will rather one day place ALEXANDER III. side by side with AMALEK, TORQUEMADA, FERDINAND and ISABELLA of Spain, and other perpetrators of inhuman acts.

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SIR JAMES MACBAIN, the President of the Legislative Council, deserves the hearty thanks of every earnest Jew for expressing his reluctance to fix the polling-day for filling up the vacancy in the representation of the North Yarra Province on a Saturday. He said, although differing from the Jews, he did not wish to interfere with the religious convictions of the Jewish community. So it ought to be. One man ought to respect the religious convictions of the other, and no one should labour under any social and political disability arising from religious grounds. Mr. Trenwith, however, with his usual consideration towards those that are not of his party, did not think the Jews would consider it wrong to vote on a Saturday. Beyond carrying out certain religious observances, he said, they made very little difference between Saturday and other days. Of course, Mr. Trenwith knows. Perhaps he will be surprised to learn that no observant Jew, if he has to record his vote in writing, will do so on his Sabbath. Why should such a man be deprived from exercising his right of an elector? It is, indeed, reassuring that although Sir James gave way to the labouring party on this occasion, he wishes it to be clearly understood the holding of an election on a Saturday is not to be regarded as a precedent. It would perhaps be better if one of our co-religionists in Parliament would draw attention to it, for there can be no doubt that in the present instance a few good Jews will be unable to vote, and the number would be still larger were any general election to be fixed on a Saturday.

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On account of severe pressure on our space, the second part of the article, "A Plea for the Study of Hebrew," by ר' בן סימא, is held over for our next issue.

A circular has been received by the various congregations from the secretary of the United Synagogue, London, informing them that the Rev. Dr. Hermann Adler has been elected Chief Rabbi, and asking them to state the amount they wish to contribute towards the Chief Rabbi's Fund.

THE rumour of a possible influx of persecuted Russian Jews has attracted the notice of Mr. Coppin, who as a member of the Legislative Council intends to direct the attention of the Minister of Justice to a public statement that it is intended to send the Russian Jews to the Argentine Republic, Canada and Australasia; and will ask whether the Government has any power to prevent assisted immigrants from landing in great numbers in this colony, no matter from what part of the world they may be sent.

THE *Jewish Chronicle* of 19th June says:—"The late Rev. Dr. Adler never acquired a perfect mastery of English." There are thousands, quite as competent to judge as the *Jewish Chronicle*, who will flatly contradict that statement.

SOME few weeks ago Mr. Patterson, M.P., in a recent address to his constituents at Castlemaine, made some remarks regarding the Russian Jews which were as offensive as they were gratuitous. The fact that Mr. Patterson possesses views of a most pronounced Liberal type made his statements all the more surprising to his many friends, amongst whom are a great many of the Jewish faith. Last week Mr. Patterson proffered an apology in the Legislative Assembly for the statements made in the following terms:—

"Speaking on this matter, he would like to take the opportunity of explaining a remark which he made some time ago as to the proposed immigration of Russian Jews. It was far from his intention in anything he said to place a stigma on the Jews already here, and he did not wish that idea to get abroad. The Jews here were of our own nation and desirable citizens, and entirely different from the Russian Jews, who would only come to Australia for their own misery."

It is as well that Mr. Patterson has so far altered his views. Probably he may yet live to learn that there are loyal, law-abiding and patriotic Jews even in Russia.

THE last of the Hallé concerts are announced for to-morrow and Monday evenings. As an exponent of Beethoven Sir Charles Hallé stands unrivalled, while Lady Hallé, as a lady violinist, has not her equal in any part of the world. It is very unlikely that these distinguished artists will again visit these shores. No lover of good music should therefore miss the last opportunities of hearing them.

It is with sincere sorrow that we record the death of Mrs. Isaac Hallenstein, which took place on the 3rd August, at Bonn, Germany, and of which her relatives in Melbourne were informed by cable yesterday. The deceased lady was known in this city to a large circle of friends, by whom she was held in the highest esteem for her many sterling qualities. To no one, however, was she a better friend than to the poor, for whom she had an unceasing care and who never appealed to her in vain. Her charity was, indeed, as unbounded as it was unostentatious. When she left here, about three years ago, on an extended visit to the old country, the poor in the neighbourhood of St. Kilda felt indeed that they had lost a sincere friend and benefactor, and her return to the district would have been hailed with sincere pleasure by all classes. This, however, was not to be; but we feel sure that, though gone to her eternal home, she will not easily be forgotten, and it were, indeed, to be wished that her excellent example would be followed by many to whom the means and opportunities of doing good are given. ת נ צ ב ה

### חברת ביקור חולים

I AM directed to inform the Jewish residents of Melbourne, Fitzroy and the surrounding suburbs by J. Kuschin, Esq., Chairman *pro tem*, that you are respectfully requested to attend an important meeting to be held at Mr. E. Cohen's, 386 Brunswick-street, Fitzroy, on Sunday 29th November, 1891, at 8.30, for the purpose of forming the above society.

J. JACOBS, Hon. Secretary.

**A**LBERT PARK, 7 Canterbury-road, opposite station, Jewish lady offers comfortable home for gentlemen; terms moderate.

## The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 20th NOVEMBER, 1891.

THE time has now come when something more than sympathy is wanted for the Russian Jews. The Russo-Jewish Committee, of London, has issued an appeal for funds wherewith to meet the most urgent cases of distress amongst Russian Jewish refugees. That committee was called into existence about ten years ago, and it started its operations with a sum of money amounting to about £108,000. The greater part of that sum was expended when the peasantry of Southern Russia did illegally what now the Czar and his advisers do legally; at least, according to Russian ideas of law and justice. After all claims had been satisfied a good balance remained in the hands of the committee, and it was resolved, and very wisely, too, to retain the money and not to discharge the committee, for no one knew how soon the Jews of Russia might again find themselves in the throes of persecution. Unfortunately recent events have shown that those fears were only too well founded. All along through the present crisis the

committee has done yeoman service. It has not only obtained reliable information on the exact state of Russian persecution, and spread that information through all English speaking countries, but, what is more than that, it has carefully and discriminatingly disbursed its funds in enabling Jewish refugees to proceed to other countries, and on their arrival there to start life with a fair chance of success. But now the committee's resources are very nearly exhausted, and hence the appeal for *practical* sympathy—or, in plain words, money.

It should be distinctly understood that Baron Hirsch's colonisation scheme has nothing to do with the Russo-Jewish Committee. Nor is it possible that the one may overlap the other. The Baron's scheme is no doubt a grand one, and his munificence in devoting £2,000,000 towards its realisation stands alone in Jewish history. But it is a scheme that cannot and will not meet present wants. Even if successful beyond the most sanguine expectations, its fruits can only be seen years hence. The Baron has emphatically warned his co-religionists in Russia not to emigrate until he is ready for them. And even then he can receive but a small proportion of the Russian Jews, and of them only those that are fit for colonising purposes. In spite of this warning, and compelled by the ever-increasing severity of the Russian Government, thousands are from month to month starting in search for new homes. It is to these, as well as to those who are left behind, old, poor, decrepit and miserable, that assistance will have to be given. During the months of July and August no less than 23,000 fugitives passed through Berlin alone, all of whom, we may be sure, required more or less aid in being forwarded to their destination. As a matter of fact, the Russo-Jewish Committee, not wishing to leave the whole burden to the Jews of other countries, only lately remitted £5000 to the Berlin Central Committee to pay for passages beyond the sea, while, as our London correspondent tells us, Berlin has, during the last few months, spent more than ten times that sum for the like object.

For a commencement, the committee's appeal has been most liberally responded to, and it is to be hoped that for so deserving and so pressing an object no one will fail to do all that lies in his power. As yet we Australian Jews have not been asked to join in the movement. But would it not be a graceful act if, without waiting to be asked, we took the matter up of our own accord? The way is paved; the horrors of Russian barbarity are daily brought under our notice. It requires but a few earnest men in every city inhabited by Jews—men willing to work—and we feel assured that Australia's offering will not be unworthy of Australians.

On Sunday next the subscribers to the Melbourne Jewish Philanthropic Society will be asked to give their consent to a new plan for the working of the society. We do not think there can or will be much objection to the scheme put forward by the committee. From year to year the work of the society has increased, and those that are able to look ahead will agree that there is little prospect of its diminishing in the immediate future. If formerly a monthly meeting was sufficient, it is now found that from one month to another the business has so much accumulated that it can hardly be attended to in an ordinary evening. Moreover, new arrivals in indigent circumstances are far more numerous now than they used to be in former years, and they have to be assisted either with money or practical advice, and that without the least delay. It is necessary that there should be a recognised place, an office, where those people and others requiring assistance should be able to go at stated times in order to meet the hon. officers of the society and place their case before them. To send them to the private office of either the president or the treasurer is as unfair to these gentlemen as it must be repugnant to the feelings of many, and the more deserving classes, of the applicants. It may be urged that the new scheme involves larger expense, which the society is scarcely in a position to bear. But it is to be remembered that the working expenses of the society have hitherto been exceptionally low, amounting to barely 2 per cent. of the income, and it is not to be expected that this will always be the case. As under the proposed system the Relief Committee will meet twice a week, and will have power to grant relief up to £5 in any particular case, temporary relief need but seldom be given, and it is quite possible that in this way a substantial saving may be effected.

WE publish to-day large extracts from "Darkest Russia," with the special object of showing our readers the exact state of affairs in Russia. Considering the appeal that is about to be made to the Jews of Australia in aid of their co-religionists, it is necessary that our people here should be in possession of the fullest particulars concerning the suffering endured by the hapless victims of Russian intolerance. There have been many persecutions in the history of the Jews, but very few that will, in severity, ruthlessness and tyranny, come up to the present one. It is, therefore, no ordinary calamity that is about to be made. It is no ordinary calamity that has befallen a large body of our people. It will be necessary that every one, the richest as the poorest, should open their hearts and purses to the fullest extent. Very few in these colonies are so poor that they could not give something; and that trifle may, perhaps, be the means of saving life or of placing an innocent sufferer in the position to reach a country where he is able to live and breathe God's air to his fellow men.

#### NOTES AND NEWS.

IN consequence of our next publication day falling upon a public holiday we shall have to go a day earlier to press. All communications intended for that issue must reach us either on Tuesday or by the first delivery on Wednesday.

MR. M. GOTTHELF, J.P., an ex-President and prominent member of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, has been on a visit to Melbourne.

THE Rev. J. M. Goldreich, of Ballarat, paid a flying visit to this city, mainly for the purpose of attending an important meeting of the *Beth Din*.



In giving the Annual Juvenile Fancy Dress Ball to their pupils both the Misses Hyams and Mrs. Green very kindly remembered the wants of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society. This deserving institution is to receive a portion of the proceeds from the admission fees.

At their meeting held on Tuesday last the *Beth Din* resolved to grant the application of Mr. Maddox to supply the Jews of Fitzroy and neighbourhood with *Kosher* meat, and also that of Mr. Freadman to act as *Shouchat* for this purpose, provided that a respectable number of Jewish families in that district present a requisition asking for the appointment, to be made, and provided also that both Mr. Maddox and Mr. Freadman place themselves under the control of the *Beth Din*.

Our esteemed contributor מרדכי בן מיכאל who, some time ago, favoured us with two articles on "The Study of Hebrew," has received the following communication from the Rev. the Chief Rabbi:—"London, 8th November, 5652.—My dear Sir,—Pressure of work has prevented me from acknowledging ere this your note and

On Wednesday, the 9th December, the marriage of Mr. Reuben Hallenstein and Miss Lucie Michaelis was celebrated at the residence of the bride's parents, "Linden," Acland-street, St. Kilda, the Rev. E. Blaubaum being the officiating minister. The bride, who was given away by her father, Mr. M. Michaelis, wore a very handsome costume of white corded silk, trimmed with Limerick point lace and silk embroidery, with veil and wreath of orange blossom to match. She was attended by six bridesmaids, two of them (the Misses May and Alice Michaelis) being the sisters of the bride and the remaining four (the Misses Brighty and Sissie Hart, and Florence and Clara Isaacs) her nieces. All these young ladies looked charming in white muslin dresses, some of which were after the "Kate Greenaway" style; they wore either pearl swallow or moonstone brooches, which were the gift of the bridegroom, as were also the pretty flower baskets which they carried. The ceremony was performed in the drawingroom, which was profusely decorated with flowers, amongst which several very pretty floral emblems, such as a marriage bell and a horseshoe, were particularly noticeable. The invited guests, though confined to the relatives and oldest friends of the family, were nevertheless pretty numerous, and after the ceremony they adjourned to the spacious diningroom to partake of choice refreshments. The toast of "The Bride and Bridegroom" having been proposed in eulogistic terms by Mr. Isaac Jacobs, and briefly responded to by the bridegroom, the young couple started on their honeymoon, accompanied by the best wishes of a large circle of relatives and friends. Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Hallenstein were the recipients of a large number of handsome and costly presents, as well as of many congratulatory telegrams from absent members and friends of the family. It is also noteworthy that on the same day, and almost at the same hour, Mr. Hallenstein's sister, Miss Alice Hallenstein, was united in wedlock at Hamburg, Germany, to Dr. Wallach, an eminent member of the Prussian Bar.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### AUSTRALIAN JUDAISM IN THE MATRIX OF WORLD HISTORY: A REVIEW ARTICLE

*Evan M. Zuesse*

When Australian scholars in Jewish Studies first heard that W.D. and Hilary Rubinstein were co-authoring a 'thematic history' of Australian Jewry, they knew that this effort, when published, would not only crown the voluminous researches of the Rubinsteins in this field, but also the extraordinary spate of books dealing with the history of Australian Jewry which have appeared in just the past few years. Certainly no reader of this *Journal* needs to be told of the remarkable qualifications or accomplishments of this formidable couple.

But *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1991), the two-volume, 1200-page result of Hilary and Bill Rubinstein's work, still astonishes. The impact is due to a number of factors: the sheer intelligence of the two authors; the use of bold theoretical constructs; the extensive research and comprehensive scope of the work, and the remarkable industry that brought it all off. The footnotes and bibliography suggest that very few historical resources indeed have escaped their net. The authors, in addition, have been involved at a leadership level in Australian Jewish life, and this intimate knowledge has obviously made a major contribution to the excellence particularly of Bill Rubinstein's treatment of post-World War Two Australian Jewry. The end result of all of these factors is a masterful summary of Australian Jewish history and contemporary affairs, as seen from the end of the twentieth century. It will remain a fundamental resource and point of departure for further research well into the next century. It is also a telling portrait of Australian society, as seen from the special perspective of Australia's Jews. As such it should be an important part of the library of any student of Australian culture.

It is evident that Australian Jewry has reached a certain 'weight' and degree of maturity that has enabled it to look back at its entire experience and take stock as never before. This work is an important document evidencing this maturation and summing-up. The number of other historical surveys that have appeared in recent years suggests the same thing. For the topic of Australian Jewish history has already been given a briefer treatment in Hilary Rubinstein's *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), and has been ably summarised in the straightforward factual narrative of Suzanne Rutland's *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: William Collins, 1988). These works are not rendered obsolete by our latest history. Far from it: their worth is made even more evident; this would even seem to have been the intention of the Rubinsteins, for their latest work neatly complements the earlier ones. Hilary Rubinstein's *Chosen* will due to its size no doubt remain the chief analytical survey consulted by ordinary readers and students, and Suzanne Rutland's *Edge of the Diaspora* while

eschewing analytical theory continues to impress the reader with its limpid clarity, cautious and factual approach and succinct comprehensiveness; it will remain a standard historical work. Although corrected in some details by the Rubinstein's more analytical and thematic study, in a number of important points its interpretations may for some readers remain the more persuasive. There is also greater weight and balance given the Sydney part in Australian Jewish history in the Rutland book. But *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History* complements those earlier surveys, and rounds them off, by providing a far more detailed and systematic treatment of crucial processes that have shaped modern Australian Jewry. Its depth, completeness and interpretative categories will also make the Jewish experience in this country of interest and accessible as never before to scholars in modern Jewish history outside Australia, and to general students in Australian Studies.

Hilary Rubinstein's task to cover the entire history of the Australian Jewish community from 1788 to 1945 in Volume One was a daunting one, especially since the plan of both authors was to describe in their joint effort the history not only of every major event, but also of every significant Jewish community in Australia, every congregation, every important organisation, and even every notable Jew. Volume Two, written by Bill Rubinstein, had merely 45 years to cover, from the end of World War Two to the present, allowing for a more connected narrative. As a result, volume one in particular sometimes conveys the feeling of encyclopaedic density, and one feels that despite the interestingly written lengthy sections on such topics as the first Jewish pioneers in Australia, the achievements and role of Jewish women, the Australian attitude to Jewish immigration in the 1890s and even the 1930s, the controversy over Zionism involving Sir Isaac Isaacs, and so on, this is a work more likely to be used for reference than for leisurely connected reading. Yet the final chapters in volume one, like the final ones in volume two written by Bill Rubinstein, are the best narrative pieces in the volume. Both volumes' last chapters deal with similar topics or themes, the Jewish community's response to anti-Semitism, and the rise and flowering of Zionism. These chapters are often quite absorbing, and are major contributions to the understanding of their subject.

Another special feature of this history is its chapters on Jewish achievement and achievers in all secular fields, constituting a stunning review of what Australia and its Jews have gained from their symbiosis. No comparable account and analysis of Jewish achievement in Australia can be found anywhere else. As might be expected from Bill Rubinstein, whose speciality is socio-economic history, the analysis of Jewish economic and social contributions is especially insightful and thorough. His point (vol. 2, p. 296) that Jews seem quite regularly to number about 5% of the elite ranks of every field of major endeavour, although Jews are only around 0.5% of the Australian population, indicates how significant that contribution has been (although he points out that there have been few giants amongst this Jewish elite, and only in music has their contribution fundamentally changed Australian society: *ibid.*, p. 341).

Although there are important contributions to the understanding of all areas of Australian Jewish history, and a number of distinctive resolutions of specific questions (e.g. Hilary Rubinstein offers a new assessment of the numbers of Jewish convicts in the First Fleet, and both authors devote a great deal of attention to demography — a contentious area where it is evident there is still much left to be done — and to the Australian government's policies regarding Jewish refugees just before and after World War Two), it is to the presentation of basic cultural and religious trends, including in this the discussion of Jewish-gentile relations, that I, as

an historian of religion and of Judaism, would like to direct my comments in what follows.

There is a noticeable tendency to treat the history of Australia Judaism as above all a social history; often, the account of religious matters centres on congregations and periods of rabbinic tenure. There results a quite full and valuable account of all significant Jewish congregations throughout Australia (cf. vol. 1, pp. 235–88; vol. 2, pp. 155–210), but deeper currents in the evolution of Jewish religion in Australia are less well covered. This is not a problem with this history alone; most histories of local or national Jewish communities tend to ignore these deeper cultural currents. Perhaps this is understandable, since a more probing analysis would oblige us to consider the entire process of modernisation amongst not only the Jews, but also amongst non-Jews, in the last two centuries in the Western world. For example, we are obliged to ask basic questions about the nature of civic life and the tacit contracts of minority groups within the majority, in the liberal democracies. We must also consider the impact all of this has had on Jewish religious experience and religious movements. These questions may be difficult ones, yet they go to the heart of the Australian Jewish experience.

In significant part, we can approach these issues through considering anew a topic richly dealt with in these volumes: Jewish-gentile relations. Obviously this topic, much discussed in this history in terms of Australian attitudes to Jewish immigration and especially to Jewish refugees from Europe, the image of the Jews in the Australian press, and so on, is a crucial one, and all the more so since the Australian Jewish community has been fundamentally reshaped by the post-War refugee immigration. Readers of this *Journal* will be well aware of the debate over recent years on whether or not the Australian government implemented an anti-Semitic policy against Jewish refugees. The Rubinstein's have been prominently involved in that debate, and it will come therefore as no surprise to discover that these volumes contain the most up-to-date and integrated discussion of these issues available at present, and that they exemplify the generous tendency of the Rubinstein's to exonerate both the Australian people in general and the Australian government from the 1930s to the 1950s from the serious charge of anti-Semitism. This generous and tactful tendency comes out so consistently, and in response to such a variety of contrary evidences, in fact, that it sometimes takes on the appearance of special pleading. Not only is much made of Australian philo-Semitism, quite rightly of course, for it has had a significant impact on the Australian Jewish experience, but whenever excuses can be made for seemingly anti-Semitic activities, they are made. Sometimes, our attention is drawn to very sensible explanations for outwardly anti-Semitic behaviour, showing that behaviour to be actually not anti-Semitic at all, or to a lesser degree than it seems to be. But on other occasions the explanations seem too ingenious, and do not persuade.

The very fact that there has been an intense debate about these issues indicates that they are not simple ones. Anti-Semitism is a very complex phenomenon. Historically, outbursts of anti-Semitism have often had very little to do with Jews or their actual behaviour, but very much to do with underlying social-structural tendencies in the specific culture. The recent phenomenon of Japanese anti-Semitism is a good instance of this. In Western culture in the nineteenth century, the whole thrust of liberal democratic ideology was to affirm the right of everyone *to be the same*: the right of everyone present in this country, for example, to be fully and legally Australian — if they were lucky enough to be white and Anglo-Saxon/Celtic. But to receive that right, Australia like all Western societies at the time insisted

on the relinquishment of what made people different, and in particular the relinquishment of separatist group affiliations. As the different people *par excellence*, the classical minority 'Other' for Western Christian society, the Jews have from the Enlightenment period on been under particularly severe pressure to conform and to dissolve all group separatisms. Although this has been the fruit of a general socio-political modernising dynamic (seeking a new unified national identity and rejecting 'otherness') that at hase has nothing specially to do with Jews and that appears for example, in contemporary Third World societies affecting their own minority groups, the result of those structural pressures has been anti-Semitic for Jews as a distinct group, even in their tacit and benign expressions. And often enough, given especially that Christian society was grounded on anti-Semitic myths, this hostility to Jews and Judaism has been explicit.

In a structural sense, then, Australian society, with its modernising pressure to conform, was at least tacitly anti-Semitic. This was heightened by its founding religious texts (which were, of course, the classic Christian sources), and emphasised in its literature (i.e., the English literature, from Chaucer through Shakespeare to Dickens, etc., which was and still is part of the basic education of Australian children), which were often explicitly anti-Semitic. However, the conformity demanded of groups was interwoven with a very strong liberal egalitarian ethic in Australia, endorsing individual rights and allowing Jews to be freely accepted as individuals. This strongly emphasised national ethic was one of the outstanding positive aspects of being Jewish in Australia that differentiated that frontier society even from British society. For Jews this meant that they could truly do well and even be generally accepted as individuals if the special 'stigmatising' or otherwise isolationist traits of Jewish group identity were avoided, which in turn meant that that community's demands on its members had to be moderate. In the absence of the elaborate, strongly marked class system and exclusivism of British society, it was less permissible to create self-enclosed 'Jewish' communities. As a consequence, Jews very seldom gave their distinctiveness or group identity great salience during the first century and more of Australia's modern history. From this arose the chief traits of the 'Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy' that for our authors took so important a role in Australian Jewish history. The tendency of this Orthodoxy to transform Jewish observance into an undemanding, ritualistic and formally conservative faith-commitment allowing extensive autonomy to the secular sphere and to the individual was in harmony with this environment, and was an entirely rational response to it: Australian Judaism by this was made into a Victorian Age's moderate Jewish Anglicanism, and so the religion could survive with some dignity, although of course not truly flourish.

There is a parallel here to the response of German Jewry to its own basically similar dilemma during the same decades, though in a much more intensive and hostile, romantically nationalistic and religious gentile environment: German neo-Orthodoxy may be said to be a basically conformist but still adamantly Jewish version of Lutheran-Catholic German religiosity: ideologically and ritualistically conservative, enthusiastically romantic and symbolical, and of course deeply patriotic (and so fearful of double loyalty charges that it was anti-Zionist). It was not accidental that neo-Orthodoxy was adopted in a fittingly moderate form by so many in Australia's Anglo-Jewish circles — moderate, to permit more individual informal intercourse with general society than was possible in Germany. (Interestingly, in England itself, where Jews were more excluded from general social intercourse than in Australia, neo-Orthodoxy was more 'observant', i.e., more

emphatically romantic, symbolical, ethnic and institutionally separatist, bringing it closer to the German instance).

As such a religious grouping within liberal Australia, of course, the Australian Jewish community won certain tacitly granted rights, including that of being able to plead its case publicly, and to protest against blatantly anti-Semitic provocations. For those provocations did occasionally erupt even in this easy-going and generally fair-minded country against its inoffensive Jewish community, with grotesque caricatures in the Press, public controversies and, more rarely, no doubt, private humiliations. And, most importantly of all, the anti-Semitic orientation of so much of English literature, read by schoolchildren, reproduced in political cartoons and enacted on the stage for adults, and, even worse, violently anti-Semitic events elsewhere in the world, put the Jews of Australia on notice that their earnest conformity was always the necessary price to pay to have tranquility in Australia. The effusive nature of the patriotic protestations of Australian Jewish community leaders throughout the nineteenth century (of which Hilary Rubinstein gives instances in passing in her narrative) tell their own story. So does the tendency for that community to flee from the word 'Jew' (itself stressed in preference to 'Kike' or 'Sheeny', but still highly derogative even in the latest Oxford Dictionary) and to term themselves 'Hebrew' congregations or 'Israelites'. Every minority people in the modern period has demonstrated their sense of oppression and victimisation by their flight to new official names. The more new names, we may say, the more evidence of discrimination. The 'Afro-Americans' were only recently 'American Blacks', which was a replacement for 'Negroes', itself a term of dignity to replace 'coloured folk', or, even worse, 'Niggers'.

The implication of Australia and Australian Jewry in the general world-wide anti-Semitism of the nineteenth century, especially towards the end of that century, is made particularly clear in the incident that forced even the optimistic Reverend Blaubaum, the leader of his generation of Australian Jewry, to tone down his stalwart anti-defamation activities (see Hilary Rubinstein's account, Vol. 1, pp. 476-479, and note her welcome but too rare recognition in passing of the influence of the international climate on Australian Jewry's self-image, *ibid.*, p. 484). The formerly tacit permission given Jewish community leaders to protest anti-Semitic provocations was evidently not after all open-ended nor permanent, but only given on sufferance. The wild pogroms of Russia from 1881 on had made world news, and helped to make anti-Semitism 'modern' again. Various slurs to the Australian Jewish community followed over the next decade. Then in 1891 it was announced that Baron de Hirsch was ready to help finance massive Russian Jewish resettlement to Australia. Such a public outburst of extreme anti-Semitism met this rumour that even the protest of Jewish leaders in Australia served only to prolong the clamour and the slander, as Rev. Blaubaum came ruefully to realise (*ibid.*, p. 478). From this time on for fully two generations, we are told by Hilary Rubinstein, Australian Jewish leaders understood that they were well-advised to keep their heads down, not to respond strongly nor publicly to anti-Semitic incidents, but rather to work diplomatically behind the scenes to lessen the negative impact of these incidents. For the events of 1891 were not isolated. The last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first few decades of our own twentieth century saw a constant increase in anti-Semitic and generally racist ideologies throughout the Western world and not just in Australia; this international climate cannot be ignored in considering the Australian Jewish community and its own responses. The intensity and loud protestations of loyalty to a non-Jewish world with which a Sir Isaac Isaacs



can press the argument against Zionism, his insistence that it arouses dual loyalties in Jews and defames the patriotism of all true Jewish Australians, can only be seen against the backdrop of growing up in this threatening world environment (Hilary Rubinstein presents a vivid and detailed account of the controversy over Zionism precipitated by Sir Isaac Isaacs, vol. 1, pp. 561f., 567–80).

All of this indicates far more anti-Semitism in Australia than our authors are sometimes willing to grant. This anti-Semitism did not impede individual Jews from rising to the very top of Australian society, it is true, and this indicates precisely the limitations and the complexities of Australian anti-Semitism. But it does not signify its absence, either. We have already seen that the very structure of a society can have anti-Semitic implications, even if this is not explicit nor emphasised. This is one major reason why the incidence and explicit intensity of anti-Semitism has always been a barometer of deeper socio-political currents in Western society. Explicit anti-Semitism is seldom equally present on every level of a society, or in every setting; the specific character of a culture is indicated, among other things, by such variations, and we can even say that a culture can be strongly anti-Semitic, neutral, and philo-Semitic at the same time, in different ways or contexts. A more complex analysis is needed, therefore, to understand the specific kind of response to Jews that was characteristic of Australian society at a particular time and place.

Much the same kind of evaluation can be given of the many blatantly hostile bureaucratic impediments put in the way of Jewish refugee immigration to Australia before and after World War Two. That some bureaucrats, and many Australians, were anti-Semitic, seems evident from the material presented even in the accounts by Hilary Rubinstein and Bill Rubinstein (and particularly admitted by the latter, e.g., Vol. 2, p. 57). That this was not a universal tendency is also evident, from the same accounts. The optimistic evaluation given these matters by the Rubinsteins is in any case consistent with the positive and constructive attitudes of the authors about many aspects of Australian Jewish history.

It is striking that in both volumes the most coherently unified and effective chapters are the last ones dealing with anti-Semitism and Zionism. (This remains so, despite the comments I have made above about theoretical perspectives). The discussion by Hilary Rubinstein on 'Anti-Semitism, Philo-Semitism and the Image of the Jews in Australia, 1788–1945' (Vol. 1, pp. 471–528), is a valuable contribution to this subject, in which she has done pioneering work. The chapter by W.D. Rubinstein dealing with 'Anti-Semitism and Communal Relations since 1945' (the longest chapter in Vol 2, pp. 379–500) ought to be required reading for anyone interested in ethnic affairs in Australia today, and particularly for all Jews working in the area of communal relations (even those, I dare to say, outside Australia). Judicious, extraordinarily well-informed, and despite its length a gripping read, it is by far the best treatment of the topic I have found anywhere. And the chapter that follows on 'Zionism in Post-war Australia' (Vol. 2, pp. 501–574) is worthy to be considered a major discussion of Zionism in contemporary Diaspora Jewry generally. Unlike the treatment of some other topics, it proceeds with full awareness of the contextual international environment for Jews and non-Jews in Australia.

Not only sociologically, but even especially in terms of explicitly religious aspects of Australian Jewish culture, as the above discussion has made clear, more attention to the influence of general international events and movements on Australian Jewry would have illuminated the account. 'Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy', as has already been pointed out, is not accidentally very similar in basic ways to the 'neo-Ortho-

doxy' developed by German Jewry around the same time. Similarly, it would have been helpful to have definitions and the wider Jewish religious setting for the various more recent types of Orthodoxy that Bill Rubinstein refers to in passing in his chapter on 'Australian Judaism since 1945'. It is confusing to read, for example, that the Melbourne Mizrahi Synagogue 'has always been very Orthodox in its practice — indeed, close to being Strictly Orthodox — but supports the State of Israel as part of its *raison d'être*, in contrast to other strands of Orthodox Judaism . . .' (Vol. 2, p. 169). It is evident that 'Strictly Orthodox' has an almost technically precise meaning for the author, although clarifications are not given; this group is obviously not to be equated with the 'very Orthodox', and does not necessarily support the State of Israel (note the 'but' in the above quote). Yet the 'Strictly Orthodox', as appears from other usages, do not include the *Hasidim* (who are apparently the 'Ultra Orthodox'), and would seem to stem from the *Mitnagdim* of eastern European Jewry. So we have to do with the occasionally overlapping 'very Orthodox', the 'Strictly Orthodox', 'mainstream Orthodoxy', 'new Orthodoxy', and the 'Ultra-Orthodox', in addition to the persisting 'Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy' of the 1940s. Almost all of these categories, when further probed, have their roots in Jewish movements outside Australia, and may be said to be varying responses to the challenges of modernity and secularism. By page 218, these various terms seem to have been reduced by Bill Rubinstein to only two chief kinds of contemporary Orthodoxy: 'mainstream Orthodoxy' which wishes to integrate non-Jewish culture into their Judaism, and the 'Strictly Orthodox' who make as little accommodation as possible to secular culture. These two have been contesting together for dominance in Australian Judaism. As Bill Rubinstein makes clear, stricter observance of Orthodox Judaism is characteristic of the entire post-World War Two generation in Australia, and this, indeed, has largely supplanted the old more relaxed Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy that formerly governed Australian Jewry. (Yet not all the data offered to support this thesis is equally convincing: affiliation with a synagogue does not necessarily indicate actual practice; as with recent controversy over the perhaps too optimistic treatment of intermarriage rates in these volumes, there may also be too much made of the Orthodoxy of Australian Jewry).

According to Bill Rubinstein, this development of a more vigorous Orthodoxy has gone along with a shift in the orientation of Australian Jewry from a 'universalistic', 'outward-looking' involvement in general social issues to a more 'inward-looking' attitude. This new focus is exemplified above all by the strong Zionism of the post-Holocaust Australian Jewish community. The rather evaluative terms can be contested. No doubt the post-War Jewish community has, as a new and burgeoning community, poured most of its efforts into creating its own structures, and it is unusually given over to Orthodox affiliation, but the terms chosen to express this valid point are, I believe, rhetorically excessive and misleading, and perhaps intended to be controversial.

For example, was in fact the older 'Anglo-Jewish Orthodoxy' really especially universalistic? Was it not rather very passive in social ethics, and non-universalistic, and insofar as its ideology embraced non-Jews intensely patriotic and nationalistic? Loyalty to Australia and the British Empire certainly does not qualify as universalism. It is hard to see any particular instance from this two-volume history where the Australian Jewish community as a community went out on a limb on behalf of universalistic causes or challenged any Australian institutional or nationalistic consensus.

Indeed, to expect 'universalism' of the community as such, and of its official

leaders, is to expect an activism in general society that is more the responsibility of individual Jews; the allotted task of community leaders is surely to sustain and maintain the community. It would seem in any case (from the chapters on Jewish achievers in Australia) that there are already plenty of Australian Jews involved in 'universal' causes. There is a tendency in these volumes, moreover, to associate 'universalism' with left-wing ideologies; one may perhaps be permitted to doubt that left-wing ideologists are necessarily more 'universalistic' than right-wing thinkers. Furthermore, traditional Judaism has at least as much right to formulate its *own* definition of universalism as any of those secular ideologies, and it is not evident that contemporary Australian Jewry fails by these standards. Quite apart from the universalism of Jewish prayers, teachings, and practices, and the activities of individual Jews, one must acknowledge, for example, the general community's support for non-Jewish charitable institutions.

Finally, and most importantly of all, one of the paradoxes of modern Jewish political activism is that it has been most universalistic in effect when it has been most particularistic in focus. To see this, however, it is necessary to expand our awareness of Australian Jewish activism to the international sphere. It has been precisely when not only Australian Jewry but Western Jewry in general most vigorously agitated for freedom for Soviet Jewry that they had the most universalistic, morally purifying and significant influence on the foreign policies of such countries as Australia and the United States (and on the internal policies of the Soviet Union!). This universalistic influence of Australian Jewry is far greater than any possessed by earlier 'Anglo-Jewry' as a group. The Jewish experience of the Holocaust has been one of the most universalistically significant occurrences of the modern age, as well, and Jewish pressure for war crimes trials has helped to sensitise the entire world to the moral significance of genocide.

The Jewish community's insistence on 'Jewish pride' (even to the *chutzpadik* point in the United States of assuming a complete symbolic equality with Catholicism and Protestantism in the 'religions of America') has been an important part of the last few decades' emphasis on what has been called in the U.S. the 'salad bowl' ideology of ethnic-religious diversity, and the 'multi-culturalism' of Australia. Zionism itself was from the start not merely a particularistic 'national' movement, but also a bold attempt to actualise universalistic ideals — one of the boldest and, despite all problems, I would say one of the most successful of such attempts in modern history. Zionism has also had an enormous impact on general world cultures, and, for example, its *kibbutz* ideals have even had impact on recent Australian experiments in communal living (something overlooked in the review of contemporary Australian Zionism by Bill Rubinstein). Many Zionists are quite proud of this universal significance of their efforts, despite the tendency of the media and Arabists to defame their movement. All in all, and from many perspectives, it is quite simply no longer so easy to say where particularism ends and universalism begins, in the new socio-political reality of advanced democracies. The distinctly different cultural environment in this generation throughout the Western world must be underlined, in contra-distinction to the situation up to the early 1960s. In this epochal new phase of the Western social system, not the 'right to be the same' is the goal, but the 'right to be different'. Not only post-Holocaust Jewish affirmations, but also Afro-American, Aboriginal, and general post-colonial self-assertiveness have played an enormous role in opening up modern societies to a greater universalism, tolerance and international awareness than they ever had before.

In turn, the new internationally endorsed multi-culturalism has spurred and nurtured the so-called 'inward-looking' quality of the Australian Jewish community. In effect, 'particularism' itself enacts a more general universalistic ethos in society, an ethos felt by all groups as legitimating and even demanding that sub-cultural groups affirm their distinct identities. All sub-cultures in the Western advanced democracies are doing this, including even the non-religious ones; we certainly see these tendencies as well in the Jewish communities of the United States, Britain, France, and elsewhere. No explanation of the Australian Jewish community's participation in these universal trends can be complete that tries to explain the Australian Jewish self-affirmations as due chiefly or solely to local influences. For all these and other reasons, I think the language used to describe the Jewish community's present orientation ('non-universalistic', 'inward-looking'), while pointing to some central realities, is not especially accurate and needs re-thinking.

Yet local factors were certainly also potent. As Bill Rubinstein reveals, in one of the most significant of his analyses, a chief factor contributing to the Jewish revivalistic attitude we have discussed is the educational system established in the Australian Jewish community. That system is nominated as probably the single most important factor in creating and sustaining the present strongly Jewish-affirmative community in Australia, making it distinctive even in terms of Western Jewish communities. This evaluation of the importance of Jewish education goes so far that Benzion Patkin, the principal founder of the Jewish day school movement in Australia, is termed by Bill Rubinstein 'the most important and influential Australian Jewish leader of the twentieth century, the man who also did more than anyone else to mould the shape the community would take for generations to come' (Vol. 2, p. 214). This certainly gives a new perspective on Australian Jewish history, so far as I am aware, yet the justice of the evaluation must be admitted. It was not easy for Patkin and others to create the day school movement, and W.D. Rubinstein shows that there was nothing inevitable about it. Patkin worked toward this goal well before the current legitimacy of 'multi-culturalism' existed. Perhaps due to that pioneering work by Patkin, as Bill Rubinstein points out, no other Diaspora community today has such a high proportion of its children in Jewish day schools, and this factor alone helps to account probably more than any other for the distinctive character of Australian Jewry: *very* strongly Orthodox, Zionist and 'Jewish' in its affirmations. The tendencies of other Diaspora communities have been exaggerated and unusually triumphant here in Australia, and just for that reason the instance of Australian Jewry should be of deep interest to scholars in Jewish Studies everywhere. The role of Benzion Patkin and the establishment of a dynamic Jewish day-school system in Australia are key parts of the special story of Australian Jewry, parts told better in both volumes of his history than anywhere else.

To conclude, the two magnificent volumes by Hilary Rubinstein and Bill Rubinstein on *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, will no doubt be regarded in later generations of our community as marking and memorialising the 'coming-of-age' of Australian Jewry. This historical account is itself an important document in Australian Jewish history, and its intensely reflective commitment to that community stands both as a testimony to that community, and to its two remarkable authors. May they go from strength to strength.

## LETTERS FROM AUSTRALIA 1854-1858

*Miska Hauser; ed. by Colin Roderick and Hugh Anderson (Sydney: Red Rooster Press, 1988; 106p., port. [frontis.])*

Born in Vienna of Jewish parents — unfortunately, the introduction to the book does not make it clear whether he was literally 'baptised' — Miska Hauser was a professional violinist who made a prolonged tour of New South Wales, Victoria and (what became) Queensland in the 1850s. He was clearly a gifted writer and a shrewd observer of people and events: it is difficult to suggest a set of published contemporary records which give a livelier or more graphic account of goldrush Australia than these remarkable letters, felicitously translated by Colin Roderick from the originals, which appeared in various Australian newspapers preserved in the National Library, Vienna.

Hauser was apparently the first overseas violinist to tour the Australian colonies, and his memoirs are a valuable if snippet-like source of information into the early musical scene here. The dancer Lola Montez is only one of a dazzling array of entertainers who romp across its pages. But the letters also provide a most interesting glimpse into the social life and manners of the 1850s: we meet old settlers, new chums, genteel ladies, brazen coquettes and bounders of all kinds. Some of the vignettes are especially memorable, none more so than Australia's very first school for aboriginal boys and girls, at Goulburn, where the sedately clad pupils amazed the visitor with their (rote-like) knowledge of classical and European history.

We also encounter some Jews. In Sydney, we are told, they were 'mostly from Germany . . .' but we must be cautious about accepting this statement at face value. It is probable that, to an Austrian, the German-speaking Jews were conspicuous while the English Jews remained unnoticed. In Melbourne, 'from among the merchants and dealers of every possible nationality came the voices of many German and English Jews, who have their second-hand and old-clothes shops here, as in every part of the world'. They stand 'twenty or thirty in a row, or up on tree-stumps and barrels, and don't let a single passerby move on without inviting him with true Oriental hospitality into their huts'. All the while they yelled 'tirelessly with fabulous volubility, while feet, hands, arms and heads move in accordance with their words'. And there was (in Sydney) the flamboyant musical impresario 'Sir James Cohen' of New Orleans, 'a short fat little fellow with a rascally face' who in a rare show of veracity confessed to being plain Jakob Kohn of Frankfurt!

Ill-served by its lack of an index, this book is a fascinating social document. It deserves to be better known.

## WALLS OF WIRE: TATURA, RUSHWORTH, MURCHISON

*Joyce Hammond (Rushworth, Vic.: The Author, 1990; 210pp., illus., bibliog.)*

Tatura is a venue well-known in the annals of Australian Jewry as the site of an internment camp to which the 'Dunera Boys' were sent. In this book we meet the Dunera internees, and also other aliens — Germans, Italians, Japanese and Taiwanese — who were detained as internees and prisoners of war in country Victoria during World War Two, as well as some of those who guarded them and some who worked to alleviate their plight.

The book is a sensitively written social history, packed with human interest, and

the narrative is enriched by a wide range of photographs and other pictorial matter, including sketches made by detainees during their incarceration. This entire story is overdue in the telling, and the author, Joyce Hammond, has done so magnificently, and has chosen the illustrative material felicitously. It is a worthy addition to the history of wartime Australia.

## AUSTRIANS AND AUSTRALIA

*Marlene J. Norst and Johanna McBride (Potts Point, N.S.W: Athena Press, 1988, 207p., illus.)*

**P**ublished in the Bicentennial year, this book traces Austrian settlement in Australia from the beginning of European settlement. The first Austrian to set foot on these shores was evidently Vienna-born Bernard Walford, a Jewish convict whose story has been more fully told by Levi and Bergman in *Australian Genesis*.

Since Walford's arrival, many more Austrians, Jewish and gentile, have settled here, or established some connection. From our point of view, the chapters in the book which deal with refugees from Nazism, and with post-War immigrants, are of especial relevance. Of course, not all the refugees were practising Jews, or Jews according to *Halachah*, and in their listing of a representative sample of refugees who have contributed to Australian society in various fields of endeavour, the authors make no distinction.

Despite this, the book provides a valuable record of the refugee contribution, and many of the achievers cited are or were certainly Jewish. Well-known names such as Harry Seidler and Louis Kahan sit alongside lesser-known ones such as the photographer Margaret Michaelis-Sachs. Much of this section reads like a roll call and the treatment is uneven. Nevertheless, the book is a worthwhile addition to the refugee story in this country.

## TABLETS OF MEMORY: THE BENDIGO COHNS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

*Alan, Jack & Lawrence Cohn (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1990. xxii, 270pp., illus.)*

**T**his is the story of four Jewish brothers who arrived in Victoria from Denmark during the 1850s and the family — and business — they established. That business was the well-known brewing and soft-drink company in Bendigo: who has not heard of Cohn's Lager?

The book, which traces the lineage and fortunes of six generations of the Cohn family, includes names well-known in the colonial Jewish saga. It includes, more noticeably, countless non-Jewish ones, and provides an excellent insight into the high levels of intermarriage and the swift assimilation which could and did overtake many country-town pioneer Jewish families in this land. The book is an exhaustively researched and painstakingly detailed history, a worthy winner of this year's Alexander Henderson Award of the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies.

Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein



## PRINNY HILL

*Nicholas Vlahogiannis (Bookset Pty. Ltd.)*

## CAULFIELD HERITAGE

*Geulah Solomon (Caulfield Council; Four volumes; 600p; \$7 each; with container \$30; bound edition \$35)*

## ST KILDA: THE SHOW GOES ON

*Anne Longmire (Hudson Publications; 340p; \$39.95. Special three volume limited edition \$250)*

These three highly-recommended books give considerable insight into Jewry's settlement and contribution to local municipal and wider Australian life since last century.

While the emphasis in the three works is on non-Jewish life, Jews receive much space, their history, lifestyles and migrations between different Melbourne suburbs being recorded, the tendency being continuously towards south of the Yarra. Many Jews have moved from Carlton to St Kilda and on to Caulfield, which is one of Australia's largest Jewish populated suburbs. Others, however, moved out to Toorak and, more recently, to the Kew, Balwyn and Doncaster areas.

The majority of Jews who settled in Carlton in the 1920s came from Poland, the Ukraine and Russia. Their jobs varied from bricklaying and hawking to manufacturing and baking. European qualifications, such as in dentistry, were not accepted; new exams were necessary.

Of the arrivals, many wanted to move as soon as they could to St Kilda and neighbouring suburbs. There was even public comment in the media on the perceived differences between the north and south of the Yarra. In 1933, for instance, the *Jewish News* declared:

The community is still split into sections each of which eyes the other with suspicion. The north of the Yarra, in parts, has the utmost contempt for the south and its idiosyncrasies. The south, in many respects, is prepared to return the compliment.

Those who made the southward trek across the Yarra in the 1930s left behind a thriving suburb, where Yiddish and Hebrew were heard in the streets. The most popular Hebrew school was Stone's in Pitt Street, Carlton, started and run by the Stone brothers as a small and intimate institution. At the same time many Jewish youngsters attended the renowned Princes Hill State School, affectionately known as 'Prinny Hill'.

It was officially opened in September 1889 to cater for 300 pupils, although forecasts were that there would soon be an urgent need to accommodate five hundred. By 1902 extensions had in fact become necessary. In the mid-1930s, about one-third of Princes Hill's students were Jewish. This meant that on religious holidays the school was so emptied of many of its youngsters that Australian children, according to Vlahogiannis in his book on Prinny Hill, thought that all Jews in the world 'came' there.

The role of Carlton as an assembly point of Jewish immigration from the last century was strongly felt. This was most marked in the 1930s and again after 1945. This trend continued until the 1960s when Jews comprised 13.3 per cent of North Carlton's population, after which it decreased to 5.2 per cent by 1971.

Ethnic tensions were virtually non-existent at Prinny Hill. There was the occasional jibe of 'Jew boy' but it was said to have been more in affection than hate. When a teacher reprimanded a student for taunting a Jew, the boy was wont to reply, 'But, sir, I'm not being serious; I wouldn't hurt him; he's my best friend'.

Some former Prinny Hill Jewish students are businessmen Victor and Samuel Smorgon, writer-editor Sam Lipski, poet and author Lily Brett, actor John Bluthal, man of the arts Joseph Brown, and singer Annette Klooger. Non-Jewish students are almost a who's who of Australian life, including sports. The school has produced many champion footballers, especially for the local Carlton team. Nowadays its footballers play for other teams, including its suburban rival St Kilda.

And so to St Kilda.

Anne Longmire's fascinating *St Kilda: The Show Goes On*, takes up the St Kilda story where the two extensive earlier works written by John Butler Cooper ended in 1930. Unlike the thick, blue-covered earlier editions, this third volume is a highly modern aptly-illustrated 340-page production.

St Kilda and Jewry are synonymous. Jews were active in the area last century. By the 1890s there were about seventy Jewish families in the district. The initial services of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation were held in the local Town Hall in 1871, attracting 100 worshippers. But the area's Jewish story really came into its own in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, with highly-creative Jewish residents, particularly from Europe, who added elements of their own particular lifestyle to the broader Victorian and Australian *milieu*. They brought a special way of doing things, of being different, of daring to take risks others would frown on, and to do so with a charisma of their own. That was why so many Carlton Jews 'migrated', why they took that trip downtown, hoping to realise a dream in what might have seemed a *golden medina*. For, to make it in St Kilda was to be on the way up.

As the book shows, however, even in the 1930s, St Kilda was not without its problems, including the daily battle of numerous residents to survive. The distribution of wealth there was described 'as uneven as the Big Dipper', the poor numbering among them Jewish residents, many of whom couldn't afford their seat rentals at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. According to Longmire, many Jews were either leading secular lives or seeking a new religious emphasis. There was growing interest in the Temple Beth Israel which was steered by Rabbi Dr Sanger from the 1930s onwards for more than forty years, and which is now guided by John Levi, who is fostering relations between Jews and non-Jews.

While the St Kilda community was predominantly of British stock, a leavening of other groups gave it a slightly more exotic flavour than many other areas of Melbourne. The most numerically significant minority was the Jewish community. In the census of June 1933, it was estimated that there were 1217 women and 1173 men who were 'adherents of the Hebrew Religion in the City of St Kilda'. Many Jews, who practised their religion with pride, regarded this as the only part of their lives which differentiated them from others in a municipality which they had helped to shape.

The arrival of Jewish refugees in the late 1930s really brought substantial changes. Not that the newcomers were always made welcome. Some St Kilda-ites were so concerned that the Jews might cause or aggravate existing anti-Semitism that the Australian Jewish Welfare Society saw fit to advise newcomers thus in 1939:

Above all, do not speak German in the streets or on the trams. Modulate your voices. Do not make yourself conspicuous anywhere by walking with a group of persons, all of whom are speaking a

foreign language. Remember that the welfare of the old-established Jewish communities in Australia, as well as the welfare of every migrant, depends upon your personal behaviour. Jews collectively are judged by individuals. You, personally, have a grave responsibility.

Longmire's book shows how active Jews were in the 1940s, as, for example, the establishment of schools and of the St Kilda-Elwood *Talmud Torah* in Avoca Street.

St Kilda's eateries helped make Australians, especially non-Jews, more adventurous in trying new dishes. Longmire says that restaurants and other attractions, like the well-known and well-patronised 'Scheherazade' (which brought Jews and non-Jews together) made locals assess their own identity more closely and modify their behaviour. The book further shows the marked concern of Jews for other Jews. A 1971 survey for the St Kilda City Council found that the Jewish community of St Kilda had initiated and maintained a far more comprehensive system of co-ordinated care than the remainder of the population.

Anne Longmire has an optimistic outlook for St Kilda's future. In the 1930s St Kilda's prestige and social status had been in decline, but by 1983 there were signs that the trend was changing. St Kilda now has plans for the future — but then, in one way or another, the proud suburb by the Bay has always had plans of one sort or another, in which local Jewry took part.

The Melbourne *Herald*, in January 1932, wrote the following: 'Caulfield may claim to be the most venturesome of Melbourne suburbs'. It was a district which housed some of the leading citizens of early Melbourne, and in which some of the infant colony's history was enacted. There are numerous examples around the suburb of the Caulfield mansions of which the newspapers wrote.

Dr Geulah Solomon has invested much research in the four volumes which comprise *Caulfield's Heritage*. Totalling almost 600 pages, these volumes are divided into 'Building Heritage', incorporating the mansion period; 'Cultural Heritage', which covers lifestyles, religious traditions and practices, education and art; 'Recreational Heritage', which deals with both sporting and non-sporting pursuits; and 'Recent Municipal Heritage', which recalls the last fifty years of local government.

The project began as a Caulfield Council proposal to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary and the 75th anniversary of the municipality becoming a city. The Commonwealth Bicentennial Authority provided a generous grant towards the cost of the project.

Dr Solomon tells an exciting story of how a rural district on the outskirts of Melbourne developed into a modern municipality which today covers some nine square miles, and includes all or part of several postal districts in its area — namely Caulfield itself, Carnegie, Glenhuntly, Elsternwick and Murrumbeena, and parts of Ormond, Gardenvale, Ripponlea and East St Kilda. She provides a chronological record of Caulfield's growth from its origins to the present, complemented by arresting sketches and photographs.

She tells how Jews have long been associated with this district, indeed from around the 1850s when numerous Aborigines dwelt in the area and performed corroborees near the site of the present-day Kadimah in Selwyn Street, Elsternwick. One of the first forty European settlers is believed to have been a Jewish horse-dealer, who lost all his money and left the area.

There has been added attraction drawing Jews to the area because of its tolerance and respect for others, and also because of its facilities and provisions for Jewish life, particularly after World War Two. These include seven highly-regarded Jewish day

schools, several synagogues, social clubs for senior citizens, youth clubs, voluntary organisations, welfare bodies, restaurants, food outlets, bookshops and well-stocked libraries.

The schools in the area (including a Japanese school and a Montessori one) testify to the cultural, religious and social harmony and pluralism that exists both within the Jewish community and Australian society at large in education and multiculturalism. The Jewish community has benefited from this. Jews account for around twenty per cent of the area's more than 70,000 residents. The increase from 650 residents in 1921 to around 14,000 today is due respectively to immigration, to a tendency towards a generally higher than average birthrate particularly among Orthodox Jews, and to the internal migration from other areas of Melbourne, and even from other States.

Meanwhile, the percentage of Australian-born Jews living in Caulfield and of those with one or both parents being Australian-born is steadily increasing. Among the younger age groups, most are born in Australia, and even among the overseas-born the vast majority have lived in Caulfield for more than five years, and most for more than twenty.

In the third volume, Dr Solomon looks at the arts, the development of ideas, and the diversity of activities that today make the Caulfield Arts Complex one of the most progressive in the state, and indeed, in Australia. Many Jews have been connected with the arts as artists and organisers. There were Jewish artists, for instance, earlier this century, among the strolling musicians who performed around the suburb. They were also in the popular City Band formed in the 19th century, although there are those who claim that the Band was formed only as a 'snub' to the city's then arch-rival, Malvern.

Further, many well-known Jews and non-Jews have lived in the area. These include members of the famous Boyd family, author George (*My Brother Jack*) Johnston, Arnold Bloch and the Leibler family, communal leaders such as former mayors Sam Taylor, Brian Rudzki and Emil Braun, artist Harold Freedman, writers Serge Liberman, Yvonne Fein, Rena Roth and Sheva Glas-Weiner, musician Henry Wenig, and film and television pioneer Newman Rosenthal.

These three books give rewarding insights into Jewry's role in the three suburbs, and will whet your appetite to know more about Jewry's involvement with Carlton, St Kilda and Caulfield — all fascinating and inspiring stories of Jewish Melburnians' contributions to their city, state and country, and to their Judaism.

Stan Marks

## RATLINES: HOW THE VATICAN'S NAZI NETWORKS BETRAYED WESTERN INTELLIGENCE TO THE SOVIETS

*Mark Aarons and John Loftus (London: Heinemann, 1991; 372pp.)*

**R**atlines contains few references to Jews, but its subject matter is deeply related to the central questions that scholars have raised about the Holocaust. Why were so many Catholic churches silent during the Holocaust? Why were the Allies reluctant to stop the Nazi genocidal programme? And finally, after the Holocaust why did so many Nazis escape justice?

Aarons and Loftus have meticulously researched and documented the intricate network of interested parties who organised, operated or condoned the clandestine escape lines down which fugitive Nazis were spirited to freedom during and after

the war. The central player in these revelations was senior Vatican official, Father Krunoslav Draganovic, a Croatian priest who gathered around him, in the Confraternity of San Girolamo in Rome, a secret Ustashi cabal. Archbishop Alois Hudal, the openly pro-Nazi Rector of the Pontificio Santa Maria dell-Anima (a seminary for German priests in Rome), was sent to prisoner-of-war camps as the Vatican representative. On ostensibly humanitarian grounds, he provided Red Cross passports to Nazis such as Franz Stangl, commandant of Treblinka, and arranged for Adolf Eichmann's escape, with all expenses paid by the Vatican's Caritas International. Other Vatican officials were knowingly involved in the operation, such that the Franciscan printing press, under the direction of Father Mandic, produced the vast number of false papers needed. Financial support for the escapees was partly supplied by the Pontifical Welfare Commission. Pope Pius XII's knowledge of these affairs, and particularly of Draganovic's activities, was confirmed in interviews of close confidants of Draganovic. It is denied, however, by the official Vatican historian, Father Robert Graham.

The motivation for these acts was not piety, since Christian charity does not normally extend to mass murderers. For some, like Archbishop Hudal, an undying belief in Hitler compelled him, in his words, 'to devote [his] whole charitable work mainly to former National Socialists and Fascists, especially so-called "war criminals"'. Belief in Hitler or National Socialism was not the only reason to protect Nazis after the war. The Vatican viewed the Croatian Church both as the core of a movement known as 'Intermarium' to unify the Catholic nations in the Balkan region, and as a major bulwark against the Eastern Orthodox-Russian-Communist influence. The deployment of mass murderers, most of whom were not Germans, against the Communist movement would be the means by which Catholicism would restore its power in Eastern Europe. The enthusiastic undertaking of this plan by the Ustashi 'Crusaders', known as Krizari, was (literally) armed by the Vatican, fired by Croat nationalism, and stoked by a deep hatred of the Serbs.

The anti-Communism of the Vatican, which eclipsed the moral imperative to punish mass murderers, also dictated the Allied nations' policy toward Nazi fugitives. The authors reveal in depressing detail how the British and American governments reversed or simply ignored their own allegations against known Nazis when it became evident that Nazis were useful in their efforts to infiltrate and destabilise Communist forces. Deeply involved in the 'Intermarium' movement, the French, British and American authorities co-operated with the Vatican to ensure that fugitives escaped. A typical reversal was played out in the case of Father Cecelja, whose distribution of false papers to Nazis was discovered by the British and corroborated by American Intelligence. In gaol for eighteen months, he was not handed over to Yugoslavia when served with extradition, but instead released by the British who now called his work 'largely humanitarian'.

*Ratlines* does not only document this shameful record, but it uncovers the widespread infiltration of the Vatican's escape network by Soviet Intelligence, as well as the latter's proliferation of fronts for Communism in the guise of right-wing emigre organisations. This is perhaps the most bizarre and surprising layer of the intrigue. It explains the failure of the anti-Communist activities undertaken by the Krizari and others. It also reveals the utter pragmatism that prevailed in dealing with the Nazi fugitives, such that double-agents, like Kim Philby, were spiriting Nazis out of Europe as a cover for their espionage on behalf of the Soviets.

One can readily see in these few excerpts how the diabolical reality of the Holocaust simply fades from view in the clandestine dramas played out between those parties who actually held power, and trained their efforts on preserving it, during

the war. One might conclude that the genocide of the Jews was not treated with the seriousness it deserved because it was incidental to the struggle for power. This was indeed the case when the covert war began between East and West, and Nazis were simply recruited as deployable agents for both the Allies and Soviets.

But the Holocaust was obviously not incidental to the struggle for power in Europe during the war, since the many nations who handed over or wilfully exterminated 'their Jews' did so fully believing that their nations would benefit from their removal. Similarly, the near genocide (by murder, expulsion and forced conversion) of the Serbs by the Croats during the war was abetted by the Catholic Church which thereby sought to preserve its hegemony in the region. Far from being incidental, mass murder was thought to be so central to the establishment of power that it became 'necessary' for the perpetrators to 'forget' their excesses by rewriting history and, in some cases, removing the rank and file who actually carried out the massacres.

The loyalties and betrayals, not to mention the considerable financial interests, which repressed perhaps all but a residual moral imperative, are all the more enraging when played out by representatives of the Church and Allied governments, which purported to be the guardians of truth and justice. Despite the extensive dimensions of this deception, Aarons and Loftus refrain from delivering their impressively documented indictment in the sensational and self-righteous tones of arch-critics. Yet theirs is a study that demands to be read.

Dr. Rachael Kohn

## MY STRANGE FRIEND

David Martin (Sydney: Picador, 330pp., \$18.95)

David Martin is the kind of multifaceted character that this writer should like to have invented. Consider the potentialities: a man taking his first breath in Budapest as the Austro-Hungarian Empire is about to yield up its last; an ambivalently uneasy Jew reared in German bourgeois cosmopolitan ease, joining, however, a Zionist work village in Holland, an Orthodox Yiddish-speaking farming settlement in Hungary, and then a radically secular *kibbutz* in 1930s Palestine, each in its socialism and Jewish particularity being, both in theory and in practice, eons removed from anything either bourgeois or cosmopolitan; that same identity-tossed young man, on discovering himself short on love of Zion and adaptability to it, volunteering, on the rebound, as an Internationale-singing *infermero* with the republican International Brigades in Spain; and the German citizen, and Communist to boot, sure picking as an enemy Alien, being employed nonetheless, in wartime, as a monitor of foreign broadcasts for Britain's *Daily Express*. Add to these the journalist alighting upon India in the aftermath of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, the near-prohibited immigrant in post-war Melbourne, the card-carrying Communist dutifully active for social and political change, the professed proponent of armed neutrality for Australia, and, at all times and everywhere, the writer — the poet, novelist, children's author and satirist — and a fuller measure of the man might be gained.

Where this global chameleon has been and what he has done is of interest in its own right as he relates it in his autobiography, *My Strange Friend*. So are the diverse characters — relatives, fellow campaigners for the wished-for better world, his all-besotting lovers and more casual *inamoras*, and the generous and churlish editors,



and equally generous and churlish writers — who people his book in vignettes and miniatures that deftly illuminate their essence.

Of greater moment still, however, are the responses he evokes. Without saying as much — perhaps not even deliberately intending it — his account brings into poignant relief the sheer toll in lives and human integrity exacted by twentieth-century ideologies, the commendable and the execrable alike. Idealism, no less than truth, emerges here as a major casualty. 'We were socialist realists . . .' he writes, 'we crippled ourselves, trying to beget positive stories', by which was meant the writing of poetry and fiction that was active for change rather than factually representational and which, in reportage, necessitated the perjuring of witnessed truth itself — the demand made of him to do precisely this being the decisive spur that led Martin to break with the Party. The opposite extreme, right-wing Fascism, too, was — and is — no lollypop either, it, too, being well-healed master at the 'bullying, oppression and exploitation' that Martin rails against.

A one-time romantic, where does Martin, in his seventy-seventh year, stand? The ideal of brotherhood has always been a fine one; but reality has exposed both the theory behind it, and the practice, as all wrong. Beyond a certain point, such an ideal runs against the natural grain, it runs counter to the human psyche, it is, at the bottom line, fundamentally unbiological and unrealisable, the appreciation of this having taken a more sober Martin some seven decades — and others, their laid-down lives and their surrendered souls — to come at. As Martin writes in his concluding stock-take:

Am I still a socialist? Not if it implies the certainty that some day the majority of men and women will band together to build a free, just and peaceful order. People cannot be induced to organise collectively and to plan forward for very long. Their individual reflexes war with their social reflexes. (p.322).

In the same vein, one could well phrase another question through Martin's mouth: 'Am I still a Jew?', or, better, 'Do I particularly still want to be a Jew?'.

Perhaps a composite picture of his relation to things Jewish culled without commentary from his own words strewn throughout the book will best reveal the man as Jew — one of numerous others of that generation drawn from a comparable assertively bourgeois, intensely cosmopolitan and Hungarian and Austro-German cultural milieu who came to be disillusioned and deathly frightened by a war which, in tandem with a host of other aberrations, specifically targeted the Jews:

I am not only my parents' child. I am the flesh of men and women stretching back into the dimmest past. Hawking their wares in heavy packs along the Rhine, kicked out [*sic.*; presumably Martin means 'admitted into', Ed.] of England under the Commonwealth, perhaps wandering about the Volga lands with Koestler's Thirteenth Tribe. But that was only yesterday. To think that there was once an amorous pair in some Jericho Valley or at the top of Pisgah without whom I would not be sitting at this desk (p.10)

Even today when I see a rainbow in the sky I cover my head and murmur the *Sh'ma* . . . under my breath, needless to say, careful not to be overheard. (p.18)

In the *Werkdorp* in Holland — the preparatory Work Village for future life on the kibbutz:

I was sincere in desiring to devote myself to build *Erez*, a Jewish homeland. With thousands of young people in the streets of east and central Europe I believed that Marxism was compatible with Zionist nationalism of the radical, anti-bourgeois [*i.e. Hashomer Hatzair*] brand . . . So I sang and danced and was a Jew among Jews and the lament of history touched me. (p.61)

But, approaching Palestine, nearing *Erez*:

hard as I tried, I could not kindle in me the emotion which, after all those years of waiting, I thought would well up when the Jewish homeland came into view. (p.87)

On a subsequent *tiyul*, a kind of walkabout:

I went north as far as Lake Tiberias, the only place in the Holy Land where the past laid its hand on me . . . [where] the peace that passeth understanding . . . can be felt, if it can be felt anywhere. But nowhere else, not for me. Not at the Wailing Wall, not when I first glimpsed the River Jordan, or Safed where the sages wrote down the Law, or standing on Mount Gilboa, where Saul fell with his sons (p.90) . . . Decades later, when I walked into Greece from Turkey, and a woman stood by a stone wall and called out a greeting, it moved me more than the echo of the voices of Rachel, Rebecca and Ruth. I must be a Greekling. It can't be helped. (p.91)

Responding to the appellation affixed to him of being an Australian Jewish writer frequently referred to in tandem with Judah Waten, he writes:

Waten's Jewishness was his secondmost important theme. In my books it is important only in one. In my poetry it appears but once or twice. The description fits me only if it is stretched to make a convenient ethnic label. (p.225)

As for being or remaining Jewish:

Do I really want to assimilate out of existence that unique heritage, bring the contribution it has made to the humanising of mankind to a close? Yes, I would like to. There's been too much pain from the beginning. I don't want to be flogged to death and have my grandchildren gassed. I don't want them to suffer any discrimination, not even in a mild form. Not at any price. I want something lighter for them and more normal, if you don't mind . . . My first-born is not going to be fettered for a sacrifice to uphold the Covenant.

To the grave with tribalism! It is the curse of the species. It will destroy us if we don't take care. . . . Adolf Hitler, who taught me I was a Jew, also taught me that there is no nationalism which does not become fanaticism. The Jewish as well? Naturally, why not? Because the blood of the martyrs has cleansed it? Israel proves not that Jews are the noblest of Almighty's congregations, but that they can be as foolish as any. I take comfort from that. It shows we conform to the norm. (p.98) . . . I was young when I went to Palestine. Now old, I am homesick for many countries and places, but not for the hills of Judea or the plain of Moab. They are not my hill and plain. (p.99)

Elsewhere, he makes another confession: 'I have lost my faith in the brotherhood of man', he writes, 'I still have some hope for man's cousinhood' (p.323), and muses, too, in the train of what seems to be the enunciation of a credo: 'The New Man we shall never have. . . . There is a lot terribly wrong with the Old Adam and the Old Eve, but they are all that we are left with and shall be left with for ever. We must do the best we can with the familiar, crabby, indestructible pair'. (p.322)

In keeping with this seeming warts-and-all acceptance of Man (capital M) as he is, Martin is, in his fiction, likewise generally accepting of men (small m) — all men — as affirmed by the diverse Chinese, Jewish, Aboriginal, German, Turkish, Cypriot, Italian and other characters who people both his adult fiction and his children's books. However, to leap at this and pin that much-banded label 'multicultural' on him, on the basis of his own origins or of his fictional concerns, is to go expressly against his grain. One might, for purposes of determining with some near probability where he belongs, call him a cosmopolitan, an internationalist or, as this reviewer prefers, a trans-nationalist — one who would cut across all nations and, *ipso facto*, all nationalisms as well — but truth is that he wears no label either lightly or consistently. He is at once Australian and European, idealist and sceptic, Jewish and Jewishly alienated, a citizen of the world and in permanent retreat in rural Beechworth; or, put conversely, he is neither wholly Australian nor wholly European, neither wholly idealistic nor wholly sceptic, neither wholly Jewish nor, despite himself — if only because he keeps returning to the theme — wholly alienated from that Jewishness. If he belongs anywhere, it is at the border, at the interface between these, and other, dialectic pairs, his position symbolically exemplified by the site in the Beechworth cemetery which he and his wife have chosen as their final resting-place. 'The grave nearest our spot', he writes, 'belongs to a Punjabi hawker, Dalale Singh. . . . Behind him, only a little farther, is laid another Sikh,

Sunda Singh. . . . It's a good neighbourhood. The bones of Dalale and Sunda are in the strangers' section, and ours will be at the edge of it'. (p.325)

At the edge. So has Martin defined his own place, a place which, no less than it will be in death, has been the position he appears, in life, too, to have occupied many times over. Where his dualities might suggest contradictions in the man, they may, with equal cogency, be seen as fruit of deeply-troubled, sometimes storm-tossed, and pendular ambivalences.

David Martin has written much here about himself. These ambivalences, as also his allegiances, his ideological coming of age, his family, his work, his encounters — all these emerge clearly in an autobiography that is poised, often elegant, neatly ironic and always sensible. It is also candid, frequently but lightly analytical and uniformly even. But in the end, this very evenness, this sustained poise disconcerts. Given his not-infrequently articulated alienation, his sometimes intense infatuations, his confusions, his doubts, disillusionments and assorted disputes, one is still left asking: what has, through all his years truly made this David run? A quest for fame? An over-riding stress on survival? A need to be always in control? And the wish always to be a free agent, loath to be touched (remember?) and desisting from dancing to tunes played by other men? On the surface, yes to all of these.

But what of the Martin below the surface?

The book, at bottom, is a cerebral affair. David Martin tells his story well, to be sure — the seamier incidents no less than the more edifying — but this reviewer, on turning the last page and stepping back to take a longer view of the book, found himself asking: in the light of his experiences and the lessons learnt, where is his passion, where are the angst and ecstasy of genuine spiritual unburdening, and where does his soul, as distinct from his covering shell, truly belong.

David Martin's *My Strange Friend* has polish, wisdom, balance and an engaging appeal. And yes, the present writer would dearly like to have invented a character as multifaceted as he. But, with whatever gifts he had, he would also have tried to ensure that the man within was truly let out.

Dr. Serge I. Liberman

## A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIAN JUDAICA

*Serge Liberman (Compiler) and Laura Gallou (Editor), 2nd rev. ed., Sydney: The Mandelbaum Trust and the University of Sydney Library, , 1991. (Studies in Judaica Number Four).*

**T**his is the second, thoroughly revised edition of this important and impressive bibliographic work compiled by Dr. Serge Liberman and edited by Laura Gallou. (A longer review of the first edition of this work, published in 1987, appeared in this *Journal* in November 1988). As with the previous edition, the broad aim has been to produce a bibliography of *every* work by or about Australian Jews.

The new edition dispenses with the sections in the previous edition on periodicals, year books, and annual reports. This is regrettable, especially in dropping the coverage of periodicals which, like books by or about Australian Jews, have escalated in numbers recently. On the other hand, the new *Bibliography* includes dozens of works produced since the last edition, corrects many errors, and is much clearer in type-face and layout.

This extraordinary work is an obvious *sine qua non* for every serious student of Australian Jewish life, and a monument to the industry and learning of Dr. Liberman, as well as to his co-producers, the late esteemed Joy Ruth Young in the first edition and Laura Gallou in this. (Copies may be obtained for \$35.00 from the Archive of Australian Judaica, Fisher Library, University of Sydney, N.S.W. 2006).

## UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

*Bernard Hellreich Ingram (Adamstown, N.S.W.: The Author, 1991)*

The author, then known as Bernhardt Hellreich, was a young Jewish doctor in the Polish town of Tarnopol when the war broke out in 1939. His autobiography tells the remarkable story of his survival of both Soviet tyranny and the Nazi death machine, and of his migration to Newcastle, N.S.W., where he is now a general practitioner. It is another fine contribution to the ever-growing literature of Holocaust survivors who migrated to Australia. (Available for \$16.50 from B.H. Ingram, Publisher, P.O. Box 15, Adamstown, N.S.W. 2289).

## THE COHEN AND THE LEVY FAMILIES IN ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA 1660–1990

*Pamela Brunel Cohen (Wisborough Green, West Sussex: The Author, 1990)*

Pamela Brunel Cohen's deeply-researched family history links the English branch of *this* Cohen family (including Louis Samuel Cohen, the Liverpool entrepreneur who was the head of Lewis' Ltd., the retailing firm) with its numerous Australian offshoots, among them such prominent Australian Jews as George Judah Cohen (1842–1937) and Major-General Paul Cullen. This is an important work for Australian Jewish genealogists, produced with care and intelligence. (Available from the author at Apple Tree Cottage, Wisborough Green, West Sussex RH14 0DD, England).

Professor W.D. Rubinstein

## VICTORIAN HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT 1991

This year comes to a close on an up-beat note, with Sir Zelman Cowen having graciously accepted our invitation to become our Patron. His involvement will further enhance our growing reputation as a strong and vibrant organisation, gearing towards a positive future.

To date, we have over 450 fully paid-up members, and the widespread recognition of our efforts to research, record, preserve and publish in the field of Australian Jewish history has resulted in greatly increased knowledge about, and use of, our Reference Library and resources, including a very large number of written and telephoned enquiries being dealt with over the past twelve months, as well as serving the needs of an ever-increasing number of amateur and professional researchers.

In order more fully to serve the aims and objectives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, honorary secretary Beverley Davis has just completed a full-time Post-Graduate Diploma in Archives and Records Management at Monash University. Through the knowledge gained, the many valuable contacts made, and the wider spread of information about our Society, we look forward to even more efficient use being made of our Library and Archives, and the provision of professional expertise and advice in the area of archival selection and storage in order to cater for the on-going needs of future researchers and historians.

We list in our frequent *Newsletters* and announce at meetings, congratulations and condolences to our members and their immediate families, and any particular honours or achievements are also noted. We regularly list details of books and other materials purchased from the Reference Library Fund or otherwise donated or acquired from various sources.

Hearty congratulations are extended to Dr. Hilary Rubinstein and Professor Bill Rubinstein on the publication of their new two-volume work *The Jews in Australia, a Thematic History: 1788 to the Present*.

At the time of writing this Report, it is most pleasing to announce that the word-processing of the text for the *Index to Volume 10* has been completed and the floppy disk is about to be delivered to our printers, Abbttype of Collingwood, who have done such outstanding work for us in the past. We very much look forward to issuing this *Index* before the end of the year.

We were able to acquire for sale a strictly limited number of complete sets of the *A.J.H.S. Journal*, and only a small number remains on offer.

Our Annual General Meeting took place on 7 March, and resulted in the return of all current executive and committee, as follows: President, Dr. Howard Freeman; Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Beverley Davis; Honorary Treasurer, Dr. Serge Liberman. Committee: Dr. Paul Bartrop, Dr. Harvey Cohen, Trevor Cohen, Rabbi Dr. John Levi, Dr. Hilary Rubinstein, Professor Bill Rubinstein, Isidor Solomon and David Sonenberg. The guest speaker on that occasion was Air Commodore Philip Henry Napoleon Opas, O.B.E., who spoke on 'A Jew on His Own in the War'. Dr. Opas gave a fascinating, at times moving, account of his years on active service with particular reference to observing his religion in often trying circumstances.

The next meeting was held on 6 June at the Magid Resource Centre, Temple Beth Israel, and featured Mrs Helen Sharp who presented a paper based on her research

for a degree in Sociology, entitled 'The Lubavitch *Chassidim* of Melbourne: Jewish Activists Against Secularisation', the text of which appears in this issue.

On 15 August, at the same venue, recently retired Supreme Court Judge, the Honorable William Kaye, A.O., Q.C., delivered a talk on 'Jews in the Judiciary', which is also published herein.

A meeting which not unexpectedly attracted our largest ever attendance took place on 25th September at Beth Weizmann Community Centre, 584 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, when the Right Honorable Sir Zelman Cowen, A.K., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., Q.C., D.C.L., gave a most eloquent address on the 'Life of Sir Isaac Isaacs', with many highlights not included in his comprehensive 1967 biography of Isaacs.

Unfortunately, our last meeting planned for 8 October with Mrs June Helmer speaking on 'Yosl Bergner' had to be postponed until next year.

The Australian Jewish community as a whole, and our Society in particular, suffered a great loss in May on the death of Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush, O.B.E. We will miss not only his deep involvement in the activities of the A.J.H.S. almost since its inception, but also, since his retirement to Melbourne, his presence and always pertinent comments at our meetings, wherever they have been held, until very recent times. Our deepest sympathies go to Rabbanit Bertha Porush, Naomi Leibler, and families.

## VICTORIAN MEMBERS JOINED since November 1990

ACKERMAN, Mr Geoffrey, Mrs Betty  
 ALTER, Mr Marcel, Mrs Esther  
 BACHRACH, Mr Hersz  
 BERTELSEN, Mrs Lorraine  
 BIALIK COLLEGE  
 BOAS, Mr Bernard, OAM  
 BOULTON, Mrs Irene  
 BOULTON, Mrs Julia  
 COHEN, Mrs Jean  
 DAVIS, Dr Alan, Mrs Vivien  
 DE JONG, Mr Henri, Mrs Eva  
 DONALD, Mr Bruce, Mrs Millie  
 FINK, Mr Barry, Mrs Kaye  
 FIRESTONE, Mrs Mathilde  
 FREEDMAN, Mr David  
 FREEMAN, Mr Andrew, Mrs Sally  
 GETREU, Mr Joseph  
 GORR, Mrs Beverley  
 GRIMM, Ms Eve  
 HARTMAN, Dr Leonard, Mrs Cyla  
 HAVIN, Mrs Rivkah  
 KAYE, Hon. William, AO, QC, Mrs Henrietta

KLEID, Mr Phillip, Mrs Anna  
 KOSKIE, Mr Jack  
 LEIBLER, Mrs Mary  
 LEVY, Mrs Rebecca  
 MARTIN, Mr Dennis, Mrs Teresa  
 MOSHINSKY, Mrs Ada  
 MOW, Mr Raymond, Mrs Leah  
 ROGOZINSKI, Mrs Anna  
 SCHACHTER, Mr Ben, Mrs Adele  
 SHARP, Mr Hyman, Mrs Helen  
 SIMMONS, Mr David, Mrs Shirley  
 SONENBERG, Ms Diana  
 SOUTHWICK, Mr David  
 ST. KILDA PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 STEG, Dr Joseph  
 TAINSH, Mrs Lili  
 WAISBERG, Mr Theo, Mrs Ruth  
 WEBBERLEY, Ms Helen  
 WHITE, Mr Emanuel, Mrs Freda  
 WIENER, Mrs Esther  
 YOUNG, Mrs Joyce  
 ZYGIER, Mr Geoffrey



## CONTRIBUTORS

**Dr. Paul R. Bartrop** is a Lecturer in History at the University of South Australia in Adelaide and a Committee member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc.

**Mark Braham** is the author of *Jews Don't Hate* (1970) and was editor of the *Jewish Observer*.

**Beverley Davis** is Honorary Secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc.

**Margaret Chapman**, who recently retired as a schoolteacher, completed an M.A. thesis on Jews and Freemasons at Melbourne University.

**Mathilde Firestone** is a member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc., and a voluntary community worker.

**Dr. Lionel E. Fredman** is Associate Professor of History at the University of Newcastle, N.S.W.

**Lorraine Freeman** is a long-time member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc.

**Eliyahu Honig**, who grew up in Melbourne, is currently a senior administrator at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and is completing a doctoral thesis on Zionism in Australia 1920–1948.

**Hon. William Kaye, AO, QC**, recently retired as a Judge of the Victorian Supreme Court.

**Dr. Rachael Kohn** lectures in Religious Studies at Sydney University and is the editor of the *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*.

**Dr. Serge Liberman** is literary editor of the *Australian Jewish News* and a well-known writer.

**Stan Marks** is a well-known Melbourne writer.

**Philip Mendes**, who lives in Melbourne, is a member of the editorial committee of the *Australian Jewish Democrat*.

**Dr. Peter Monteith** was a Tutor in History at Deakin University and now lectures at the University of Western Australia.

**Dr. Charles A. Price**, the eminent demographer, recently retired from the Australian National University.

**Norman Rothfield** of Melbourne has been president of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, and of Paths to Peace.

**Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein** is a Research Fellow in the Department of History at Melbourne University and a member of the Committee of the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc.

**Professor W. D. Rubinstein** of Deakin University is the Editor of the Victorian issues of the *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*.

**Helen Sharp** is a Tutor in Sociology at LaTrobe University. She was awarded the Jean Martin Prize in Sociology for her thesis on the Lubavitcher community in Melbourne.

**Colin Thornton-Smith** is a member of the Department of French and Italian Studies at Melbourne University.

**Dr. Oswald B. Tofler** is a Perth cardiologist, and editor-in-chief of the *Maccabean* weekly newspaper.

**Malcolm J. Turnbull** is researching a doctoral dissertation on Australian Jewish history at Deakin University.

**Dr. Evan M. Zuesse** is Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of South Australia, Adelaide.

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