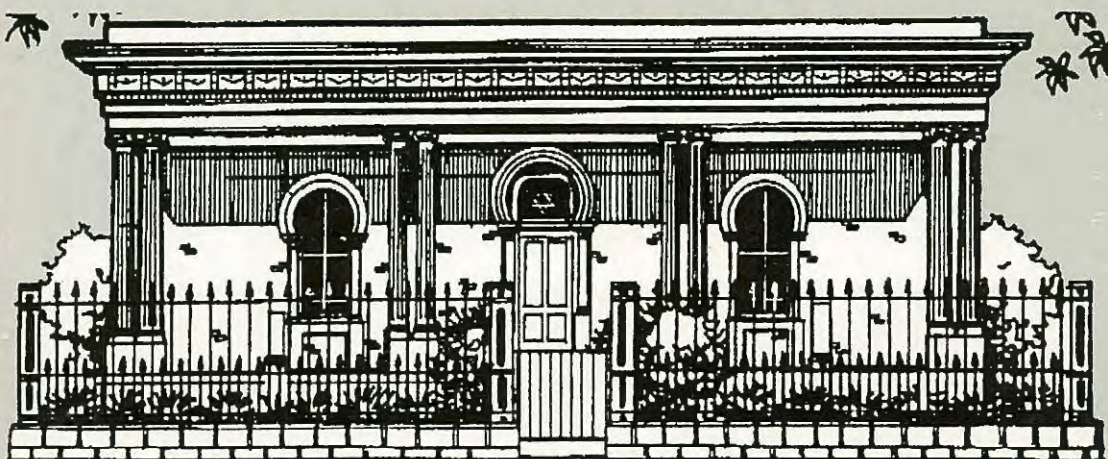


JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



VOL. XI 1990



PART I

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:

Professor William D. Rubinstein, B.A., M.A., Ph.D., FAHA, F.R.Hist.S. (**Editor**)

Dr. Paul Bartrop, B.A., M.A., Dip.Ed., Ph.D.

Mrs. Beverley Davis (Honorary Secretary).

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

Rabbi Dr. John S. Levi, A.M., D.D., M.A.H.L., M.A., Dip.Ed.

Dr. Serge Liberman, M.B., B.S.

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).

Front cover: The Brunswick Talmud Torah on Lord Street in Brunswick. The last synagogue located in Melbourne's northern suburbs, its history is recounted by Lorraine Freeman (see pp. 000ff).

THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

November 1990

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Part 1

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

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

As will be seen at a glance by all readers, this issue is the most substantial ever produced by our Society, exceeding both in size and scope even the previous extended issues produced by the Victorian Society.

It will also be seen that this issue is the first part of Volume XI of our Society's *Journal*, now more than fifty years old. Complete agreement has been reached between the Victorian and the New South Wales sections of our Society over the future of the *Journal*, by which we will publish one yearly issue in November and they will publish one yearly issue in May. Although the editing of these two issues will be separately carried out, we now hope for a comprehensive sharing of information and real co-operation between the two Editorial Committees.

We extend our warmest welcome to Suzanne Rutland, Sydney's distinguished new Editor, and our best wishes to retiring Editor Morris Forbes. We also wish to place on record our thanks to Sophie Caplan of Sydney for her outstanding work in compiling the Index to Volume IX of the *Journal*.

Since this issue is so rich and varied, it is almost impossible briefly to describe it. A number of highlights should, however, be noted. Our Society was privileged to be given a grant by the Trustees of the Brunswick Synagogue — the last synagogue in Melbourne north of the Central Business District — to write its history, following its closure several years ago. Lorraine Freeman's article describes the history of a *Shul* which existed for many decades until it was bypassed by Jewish population shifts.

A number of important and interesting articles in this issue discuss aspects of Sephardi Jewry in Australia: the essays by Gad Ben-Meir, Marcello Montagnana, and Dr. Joseph Gentili. Montagnana and Gentili examine, specifically, Italian Jewish refugee migration here, an aspect of the Holocaust and, subsequently, of the history of our Jewish community, too often overlooked, just as Sephardic Jewry is so often and so unfairly omitted from our common perceptions of modern Jewish history.

It is a pleasure, in particular, to be able to include the important memoirs of Dr. Joseph Gentili, 'Tracks Along the Way'. From about 1942 until a decade later, it was virtually impossible to open a Jewish journal in Australia without encountering an interesting, often provocative article or essay by Dr. Gentili, who was, at the time, among the leaders of Australian Jewry's intelligentsia. From that time — the early 1950s — to this, however, Dr. Gentili has been silent on Jewish matters, instead building up an international reputation in his academic field. It is also a particular pleasure for me to have made contact with Dr. Gentili and to have persuaded him to give us his important autobiographical memoirs.

Three essays deal with aspects of that remarkable man and seminal figure in our history, Dr. I. N. Steinberg. Steinberg was here for less than five years, and yet it is unlikely that anyone has had so considerable an impact on the development of our community in so short a period of time. Steinberg's renowned but ill-fated Kimberley Scheme is discussed by Leon Gettler, who is currently writing a book on the subject, while one tragic and moving footnote to Steinberg's efforts is discussed by Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein. My own article on the transformation of our community in the midst of the Second World War also pays tribute to the key role of Steinberg in facilitating this process, but with results perhaps unintended by him.

1990 is the fiftieth anniversary of the now-celebrated *Dunera* affair. Dr. Paul R. Bartrop, editor of a new collection of documents on the *Dunera*, here places the *Dunera* in its historical perspective. Dr. Bartrop's book on the *Dunera*, as well as a recent reprint of Cyril Pearl's *The Dunera Scandal*, are also reviewed in this issue.

This issue also contains a number of important pieces by and about other refugees from Nazism, including Michael Spivakovsky's biography of Jascha Spivakovsky, the well-known musician; Dr. Paul Bartrop's scholarly examination of the 'Are You Jewish?' clauses in Immigration Forms 40 and 47; and Dr. Rodney Gouttman's analysis of the rather curious views of Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher, whose support for persecuted Jewry was so valuable and (unfortunately) so nearly unique.

The post-war period also receives attention in the conclusion to Philip Mendes' study of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism; Dr. Rodney Gouttman's examination of the first appearance of the notorious anti-Semitic tract, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in Australia; and Stanley Robe's article on Germany's post-war compensation to Holocaust survivors.

Unfortunately, only one article appears here on the earlier period of settlement, Malcolm Turnbull's study of Isaac Jacobs and the first attempts to found a Reform movement within Judaism in Australia. We are always keen to publish accounts of the earlier phases of Australian Jewish history, which have been somewhat neglected recently.

Our popular annual feature '100 Years Ago — Extracts from the Jewish Press', compiled by Lorraine Freeman, gives us a unique look at Australian Jewry in 1890. The very valuable reference article by our Honorary Secretary, Beverley Davis, and Committee-member Dr. Harvey Cohen, outlines the genealogical records and material held by our Society. There are, additionally, a record number of book reviews, showing the flourishing and remarkably varied state of publishing on Australian Jewish subjects and closely related topics.

I would like, once again, to thank our esteemed Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Beverley Davis, for her outstanding job of word-processing this issue, and Dr. Hilary L. Rubinstein for her equally valued proof-reading of the text.

Professor W. D. Rubinstein
Journal Editor

THE BRUNSWICK TALMUD TORAH: AN ANECDOTAL RECORD OF THE CONGREGATION

Lorraine Freeman

The city of Brunswick had its early beginnings in the village of Phillipstown. It is still possible to see today houses that people had built in the 1850s, and also the grand Victorian facades along the Sydney Road shopping centre, many of which date from the 1880s. There are also in the area remnants of the brick-making industry that helped to build Melbourne.

Brunswick experienced boom years of housing development between 1910 and 1930. By 1920, the electric tram route to East Brunswick had commenced operation, and the Brunswick Electricity Supply, under control of Council, had commenced distribution of electric power. In 1925, the electric tram route to West Brunswick across Royal Park was opened, and the then-desirable residential areas of West Brunswick had public transport.

In 1928 Brunswick had reached maturity as a city. At that time the population was over 55,000. Sydney Road was a booming commercial centre. Clay industries were at the height of their development, and small manufacturing industries were numerous. As the clay-holes and quarries were exhausted many were filled, and some were landscaped for public parks. Methven Park was one of the first areas developed for this purpose. Methven Park adjoins the property in Lord Street which later became the home of the East Brunswick Congregation.

During the 1930s and 1940s, most of the remaining residential land was built upon, and major changes were taking place in the makeup of the population. Migrants with a working-class identity, particularly from Greece, Italy and the Middle East, were attracted to Brunswick as a desirable place to live in the post-war period.

Between 1921 and 1933, the Jewish population in the Northern suburbs rose with the influx of migrants who settled upon Brunswick as being a suitable place to live. Brunswick was a suburb of wide streets lined with small cottages and rows of terraces, on what was the north-eastern edge of the city. Most importantly, it was adjacent to Carlton with its Jewish grocers and Kosher butchers. Hilary Rubinstein's book *The Jews in Victoria 1835-1985* records that in 1921 Brunswick had a total of 277 Jews; this rose to almost 400 by 1933. Due to the situation in Europe the number continued to rise until 1939. From the point of view of many Jewish refugees, the best that could be said for Melbourne was that it was as far away from Hitler as you could hope to go. Mrs. Edith Goldberg, who enjoyed an involvement with the East Brunswick Congregation for a period longer than anyone else, voiced precisely these sentiments when asked why her family migrated to Melbourne from Germany; others came to join family here, or because they had heard that it was a land of opportunity.

The man generally credited with having a major role in establishing the congregation, Joseph Yoffe, emigrated from Palestine in the 1920s, on hearing that there were good business opportunities here. Another group came in response to the suggestion of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneerson, with the purpose of establishing Jewish educational institutions here. One member of this



Mr. Myer Weinstock admiring his father's handiwork. (Courtesy Myer Weinstock.)

group, Rabbi Isser Kluwgant, acted as unofficial Rabbi for the congregation throughout the 1950s.

For at least twelve years, people living in the area attended services at Albion Hall, situated in Lygon Street, Brunswick, between Blyth and Victoria Streets. 1930 is the earliest year which anecdotal evidence can supply from former congregants. The services were initiated by Mr. Max Markovitch, a man who had strayed from Jewish observance in his youth, and, wishing to resume his Jewish identity, provided the rent money and secured the use of the Hall. He then attracted people from the Brunswick area to attend services regularly on *Shabbat* morning, and on the *Yom*



Interior of the synagogue. (Courtesy Clive Fredman.)

Tovim. He also organised classes to teach the children elementary Hebrew and Judaism.

Recollections of this period come mainly from Myer Weinstock, whose father's home was the hub for organising the proceedings at Albion Hall, and from Moshe Kantor of Kantor's Bookstore. Mr. Kantor, who worked as a *shochet* when he first arrived in Australia from Palestine, was engaged as a teacher at Albion Hall. He recalled being paid thirty shillings a week in 1939 for organising and running the educational programme. Reverend Adler, the first teacher engaged by Mr. Markovitch, was also a *shochet*.

Albion Hall belonged to the East Brunswick Albion Lodge of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows. The Lodge room was upstairs on the first floor. Myer Weinstock recalls photographs of men in their full regalia, looking down from the walls of the room. The Hall was used for *Shabbat* services, and also as the classroom. For an Orthodox congregation, things were run in a relaxed manner. Reverend Adler, instead of teaching, would sometimes organise a cricket match in the Hall. As they struggled to have a *minyan* on *Shabbat*, they implemented the rule that if there were nine men present, then a boy with a *Chumash* in his hand could make up the tenth for a *minyan*. Myer often took this role until his *Barmitzvah* in 1936. Myer remembers his *Barmitzvah* as a simple service compared with the proceedings of today. On that day Mr. Kantor was the *chazan*, and conducted the service. Myer was presented with a *Chumash*, in which was a presentation book-plate, which lists Mr. Markovitch as President, Mr. Morris as teacher, and Mr. Piner as Secretary. Mr. Morris had taken over from Reverend Adler as the teacher. Shmuel Rosenkranz, now president of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, recalls that when he first arrived in Australia in 1939, the driving force behind the Brunswick congregation was Mr. Morris, who was a printer by trade.

Mr. Kantor describes the service as being in the East European style — everyone took part. There was no paid Minister. This style of service endured for the entire life of the congregation. As it was never a wealthy congregation, it relied heavily on volunteers and donors. This ensured that there were no high seat rents, such as were paid at the East Melbourne and Carlton congregations. For the *Yom Tovim*, however, someone would be engaged to officiate, and Mr. Kantor recalls officiating at least once in Albion Hall. A fee would be offered for this service.

For the *Shabbat* services, the men were seated around a table. The Lodge room at Albion Hall had a platform at one end, and this was used for *davening*. The Ark for the *Sefer Torah*, and the Reader's Desk, were locked away in a small cupboard during the week. Fees were paid for the children to attend *cheder*, and a highlight, fondly remembered by Myer Weinstock, was when the children participated in a *Purim Spiel* and party. There was a larger dance hall downstairs, which was used for the High Holydays. It had an upstairs gallery for the ladies. Mary Goffin, now a guide at the Jewish Museum of Australia, recalls going to Albion Hall in 1938, soon after arriving in Australia. She retains her memory of a musty smell, and that it was depressing to have so few people in attendance.

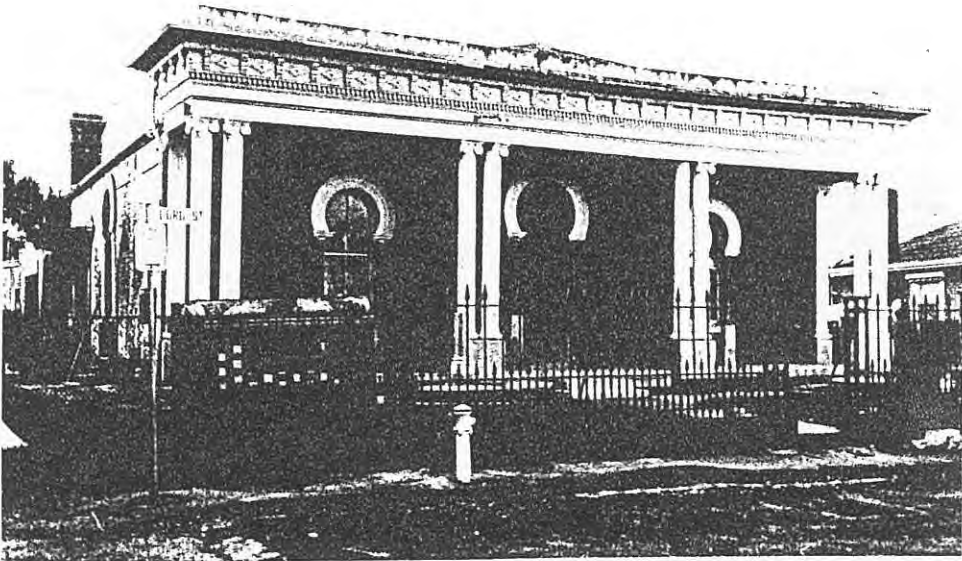
In the 1930s very few were strictly Orthodox. Myer Weinstock describes the Albion Hall congregants as Australianised — 'probably ninety per cent were not religious'. Most had had little to do with *Yiddishkeit*, and did not know how to read Hebrew, yet they wanted to be involved with the Jewish community. Myer recollects that on one *Erev Yom Kippur*, somebody turned the lights off after the service. When told 'You're not supposed to do that', the person replied, 'but I'm not religious'. A congregant, Mr. M., lived directly across the road from Albion Hall, and sent his children to the *cheder*. He owned a kosher chicken shop in Carlton, and Reverend Adler came to kill the chickens for him in the backyard. Yet on *Shabbat* mornings Mr. M. would take the tram to Carlton *Shule*. He reasoned that the tram was going anyhow, and he had purchased his ticket beforehand, so it was all right. According to Myer Weinstock, 'people made rules to suit themselves in those days'.

The congregants were mostly employed in the clothing trade. Very much involved with the day-to-day workings of the congregation were: Mr. Kaplan, who was a *shomer* at a butcher's shop in Carlton, and who was concerned with the

religious observances; Mr. Morris Cooper, the *gabbai*, who rented premises at 32 Lord Street, East Brunswick (living in the front of the house, and selling chickens from a closed-in verandah at the back); and Mr. Weinstock, Myer's father, a carpenter from Palestine, who took charge of the *kiddush*, and hand-carved both the Crown to decorate the Ark, and a plaque for the Reader's Desk, in commemoration of his deceased son.

Each year, before the High Holydays, an Annual General Meeting would be held, at which the agenda would be the seat rental, and who would conduct the services. A hat would be passed around to help pay for the salaries of the teachers. Mr. Kantor recalls that there was always a very elaborate *kiddush* for such a small congregation. This would be held in the homes of congregants living near the Hall, and gave people a feeling of belonging to a family. By the late 1930s, twenty to twenty-five men attended each *Shabbat*.

From the time that the Nazis gained power, there had been an influx of refugees, mainly of Polish Jews, and from Germany in 1938 arrived the Zelazco family. Edith Zelazco married Max Goldberg who, with his sons, was instrumental in seeing that the congregation survived until the late 1980s. (Max Goldberg was one of a group of twenty orphans from Europe brought to Australia by Mr. Jonas Pushett in 1939). Mr. Zelazco dearly loved going to *shule*, and, according to his daughter, he tried to create a *shtiebl*, to bring about the intimate atmosphere of a small number of families, who knew each other well, praying together. This seemed to be in keeping with what felt like a village life in the area. They were adjacent to, but none-the-less removed from, Carlton, which was the hub of Jewish activity at that time. They could be described as in the main working or lower middle class, not very religious, but nationally conscious, and wanting an association with a congregation.



The synagogue in the 1960s. (Courtesy Clive Fredman.)

Early in 1940, Mr. Joseph Yoffe moved with his family to the East Brunswick area. He was the type of man to take charge, and he, with two or three other activists, began fund-raising to purchase a building in which to house a permanent congregation. Myer Weinstock recalls that his mother was always baking for the fund-raising meetings, and his father was constantly fuming over some disagreements that had taken place at committee meetings. One thing his father particularly disapproved of was that the men would organise card games on Friday nights as their regular fund-raising activity. Unfortunately, minutes of the committee meetings were almost never taken. When Shmuel Rosenkranz became Honorary Secretary, he was told: 'What for do you need to take minutes? We all know about it!' However, during the end of 1942, and in early 1943, there must have been an awareness that something historic was taking place, as six meetings were minuted.

The first meeting, minuted on 26 October 1942, names Mr. J. Yoffe as President, and Mr. S. Slonim as Vice President. On 29 November 1942, they were able to hold an Annual General Meeting in their own building at 32 Lord Street. President J. Yoffe was recorded as saying that the main achievement of the outgoing committee had been the recent purchase of the building for the Society. Services were to be held Friday night and *Shabbat* morning. The committee was instructed to form the Brunswick Hebrew Congregation and Talmud Torah. Officers elected were Mr. J. Yoffe, President; Mr. S. Wertheim and Mr. N. Nossell, Vice Presidents; Mr. Zelazco, Treasurer; and Mr. E. Lewis, Secretary. Allocated to look after the *cheder* were Mr. Weinstock, Mr. Honig and Mr. Gold.

On 10 January 1943 it was recorded that one hundred books had been secured at six shillings a book, and that Mr. Kallai, the teacher, had asked for a rise in pay, and would from then on receive £3.10.0 a week, which would amount to a rise of ten shillings per week.

On 17 February 1943 a sub-committee was formed, consisting of S. Wertheim, S. Yaffe, E. Lewis, and a Mr. Fine, to organise the celebration of the opening ceremony, and it was agreed to invite Rabbi Dr. Sanger to give the opening address and to introduce the guest of honour, Dr. Michael Traub. Dr. Traub was in Melbourne as the official delegate of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and of the *Keren Hayesod*. The official opening of the Brunswick Talmud Torah was to take place on Sunday 28 March 1943. An appeal would be held, and a list of donors would be placed on an Honour Board.

An entry in the *Australian Jewish News* of Friday 23 April 1943 lists all donors to the Building Fund of the Brunswick Talmud Torah, the main donors being: J. Yoffe £300, I. Skolnik £200, M. Zeltner £100, and A. Sicree £100.

The last meeting minuted for this period was held on 31 March 1943, at which it was briefly recorded that a discussion ensued as to the rights and wrongs of the meeting being held. This hint of argument also characterised the services; it was not unusual for heated arguments in Yiddish to halt a service. Mr. Zelazco's son, Herb Irons, remembers that the men would stop the service to discuss whose turn it was to lead the congregation in prayer, and there always seemed to be raised voices. Different opinions of the correct Hebrew pronunciation were also aired with vigour. Even so, those who came on *Shabbat* morning all seemed to be good friends. People were made to feel welcome, and if a 'regular' failed to attend, then someone would go to see what had happened. All the children were given sweets at the *kid-dush*.

The Certificate of Title for 32 Lord Street, East Brunswick, shows that it was transferred from Israel Sukiert, flock manufacturer, to Joseph Yoffe and Boris Sonkin, manufacturers, and Solomon Wertheim, manufacturing chemist. These three friends became joint proprietors of the estate from 2 June 1943. Mr. Sukiert had purchased the property as an investment in January 1939. The house had originally been built for James Dolphin, a hosiery manufacturer, in 1911–12, and he had lived there with his family until his death in 1929.

Mrs. Bella Goldstein, whose father was Morris Cooper, a poulterer, had lived at 32 Lord Street from 1935 until 1942, when it was purchased for the congregation. Between 1939 and 1942, her family had been Mr. Sukiert's tenants in the property. She recalls that, in the first instance, the property was offered to her father, at the asking price of £670. At the time, they were paying rent of 32s.6d. a week to live there. Her father ran his poultry business from the rear of the house. She describes it as being a very grand house, with a large cellar, a fernery, two fountains on either side of the front door, pillars in the wide entry hall and high ceilings. For a *shule* it proved to be a most suitable choice. It was Mr. Yoffe's choice, and he donated a large sum of money towards its purchase. Inside, there was very fine timber work in the hall, and in the main rooms. Some of this timber was used to construct the Ark. Mr. Weinstock was involved with the construction of the Ark, on both sides of which were seats for the President and important guests. The interior was similar to the *Beth Hamidrash* which had existed in Poland.

Over the front entry there was a most unusual portico, supported on paired Ionic columns. Its keyhole-shaped front door and windows gave it a Moorish character. On its Western boundary it adjoined Methven Park, which the children of the congregation enjoyed. This also created a most pleasant aspect through the large bay window in the main prayer room. On *Yom Kippur*, when there was a pause between services, people were able to enjoy the break in the park.

The first wedding held at Lord Street was that of Myer Weinstock's sister Rachel to Norman Arber, in August 1944. The *chuppah* was borrowed from the Carlton congregation, and four men held it over the bride and groom. Rabbi Gurevitch officiated. Because there was no official rabbi at Lord Street, very few marriages or *Barnitzvahts* were celebrated there.

Mr. Zelazco was the first *gabbai* at Lord Street. He was Orthodox and observant, and for his funeral in 1947 the procession stopped by the *shule* and the coffin was taken inside while prayers were recited.

Between 1946 and 1948 the suburb and *shule* were enriched by a wave of new immigrants — Holocaust survivors. They were mostly from Poland, and were traditionally oriented, but not strict in their religious observance. Many members kept kosher homes, but not too many observed *Shabbat*. They were mostly employed in the 'rag trade'.

Shmuel Rosenkranz commented that Mr. Yoffe gave a certain stamp of character to the *shule*. He was a traditional Jew, who enjoyed synagogue life. His home was always open to people, and new immigrants came to him with their problems. He was known as a very charitable person, always ready to give assistance. Originally from Russia, he moved to Switzerland before the First World War, and attended the First Zionist Congress in Basle, where, listening to Herzl speak, he became an ardent Zionist. He emigrated to Palestine in 1922, where he attempted to make a living running a cardboard factory. On hearing that life was much easier in Australia, he emigrated to Melbourne in 1925, and later also brought out his brother, Sam Yaffe. Due in part to his strong influence, there was a Zionist orientation at the

shule, and the children at the *cheder* were instructed in modern Hebrew. He was a founder of the Bialik Hebrew School, which was the fore-runner of the present Bialik College day school.

By the mid-1940s, Professor Goldman had taken over the running of the *cheder*. He was professor of languages in the Semitic Studies Department at Melbourne University, and had been a censor of mail during the war years. The *cheder* was run in a more organised manner; there were two classrooms (named Skolnik and Zeltner) with desks, examinations were held, a concert was put on for the parents, and prizes given out. Edith Goldberg remembers this period as a marvellous part of her life. The children were all very friendly; after Sunday classes they would often go swimming together. In fact, she still has friends from that time, one of them having been a bridesmaid in her wedding group.

For the High Holydays, the classrooms became the ladies' section, and a loose see-through curtain was put in place. There were arguments about the curtain; some were for and some were against having it. The ladies could not hear very well from the classrooms, and when attendances fell, in later years, they would sit at the back of the main room without the curtain.

People dressed beautifully for the High Holydays. They were very much a social event, and many would gather outside in the park to talk. Herb Irons remembers that Shmuel Rosenkranz addressed the congregation on the High Holydays, often on the subject of Zionism. The men's section would be packed out, and many had to stand. Mr. Yoffe would also speak to the congregation. At the close of *Yom Kippur*, there would be a cup of tea and something to eat, often provided by Edith Goldberg's mother. Those members who lived far away were driven home.

Although the High Holydays were a 'sellout', it was a struggle to keep the Friday night services going. On *Shabbat*, the *kiddush* would be set up in the ladies' section. Mr. Kaplan was renowned for the mince sausages he provided in summer, and for the *cholent* he brought in the winter months. To the elderly of the congregation the *kiddush* meant a great deal, as it symbolised the extended family.

Mr. Yoffe was enthusiastic about involving the youth in the life of the congregation, in order that they keep their Jewish identity. For *Simchat Torah*, he invited the *Habonim* youth to attend the *shule* in their uniforms, to participate and to dance *horas*, at a time when Zionism was not strong in the community.

According to his son Morris, Mr. Yoffe was instrumental in founding the *Hachshara* Training Farm in Springvale immediately after the Second World War, before it was moved to its better known site in Shepparton. With Mr. Sam Wynn, he was involved in purchasing the land in Springvale for the Victorian Zionist Organisation. At the *Hachshara*, many were imbued with the spirit to go on *aliya*, and the first Australian *chalutzim* left for Palestine at the time of the War of Independence. On the joyous occasion of the establishment of the State of Israel the excited congregation held a special service, at which the keynote speaker was Mr. Yehuda Honig.

Between 1949 and 1953, there were many new arrivals, and the *shule* became very popular. In 1949 a group of Lubavitchers arrived from Russia. These were the people who, later on in 1959, moved to East St. Kilda and established the Yeshiva College; they included the Kluwgant and the Serebryanski families. Zelman Serebryanski was involved in teaching at the *cheder* during the 1950s. In 1949, the Kinderlerer family emigrated to Melbourne from England. They were related to the Yoffe family and consequently settled in Brunswick, becoming members of the

synagogue. Max Kinderlerer's elderly father taught at the *cheder*, and tried to influence the children to be more observant.

The early 'fifties were the golden years for the East Brunswick congregation. Apart from the Lubavitchers, other families who joined the *shule* and became a part of its life were the Zylberszacs and the Wajsmans. Herman Zylberszac had a beautiful singing voice, and was the *chazan* throughout much of the 1950s and the 1960s. For him it was a *mitzvah*, as the *shule* played a great part in his life. His son, Mr. B. Silver, recalls that their home would be flooded with people who had come to break their fast after *Yom Kippur*. Leah Waysman filled the office of Secretary in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and was in charge of the seating arrangements. Seat rental would be varied according to people's ability to pay.

The synagogue had a happy friendly atmosphere. People shared a similar background and outlook on life. There was a group of women who all attended *shule*, went to WIZO meetings, and played cards together. Many of the men were capable of leading the service, and the style of service would be either Sephardic or Ashkenazic depending upon who was *davening*.

For a few years, on the High Holydays one hundred and fifty extra seats were hired. The regular attenders had their own pews. It was so crowded that people would even have to stand outside near the windows, hoping to hear the service. On these days the congregation would be addressed by either Mr. Yoffe, Mr. J. Sperting, or Mr. Balberyszski.

Throughout the 1950s, Rabbi Isser Kluwgant volunteered his services as Reader and spiritual leader. He was a learned gentleman, with an interesting personality, and was held in high esteem. People enjoyed his weekly *shiurim*. His son, Mendel, officiated when Edith and Max Goldberg's two sons were Barmitzvah. Mrs. Kluwgant and Mrs. Budnow provided the *kiddush* on *Shabbat*. As Mr. Budnow was the caretaker, his family lived on the synagogue premises.

In the latter half of the 1950s, the number of congregants began to dwindle. Members became more financially secure and moved south of the Yarra to Prahran, St. Kilda and Caulfield. This was a well-trodden path for Jewish migrants; as their financial situation improved they moved to the 'better' southern and south-eastern suburbs, where the established 'Australian Jews' lived.

On the High Holydays there was still a 'full house', and this remained the case until the late 'sixties. On *Shabbat*, however, Mr. Yoffe found it difficult to keep up the numbers sufficient for a *minyán*. As the more affluent members departed, seat rental was no longer charged, and it also became difficult to finance the upkeep of the synagogue.

Mr. Yoffe remained President until his death on 13 July 1967; his obituary featured in the *Australian Jewish News* on 21 July. He knew of the successful outcome of the Six Day War and died happy in that knowledge.

For a few years Mr. Zylberszac filled the office of President. Then in the 1970s, Mr. (Mick) Kaplan, who owned a Kosher butcher's shop in Lygon Street, Carlton, became President; in fact, he was '*rabbi, gabbai, President and kiddush provider*' all at the same time. In this period the Gross family were living on the premises in a caretaking capacity. This was the decade in which the Goldberg family stepped in, and attempted to bring about a revival of the congregation.

In March 1981 a *Purim* party was held and an associated appeal raised £1200 towards rebuilding the synagogue. To raise additional funds a raffle was held, and an application was lodged for an appeal to be held through the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies. Subsequently, the Goldberg boys, Harry and Mark, organised

working bees. The roof and some of the flooring required renewal. The Fink family donated carpets, the Goldbergs painted, and the synagogue was partly restored. For the Goldberg family it was a valiant effort, and the fact that the life of the synagogue was able to continue was due mainly to the time and money that they invested in it.

The Goldberg family were often in the position of having to coerce people to attend in order to form a *minyan* — it was frequently necessary to knock on the door of a particular young student who lived nearby. The service having then commenced, another of the congregants, who was a bookmaker, would push to have the service finish early, so that he could leave for the racecourse.

By 1983, the secretary, Ian Elliott, in reply to a questionnaire from the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, stated that the congregation comprised twenty-three financial members, of whom just twelve were regular attendees. Four of the total membership were ladies. The Brodsky family now lived on the premises in a care-taking capacity.

On the High Holydays there would be a good attendance of some seventy to eighty people. Most had long since left the area, but retained their attachment to the *shule* because of the warm informality of the atmosphere. To break the fast after the final service on *Yom Kippur*, a meal would be provided by Mrs. Goldberg and Mrs. Kaplan, and all who were there would be invited to partake.

In 1983 Mr. Elliott wrote to the Prime Minister, the Hon. R. J. Hawke, M.P., Member for Wills. He invited Mr. Hawke to visit them, as local member and friend of the Jewish community, in order to formally commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the congregation. The date suggested, indeed the year, was arbitrarily chosen, but was prompted by the knowledge that such a celebration was well overdue. In particular, the committee hoped to re-gather many former members for such a celebration, thereby gaining additional donors for the completion of the restoration works. Although the Prime Minister's office sent a warm and favorable response, the organisational problems proved to be too daunting for the small committee.

Following the closure of the *Talmud Torah Hascola* in Carlton in the mid-1980s, the half dozen remaining members of that congregation joined the East Brunswick *shule*. They were mostly elderly people, living on their own, who attended for the social contact. Ian Elliott described it as 'the weekly get-together with Max and his boys'.

When Mr. Kaplan died, the congregants found that they were unable to function without his services and ministrations. By 1987 there were no more than seven men who could be relied upon to attend *Shabbat* services. Without a *minyan* they would gather to read from the *Chumash*. Harry Goldberg, as the President, had the sad task of presiding over the demise of the congregation, and the Trustees decided to dispose of the property and its contents.

Subsequent to this distribution being made, the Ark was discovered in a Clifton Hill (Melbourne) antique shop, and was purchased by Temple Beth Israel. It has been used in the temporary synagogue at Alma Road during the rebuilding of the Temple and is soon to be used in the construction of the Hall at King David School, where it will be the focus of prayer service.

The Trustees — Simon Feingold, solicitor, Max Goldberg, launderer, and Harry Goldberg, lecturer — auctioned the property on 20 December 1987, and it was sold at auction for \$150,000 which was considerably in excess of their expectations. It

was resolved to distribute the nett proceeds of the sale, and the appurtenances of the synagogue, in the following manner:

Israel — Oleh Centre	\$40,000
Russian Synagogue, and Drug Rehabilitation Centre (through the Yeshivah)	\$30,000 (and a <i>Sefer Torah</i> , Reading Desk and Pews)
Montefiore Homes for the Aged	\$15,000
Jewish Welfare Society	\$15,000
Access	\$ 5,000
Jewish Holocaust Centre	\$5,000
Yavneh College	\$5,000
Australian Jewish Historical Society	\$5,000
Moorabbin Synagogue	\$10,000 (and a <i>Sefer Torah</i>)
Makor Resource Centre	\$10,000
Anti-Cancer Council	\$9,000
Caulfield Synagogue Youth Minyan	(a <i>Sefer Torah</i>)
Chabad House, East Bentleigh	(the <i>Bimah</i>)

In 1988, the Historic Buildings Council conducted an investigation of the property with a view to its possible inclusion on the Register of Historic Buildings. In 1982, the Brunswick Conservation Study had recommended that the building be placed on the Register. On 17 February 1988, Douglas Hill, as administrator of the National Trust for Victoria, wrote

It is with pleasure that the above-mentioned building has been included in the National Trust's Register. The Register lists those places which, in the Trust's opinion, are important parts of Australia's heritage and which therefore require special care.

Whilst it was the stated wish of some heritage-minded individuals associated with both the National Trust and the Brunswick City Council that the fabric of the building be preserved as a former synagogue, the building has in fact now reverted to its original use as a private residence.

THE DUNERA AFFAIR: A SCANDAL FOR WHOM?

Paul R. Bartrop

Read before the AJHS — Victoria on 17 September 1990

The year 1990 sees the fiftieth anniversary of the departure from England and arrival in Australia of the infamous transport ship *Dunera*. One of the recurrent themes of authors who have examined the history of the *Dunera* is that the whole affair was a scandal of which both the British and Australian governments should be forever ashamed and apologetic. The purpose of this paper is to question this prevailing 'wisdom', and to consider whether the word 'scandal' is in fact appropriate to describe the voyage or its aftermath.

There is little doubt that in the summer of 1940 Britain was fighting for its life. The so-called 'Phoney War' ended on 10 May with the German invasion of the Low Countries. Britain would soon stand alone awaiting a German invasion; its resources were then stretched beyond capacity as Italy entered the war in June and threatened the British Mediterranean lifeline. New considerations of security now confronted the British. Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities the British Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, had made a declaration that the government would draw a clear distinction between enemy aliens and refugees from Germany and Austria, and aliens tribunals had been set up throughout the country to classify the refugees into the following categories:

- A — persons to be immediately interned as not being absolutely reliable;
- B — persons left at liberty, but subject to certain of the restrictions applicable to enemy aliens under the Aliens Order of 1920;
- C — persons who should be free from all restrictions under the Aliens Order, except those applying to friendly aliens.

Both the B and C categories were classified as refugees from Nazi oppression, and generally considered by the British people sympathetically. As a result of investigations undertaken by the aliens tribunals, 568 refugees were placed in category A and interned; about 6,800 were classified as B, whilst the vast majority, numbering nearly 65,000, were classified as C.

With the invasion of the Low Countries a panic emerged in Britain which saw all enemy aliens, whether refugees or not, as potential fifth columnists who may be spies ready to spring into action once the Germans invaded. On 12 May Sir John Anderson issued an order which would 'temporarily' intern all male Germans and Austrians over sixteen and under sixty (excluding the invalid and infirm) throughout the coastal regions of England and Scotland. All other male aliens in the same age group, regardless of their nationality, were also to be subjected to restrictions: daily report to the nearest police station; prohibition from using any motor vehicle (except public transport) or bicycle; and a curfew between 8 pm and 6 am. At the end of May a second order provided that all B category persons of enemy nationality, male and female, anywhere in the country, should be immediately interned. Then in the last week of June, as the panic measures intensified with the collapse of France, an order was issued for the general internment of *all* adult males of enemy nationality between the ages of sixteen and sixty, throughout the country. The great majority of these were men who had been placed in the C category, and included

many engaged in work of national importance as scientists and educators, as well as many students from schools, colleges and universities.

Accompanying the panic measures to intern all enemy aliens were calls to deport as many as possible from Britain to places where they could do the least damage to the war effort. On 3 June new Prime Minister Winston Churchill wanted to know why arrangements could not be made to deport twenty thousand internees to Newfoundland or St. Helena, and on 7 June the Dominions Secretary asked the Canadian High Commissioner in London, Vincent Massey, whether Canada could take some of the internees off Britain's hands. Canada agreed that it could. Subsequently, ships taking internees across the Atlantic departed Britain on 24 June (*Duchess of York*, 2,602 internees), 30 June (*Arandora Star*, 1,213 internees), 3 July (*Ettrick*, 3,062 internees), and 7 July (*Sobieski*, 1,828 internees).¹

One of the transports, the *Arandora Star*, never reached its destination: it was torpedoed by a U-Boat a few hours out of Liverpool. Of the 734 Italian civilians on board, 486 lost their lives; of the 479 Germans, the death toll was 175. These are official figures. Discussions with survivors of the *Arandora Star* suggest that these numbers represent what could be an under-estimation. Of certainty is that some 444 survivors were plucked from the water by British and Canadian warships and later re-embarked on board another ship taking internees away from Britain: the 12,615-ton hired (or chartered) military transport (HMT) *Dunera*, bound for Australia. Altogether the *Dunera* carried 2,288 other internees, making for a total prisoner complement of 2,732. There were 141 guards and crew manning the vessel.

Australia had been approached to take internees after Canada. Without much delay, the Australians agreed to take six thousand, including women and children, *provided their role would simply be that of guarding the internees and there would be no possibility of their remaining in Australia after their release* (whenever that should be). The *Dunera* was thus the first of what were to be several transports: in the end, it was the only ship to come to Australia from Britain carrying internees. (Mention should be made here of the *Queen Mary*, which came to Australia from Singapore in September 1940 carrying over two hundred internees, men, women and children, who were immediately sent to the internment camp at Tatura. These people fell into the same general category of 'Overseas Internees' as the *Dunera* internees did.)

The story of the trip has been frequently told, and shall not be retold here.² In all of the accounts, however, instances are recorded of the most appalling injustices and mistreatment perpetrated by the guard detachment charged with security on board. The guard was made up from companies in the British Pioneer Corps, and from members of the Royal Norfolks, Suffolks and the Queen's Own Regiment. They were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel William Patrick Scott; his second-in-command was Lieutenant John O'Neill VC, MM. Neither of the two officers are remembered as humanitarians by the internees. Many of the other guards hardly acted any better; according to at least two authors, the reason can be found in their social character and origins. One of these authors, Barbara Winter, can be quoted in depth:

Internees said the guards were mainly what they called 'Soldiers of the King's Pardon', men released from various prisons for this specific task. Many documents relating to the disgraceful conduct aboard the *Dunera* are not open to public scrutiny; one reason for this may be that this was not a group of ordinary soldiers who happened to turn vicious, but in many cases they were known criminals with previous convictions for theft and violence, and this was known to the British authorities. Someone had blundered or did not care; those in authority should have known that many of these men, including many officers, were entirely unfit to be entrusted with any responsibility. Thus prisoners

were robbed, beaten and starved aboard *Dunera*. Considering the quality of many of the guards, this should have been expected.³

Whether this is true or not was irrelevant to the internees themselves: all they knew was that some members of the guard detachment were responsible for beating, looting, robbery, torture, and intimidation.

As the ship sailed halfway around the world, its key ports of call were in West Africa (Freetown and Takoradi) and South Africa (Cape Town). From there the ship proceeded directly across the Indian Ocean to Australia. A brief narrative of subsequent events would read something like this: on 26 August the Australian coastline was sighted for the first time, and the next day the *Dunera* docked in Fremantle; on 3 September the ship arrived at Melbourne, where a number of internees were disembarked and sent to the internment camps at Tatura; on 7 September the ship docked in Sydney and off-loaded the remainder (and the majority) of the internees. The next day, after a nineteen-hour train trip, these internees arrived at Hay internment camp where they were divided into two groups; Camp 7, which mainly comprised Jewish internees, and Camp 8, which was made up of political internees and Catholic Germans. The internees then quickly began to settle into an existence which was intended to efficiently and, so far as possible, comfortably enable them to survive the experience of captivity and perhaps even gain something positive from it.

While all this was taking place, in Britain events were in train which would greatly affect the status of the *Dunera* internees. Even before the worst of the Blitz had passed, by September 1940, questions about the arbitrary nature of the arrests of internees earlier in the year began to be asked in the House of Commons. The upshot of these questions saw a new set of exemptions from internment published in October 1940. These exemptions included most of those who had been sent to Australia on the *Dunera*.

Acknowledging they were wrong, therefore, the authorities in the British government contacted the Australian government with the information that the internees were now eligible for release, subject to an appeal on behalf of each internee before a reclassification board. The Australians were delighted, no more so than when the British went on to suggest the way in which the releases should take place. An Army Officer seconded to the Home Office would be sent to Australia to help facilitate the repatriation of the internees to Britain, where they would then be released. The Australian view was that this was the most logical and acceptable solution. Until this Officer arrived, however, the internees had no option but to remain in internment. That had been the arrangement agreed to originally, and there was logical reason, in the view of either the Australians or the British, to depart from this.

It will be recalled that the Australians had originally agreed to act merely as jailers for the British; they would house the internees, guard them and feed them (all with substantial reimbursement from the British government), but *under no circumstances* would the internees be permitted to enter Australian society as immigrants. It was as if the internees were hermetically sealed off from Australian society: they would be *in* Australia, but not a part of it. The Australian authorities, moreover, had always said that if their status should ever change in Britain, then it should be in Britain that their situation should be rectified — but not in Australia.

The British government thus acknowledged its mistake, and duly despatched its Home Office Liaison Officer to Australia to rectify the situation. He was Major Julian Layton, a London Jew who had already a great deal of experience with refu-

gee and internee matters. In the early 1930s, he had gone to Australia in an attempt to facilitate refugee entry; he had been in Germany on numerous occasions dealing directly with the Nazis in trying to arrange exit visas; and he had for a time been in charge of the Kitchener Transmigration Camp at Richborough, where he had got to know many of those who were later interned. He was thus known (and respected) by many of those in Australia, on both sides of the wire.

After his arrival in March 1941 (after journeying via Canada, where he apprised himself of conditions prevailing for the 'overseas internees' who had been sent there just before the *Dunera* voyage), Layton quickly found that the task of repatriation was not going to be as simple as he had at first anticipated. The usual bureaucratic inertia which takes place when mistakes require rectification had taken hold, and things were going to 'take time'. Not deterred by this, Layton set about achieving the possible, and allowing the 'impossible' to work itself out. Two early measures are worthy of note.

The first of these saw the internees transferred from the Camps at Hay to Tatura (Victoria), an altogether better climate which was both needed and appreciated by the internees. The second saw the beginning of a process whereby compensation would be paid by the British government to the internees for the losses they incurred on the *Dunera*. This was an important concession, as it must not be overlooked that the drama took place during wartime, a time when all manner of injustices and threats to civil liberties can (and do) take place. It must also be noted and remembered that the British government was very quick to acknowledge its mistake, and sent an officer halfway around the world in order to redress the situation and arrange for the repatriation and release of the internees. Three of the guards who behaved so brutally on the *Dunera* were tried by court-martial on a variety of charges upon their return to the United Kingdom; one was actually found guilty, reduced to the ranks, sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and dismissed from the Army. The British government went out of its way to pay restitution to the internees, a figure of £35,000 eventually being paid out as compensation for physical losses incurred during the voyage. That this took place at a time when Britain was engaged in a war for survival, when it needed literally every penny for the war effort, is strong evidence that the mistake was sincerely regretted and that the British government was sensitive to the injustices to which the internees had been subjected.

As a result of Layton's efforts for repatriation, several hundred of the internees ultimately did manage to return to Britain, risking a hazardous sea voyage at a time of total war. Others were able, again with Layton's help, to move to other countries while the war was still in progress. Those who did not want to return to freedom in Britain, or who were concerned that to do so would entail more risks than if they remained in Australia, elected to remain in internment until conditions improved or changed. There was no 'release-into-Australia' option — and the internees had been repeatedly told this. It was not a matter of Australia keeping them there: the Australians stuck by the original arrangement, and allowed the British government to rectify its own mistake — as it had always said it would do.

It is ironic, therefore, that so many of the *Dunera* internees ultimately stayed and became valuable members of the Australian community in a staggering variety of professional and technical fields. What brought about the change? A constant theme running through the internees' whole experience was a desire to be released, in most cases so as to contribute to the war effort against the common enemy. After the entry of Japan into the war, when Australia was itself threatened, the Australian

government provided the internees with the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty in a practical way by joining the Army in a non-combatant labour role. Almost all who had not yet returned to Britain took advantage of the offer. Their ultimate reward, though it is problematical how many had sought it, was a further offer from the government: this time to stay permanently in Australia. The internees had done their bit; they had shown themselves to be 'dinkum'. For the Australians, no accomplishment by a foreigner could be greater than this.

For all this, the question must be asked as to what can be concluded about the affair. The British, for their part, had admitted their mistake; had sent an officer across the world to arrange the repatriation of the internees; had compensated these same internees to the value of £35,000 at a time when the resources of the nation were stretched beyond capacity; and (a point omitted earlier) consented to the now former 'enemy aliens' joining the British Army in order to perform labour duties in the Pioneer Corps. The Australians, in turn, had stuck to their original arrangement with the British, and had not abandoned the internees or allowed their condition (in fact quite the opposite); had agreed to the transfer of the internees from Hay to a better climate at Tatura; had gone against their own arrangement with the British government, by allowing the internees to join the Australian Army in a labour capacity; and, their 'loyalty' having been demonstrated, ultimately permitted over seven hundred of the internees to stay on as permanent settlers.

When all these measures are taken into consideration, the question of whether the *Dunera* experience was a scandal or not surfaces very clearly. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, the word 'scandal', so defined, is something which occasions a 'general feeling of outrage or indignation, esp[ecially] as expressed in common talk, opprobrium'. In that context, there should be no doubt that the journey on board the ship *was* a scandal; this was acknowledged when the British government went so far as to put three of the guards on trial and pay compensation to the internees for losses incurred on the ship. Other than that, there are few other aspects of the *Dunera* experience which can be described as 'scandalous'. The fact was that the original round-up and arrest in Britain was a blunder — a monumental mistake — but performed at the time with wholehearted support from a great many British people (and possibly even a majority). There followed the trip, which was, as stated, truly scandalous; but once the internees arrived in Australia their treatment, though unfortunate and frustrating (and all too frequently humiliating, such as when the internees had to write their letters on prisoner-of-war paper), was not scandalous. Indeed, the process of extremely slow, but gradual release was not so much scandalous as appreciated by those whose fate had in 1940 been extremely uncertain in Britain.

It is therefore difficult to accept arguments which suggest that there was any sort of 'conspiracy' involved in the *Dunera* affair. This is suggested throughout Cyril Pearl's book *The Dunera Scandal* (the very title is a giveaway as to his position) through a clever use of suggestion and innuendo, and has recently been reinforced in the popular media through the pages of the *Age Good Weekend* magazine (1 September 1990). In this article the author, Alan Gill, quotes Cyril Pearl's widow Paddy along the following lines:

The British admitted to their fault straight away. . . . Immediately the ship left, there was a howl in the press, they realised what they had done. There were debates in the House of Commons. In contrast, when they [the *Dunera* Boys] got to Australia, the Government headed by Menzies was not the faintest bit interested. . . . He bunged them into Hay and wasn't moved by pleas from anyone.⁴

This does not consider the fact that the *Dunera* internees fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army, and its Minister, nor that the internees were not so much 'bunged' in Hay than placed in camps which had been specially constructed for them while they were still *en route* from England. This notwithstanding, Gill then provides his own contribution to the 'scandal' idea:

Two decades after [Cyril] Pearl began his researches, I found Australian Archives staff in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne almost embarrassingly eager to please. Thanks to recent computerisation of records, I obtained a list of all Government files (about 30) bearing the name *Dunera*. They contained fascinating revelations concerning British and Australian official attitudes, but no letter or memo to or from the PM. This supports theories of a cover-up.⁵

The logic leading to this conclusion is most unfortunate. Pointing to an absence of documents bearing the Prime Minister's signature does not prove that he had no interest: all it shows is that the researcher has not found any documents to back up his preconceived notions. It does not 'prove' anything — least of all the existence of a cover-up. A balanced position has either not been considered or has been edited out of the final copy; either way, readers of the article may be confirmed of earlier suggestions that a cover-up has taken place. Claims of a conspiracy have fuelled the allegation that the *Dunera* affair was a scandal. As this paper has attempted to show, however, the word 'scandal' is really inappropriate when describing everything but the trip itself.

There is one area, for all this, where the post-*Dunera* experience does fall under the heading of 'scandalous' — and it is still with us today. In his 1983 account, Cyril Pearl drew the public's attention to the 'ludicrous 100-year ban' which the British Home Office had placed on the *Dunera* files in London.⁶ This ban has not been challenged recently, so it may be assumed the ban still stands. Many of the files in the Australian Archives are also closed, or open only with exceptions. Perhaps, then, the time is again right for the wisdom of these restrictions to be questioned, in light of what we now know of the *Dunera*. The challenge before the governments of both Britain and Australia should now be to re-examine the closed files with a view to overturning earlier bans. In 1990, fifty years after the event, there is little to be uncovered of which the wider reading public is not already aware. Those who lived through the *Dunera* affair are owed a debt of explanation which only the release of the relevant documents can provide. The continued failure of both governments to face up to this is, it can be argued, the real *Dunera* scandal: and it is still to be resolved.

NOTES

1. These figures are derived from Ronald Stent, *A Bespattered Page? The Internment of 'His Majesty's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens'*, London, Andre Deutsch, 1980, p. 96.
2. See, generally, the following: Benzion Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, Sydney, Cassell, 1979; Cyril Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal: Deported by Mistake*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1983; Peter and Leni Gillman, 'Collar the Lot! How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees', London, Quartet, 1980; and Paul R. Bartrop with Gabrielle Eisen (eds.), *The Dunera Affair: A Documentary Resource Book*, Melbourne, Jewish Museum of Australia/Schwartz and Wilkinson, 1990.
3. Barbara Winter, *Stalag Australia: German Prisoners of War in Australia*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1986, p. 79. This story is corroborated in part by Ronald Stent, who writes: 'One internee says that there were ex-jail birds amongst the soldiery who had been granted a Royal Pardon upon joining the Army. They had been considered unfit for normal combat or garrison duties, but entirely suitable as guards.' At the same time, he footnotes that 'the recollections of several internees about the regiments vary. The information may therefore not be entirely accurate, or comprehensive' (Stent, p. 115).
4. Alan Gill, 'When Friends Were Enemies', the *Age Good Weekend*, 1 September 1990, p. 24.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Pearl, p. v.

THE SEPHARDIM OF AUSTRALIA

Gad Ben-Meir

Sephardim in Australia form part and parcel of the general Jewish Community which is predominantly Ashkenazi. There are no specific statistics to evidence their true numbers. My own estimate ranges between 5–6,000 scattered over the States and Territories.¹ The vast majority live in Sydney (about 3,500–4,000) and Melbourne (about 1,200–1,500), where they succeeded in developing their own congregations and building their own synagogues. In this article, I will endeavour to sketch the history of Sephardim in general and of Sephardi settlement in Australia in particular. I will review their achievements to date and express an opinion about their future.

In writing this article, I was greatly assisted by the book *Sephardim in Australia and New Zealand* written by Mr. Aaron Aaron,² and by the scholarly papers written by Dr. Myer Samra,³ Mr. Henry Shaw,⁴ and Ms. Fiona Kaufman.⁵ Each in his or her own way has contributed appreciably to the knowledge about and understanding of Sephardi history and the significance of Sephardi tradition and culture.

The central fact in the early difference between Sephardim and Ashkenazim is that over a very long period of time, in fact until the end of the sixteenth century, Sephardim lived under the rule of mighty empires — the Byzantine, Persian, Moslem, Mongol and finally Turkish. The Ashkenazim lived among Christians. And whereas the last of those Empires declined, there was a dramatic rise to power by the northern and western world in which the Ashkenazim lived. The Golden Age of Spain had first taken form in the Moslem period, and this was an essential element in the unity of the Sephardi world. Even though their beliefs and prayers were basically the same, differences in rituals, liturgy and folk practices were maintained over the centuries.

Thus, in the old centres of Safad, Baghdad, Cordova; in Amsterdam, Salonika, Constantinople; in Buchara, Smyrna and Sarajevo, Verona and Padua; in Marrakesh, Alexandria, Yemen or Cochin, Sephardim maintained their distinctive liturgy and cultural awareness. This treasury of Rabbinic scholarship, religious and philosophical investigation, and cultural and poetic excellence left by the *Gaonim* of Baghdad, Palestine and Persia, and by the giants of Judeo-Arabic literature in Spain, have become the mainstay for the spiritual survival of all contemporary centres of Jewish life. It is this heritage that Sephardim and trying to maintain and further develop in a new setting. What has happened to Jewish history is that this heritage, shaped over many centuries in the Middle East and spread all over the Jewish world have come back to the ancient homeland where modern Zionism established the State of Israel. Meanwhile, a remarkable change in the relative positions of Sephardim and Ashkenazim has occurred. Since the mid-sixties, Sephardim have outnumbered Ashkenazim in Israel. A new phase of cultural cross-fertilisation not only between Sephardi and Ashkenazi, but also between Jew and Arab, has commenced.

The two great groups into which Jews are divided are called Sephardim and Ashkenazim. In essentials their differences are in liturgy and in pronunciation of Hebrew. The Sephardi liturgy was derived from the great Jewish centre set up in

Babylonia by the exiles settled there by Nebuhadnezzar after the fall of the Kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C.E. The Ashkenazi liturgy was derived from the revived community established in Palestine by the returning exiles who accompanied and followed Ezra and Nehemia. The development of Judaism, or rather, of Jewish liturgy, followed therefore two separate courses; the fact that communications between Spain and Babylonia were closer than those between Spain and Palestine made the influence of Babylonian Jewry prevail amongst the Sephardim. The pronunciation of Hebrew by both communities also developed considerable differences, but not so extensive as to make the language of one group completely unintelligible to the other. Moreover, many Sephardim travelled a lot and came into contact with more widely scattered Jewish communities than did the Ashkenazim, who until the turn of the century were never established outside Europe.⁶

In their new homes in North Africa, in Turkey and in Italy the Sephardim absorbed the local communities so that for instance in Italy, where the Jews originally followed the Ashkenazi rite, the whole community in the end became Sephardi. The separation of the Sephardim from the Ashkenazim, therefore, goes back probably to the beginning of the present era. The Jews who left Spain in 1492, and Portugal five years later, settled for the most part in North Africa, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire. After them, for two centuries and even longer, came the Marranos,⁷ whose immigration to some extent followed the course of their earlier brethren. They settled in increasing numbers in South and Central America and the West Indies, where, although still under Spanish and Portuguese rule, they thought that the hand of the Inquisition and of its secular supporters would not reach them. Albert Hyamson⁸ recounts a story which, he said, could not be confirmed but could be true. If authentic it brings into sharper focus the origins of the Anglo-Jewish community on the one hand and demonstrates the extraordinary sacrifices some Marranos made in order to maintain their faith.

In 1593 some Marrano fugitives from Portugal on a ship captured by an English vessel, were landed in England. Prominent in the party were a young man, Manuel Lopez Pereira, and his sister, Maria Nunez. Reports spread of the beauty of this girl and the Queen herself became interested. She was captivated by the girl's charm and offered her and her brother permission to settle in England, but the call of Judaism was stronger than personal ambition or prosperity. Settlement in England, even under Royal protection, meant, they felt, the ultimate loss of their Judaism. Pereira and Nunez refused the tempting offer and proceeded to their original destination, Amsterdam. There they helped in founding a Sephardi Jewish community, which in course of time became the parent of Bevis Marks, the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation in London.⁹

It was Marranos such as these who were the first Jews to settle in England after the expulsion of the Jews from the Kingdom in 1290 C.E. They established themselves mainly in London where they prospered and contributed to the wealth and influence of the city. They maintained relations with their brethren in Amsterdam, Montreal, New York and the West Indies, and they eventually produced one of England's greatest Prime Ministers — Benjamin Disraeli. It was a quarrel in 1813 with Bevis Marks over an imposition of a fine of £40 on his father Isaac that led to the baptism of the family in 1817. But for this historic incident, Disraeli could never have become Prime Minister. Throughout his fascinating political career Disraeli maintained his pride in his Jewish ancestry.¹⁰

The genesis of Sephardi settlement in Australia is directly related to the descendants of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of England. Several of the Jewish convicts

on the First Fleet had Sephardi names, and among the free settlers were a number of Sephardim who made considerable contributions to the development and wealth of the Colonies, as did their predecessors in the City of London. More about that later. Let me here recount the story of another ship which sailed the Mediterranean to Spain some five centuries before the ship which carried Pereira and Nunez to England.

During the reign of the Umayyad Calif Abdul Rahman the Third in Cordova (912–916 C.E.), a foreign vessel sailing towards Spain was seized by the Calif's Admiral Ibn Rumahis. The ship carried a Babylonian Jewish family: Moses Ibn Inoch, his wife and their young son. Fearing dishonour the wife cast herself into the sea, while the boy and his father were taken captive and brought to Cordova where they were ransomed by the Jewish community. Moses Ibn Inoch turned out to be one of the most learned teachers at the famous Babylonian Academy of Sura. He had been sent on a fund-raising mission to Jewish centres in Spain and North Africa. At the time, Spanish Jewry was 'in a sense a religious cultural colony of Babylonian Jewry'¹¹ and the Western Arab Califs were, therefore, eager to encourage their Jewish subjects to become independent of the hegemony of Eastern Jewish learning and to stop sending funds to the lands of the Eastern Califs, their arch-enemies. And so, with the help of Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, a cultured Jew and the Calif's trusted adviser,¹² Moses Ibn Inoch was appointed the head of the Talmudic school in Cordova. Under him and his friend Dunash Ben Labrat, another Babylonian scholar, Jewish literature and philosophy entered a new era lasting almost five centuries.

During this period Spanish Jewish philosophers, men of letters and grammarians produced such rich writings that it became known as the Golden Age of Jewry, both Sephardi and Ashkenazi. It is, therefore, no co-incidence that the works referred to above were all written during this period in Spain, almost all in Arabic. That includes, for example, Ibn Gabirol's two works *Mekor Hayyim* (*The Fount of Life*) and *Tikkun Midot Hanefesh* (*The Improvement of the Qualities of the Soul*). Both works were written in Arabic during the first half of the eleventh century. And so was the masterpiece *Sefer Hovot Halevavot* (*Duties of the Heart*) by Bahiya Ibn Pakuda, written between 1100 and 1150 C.E., and so were Yehuda Halevy's *Sefer Hakuzari* (*Book of the Kuzari*) and Maimonides' work *Moreh Hanebokhim* (*The Guide for the Perplexed*), a superb work of reconciliation and harmonisation between religion and philosophy. There was also Joseph Albo who completed his work *Sefer Haikkarim* (*The Book of Roots*) in 1428 in Hebrew.¹³

After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, new centres of Jewish learning were established in Amsterdam, Venice and Leghorn. Jews from those centres found their way to England, and in the middle of the 17th Century established the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue at Bevis Marks. Those were the carriers of the great Sephardi tradition which, through some of their descendants, found its way to this far-away continent, Australia. Some arrived forcibly as convicts, others were free settlers.

Punishment by Transportation in England was first introduced in the year 1597, but it was not until 1718 that the policy was put into effect. In 1786 the Eastern coast of Australia as selected as a site for a penal colony under the name of New South Wales. From their prisoners were conveyed to Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) in small craft. No proper records are available about Jewish convicts or settlers in those early days and some of the names available may be Sephardi or Ashkenazi.

For example, Judah Solomon, a convict transported into Hobart in 1819, later to become the most prominent member of the Hobart Jewish community. Others were Mordechai Cohen and Moses Cohen who reached Hobart in 1818 and 1822 respectively.¹⁴ The Hobart congregation did not have sufficient funds to build a synagogue. An appeal was made to Sir Moses Montefiore who made a generous contribution, and on Wednesday 9 August 1843, the community celebrated the laying of the foundation stone of the first synagogue in Tasmania. Judah Solomon and R. Furtado, who was Joseph Montefiore's partner, were present. The synagogue was built in Egyptian style in 1854. Hans Jacobs, its president, paid a visit to Calcutta where he met Lady Rachael Ezra of the Sassoon family. She presented the synagogue with a Holy Scroll encircled in a silver hand-beaten casing.¹⁵

The first sale of land in Geelong was held in Sydney in 1839. J. C. Breilat, who was a partner of Joseph Barrow Montefiore, bought two allotments in South Geelong for £30 each. The only Jew who lived there was Abraham Levy who ran a draper's business in Corio Street, North Corio.¹⁶

Joseph Barrow Montefiore bought land in Melbourne in the second sale of land also held in Sydney. He bought the plots at the corner of Spring and Flinders Lane, on the South side of Lonsdale Street between Spring and Exhibition Streets, and in Williamstown. At the age of 23 Joseph Barrow Montefiore, nephew of the great Sir Moses Montefiore, entered the Stock Exchange in London. He was one of twelve Jewish brokers in the City. That apparently did not satisfy his pioneering spirit. He immigrated to Australia where, during the subsequent half a century, he contributed greatly to the economic and political advancement of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. He supported the religious and social welfare of the Jewish communities in those colonies and became one of their highly regarded leaders.

Joseph Barrow Montefiore sought and obtained from the Governor 5,000 acres in Victoria, then went to Sydney and later to New Zealand where he and his brother Jacob founded a township in the Wellington Valley called Montefiores. The two brothers laid the foundation of the Bank of Australia and for a time Joseph acted as agent for the South Australian Government in New South Wales. He also gave evidence before a commission held in Sydney presided over by Chief Judge Forbes to enquire into the Usury act. Joseph Montefiore objected to any law fixing the interest on money. In disputed cases he suggested that Courts should be guided by the interest prevailing at the time. He contributed to the building of the Sydney Synagogue of which he became first President in June 1840. He was elected a member of the London Committee which pushed for the independence of Victoria from New South Wales. Joseph Barrow Montefiore became one of the most prominent businessmen in South Australia as well as in Victoria. He was one of the original trustees of the State Savings Bank, a member of the Stock Exchange, a committee member of the Chamber of Commerce and a pioneer in mining companies. He retired from business, returned to London and died there at the ripe age of 90.¹⁷

Other Sephardim who made valuable contributions to Jewish life in Victoria were E. Moses, A. E. Cohen, John Hendricks, C. Henriques, H. C. Pirani, C. Mendoza, G. Mendes, Mitchell Joshua Farjeon, Belifante, and Charles Dyte. They applied for and were readily given permission to conduct a Sephardi service at the Melbourne Synagogue. The numbers were apparently sufficient to justify not only a Sephardi service: in February 1846, J. M. Belisario wrote a letter to the editors of the *Voice of*

Jacob saying that the Sephardim 'will only accept the jurisdiction of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in London, not that of the local Beth Din'.¹⁸

In Ballarat, Charles Dyte became the President of the Jewish community in 1856. In 1861 he laid the foundation stone of the synagogue and of the Town Hall as Mayor of Ballarat. In 1866 he won the parliamentary seat of East Ballarat, whilst Edward Cohen won that of East Melbourne. In 1869 Edward Cohen was chosen by Premier McPherson as Commissioner of Trade and Customs. In 1860 Joseph Henriques was named the first U.S.A. consul in Melbourne. Pirani, who was a brilliant mathematician, architect and surveyor, designed the bridge at Castlemaine and acted as mining surveyor at Sandhurst. He was a mathematics master at Wesley College, lecturer in mathematics at the Industrial and Technological Museum and lecturer in logic and mathematics at the University of Melbourne. Mr. Mendoza was selected from among fifty-one applicants as the librarian of the Ballarat East Public Library. De Lissa went to England to persuade the British government to open up Northern Borneo and to build Sandakan as a harbour for an intermediate port between China, Japan and Australia. Henry Aron, a scholarly Talmudist, wrote on Jewish theology and literature in the Jewish Herald under the pseudonym Aron Ben-Akaria. M. Mendoza was the Secretary of the Jewish Mental Aid Society, and S. M. Solomon was the Secretary of the United Friends, the Jewish Benevolent Society.

Those early Sephardim continued to conduct the Sephardi services for the High Holy Days in the school room of the Melbourne Synagogue, Mendoza and Sicree officiating, until about 1873 when they stopped because they could not get a Sephardi *Minyan*.¹⁹ Thereafter they gradually assimilated into the larger Ashkenazi community.

George Mocatta must be regarded as one of the early pastoral pioneers of Queensland. In 1848 he sent 1600 head of cattle overland from Central New South Wales to Moreton Bay. The journey took three months and was hailed as a great venture, opening up a new phase in the development of the northern region. In 1855 he left the district and transferred most of the property to Montefiore Graham and Co. In the Toowong cemetery there are a number of Sephardi graves which go back one hundred years, with names such as Garcia, De Lissa, Ben-Sussan and Elias. After World War Two a few Sephardim settled in Brisbane, but were absorbed into the general Jewish community.²⁰

The very foundation of South Australia is firmly associated with the name of Jacob Montefiore, the elder brother of Joseph Barrow Montefiore. Jacob was born in Jamaica in 1801. He came to Australia in 1829. He was one of the Commissioners appointed by King William the Second to supervise the colonisation of South Australia. In 1843 he was given a civic welcome at the Shakespeare Tavern in Adelaide. The event was described in the *Southern Australian* of June 1843 as a testimony to his valuable services to the colony since its inception. The Montefiore Hill overlooking the city from North Adelaide perpetuates his memory and so does his own portrait presented to the Adelaide Art Gallery. Jacob Montefiore died in London in 1895.²¹

Unlike Jacob Montefiore, his brother Joseph spent many years in South Australia beginning in 1837 when he was acting as Agent for the colony of New South Wales. The second Jewish marriage solemnised in Adelaide was that of his daughter Esther Hannah who married Eliezer Montefiore Levi in May 1848 at his private residence at St. John Street, Adelaide. The last link with the Montefiores in South Australia

was severed when Moses Montefiore, Joseph's cousin, died in Adelaide in March 1920 at the age of 84.

Apart from Joseph and Jacob Montefiore other Sephardim figured prominently in the life of South Australian Jewry. Solomon Mocatta acted as Officiating Minister; Henry Senor Coronel was the First Secretary of the Congregation; Benjamin Mendes Da Costa bequeathed a valuable property to St. Peters College in 1869, and the Honourable Maurice Salom, who came to Australia in 1852, was a Member of Parliament and Treasurer, then President of the Hebrew Congregation. Moses Henriques, whose family was closely connected with the Montefiores and the Mocattas, was Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and acted for many years as Consul for Belgium. He married Emily Barrow Montefiore in Adelaide in February 1856.²²

At the turn of the Century none of those Sephardim were left in South Australia, and no others settled there until the mid-fifties when some Jews from Egypt came to Adelaide and soon became active participants in the life of the Jewish community. They were too small in numbers to constitute a congregation of their own but they did manage to introduce parts of the Sephardi *Minhag* into the Ashkenazi *Minhag*. The new blend reflected the mutual tolerance and amity between the two sections of the community. Amongst those prominent in the community were the late Victor Ades who was the President of the Board of Deputies from 1963 to 1970; Albert Hassan, Treasurer of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation since 1969; and Joseph Boulafi, President of the South Australian Zionist Organisation since 1962.²³

The history of Sephardim in Western Australia does not differ much from that in South Australia. In 1855, Sir Moses Montefiore's nephew presented the congregation with a *Sefer Torah* (Torah Scroll) which is now located in the *Heichal* of the Perth Synagogue. A century later, a second Scroll was presented to the synagogue, this time by Joseph Sebag Montefiore who was then President of the Sephardi Federation in London. The Hebrew Congregation in Perth was formed in April 1891. The first Jewish wedding in the goldfields of Coolgardie was solemnised in July 1897, the ceremony being performed by Reverend Moses Saunders of Perth. Another Sephardi of note was A. E. Abadee who served as President of the Perth Hebrew Congregation from 1918 to 1930.²⁴

After the Second World War a number of Sephardim settled in Perth. They came from Singapore, Rangoon, Egypt, England and India. Amongst them are the Bekhors, the Isaacs, the Benjamins, the Sadkas, and the Ezekiels. By 1948 they numbered about 70 people. There was some talk of establishment a Sephardi synagogue but there was not sufficient interest to bring it about. In 1960 the Nessim and the Shohet families who came from Singapore contributed generously to the building of a new synagogue, a Jewish school and a home for the aged. Two Sephardim of note currently living in Perth are Dr. Sassoon Gubbay, born in Singapore, a Neurologist at the Royal Perth Hospital and a convener of the Scientific Advisory committee, Australian Neurological Foundation; the other is Ronnie Gubbay, born in Baghdad in 1932, who came to Perth in 1968. He is currently the senior lecturer and director of the programme of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Western Australia, and the senior lecturer of the Free Jewish University in Perth.²⁵

The history of Sephardim in New South Wales is well and ably covered in Aaron Aaron's book *The Sephardim of Australia and New Zealand*²⁶ and by Myer Samra in his work *The Immigration of Sephardi Jews to Australia*, and more concisely in his recent article published in *Historical Essays to Honour Rabbi Dr. Israel Porush, OBE*,

on his *Eightieth Birthday*.²⁷ I shall, therefore, concentrate here on the main aspects of Sephardi life in New South Wales.

Among the 751 convicts transported in the First Fleet there were ten who could be identified as Jews, two of them Sephardim Sarah Burdo and Joseph Tuso. Between 1788 and 1830, 384 Jewish convicts arrived in Australia; at least thirty can be identified as of Sephardi origin, sixteen males and fourteen females — names like John Roman, James Larra, George Fransisco, Uziel Baruch, Aron Mendoza, Joseph Mordechai and Jacob Messiah. In 1787 Larra received a grant of fifty acres in the district of the Field of Mars at a rent of one shilling, on condition that he lived on and cultivated the land and not sell it before the expiration of five years. In 1798 he was granted a liquor licence and became the first publican in Parramatta. He received another grant of five hundred acres and the freehold of the Parramatta property. In 1815 he lost his property and tavern and in 1825 was sent to prison for debts incurred by his wife. He died in 1839 and was buried in the Devonshire Street Jewish Cemetery. He was undoubtedly the most prominent Jew of Australia's early settlers.

Of the free settlers, as mentioned before Joseph Barrow Montefiore and his nephew Jacob Levi Montefiore and other members of that great family were amongst the first Sephardim to arrive in New South Wales. Others were Walter Jacob Levy, Saul Samuel, Alfred De Lissa and George Mocatta, his cousin John Israel Montefiore and his partner David Furtado. Thus, the Jewish community in New South Wales gained some members of the English aristocracy. Within ten years, Joseph Barrow Montefiore owned eleven thousand acres of land in the Wellington Valley and became the President of the Jewish congregation in New South Wales. Saul Samuel became the first Jewish Minister of the Crown and the first Jewish magistrate in New South Wales. Alfred De Lissa became the founder and first Secretary of the Law Institute of New South Wales.

By the end of the 19th Century, Sephardim in all the colonies had gradually died or assimilated into the larger Ashkenazi community. Not until the Second World War did a new wave of Sephardim find their way into the life of Australian Jewry. They came from India, Burma, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Iraq, Persia, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, London and France.

Before the Six Day War, those hailing from India, Burma, Singapore and Shanghai formed the bulk of Sephardi immigration. These were the successors of the Asian Jewish communities established by Iraqi Jews in the late 18th and during the 19th Centuries. The Second World War destabilised those communities. Many fled the Japanese invasion, whilst others were held prisoners and were interned, mostly in Singapore. After the War, the survivors of these small scattered communities sought refuge in Australia when the White Australia Policy was in full swing. Though they were British subjects, generally of dark complexion, they nevertheless had to persuade the authorities that they were of European or white origin, not black or Asiatics. They were often made to disrobe to 'prove' the true colour of their skin.²⁸ In the majority of cases local Jewish leaders were required to testify that these Jews were 'of pure Jewish origin without any mixture of Indian blood'.²⁹ The views of the World Sephardi Federation in London were also officially sought. The Federation, under the presidency of Denzil Sebag Montefiore, was quick to assure the Australian authorities that those people were Jewish.

The 'new Sephardim' gravitated mostly to Sydney and Melbourne, where they organised themselves into separate congregations and conducted their own religious services and eventually established their respective Associations.

In 1855 a man named Saleh Aharon Khazzum, a native of Baghdad, came to Sydney after living a few years in Calcutta. At the end of the 19th century three of his grandsons — Jacob, Moshe and David — came to Sydney. Jacob stayed on, but his two brothers returned to Calcutta. It was Jacob Aaron who in 1962 laid the foundation stone of the first Sephardi Synagogue in New South Wales.³⁰ In 1948, Jacob's nephew, Reuben, came to Sydney, also from Calcutta, followed in 1950 by his brother Aaron, who is the author of *Sephardim in Australia and New Zealand*.

After 1978 a number of Sephardim came to Sydney from England, Egypt, Baghdad, Calcutta and Singapore, but the bulk of the present community came after the Second World War. Members of the community were divided as to whether or not to maintain their own ancestral tradition and form their own congregation, or integrate fully within the established Ashkenazi community. Rabbi Dr. I. Porush was amongst the leading proponents of 'saving the venerable rituals and customs of this major branch of Jewry for the variegated Jewish life in Australia'.³¹

The community proceeded to hold the first High Holy Day Services in 1947 and annually thereafter, and to establish the New South Wales Association of Sephardim in May 1951. Since then, Sephardim in New South Wales have gone from strength to strength despite the occasional eruptions of divisions or disagreements. In February 1961, Denzil Sebag Montefiore, then President of the World Sephardi Federation, visited Sydney. He was apprised of the efforts to build a Sephardi synagogue and, as a true believer in preserving Sephardi culture, he made a financial contribution and was instrumental in enlisting the support of the World Sephardi Federation as well. Jacob Aaron also made a handsome donation, and the foundation stone of the Synagogue was laid by him in July 1962. The Association received a further substantial donation from Dr. Nessim Gaon, the new President of the World Sephardi Federation, earmarked for the building of the Ladies' Gallery named after his wife, Renee. The Gallery was officially opened by the Haham Dr. Solomon Gaon on 30 November 1975.³²

The Sephardi Association of Victoria was formed on 1 November 1965. About fifty people attended the inaugural meeting at the home of Ken and Helen Bekhor in Cotham Road, Kew. Reuben Aaron, then President of the New South Wales Association, and Rabbi R. Lubofsky were guest speakers; the widow of the late Jacob Aaron of Sydney was among the honoured guests. Maurice Tuetta was elected first president, followed by Anwar Jawary in 1968, then by this author in 1972. I served for five years until the Sassoon Yehuda Synagogue was built and officially opened in March 1977 by the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, then Prime Minister of Australia. This was the first time in the history of this country that an incumbent Prime Minister officially opened a synagogue. The significance of the occasion was emphasised in the first passage of Mr. Fraser's address, when he said:

It is a very great honour and pleasure to be here today to open the first Sephardi Synagogue and Communal Centre in Victoria. I have searched for other words to describe the significance of this centre, but I have been able to find none better than those used by Gad Ben-Meir in his letter inviting me to be here: 'The significance of the achievement lies not in the size or splendour of the centre — it is in fact small and modest — but in its being an expression of the opportunity our free country offers its citizens to maintain their age-old traditions and their religious and cultural individuality'.

Australia has afforded this opportunity to people from every country in the world. In our age, when religious racial and cultural repression still exists, this opportunity is by no means an unimportant one; but it has been the dedication of the Australian Jewish community and of other ethnic communities around Australia to maintaining their heritage which has enabled the opportunity to be taken up, which has enabled Australia to develop increasingly as a multi-cultural society.³³

Some months before the Sassoon Yehuda Synagogue was completed, the very Rev. Haham Dr. Solomon Gaon, then Chief Sephardi Rabbi of England and the British Commonwealth, came for a visit. It was the first time that any Sephardi Chief Rabbi ever came to these shores, and both organisations in Sydney and in Melbourne were very pleased to receive him. Rabbi Gaon and, before him, Denzil Sebag Montefiore, were instrumental in extending financial assistance towards the building; but the Synagogue would not have been built were it not for the contribution made by Albert Yehuda of Melbourne. Mr. Yehuda was born in Baghdad, Iraq, lived in India in the forties, and settled in Melbourne in 1948. In recognition of his very generous and timely donation the Synagogue was named in perpetuity after his late father, Sassoon Yehuda, also a native of Baghdad.

On 7 April 1987, Malcolm Fraser returned to the Synagogue to help celebrate its tenth anniversary. It was a splendid occasion, indeed historic, in that the two Consuls-General of Egypt and Israel were for the first time sitting side by side, as honoured guests. In a way, it was a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel.

The existence of two Associations striving towards achieving the same objectives in Sydney and in Melbourne inevitably led to the establishment of the Sephardi Federation of Australia. The Inaugural Conference, held in Sydney in March 1971, adopted the Constitution and elected the first Executive. The birth of the Federation was not without some dramatic moments when conflicts about leadership and direction threatened the outcome.

The Federation for a while lived up to expectations, in that it gave Sephardim a voice nationally and internationally; unfortunately, it lies dormant at the present time, mainly because the present leadership in Victoria is, in my opinion, short-sighted.

Sephardim in the smaller States remain limited in numbers. They have not been able or willing to date to establish their own congregations and it is very doubtful that they will unless, of course, more Orthodox Sephardim settle there. The prospects of that happening appear to be remote. The position in New South Wales and Victoria is quite different.

The survival of Sephardim as a community in New South Wales is beyond doubt. Their numbers, the quality of their leadership and the variety of their religious, educational and social services will ensure their durability as a vibrant traditional Orthodox community. They are well integrated within the Jewish community and have their representatives sitting on the boards of various major Jewish organisations. For the most part of their congregational existence they had a Sephardi Rabbi who was instrumental in propagating the Sephardi *Minhag* and attracting the young. Because of their numbers they are able to retain a Rabbi; something that eluded Victorian Sephardim and the smaller congregations in other States. It is true that the community had its fair share of dissension and personality conflicts; all of that is now water under the (Sydney Harbour) bridge. The Eastern section of the community which seceded from the New South Wales Association of Sephardim now co-exists harmoniously with it. It is possible that within the next five years the Association will build a bigger Synagogue to cater for their expanding religious, educational and cultural needs.

Until two years ago, the Sephardi Association of Victoria managed to united the Sephardi community as a constructive constituent of the general Jewish community and its roof bodies. The common aspiration to build a synagogue was the prime motivation during the first decade. The inauguration of the Sassoon Yehuda Syna-

gogue in September 1976, its official opening in March 1977, and its tenth anniversary celebration in April 1987 must be rated as its crowning achievements. Unfortunately, the unity of purpose which underlay that unique achievement was suddenly shattered, hopefully not irrevocably, by the new leadership of the Association which took office in February 1987. The seeds of division and dissension they have sown brought about the alienation of almost the entirety of the Iraqi constituency and of the intelligentsia.

Even without this recent upheaval, Fiona Kaufman concluded in her honours thesis that it was 'unrealistic to hope for or expect a revival of Sephardi culture in the years to come, for such a culture is indeed foreign to those second-generation Sephardim brought up in Australia'.³⁴ Her conclusion was based on the tiny number of Sephardim, the limited prospects of their increase through procreation and immigration and the inevitability that, within an Ashkenazi-dominant culture, the younger Sephardi who does not usually attend religious services will, in varying degrees, absorb Ashkenazism rather than Sephardism. The accelerating rate of intermarriage between Sephardim and Ashkenazim is indicative of this sociological trend.

Contemporary Sephardism cannot rest on the laurels of the Golden Age. Each new generation of Sephardim must cultivate its own creativity by drawing on its cultural roots and assimilating modern sophistication. To do that, the community needs leaders whose clear vision and intellectual vigour are capable of inspiring the young to maintain their cultural individuality. The present leadership is, in my opinion, poorly equipped to cultivate such a vision. The last two years were spent in a vain attempt to demolish a synagogue which served the community well over the last twelve years and build another nobody really needs or can really afford. In the meantime, the silent membership remains entangled in the muddle and divisions those attempts have seemingly created. The push to 'Yeshivah territory' is bound to radicalise Sephardi Orthodoxy and alienate the majority who desire to preserve Sephardi culture and liturgy without the imposition of *Beth Shamai* practices.

I remain convinced, however, that Sephardim in Victoria will survive as a community. I do not consider 1,200–1,500 members of a community as 'tiny'³⁵ or too small to survive. Unlike their predecessors who could not bequeath a congregational legacy, Sephardim in Victoria have, I believe, irreversibly asserted their cultural individuality, and, unless they continue to suffer dissension and poor direction, Sephardim will resist the pressures of total assimilation into the dominant Ashkenazi culture.

NOTES

1. This estimate is based partly on *The Demography of the Australian Jewish Community 1981* by W. D. Rubinstein, Associate Professor of Social Sciences, Deakin University, published in June 1986 by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, and partly on estimates and observations made by leaders of the Sephardi Associations in New South Wales and Victoria. Out of the total, 2,000 are of Iraqi origin; the balance from Egypt, India, Singapore, Persia, Israel and other North African and Middle Eastern countries. See *Yisrael Rhammana: Kinship and Community Among Jews of Iraqi Origin in Sydney, Australia* by Myer Samra, University of Sydney. See also, *The Sephardi Voice: The Sephardi Community of Victoria 1800–1984, a Study*, by Fiona Kaufman, chapter 3, pp. 22–25.
2. Aaron Aaron was one of the founders of the New South Wales Association of Sephardim and its first Chairman. The book was published by the author in 1979.
3. Myer Samra was the Secretary and Executive Member of the New South Wales Association of Sephardim. The articles referred to are *Yisrael Rhammana* (see 1 above), and *The Immigration of Sephardi Jews to Australia*, University of Sydney.

4. Henry Shaw, *The Sephardim: their Origin, History, Tradition and Culture*, Prahran College of Advanced Education.
5. *The Sephardi Voice: the Sephardi Community of Victoria 1800–1984*, a Study. This was an Honours Thesis, 1984, University of Melbourne, Department of Middle Eastern Studies.
6. *The Sephardim of England*, Albert M. Hyamson, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1951, pp. 1–2.
7. The Marranos are Iberian Jews who had adopted Christianity more or less voluntarily, often under great pressure, and had remained in their homes only to find sooner or later that despite their submission, life in supportable conditions was impossible and that the choice lay no longer between partial conversion and exile, but between complete renunciation of their faith and death at the stake. Often they met the latter fate.
8. Hyamson, p. 8.
9. Bevis Marks was opened in 1701. It was on the occasion of its 250th anniversary that Albert M. Hyamson wrote his book *The Sephardim of England* in 1951.
10. Benjamin Disraeli was born in London on 21 December 1804, the eldest son of Isaac D'Israeli and Maria Basevi. His birth was registered in the book of records of Bevis Marks. His grandfather, Benjamin D'Israeli, immigrated to England from Cento in Italy in 1748 and became a member of the London Stock Exchange. Isaac D'Israeli was a *Yahid* (member) of the congregation but was not interested in the affairs of the Jewish community and his attendance at services was very occasional. His real interest was literature. In 1813 the *Mahamad* (Board of Management) elected him as a *Parnass* without his knowledge or consent. The *Ascamot* (Constitution) of the synagogue enabled the *Mahamad* so to elect and to impose a fine if a *Yahid* declined the honour. Isaac of course declined but refused to pay the fine of £40 stating, truthfully, that no *Yahid* could be less qualified for office than himself. He offered to continue to pay his usual contribution to the synagogue's funds. His refusal was ignored and in 1817 he was asked again to pay the fine. He replied regretting that the *Mahamad* was not satisfied to allow him to remain a passive member and he resigned. For himself he was content to remain outside all religious communities but he had to do something for the children who were attending non-Jewish schools; Benjamin was baptised in the Church of St. Andrew's at the age of thirteen. As a Jew he could not have been elected to Parliament until 1858 but because of his baptism he was able to enter Parliament in 1837 as the Conservative Member for Maidstone in Kent. It can safely be asserted that, but for the *Mahamad's* insistence on payment of the fine, Benjamin Disraeli could never have risen to be Prime Minister of England (Hyamson pp. 242–245). See also, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 15th Edition, Vol. 5, pp. 898–900.
11. Henry Shaw, p. 8.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
13. *Otzar Hammakhshava Shel Hayahdut (Treasury of Jewish Thought)* in 7 volumes published by Mahbarot Lesifrut and Yediot Aharonot, Israel. Reviewed by Nessim Rejwan in the *Jerusalem Post Weekly* and reprinted in *Kol Sepharad*, May 1966, World Sephardi Federation, London.
14. Aaron, p. 13.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–48.
27. *Historical Essays*, Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1988, pp. 29–35.
28. Myer Samra, *The Immigration of Sephardi Jews to Australia*, p. 115.
29. Myer Samra, 'The Early History of the New South Wales Association of Sephardim', *Historical Essays*, Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1988, p. 30.
30. Aaron, p. 93.
31. Israel Porush, *The House of Israel*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1977, p. 215.
32. Aaron, p. 247.
33. *Sassoon Yehuda Sephardi Synagogue, 10th anniversary celebration 1977–1987*, p. 22.
34. Fiona Kaufman, pp. 55–61.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

ISAAC JACOBS AND THE REFORM MOVEMENT

Malcolm J. Turnbull

The early history of Liberal Judaism in Australia is one of persistent agitation by a handful of committed individuals over a long period of time. It culminated in the foundation in 1930 of the Beth Israel synagogue, the first Liberal congregation in this country. While Beth Israel grew directly out of concern over the critical state of Australian Jewry in the 1920s, it also stood in direct succession to a number of earlier and unsuccessful reform bids. For example, as early as the 1880s, an abortive attempt had been made to establish the reform Temple of Israel in Melbourne. During the same period (and intervening years) a number of modernists had attempted to change the religious establishment from within. While minor reforms were effected from time to time, clerical opposition invariably meant that more sweeping or radical innovations were doomed to fail.

For at least sixty years prior to 1930 those committed to religious reform argued that traditional Judaism was growing more and more meaningless for the modern-day, enlightened Western Jew. As ever-greater numbers of Jews assimilated and became absorbed into the wider Australian population, so agitation for reform — as a counter-measure — strengthened. Ultimately, unsuccessful pioneer reformists were vindicated by the creation of Temple Beth Israel. Most prominent among these pioneers was Isaac Jacobs.

In describing the local Jewish community at the turn of the century, Hilary Rubinstein has singled out Jacobs as 'the clear and authoritative voice of Reform Judaism in Melbourne'.¹ For more than forty years he persistently sought the innovation of reforms to Judaism in the belief that traditional orthodoxy was failing to meet the needs of an ever more apathetic and religiously ignorant local Jewry.

Jacobs was a remarkable man. The epitome of Jewish success in the Colonies, he combined a memorable public life as businessman, humanitarian and wider community spokesman, with an intense involvement in Jewish communal affairs. His groundbreaking support for the Shepparton Orchard settlement was just one instance. Late in life he won considerable mainstream respect through his devotion to philanthropy and welfare work. In the long term, his main historical impact rests with his long-running battle for modernisation and liberalisation of Melbourne Judaism.

A reformist of unassailable integrity and deep sincerity, Jacobs was undeterred by ongoing traditionalist opposition to his calls for reform. While always working from within the orthodox mainstream (he was an active member of the St. Kilda synagogue from its inception until his death), his commitment to change strengthened with age. From relatively cautious advocacy of minor innovations to the ritual in the 1870s, he progressed to full-blown support for Britain's 'Jewish Religious Union' and a strong endorsement of American Reform Judaism in his final years. (As it eventuated, Temple Beth Israel — American affiliations notwithstanding — would ultimately adhere much more to British *Liberal* Judaism than to more extreme *American Reform*).

While my main purpose here is to examine Jacobs' role as a pioneer of Liberal Judaism in Melbourne, it may be useful first to glance briefly at his background and biography.

He was born in 1834 into a traditional Jewish home near Graudenz, Prussia (an area later described as 'the very heart-centre of old-fashioned and rigorous Jewish ideas and customs').² His father, Elias Rypinski, appears to have been a Polish migrant; he had married Henrietta Leisersohn the previous year. Both have been described as 'very devout Jews who brought their children up to be likewise'.³ Around 1836 the young family sought to better its circumstances by migrating to England. Elias quickly adopted the family name of Jacobs and established himself as a merchant in Manchester. Eight more children — six girls, two boys (one of whom died) — were born in that city between 1837 and 1853.⁴

Financial need compelled young Isaac to leave school at an early age.⁵ He began working life as office-boy with Philip Falk & Co., wholesale jewellers. Presumably he exhibited an early flair for the business as the company soon sent him out to the Colonies to open a local branch. The 18-year-old arrived in Melbourne in 1852.

Other members of the family followed Isaac's lead in migrating and several ultimately settled in Melbourne. Lesser Jacobs, who found employment with his brother's importing firm, married Isabella Harris (grand-daughter of pioneer Samuel Harris) and eventually returned to England.⁶ Augusta Jacobs emigrated to Melbourne in 1860. She married her brother's friend, Hyman Levinson, in the following year and moved with him to Ballarat, where Levinson helped found the local synagogue. They finally settled in the St. Kilda area.⁷ Another sister, Jane, married Isadore Gross and divided her time between London and Melbourne. Sophie Jacobs, who married Solomon de Beer in 1874, settled in Melbourne after ten years in New Zealand.⁸ Other sisters settled in America, Canada and New Zealand.⁹

With all their children married and dispersed around the world, Elias and Henrietta Jacobs returned to Graudenz, Prussia, where Elias died in 1874. Following his death Henrietta elected to join her children in Australia; she arrived in Melbourne in 1878 and lived with the de Beers and Levinsons until her death in 1899.¹⁰ (The Jacobs, de Beer, Gross and Levinson families were all closely associated with the early years of the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation).¹¹

Isaac Jacobs himself was married in 1860, to Hannah (Annie) Wolf.¹² The marriage was to last nearly fifty years and produced twelve children, three of whom died in childhood. One son, Julian Emanuel, was accidentally killed in 1877 when the house where he was living collapsed during a storm.¹³ Among the others were Louis, later a prominent Melbourne businessman; Philip Acland, a barrister; Octavia, who became Mrs. Henry Levy of Sydney; and Deborah (Daisy), who became Lady Isaacs, wife of the Governor-General.¹⁴ During their half-century of marriage, Isaac and Annie Jacobs lived at a succession of addresses in and around developing St. Kilda, including Acland and Dalgety Streets (in the 1870s), Beaconsfield Parade (in the late 1880s), Burnet Street (at the turn of the century) and, finally, 'Quisisana' in St. Kilda Road.

From his earliest years in pioneer Melbourne, Isaac Jacobs prospered. Soon after his arrival he progressed from colonial manager to partner as Falk & Co. expanded into general importing. In the 1860s he made the move into the tobacco industry with which he remained (passively) involved until his death. His first venture was Feldheim, Jacobs & Co. at 72 Queen Street, later superseded by Jacobs, Hart & Co. (Of the many firms with which he was associated, most gradually merged into the 'State Tobacco Company' and the 'British Australasian Co., Melbourne').¹⁵ Within a short time Jacobs became a well-respected and successful Melbourne business figure. In turn, he displayed a strong commitment to the wider community. He

served as an early president of both the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Manufactures, and later as a city delegate to the Bordeaux Exhibition in France. In later years his community involvements included pioneering philanthropic work, notably spearheading the Victorian Provident Loan Society and the Charitable Organisation Society.

Information on Jacobs' personal life is scanty. Son Philip's memoirs contain scattered references to his father and indicate an 'old-fashioned', very conservative man, fond of theatre, music and sports, and with a 'positive reverence' for learning and good writing.

Throughout his busy life . . . he tried hard to fill the gaps which fate had left in his education . . . Shakespeare, in his view, was someone almost divine . . . Polonius' speech to Laertes was, for him, on a level with the Ten Commandments.¹⁶

Business demands and erratic health restricted Jacobs' attempts to make up for his educational deficits, but he developed an early (and lasting) enthusiasm for the art of letter-writing. His lengthy contributions to the *Jewish Press* bear out his son's judgment that his writing style was conventional, correct, but unimaginative.¹⁷

In his biography of Sir Isaac Isaacs, Max Gordon describes the affluent middle class Jacobs home in Beaconsfield Parade, and notes that Jacobs and his wife delighted in entertaining young people of talent (like Isaacs) at musical evenings and other social functions.¹⁸

In common with most Australian Jews in comfortable circumstances, Isaac Jacobs readily conformed to the Anglo-Jewish model of 'Englishman abroad'. Fond of travelling, he returned to England a number of times and retained connections with the mother country throughout his life. In line with middle class colonial norms his sons were sent Home to English Public Schools. In addition, Jacobs was a founder of the local branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association.

During the 1890s he incurred severe financial losses in 'land boom' speculation. While his fortunes rallied to some extent, he never recovered completely from the reverses.¹⁹ His difficulties were compounded by recurring health problems, yet these setbacks only seemed to increase his dedication to welfare and charitable work. In an obituary article, Melbourne's *Age* newspaper would praise his philanthropic commitment during his later years. 'He gave to any man or woman in need, making no denominational distinction'.²⁰

Just as Jacobs was a leading figure in Melbourne business and welfare circles, so he was a leading figure in establishing a solid Jewish presence in pioneer Victoria. Indeed, he seems to have been prominent in practically all Jewish communal ventures during the second half of the century. Initially he was an active member of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, remaining with that synagogue after the East Melbourne split. During the 1860s he represented M.H.C. in attempts to reach consensus between the two congregations, including acting as chairman of the short-lived Committee on *Guerim* and *Gueros*.²¹ In the 1870s he was a founder member of the new St. Kilda synagogue, serving as treasurer on a number of occasions, and as president in 1873-75 and 1877-79.²²

Jacobs' leadership extended into many areas. He was a member of the board of the pioneering Melbourne Hebrew School which opened in January 1874. Following that institution's demise he became a founding committee-member of the Melbourne United Jewish Education Board in 1895. Similarly, he had an early involvement with the local Jewish press. When Solomon Joseph found himself in financial difficulties eighteen months after starting the *Australian Israelite* in 1871, Jacobs was among the businessmen who formed a public company to bail the

newspaper out.²³ Later in the decade he was actively involved with the finances of the new *Jewish Herald* and became a council-member of the 'Jewish Herald Association'.²⁴

In 1873 Jacobs was instrumental in establishing the Melbourne branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association, and he acted as its first treasurer and as long-time president of the branch.²⁵ Predictably, his philanthropic zeal found an outlet in helping to found the Jewish Aid Society. Towards the end of his life he was the moving force behind a Melbourne branch of the Jewish Territorial Organisation. From 1907 he lobbied for the establishment of an agricultural settlement to assist incoming Russian Jewish migrants; the resultant Shepparton settlement was later renamed in his honour.²⁶

Isaac Jacobs displayed a remarkable sensitivity and commitment to developing the local Jewish community. In summing up his life, the *Jewish Herald* would later comment on his tenacity and 'uncommon sense of duty', remarking that benevolence was his most prominent character trait.²⁷ This dedication to the public good underlay his concerns at the state of local Judaism. The *Jewish Herald* would continue: 'No-one has fought more strenuously to arrest the drifting from religious observances which has characterised latter-day Judaism'.²⁸ Jacobs' primary motivation was to render Judaism more relevant/meaningful to assimilating Jewish youth. In his view, 'the interests of pure religion and moral edification' could be served best by the reforms he advocated.²⁹

Jacobs' public calls for reforms to the synagogue service can be dated at least as far back as the early 1870s and the beginnings of the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation. From the start, predominantly German St. Kilda boasted a strong reform element, well-versed in the principles of Geiger, *et al.*³⁰ Only weeks after its first services the local Jewish Press blasted the infant congregation for introducing 'unauthorised and unwarrantable changes' into the ritual (i.e. omitting and curtailing some prayers).³¹ As a foretaste of things to come, Isaac Jacobs quickly demonstrated his commitment to change and his lack of confidence in the religious establishment. The *Australian Israelite* quoted him as asserting that St. Kilda laymen were competent to reform the synagogue service without the aid of the ministers. Indeed, he suggested that Melbourne's 'Reverend gentlemen' (Ornstein, Pulver and Rintel) might gladly endorse many reforms if they only *dared*.³² St. Kilda's second Annual General Meeting was enlivened (as many later meetings would be) by Jacobs' rallying cry: 'Orthodoxy has been tried and the effect of it was to keep persons from the synagogue, and to lead them to break the Sabbath'.³³

Newman Rosenthal records that there were two conflicting parties in the young St. Kilda congregation, alternately opposing the jurisdiction of either British Chief Rabbi Adler or English Reform's Professor David Marks.³⁴ Interestingly, the synagogue did not place itself under the Chief Rabbi for another thirty years. In obvious deference to the congregation's reform 'bloc', St. Kilda reserved its right to accept or reject Adler's rulings.³⁵ Jacobs, in particular, opposed relations with the Chief Rabbi, believing that Adler would not sanction changes.³⁶

From 1873 Jacobs led demands for alterations to the service. His success was minimal as he found himself evenly matched with the congregation's newly-appointed minister, Rev. Elias Blaubaum. Strongly opposed to any modification of the traditional service, Blaubaum inevitably conflicted with the reformists. Both men were strong and well-respected figures, sincerely committed to their respective viewpoints, and they would continue to hold and propagate opposing views for the next thirty years (until Blaubaum's death).³⁷

Blaubaum's Orthodoxy did little to curb Jacobs. Throughout the final decades of the century he persistently sought innovation and alteration. In the late 1870s a sub-committee of the St. Kilda congregation took a year to debate his demands for changes to the ritual; as it eventuated, all the members recommended were improved 'feeling' in the conduct of the service, and an improvement in the reading of certain prayers.³⁸ The garbled manner in which traditional services were conducted, the apparent needless repetitions and the general lack of reverence or feeling for the beauties of the liturgy were continual grievances from Jacobs. Services were lacking in decorum, inordinately over-lengthy, unintelligible to all but the very few who understood Hebrew. Consequently (argued the reformists) the synagogues were poorly attended. Those who did attend were described (in a contemporary letter to the *Jewish Herald*) as talkative, restless, listless, impatient for the end of the service, and thankful when it was over.³⁹ The writer of this letter⁴⁰ deplored the unsatisfactory state of the ritual, deeming it quite unsuitable 'for our present time'.⁴¹

In 1876 publisher George Robertson issued an anonymous book titled *The Jewish Prayerbook: as it is and as it ought to be* in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. A collection of articles reprinted from the English periodical *Jewish World*, the book included an introduction by a nameless St. Kilda 'layman'. Hilary Rubinstein suggests that this layman was probably Jacobs.⁴² (Certainly the style of the introduction, the book's format, and the strongly anti-clerical views expressed bear a close similarity to Jacobs' later publications). The book recommended revision of the prayerbook, with a view to 'establishing a rational Judaism suitable to the requirements of the present day'.⁴³ In the introduction, the author (we presume Jacobs) heralded the likelihood of clerical opposition to change and the subsequent duty of laymen to agitate until reforms were brought about. (Three years earlier Jacobs had publicly declared the necessity for lay intervention, given that the clergy would not attempt reform).⁴⁴ Maintaining that the long-winded traditional service was a relic from the Middle Ages, the writer acknowledged that ministers were unlikely to 'substitute the mumbling of prayers in a dead language for the more difficult work of delivering eloquent and instructive sermons'. He argued that the ministers' main qualifications were usually nothing more than a 'musical voice' and a reading knowledge of Hebrew.⁴⁵ The writer also suggested that colonial Jews might well be less fettered by traditions than their European co-religionists, and hence, in a better position to lobby for innovations.⁴⁶

At this stage Jacobs was only one of several vocal reformists in Melbourne. In the main these men worked to reform the existing congregations. One notable exception was Abraham Samuëll who sought to establish a separate Reform congregation.⁴⁷

Jacobs, his wife and younger children returned to England in 1882 for business reasons.⁴⁸ The family stayed in London for five years; thus they missed the most dramatic Reform development prior to the 1930s. This may have been to the good as the founding of the Temple of Israel doubtless set the cause of Reform back considerably. Samuëll, a sincere seeker after change for the good of the community, had been unsuccessful in attempting to found a congregation in 1882. Three years later he and his followers were joined by Dr. Dattner Jacobson, former minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Jacobson was currently 'between pulpits', having resigned from Melbourne 'under a cloud'. (At the same time as he was promoting himself as the 'Moses' of the Reform movement, he was applying for the vacant pulpit at East Melbourne). Many observers justifiably questioned Jacobson's

motives when he and Samuel established the Temple of Israel in a Collins Street Church. It folded within three months following a series of heated and ugly exchanges between Temple members and supporters of orthodoxy (led by Blaubaum, as editor of the *Jewish Herald*), in which Jacobson's eccentricities and lack of credibility became all too obvious. Hilary Rubinstein points to the 'deep underlying poignancy' of the episode. She writes: 'There is no doubt that Samuel and other convinced reformers deserved a better leader than the apparently venal Jacobson, whose actions brought the movement into ridicule and disrepute'.⁴⁹ Realists like Jacobs must have recognised that attempts to revive discussion on reform in ensuing decades would invite inevitable parallels with Jacobson and his Temple. At the same time, Melbourne's rigidly anti-reformist religious establishment was failing to hold the many young Jews who, 'alienated from Orthodoxy', were becoming 'irrevocably lost to the community'.⁵⁰

Samuel and other stalwarts continued to 'carry the torch' into the 20th century — but to little effect.⁵¹ In practice, Isaac Jacobs was the only reformist who made, or retained, any real impact. (This was probably partly due to his unquestioned status in the Jewish community and to the respect accorded him on other fronts). Rather than discourage him, lack of success only seemed to increase his determination. For many years he enlivened St. Kilda's Annual General Meetings with calls for liberalisation of the service and with pleas for measures to counter the waning interest of Jewish youth. While he was wryly aware that his regular protests were seen as trite⁵² by such staunch traditionalists as Moritz Michaelis, Philip Blashki and Abraham Benjamin, Jacobs firmly believed that he had no choice but to persevere. He indicated that

He moved for reform not for himself alone, but for others who he thought did not benefit by the manner in which the services were being conducted.⁵³

In the mid-1890s he led a briefly successful campaign for ritual alterations at St. Kilda. He called a Special Meeting of the congregation which resulted in the formation of a sub-committee to consider the issues involved. Although compromise was only reached with great difficulty (and in deference to a less than sympathetic Blaubaum)⁵⁴ a few minor amendments were introduced on a trial basis. Most of the alterations (prayers in English, fewer repetitions) were short-lived. Critics of change argued that, notwithstanding Mr. Jacobs' good intentions, the modifications did not increase attendance. (Indeed, one member of the congregation suggested that the changes were keeping worshippers away).⁵⁵

In 1897 a Special Meeting was convened to consider ways of reversing the decline in attendance at St. Kilda. Again, Jacobs was on his hobbyhorse, drawing a parallel between the state of Melbourne Judaism and Free Trade and Protection. He stated

It was the encumbrances which weighed us down. It was the Minhag that deterred people, and especially the young men, from attending the synagogue.⁵⁶

As usual, Jacobs found himself at loggerheads with other congregation members. In replying, Moritz Michaelis questioned the efficacy of reform. He pointed to a general malaise in Australia where no place of worship was well-attended. 'The only exception were the Roman Catholics, and they had to do it'. In high-lighting the recent attempt to modify services at St. Kilda, Michaelis asserted that 'not even those had attended who took the leading part in the movement'.⁵⁷ Even Jacobs' son Eliot (Elias) found himself at variance with his father, claiming that altering the service merely created dissension. ('The service, whatever it was, would not bring Jews back to the synagogue').⁵⁸ Unswayed, Jacobs Senior simply became more

outspoken. As the state of the community became more critical, so his advocacy of Reform became more fervent, more extreme, and more public. His lobbying reached its peak at the beginning of the 1900s. Whereas his earlier agitation had been largely confined to the St. Kilda arena, by the turn of the century he had stepped outside the committee room and become a very visible/vocal agitator. In particular, he was a frequent contributor of lengthy letters to the *Jewish Herald*.⁵⁹

At the St. Kilda Annual General Meeting of 1900 Jacobs suggested that a Sunday service might be in order 'to enlighten the younger members' of the sparsely attended congregation. He recognised that the call of business (and the wider community) on Saturday invariably took its toll on religious observance. Moritz Michaelis quickly opposed him. ('God forbid that we should ever transfer the service to Sunday').⁶⁰

In the following year Jacobs was elected a lay delegate to a proposed conference of ministers and laity to be held in Sydney. Its objective was 'to further the interests of Judaism in Australia'.⁶¹ From the start the Melbourne rabbinate criticised the composition of the conference asserting that the lay element would be represented disproportionately. Blaubaum wrote: '... every Jew at the present day considers himself quite competent to form and express opinions on ecclesiastic matters with which those who have studied them during the greater part of their lives are slow in dealing'.⁶² The ministers were particularly aggrieved that some delegates (notably including Jacobs) were planning discussions on alterations to the ritual, shortening of the Sabbath service, and the admission of proselytes.⁶³ As it eventuated, the Melbourne Beth Din (i.e. the leading ministers) withdrew; as a result the conference was abandoned. Not surprisingly, Jacobs and other delegates were angered by the Beth Din's action. Rev. A.T. Boas of Adelaide insisted that the Melbourne Beth Din had placed itself in a false position by allowing its members to be nominated by their respective congregations and then withdrawing 'at almost the last hour'.⁶⁴ Jacobs and other interested parties attacked the Beth Din in the pages of the *Jewish Herald*, labelling the body 'cowardly, obstructive and unlearned'.⁶⁵

In challenging the rabbis Jacobs quoted from Rev. A.A. Green, one of the leading campaigners for radical change in London synagogues.⁶⁶ Within a year Jacobs, a staunch supporter of Green, was using developments in London as the springboard for a similar movement in Australia.

Towards the end of 1902 Jacobs issued a circular within the Jewish community urging people to start a Reform movement in Melbourne. His immediate impetus was the recent formation of the 'Jewish Religious Union' in London. The Union had grown out of a fairly widespread dissatisfaction with the state of Anglo-Jewish orthodoxy, and in the belief that London's Reform synagogue was still too conservative. Rev. Green described English synagogue services as 'painfully and obviously inadequate' and meeting 'the needs of hundreds of years ago'.⁶⁷ The Union's first act was to institute radical changes in the ritual. ('The old style of service was held responsible for all the apathy and indifference and want of religious feeling of a large number of merely nominal Jews').⁶⁸ A new prayerbook was drawn up (containing prayers in both Hebrew and English), and Sunday services were advocated.

As it turned out, the London movement was unsuccessful (at least temporarily).⁶⁹ Many felt that the changes it sought were too sweeping and too soon. Even Green dissociated himself from its more radical innovations.⁷⁰ Undeterred, Jacobs mounted a campaign to create a Union-type movement in Melbourne. He con-

vened a meeting of supporters and interested persons in December 1902 to discuss ways of improving decorum and 'feeling' in synagogue services. Among those in attendance were Hyman Levinson, Angel Ellis, Nahum Barnet, Alfred Hart, Reuben Moss and Bernard Levy.⁷¹

Jacobs estimated that less than one tenth of the local Jewish community observed *Shabbat* or attended weekly services, while nine tenths regarded the present ritual and ceremonies with derision or indifference. In a series of mammoth 'epistles' to the Jewish Press he hammered out his long-held concerns and the remedies he visualised. Remembering the aborted conference of the previous year and the opposition he had encountered through three decades, Jacobs correctly predicted little assistance from the clergy. In fact, he found himself rapidly involved in a heated disputation with Blaubaum.

As editor of the *Jewish Herald* Blaubaum conscientiously printed Jacobs' lengthy correspondence (although, at times, with some expurgation);⁷² at the same time, he ensured that the Orthodox viewpoint was expressed at all times. He targeted London's 'Jewish Religious Union' as wild and irresponsible, creating an opportunity for the ignorant and unsympathetic to drive the observant from the synagogue. Blaubaum noted that all alterations made in Melbourne to date had notably failed to bring back the indifferent or 'even their strongest advocates'.⁷³ Rabbi Dr. Joseph Abrahams of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation joined with Blaubaum in attacking the movement. He suggested that some would-be reformers merely wanted to be entertained in the synagogue.⁷⁴ Blaubaum added weight to this opposition by invoking the Chief Rabbi.

In response to diatribes from the Chief Rabbi and the local clergy, Jacobs warned that a new congregation must be the inevitable outcome. He elaborated

I do not wish this to be regarded as a threat. But this will be done unless our clergy here are moved to do something in response to such strong and heartfelt appeals for a moderate reform.⁷⁵

Unfortunately, differences of opinion gave way to personal attacks. Blaubaum accused Jacobs of being 'needlessly offensive' in his broadsides at Melbourne Orthodoxy.⁷⁶ He noted that Jacobs was 'very angry' with the clergy for not supporting his movement.⁷⁷ Jacobs hinted that some clerical condemnation might be rooted in fear of the possible impact of a successful Reform movement on the ministers' own material interests. Targeting Abrahams' castigation of Sabbath-breakers, he wrote: 'Now, seeing that the Rev. Doctor's salary is derived chiefly from the ill-gotten gains of Sabbath-breakers, should he not, to be consistent, refuse to benefit from such gains?'⁷⁸

Not surprisingly, Jacobs' new movement quickly ran out of steam. Only two months after it burst on the scene Blaubaum was speculating that it had come to an end.⁷⁹ While Jacobs protested that the wish was 'father to the thought' and that the subject would not be allowed to drop, either in England or Melbourne, he acknowledged the deplorable apathy of the Jewish majority.

... very few will take the trouble of considering the subject at all from any point of view. It is the aim and wish of the promoters of this movement to cope with this apathy. To this end we might reasonably expect the assistance, and not the hostility, of the clergy.⁸⁰

The *Jewish Herald* noted that, of the twenty-five who attended its inaugural meeting, some sixteen had been relatives of the movement's founder (and several were anti-reform). Only four persons appear to have attended a follow-up meeting. Labelling the whole incident the work of a few 'malcontents', an anonymous contributor to the *Jewish Herald* wrote: 'If, for an "urgent and pressing necessity" you cannot get more than twenty-five people out of a membership of at least six

hundred to come forward and assist in the course, it is plain that the community generally does not consider the necessity so urgent.⁸¹

Resignedly, the leaders of the movement postponed further action, deciding to wait on developments in London. Raymond Apple maintains that the only practical outcome of the controversy was a decision by the St. Kilda congregation to introduce minor alterations to the service in August 1903. Specifically, Hebrew prayers were retained but additional prayers in English were recited before and after the statutory services. (We note that Jacobs had to present a petition to the executive before even this minor innovation was accepted).⁸² Obviously this achievement still fell far short of Jacobs' vision.

The attempt to start a Reform movement in 1902 was the climax of Jacobs' agitation for change. While the failure of the movement did little to dampen his ardour, he cannot have failed to recognise that the time was not right for large-scale alterations. At one point Blaubaum suggested that Jacobs' letters to the *Jewish Herald* were more moderate than his original circular had been. 'Perhaps', he wrote, 'Mr. Jacobs has already found out that sweeping reforms are not likely to be accepted here — hence it would perhaps be wiser to introduce the thin edge of the wedge first.'⁸³ Jacobs would later lay the blame for failure on the clergy and the 'so-called Orthodox party',⁸⁴ but, in reality, the proponents of Reform were neither sufficiently organised or numerous enough to combat the religious establishment effectively. Nor was the state of the community yet at that critical 'low' which would ultimately tip the scale towards a Liberal congregation. Zealots apart, few in the community were sufficiently interested in religious issues to attack tradition. In fact, communal apathy was probably the major contributor to the failure of Reform prior to 1930.

Jacobs himself later recognised that the majority of Melbourne Jews were too apathetic in regard to religious matters to attempt to implement any radical change.⁸⁵ When a well-meaning, if ingenuous, 'Geelong' correspondent to the *Jewish Herald* re-opened the debate on Hebrew vs. English in the synagogue, Jacobs sprang to his defence. However, apart from the newspaper's obligatory editorials, the issue appeared to elicit yawns rather than to stir up the anticipated 'hornet's nest'. The *Jewish Herald* noted that similar observations and strictures had been made, rebutted and made again hundreds of times. Partly due to Jacobs' persistence, the question had become 'too hackneyed to be even a stock subject'.⁸⁶ Jacobs continued his quest but pretty much as a proverbial 'lone voice in the wilderness'. He was probably disappointed to find Blaubaum's successor at St. Kilda, Rev. Jacob Danglow, as rigid a traditionalist as his predecessor had been. (Danglow later recalled Jacobs constantly urging Reform while Philip Blashki, just as constantly, warned against it).⁸⁷

During his final years Jacobs concentrated much of his energy into the Jewish Territorial Organisation (I.T.O.). In poor health, he took an extended overseas holiday with his wife in 1907. Much of the year was spent promoting the cause of Russian-Jewish farming in Australia. (His efforts would eventually bear fruit with the establishment of the Shepparton settlement in 1913).⁸⁸ However, while travelling in Britain, the continent and the Middle East, he took time to visit synagogues in several cities. These visits reinforced his conviction that orthodox *shuls* made no attempt 'to reach the spirit of the congregation'. He found himself continually distressed by the noise, disorder and lack of decorum in most synagogues. Even a sermon by the Chief Rabbi was (he felt) 'far and away from our life of today'. By contrast he praised the reform congregations in London and Manchester, and he

expressed himself most pleased with the 'Jewish Religious Union's' service. He noted

This service, although led and read by educated laymen (there being no ordained minister at the head of this congregation), appealed to me more than any other I heard. The prayers, largely culled from the orthodox liturgy, are the best and most appropriate that are used, and, being read in the vernacular throughout, and read too, in a devotional manner, were well calculated to awaken the religious spirit of the worshippers.⁸⁹

The couple returned to Melbourne in February 1908 and Jacobs quickly immersed himself in the I.T.O. and other communal endeavours. Age and ill health were taking their toll, however, and he finally retired from the committee of the St. Kilda synagogue after nearly forty years.⁹⁰ During 1909 he again contributed a number of pro-reform letters to the Jewish Press. For instance, when the *Jewish Herald* attacked American Reform Judaism on a number of occasions, Jacobs sprang to its defence.⁹¹ The mid-year death of Professor David Marks provided Jacobs with the opportunity to eulogise the pioneer of English reform and, in the process, highlight the durability of the movement — despite, as he noted, the prophecies of antagonists.⁹²

In June 1909 he published *Revision of the Ritual*, a collection of writings by eminent theologians and laymen. He was disappointed, although not surprised, when little notice was taken of the booklet.⁹³ As anticipated, the local clergy were unmoved by his appeals. Jacobs reportedly submitted a draft of the book to both Abrahams and Danglow (but not to East Melbourne's Rev. Lenzer, 'well knowing that any suggestion of reform or revision in the matter of Ritual is simply anathema with his congregants'). Both ministers declined to interfere with the existing ritual without the sanction of the Chief Rabbi and insisted that any revision would merely alienate the Orthodox members who attended synagogue regularly. In the face of this rigidity Jacobs became more and more convinced that the eventual establishment of a Reform synagogue was inevitable.⁹⁴ (Doubtless he greeted with enthusiasm the revitalised 'Jewish Religious Union's' announced intention to become a 'regular congregation' with its own synagogue, where it would hold *Sunday services*).⁹⁵

At the end of the year, following a flurry of letter-writing to the *Jewish Herald*, he was challenged by New Zealand's Rev. Adolph Chodowski to a public discussion of his proposals.⁹⁶ However, before anything could take place, Annie Jacobs died suddenly. Jacobs understandably declined to respond to Chodowski, pleading ill-health.⁹⁷

Debate on religious reform took a back seat for a time, but by late 1910 he was back in the fray. The *Jewish Herald* noted mild excitement at St. Kilda's Annual General Meeting when Jacobs ('the veteran champion of radical reform') briefly joined old adversary Abraham Benjamin ('the veteran upholder of orthodoxy') in criticising the traditional practice of 'intoning' the *Torah*.⁹⁸ The co-operation between the two men ceased abruptly, however, once Jacobs began to question the time-honoured custom of 'calling up' to the *Torah*.⁹⁹

An anonymous contributor to the *Jewish Herald* lamented his persistence.¹⁰⁰ The writer asserted that innovations such as a mixed choir, services in the vernacular and lectures 'of the highest order' had failed to bring greater numbers to the synagogues.¹⁰¹ In response, Jacobs wrote: 'At my time of life, with the door of Eternity standing ajar, I am not likely to advocate the adoption of changes in our methods and practices without the conviction that such changes must make for the exaltation and enhancement of our faith.'¹⁰²

In 1911 Jacobs published his endorsement of American Reform. Like his previous titles, *American Reform Judaism: an appreciation* was a compilation of relevant articles by leading Reform writers. It was perhaps the most concise synthesis of his philosophy and confirmed his full-fledged advocacy of Germany's Geiger and his U.S. disciples. In a running commentary he prophesied that 'Education, research, scientific developments with the resultant enlightenment, will compel the introduction of reforms here as elsewhere'.¹⁰³ Much of the text was devoted to Geiger's ideas: the abandonment of the crude religious conceptions and anachronistic ceremonies of an earlier day, a universal rather than national conception of Israel, a rejection of the notion of a 'personal messiah' of Israel, the notion of *Shabbat* observance as contradictory to the true Biblical idea of *Shabbat*, and a re-defining of the status of women. In addition, the selected articles re-examined the questions of 'Hebrew only' in the synagogue and the length of the service. Central to the book was Rabbi David Philipson's statement that 'Fealty to Judaism does not demand a blind adherence to the past without regard to the requirement of the living present'.¹⁰⁴

American Reform Judaism encapsulated Jacobs' views. He published a revised edition in 1912 and a 24-page critique of the Orthodox ritual in 1913, but by this point ill-health was limiting his activities.¹⁰⁵ Most of his energy was directed towards the I.T.O. and other welfare ventures (including 'Bezalel', a Palestinian Industrial project),¹⁰⁶ although he did find time to react publicly to a series of Reform debates in the Jewish Press.¹⁰⁷

His 'swan song' was a spirited endorsement and defence of Liberal Judaism during the first half of 1914. Following an unqualified denunciation of the Liberal/Reform movement by Birmingham's Rev. A. Cohen, Jacobs inundated the *Jewish Herald* with more lengthy letters quoting from his Reform 'heroes'. His final letter closed with the rather ingenuous wish that 'If our Orthodox friends could only be persuaded to read the fore-going with an open mind, they would think better of the aims and ideals of Liberal Judaism'.¹⁰⁸ It is interesting to note that, despite the failure of most of his reform agitation, the old man remained optimistic that his opponents would ultimately 'see the light'.

Isaac Jacobs died at his home, *Quisisana* (621 St. Kilda Road), on the intermediate Sabbath of *Sukkot*, 10 October 1914. He was in his eightieth year. Although he had been in failing health for some time, he had reportedly maintained his connections with community welfare organisations until the end, and had managed to attend services at St. Kilda in the previous week.¹⁰⁹

Rev. Danglow announced the pioneer's death from the pulpit and proceeded to deliver an emotional eulogy instead of his usual sermon. At the funeral the following day, Danglow lauded the old man's 'noble and indefatigable efforts in every department of communal endeavour'. Observing that it was not customary to deliver funeral orations on *Hoshana Rabba*, Danglow insisted nonetheless that Jacobs' position in the community had been so exceptional that it was impossible to refrain from paying tribute.¹¹⁰

In an editorial headed 'The memory of the righteous', the *Jewish Herald* dubbed Jacobs 'one of the most distinguished pioneers of this community and one of the most earnest and zealous workers for its progress and welfare'.¹¹¹ Pointing to his reformist zeal, the paper acknowledged: 'Whether these views are right or wrong is beside the point. The outstanding and undeniable fact is that their propounder — or advocate, rather — was earnestly convinced of their soundness'.¹¹²

It is easy to underestimate Isaac Jacobs' importance in the history of Australian Liberal Judaism. Most of his calls for change were doomed to fail (minor innovations notwithstanding). The time was simply not right for tampering with a somewhat brittle tradition. In later years the old man's preoccupation with change was all too often seen as merely the tiresome idiosyncrasy or eccentricity of an otherwise admirable communal 'patriarch'. Yet one only needs to examine the lengthy debate which led to the founding of Temple Beth Israel to recognise the farsightedness of Jacobs' lobbying several decades earlier.¹¹³ In his lifetime he had witnessed the evolution of Australian Jewry from struggling pioneer to affluent membership in a new ultra-British middle class. He had seen how material success had been accompanied unavoidably by a diminution of Jewish identity, abandonment of religious commitment and widespread assimilation. In Jacobs' view, the only hope for a community which primarily defined its Jewishness in religious terms (in the absence of alternative foci such as Zionism or Jewish secular culture) was to revitalise and re-orient that religion in terms meaningful to the modern Jew.

In the long run, Jacobs' lack of success was less significant than his pioneering recognition of the needs and problems confronting Australian Jews in an increasingly secular and materialist environment. In many ways he paved the way for the intensified agitation for reform of the next generation.¹¹⁴ It seems reasonable to assume that his very public warnings and challenges to the community broke the ground by promoting widespread debate on the issues, and thus made his successors' task considerably easier.

NOTES

1. Hilary Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835-1985*, Sydney, 1986, p.68.
2. *Jewish Herald* (J.H.), 23 October 1914.
3. Information from the 'Jacobs Family Papers', held by the Australian Jewish Historical Society — Victoria Inc.
4. *ibid.*
5. P.A. Jacobs, *A lawyer tells*, Melbourne, 1949, p.37.
6. His stay in Australia was not free from drama. While travelling for Feldheim, Jacobs & Co. in 1873, Lesser Jacobs was a passenger on the *Georgette* which was wrecked on Western Australia's Murray Reef. Fortunately, no lives were lost. See *Australian Israelite*, 21 November 1873.
7. Jewish Museum of Australia, *Arrival and Survival: Jews in Victoria 1835-1985*, Melbourne, 1985, p.8.
8. This and other genealogical information was compiled from:
 - (i) Victorian civil records.
 - (ii) W.S. Jessop, 'Genealogies of Jewish families in Australia', unpublished manuscript, State Library of Victoria, ms. 8553/69.
 - (iii) *Australian Israelite*, 18 September 1874; *Jewish Herald* (J.H.) 24 November 1899; 23 October 1914.
 - (iv) 'Jacobs Family Papers' and 'De Beer Family Papers', A.J.H.S. — Victoria Inc. I am indebted to Beverley Davis of the A.J.H.S. for her assistance with dates, gravestone inscriptions and other family details.
9. Rebecca Jacobs married Isaac Herman and lived in Canterbury, New Zealand, before moving to Vancouver, Canada. Leah Jacobs married Moss Davis of Auckland, New Zealand. Their children included Sir Ernest Hyam Davis, mayor of Auckland in the 1930s, and parliamentarian, Eliot Rypinski Davis. (See L.M. Goldman, *The History of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington 1958). Elizabeth (Betsey) Jacobs married Simon Michael Levy and settled in Baltimore, U.S.A.
10. *Australian Israelite*, 5 June 1874; J.H., 24 November 1899; 'Jacobs Family Papers'.
11. All the families lived and died around St. Kilda. Jane Gross died in 1908, Sophie de Beer in 1921, and Augusta Levinson in 1923.

12. *Records of Pioneer Women of Victoria*, State Library of Victoria, microfilm No. LTM5. Annie Wolf was born in Brighton, England, in 1840, and came to Australia from Capetown, South Africa, in 1857.
13. See the *Argus*, *Age* and *Melbourne Herald* newspapers for 17 December 1877. Nine year old Julian had been unofficially adopted by his childless aunt Esther (Annie Jacobs' sister) and her husband, Nelson S. Marks. (Marks was Reader at the St. Kilda synagogue in the early 1870s). Newspaper reports indicate that both Mrs. Marks and the boy were crushed to death when the chimney of the Acland Street house collapsed into the bedroom where they were sleeping. At the inquest the question of architectural negligence was raised, but it was dismissed in light of the extraordinary ferocity of the storm. Philip Jacobs later detailed his infant recollections of the incident in his memoirs. See Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.2.
14. It is interesting to note that four of Isaac Jacobs' sons (Louis, Philip, Eliot and Emanuel) married four daughters of Samuel and Caroline (Ellis) Jacobs, who were *not* related to Isaac.
15. *J.H.*, 23 October 1914; *Age*, 12 October 1914.
16. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.37–38.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Max Gordon, *Sir Isaac Isaacs: a life of service*, Melbourne, 1963, p.42–44.
19. Zelman Cowen, *Isaac Isaacs*, Melbourne, 1967, p.21.
20. *Age*, 12 October 1914.
21. L.M. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the 19th century*, Melbourne, 1954, p.193. Throughout his life Jacobs continued to represent the synagogues on Proselyte Boards, most notably in 1898–99 and 1905. The problem of proselytes was a constant, and so divisive an issue that Proselyte Boards always proved unworkable. Only with Temple Beth Israel's more liberal approach to converts would the question find some sort of resolution.
22. Newman Rosenthal, *Look Back With Pride*, Melbourne, 1971, p.173.
23. Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the 19th century*, *op. cit.*, p.232.
24. *Ibid.*, p.249.
25. *Ibid.*, p.224.
26. Rubinstein, *op. cit.*, p.17.
27. *J.H.*, 23 October 1914.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, Sydney, 1988, p.65; Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p.17.
31. *Australian Israelite*, 17 November 1871.
32. *Ibid.*, 23 February 1872.
33. *Ibid.*, 24 January 1873.
34. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p.17.
35. *Ibid.*, p.23.
36. *Ibid.*, p.18. See also: *J.H.*, 16 December 1892; 6 October 1893. As late as 1904 Jacobs still objected to St. Kilda's final decision to align with the rest of Australian Anglo-Jewry in this regard. See *J.H.*, 9 September 1904.
37. Hilary Rubinstein tells us that Blaubaum did allow piecemeal reforms such as a limited use of English in the liturgy and the confirmation of girls, but he refused to permit reforms which he believed contradicted Jewish law. He vehemently opposed Samuel, Jacobson and the Temple of Israel in the 1880s, and Isaac Jacobs' Reform movement in 1902. See Hilary Rubinstein, 'Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847–1904): Minister, editor and scholar', *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Volume IX, Part 8, 1985, p.570.
38. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p.22.
39. *J.H.*, 12 march 1880.
40. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, *op. cit.*, p.61. Dr. Rubinstein believes Jacobs may have written this letter.
41. *J.H.*, 12 march 1880.
42. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, *op. cit.*, p.61.
43. *The Jewish Prayerbook: as it is and as it ought to be*, Melbourne, 1876, p.iii.
44. *Australian Israelite*, 19 Sept 1873.
45. *The Jewish Prayerbook: as it is and as it ought to be*, *op. cit.*, p.vi.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, *op. cit.*, p.62.
48. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p.5.
49. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835–1985*, *op. cit.*, p.68. For a detailed examination of the Temple of Israel incident, see Rubinstein, *ibid.*, p.57–68; see also Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the 19th century*, *op. cit.*, p.317–320.

50. Rubinstein, *ibid.*, p.68.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *J.H.*, 1 October 1897, quotes Jacobs at a meeting as recognising that the members presumably did not want a long address from him.
53. *Ibid.*, 21 September 1896.
54. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p.40.
55. *J.H.*, 21 September 1896.
56. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1897.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. On more than one occasion St. Kilda president Abraham Benjamin took exception to Jacobs' capacity for 'rushing into print'. See *J.H.*, 1 October 1897; 11 November 1910.
60. *Ibid.*, 23 September 1900.
61. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1901.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*, 26 April 1901.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*, 30 August 1901.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.* 5 December 1902.
68. *Ibid.*
69. The Union re-emerged later in the decade, prompting renewed activity by Jacobs on its behalf.
70. *J.H.*, 6 December 1902.
71. Raymond Apple, 'The Victorian Jewish community 1900-1910', *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Volume IV, Part 2, 1955, p.68.
72. *J.H.*, 13 March 1903.
73. *Ibid.*, 5 December 1902.
74. *Ibid.*, 30 January 1903.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*, 13 March 1903.
77. *Ibid.*, 27 February 1903.
78. *Ibid.*, 13 February 1903.
79. *Ibid.*, 30 January 1903.
80. *Ibid.*, 13 February 1903.
81. *Ibid.*, 30 January 1903.
82. Apple, *op. cit.*, p.69; *J.H.*, 11 August 1903.
83. *J.H.*, 19 December 1902.
84. *Ibid.*, 1 December 1905.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*
87. J. Danglow, 'An Australian ministry', *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Volume IV, Part 4, 1956, p.172; see also Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, p.60. Rosenthal notes that Blashki and Abraham Benjamin both visited Danglow frequently to minimise any influence Jacobs may have had.
88. For a detailed examination of Jacobs' role with the I.T.O. and the Shepparton settlement, see Hilary Rubinstein, 'Australian Jewish reactions to Russian Jewish distress', *A.J.H.S. Journal*, Volume IX, Part 6, 1984, p.451-456.
89. Isaac Jacobs, 'Impressions of some synagogues abroad', *Jewish Herald*, 6 March 1908.
90. *J.H.*, 15 October 1909.
91. *Ibid.*, 25 June 1909; 28 July 1909; 6 August 1909; 1 October 1909.
92. *Ibid.*, 25 June 1909.
93. *Ibid.*, 28 July 1909.
94. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1909.
95. *Ibid.*, 12 November 1909.
96. *Ibid.*, 26 November 1909.
97. *Ibid.*, 10 December 1909.
98. *Ibid.*, 30 September 1910; 14 October 1910.
99. *Ibid.*, 11 November 1910.
100. This anonymous contributor wrote: 'Mr. Jacobs has placed his religious views before the public time after time, and when his own matter became exhausted he fell back upon a collection of quotations which, apparently, he keeps in store in case of emergency.' *J.H.*, 25 November 1910.

101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*, 5 December 1910.
103. Isaac Jacobs, *American Reform Judaism: an appreciation*, Melbourne, 1911, p.78. Jacobs' other publications include: *Revision of the ritual*, Melbourne, 1909; *Conservative Reform in Jewish Observance*, Melbourne, 1910; *The Orthodox Hebrew Ritual*, Melbourne, 1913.
104. *Ibid.*, p.25.
105. The 'De Beer Family Papers' indicate that a very ill 'Uncle Isaac' lived with his sister Sophie and her family for some time after Annie Jacobs' death.
106. *J.H.*, 7 June 1912; 12 December 1912.
107. *Ibid.*, 29 August 1913; 7 November 1913; 5 December 1913.
108. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1914.
109. Jacobs' death certificate lists the cause of death as pulmonary congestion and cardiac failure.
110. *J.H.*, 23 October 1914.
111. *Ibid.*
112. *Ibid.*
113. For example: see *J.H.*, March, April, June, December 1924.
114. It is interesting to note that Sir Isaac and Lady Isaacs were prominent guests at the laying of the foundation stone of Temple Beth Israel in 1937. Lady Isaacs' presence was particularly appropriate as she was Isaac Jacobs' elder daughter.

AN UNPROMISED LAND

Leon Gettler

Read before the AJHS — Victoria on 19 September 1989

In June 1939, Lenin's former comrade and justice minister Dr. Isaac Nachman Steinberg stood on the banks of the Ord River in Western Australia and gazed at the alien landscape that surrounded him. Behind him, hundreds of raucous cockatoos circled imperiously around the isolated gum trees like hoarse fops. Turning to the sound, he caught a glimpse of fawn kangaroos bounding through the tall grass, disappearing into the ocean of savannah, the result of thousands of years of burning by aboriginal firesticks. In the east, the irregular range of jagged and flattened hills glowed purple as the sun went down. Slowly, the old revolutionary crouched and picked up a clump of brown soil. Crumbling it between his fingers, it felt like the *chernoziom*, the black earth so prized by the Russian peasants he had known so many years before.

The former revolutionary turned to his guides and smiled. At last, he had arrived. This ancient and timeless land was the place for a homeland.

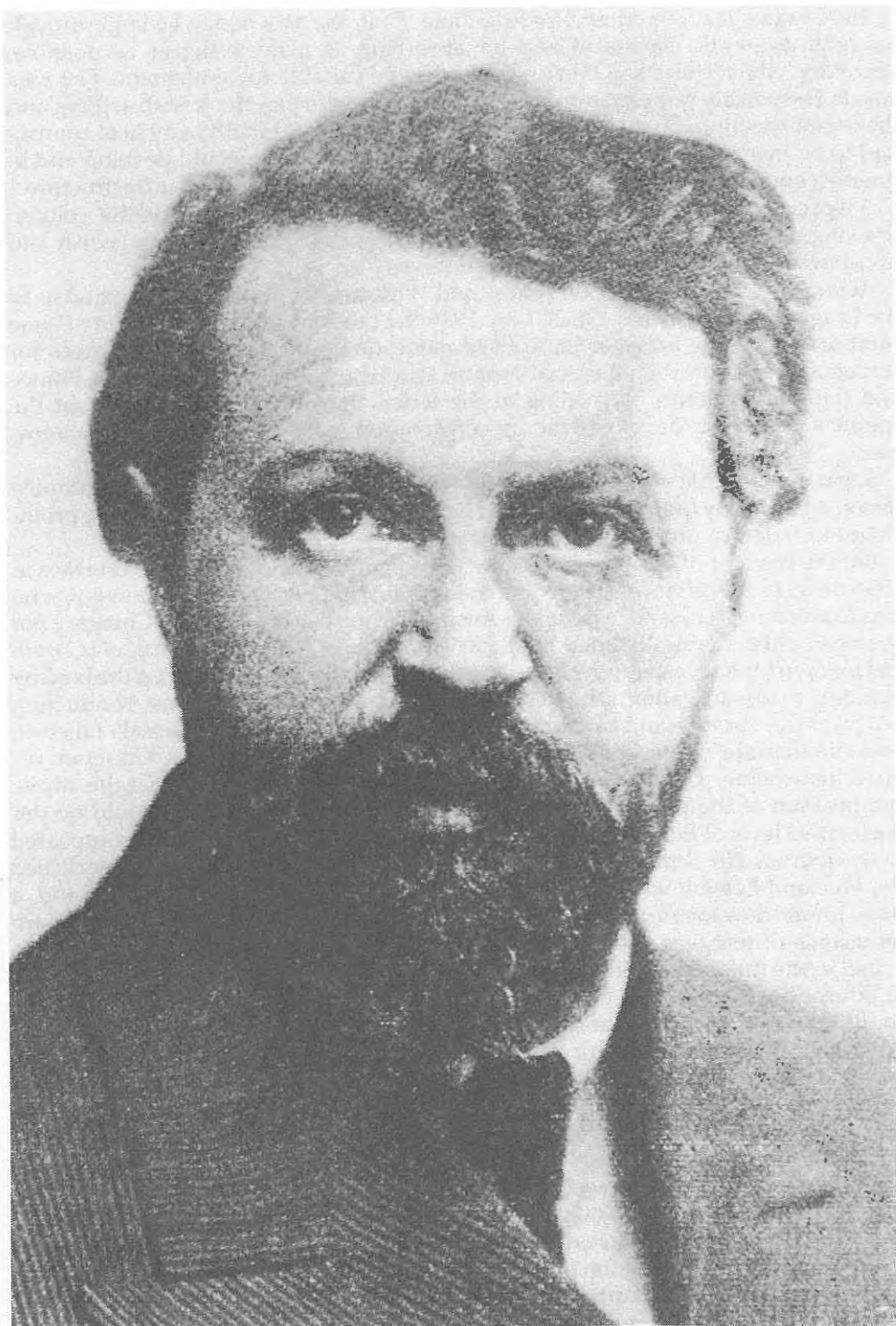
The first steps of this journey were taken at the turn of the century when many Jews were starting to realise that they could never gain full-blooded acceptance as citizens of Europe. At best, they were no better than denizens, even strangers in their own homes. Modern Zionism was the most significant Jewish mass movement to arise out of this era, but it was certainly not the only one.

Divisions appeared in the fledgling Zionist movement in 1903 when the British offered the Jews a homeland in Uganda. Zionist leaders rejected the offer but a breakaway group of dissidents led by the Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill refused to rule out the East Africa option. In 1905, this group formally established the Jewish Territorialist Organisation in London with the aim of procuring land which could be established as an autonomous homeland for the Jews. For the next few years, the organisation negotiated unsuccessfully with governments around the world over potential settlement areas in such far-flung regions as Angola, Brazil, Canada and Cyrenacia, an historic region in what is now known as Libya.¹

After the Balfour Declaration of 1917, efforts at Jewish settlement gained a stronger focus on Palestine, dealing territorialism a severe blow. In 1925, Zangwill disbanded his movement.²

But territorialist activities were revived in the 1930s with the rise of Nazism in Germany, and anti-Semitism in Europe. With moves to restrict the flow of refugees into Palestine, the Jews began to look for alternatives. On 26 July 1935, neo-territorialists gathered in London to form the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation.³ This new organisation aimed to find some sparsely populated part of the world where it could place Jews who would subsequently enjoy cultural and religious freedom.

Unlike Zangwill's movement, the League eschewed any call for political independence, aiming instead for culturally distinct settlement flourishing within the political and economic framework of an established country, and for the settlers to become citizens of that host nation. It did not seek to create a state within a state.



Dr. Isaac Nachman Steinberg, progenitor of the Kimberley Scheme. (Courtesy Leon Gettler.)

The League had four criteria for its Utopia. First, the area had to be large enough for both economic expansion and for absorbing as many refugees as possible. Secondly, climatic and soil conditions had to be suitable for settlement. The area was to be sparsely populated to avoid any friction between the Jewish settlers and the established inhabitants, as had occurred in Palestine. Finally, any host country had to be free and democratic to ensure that the settlement would develop and in time become part of that country's social, economic and political infrastructure.⁴

A special Jewish migration and settlement bank was to finance the colony, drawing most of its funds from major philanthropic institutions, both Jewish and non-Jewish, and from the refugees themselves.⁵

Australia, with its vast, open spaces and Westminster democracy, seemed to fit the League's requirements. On 21 May 1936 the League wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister and Trade Minister Earle Page requesting talks about suitable areas for settlement and promising financial support and expertise from Great Britain, France and the United States. According to the letter, the League would map out the colony's economic development in consultation with the Australian Government.

Separate talks that year with Page and former Australian Prime Minister Stanley Bruce, who was by then the Australian High Commissioner in London, were promising but failed to produce anything concrete.⁶

But the concept of establishing a new Jerusalem in Australia was to resurface in 1938 through the efforts of an Australian journalist in London, C. H. Chomley, who was conducting a crusade to populate Australia's north-west. In 1936, Chomley put out a pamphlet, heroically titled *The Rich North-West of Australia: an Appeal to Youth and the Spirit of Adventure*, which envisaged British migrants opening up the land by building roads, irrigation schemes, establishing experimental farms, conducting geographical surveys and building new industries.⁷ When his proposals failed to rekindle that old Empire-building spark in the Britain of the 1930s, Chomley revised his scheme. The area and economic plans remained the same, but the ethnic composition of the pioneers was changed — this time the settlers would be the persecuted Jews of Europe. On 6 January 1938 Chomley's new proposals appeared in the journal *The British Australian and New Zealander*.⁸ His proposals electrified the Freeland League which turned to the Kimberleys as a new Promised Land, a huge under-developed area, larger than the United Kingdom, which could absorb thousands of refugees without risking conflict with the smaller number of established white inhabitants. It was a territory that was not only far from the jackboots of Europe but also isolated from the rest of Australia, an 'island' separated from the south by the Great Sandy and Gibson Deserts and from the east by the sparsely populated Northern Territory. The area was largely savannah, eliminating the labour and expense involved in clearing jungles found in other under-developed parts of the world.

But if the League was impressed, the brutal blood-coloured landscape of Australia's far north was not exactly flowing with milk and honey. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch traders and sharp-eyed navigators on their way to Java, or in search of new islands and riches, had a good knowledge of Australia's west coast, but they regarded it as useless, offering no marketable goods to attract trade or settlement. The first Englishman known to navigate the coast of New Holland was the buccaneer William Dampier in 1688 who declared the aboriginal inhabitants as the 'Miserablest people in the world' and found the area unsuitable for settlement. But in 1836 a party led by Lieutenant George Grey penetrated the rugged and

forbidding terrain of the north-west and found massive rivers and the potential for fine quality grazing land. But despite his glowing report, which was followed by others in the years ahead, the area lay largely dormant. Many were discouraged from settling the region because of the difficult terrain, oppressive climate and isolation. And unlike the United States, there were few government-backed surveys to map out the hostile terrain and there were no convoys or railways to open up the country.⁹ Here, the job of settlement was left largely in the hands of pastoralists, the most notable being the Durack family, which set out for the Kimberleys from Queensland in 1883 driving some 7,000 head of cattle into this region.¹⁰ But by the 1930s, when the bottom had fallen out of the beef market, the Duracks were looking to sell part of their holdings. In 1938, contact was made between the head of the family, Michael Durack, and the Freeland League.¹¹

The Commonwealth's immigration laws which opposed mass migration of any one particular ethnic group were the major stumbling block. The Freeland League thus began lobbying Western Australian and Commonwealth Government representatives in London.¹² There was also lobbying in Australia, with the issue raised in the Western Australian and Commonwealth parliaments.¹³

On 23 November 1938 Durack wrote to the Minister for the Interior, John McEwen, reminding him of the 'many weak links in our Northern empty spaces which require strengthening and tightening up'. In his letter, Durack played down fears of the Jews establishing a quasi-state in the north-west and assured him that steps would be taken to guard against aliens not conforming to Australian laws and way of life.¹⁴

McEwen's reply was ambiguous. He said the Government opposed what it described as an 'undue aggregation of aliens' but at the same time it would not stop Durack transferring his holdings to 'any persons or interests of British nationality' and allowing the refugees to work on the properties if they were sold.¹⁵ The letter therefore prohibited rural ghettos but gave the Jews an opening — the League was an organisation run by British (albeit primarily British-Jewish) interests and therefore free to buy the Durack holdings which covered some 2,797,200 hectares most of it in the Northern Territory, for some 75,000 Jewish settlers. The suggested price was some £180,000 sterling.¹⁶

By early 1939, the League decided it was time to send Dr. Steinberg to Australia to study the Kimberleys and sell the idea to the Australian Government and public. This was an awesome task. Despite a wave of sentiment about the need to 'populate or perish'; which was sweeping through Australia at the time, the mood was still fundamentally conservative and xenophobic. But the League had chosen its emissary well — Steinberg was a blend of singleminded determination, unshakeable confidence and unbelievable *chutzpah*. He was an internationalist who could speak seven languages and was no stranger to the political process, having established a reputation for juggling politicians and bureaucrats with remarkable ease. His skills as an orator inspired audiences wherever he went, and in a letter to one of his colleagues Michael Durack referred to Steinberg's 'magnetic appeal'.¹⁷ In an interview with one of his former colleagues in Australia, the former revolutionary was described as possessing a 'half-insane enthusiasm that was hard to resist'.¹⁸

Born in Latvia in 1888, Isaac Nachman Steinberg grew up in a household where traditional Judaism co-existed with a modern worldly perspective.¹⁹ That synthesis stayed with him for the rest of his life. For his doctorate of law, he examined criminal law in the Talmud, analysing such concepts as free will, intent and the responsibilities of both groups and the individual.²⁰ Later, his close association with

the Bolshevik leader Lenin did not stop him praying every day, wearing *tefillin* and keeping *kosher*. And while he was a member of Lenin's government, cabinet meetings when on Saturday were said to be held at his house as he would not break the Sabbath by riding.²¹

After enrolling at Moscow University to study law and philosophy in 1906, Steinberg joined the illegal Social Revolutionary Party. By the end of that year, he had already been arrested and was sentenced to three years in Siberia which was later commuted on appeal to exile from Russia. Steinberg spent the next three years in Germany and Switzerland, completing his studies at Heidelberg University and continuing to foment revolution.²² In December 1917, he was one of seven left-wing SRs who joined Lenin's Bolshevik Government and was subsequently appointed the first Minister of Justice. He was then twenty-nine years old. But his term in office lasted only a few months and Steinberg was placed under arrest after the collapse of the SR-Bolshevik coalition.²³ Steinberg was finally forced to flee the Soviet Union in 1923 and settle in Germany.

By the beginning of the 1930s, the idiosyncratic radical had become more active in the field of Jewish culture, this time in Germany. But the rise of Nazism forced him to flee again, this time to London where he became one of the founders of the Freeland League.

Australian officials were understandably nervous when Steinberg applied for a visa. A cable from the High Commissioner's office on 6 March 1939 noted that the former subversive had 'been politically quiet for several years and [is] now regarded by authorities as unexceptional'²⁴ but a further telegram warned that the charismatic firebrand was 'known to be a clever propagandist' who would probably 'stump the country in support of the aims of the Free Land League'.²⁵

Despite these reservations, the Australian Government granted the visa but not without qualifications. On 6 April 1939 the Government prudently informed Steinberg that although he could enter the country, it would not allow 'foreign nationals who proposed to settle in one area and who might there form an alien colony'.²⁶

Unperturbed, he began drumming up support for the project as soon as he arrived in Perth on 23 May 1939. Armed with letters of reference from British Labour and Conservative politicians, Steinberg went straight to Western Australian Premier John Willcock, who did not think the region was suitable for settlement²⁷ but advised him to investigate the area.²⁸

On 8 June, Steinberg left for a three-week tour of the Kimberleys, accompanied by an agricultural scientist, George Melville, and members of the Durack family. Describing that journey years later in his book *Australia — The Unpromised Land*, Steinberg waxed lyrical about the potential of the land which would see a spiritual rejuvenation of the Jews through a back-to-the-soil movement, renewing their links with the ancient farmers of Judea. 'No need here to resort to the miracle of Moses and strike water from a stone for an unbelieving flock,' he wrote. 'Let but the hand of science and experience, impelled by the will and imagination of Jewish labour, awaken this dormant earth.'²⁹

In an ambitious report on the region, Steinberg and Melville envisaged an agricultural miracle which would create new markets, boost exports and stimulate economic growth. They saw Jewish refugees, including agriculturalists, builders, labourers, scientists, technicians and engineers establishing farms in the wilderness, developing new industries, damming rivers, including the Ord, developing and building scientific and hydro-electricity stations.³⁰

Steinberg prepared an additional memorandum to the report — which was presented on the eve of World War Two — reassuring authorities about the loyalty of the refugees, many of whom were to come from Germany. The settlement, he said, would enjoy complete religious and cultural autonomy but would not be isolated from the rest of Australia. Economic planning would be based largely on filling the gaps in the Australian economy and the colony would follow state and Commonwealth laws, including those for education, taxation and defence. It would, in his words, be 'organically incorporated into the economic and political framework of Australia'.³¹ He also guaranteed that the refugees would not abandon the settlement for cities where they would compete with Australians for jobs. The Freeland League would select the most suitable types to become pioneers. More importantly, he promised the League would pay for everything, from capital costs to running costs.³²

The daring proposal captured the public's imagination. Writing in the *West Australian* on 15 July 1939, Australia's eminent man of letters, Professor Walter Murdoch, noted: 'Israel's extremity is Australia's opportunity'. Church leaders, moved by the plight of the refugees, were publicly backing the proposals while business leaders, concerned about the lack of resources for developing the north, were offering Steinberg assistance in promoting the scheme.³³ And in state Parliament, Edward Angelo MLC said the scheme would help protect Australia from invading Asian hordes. 'In my opinion,' Angelo said, 'the proposition can be boiled down to one question: Are we going to have Jews or Japs?'³⁴

The State government endorsed the scheme but qualified this with certain conditions. It wanted to inspect the area itself. It also wanted a major role in recruiting settlers. It would send advisors who would be paid by the colonists. It also disclaimed financial liability for any public works during the first three years of settlement and stressed that any schools had to conform with Education Department guidelines. The welfare of the refugees was to be administered by a special body of what it described as 'reputable and financially substantial' Jews in Perth.³⁵

It was a remarkable victory for the Freeland emissary who had singlehandedly won over public opinion and a state government led by a Premier who was initially hostile to the proposal. Steinberg had pulled off a strategic coup. He was now not only speaking on behalf of an obscure foreign organisation but for a state government as well, and riding a wave of public support.

The stage was set to approach Canberra and get approval for a scheme that could save thousands of lives before the Nazis pulled the noose any tighter. But hopes for a quick decision were dashed on 1 September when German tanks rolled into Poland launching the world into war. Now stranded himself, Steinberg realised the Kimberley scheme would have to take a lower priority while the government concentrated on the war effort. If his job was difficult when he arrived, there would now be a greater struggle winning support from a government and nation which was suddenly facing its greatest crisis.

Apart from this, there was still the problem of winning over a Federal government which had a long-established policy of opposing block settlements of aliens and of allaying fears that refugees from enemy territories had divided loyalties. Instead of approaching Canberra straight away, Steinberg launched a national campaign and recruited an army of supporters, calculating that the pressure of public opinion would soften up any hard-line opposition and eventually win over the government.

He rallied prominent Australians who signed petitions and statements supporting the scheme. The list of signatories might have come straight out of an edition of *Who's Who*. The forty-six who signed a statement of support which appeared in Melbourne's newspapers at the end of 1939 including the past and future Premier John Cain, Labor politicians Maurice Blackburn and Edward Holloway, former Conservative politician Frederic Eggleston, the former deputy president of the Victoria Chamber of Manufactures, Robert Saunderson, economist and co-founder of the Australian Institute of International Affairs Edward Dyason, CSIRO chief Sir David Rivett, county Court judge Alfred Foster, and many academics including Melbourne University vice-chancellor John Medley.³⁶ Sydney supporters included Supreme Court judge and former Premier Sir Thomas Bavin, the Minister for Repatriation, Eric Harrison, Australian Broadcasting Commission chairman William Cleary, Sydney Harbour Bridge designer Dr. John Bradfield, newspaper chief Sir John Butters, official war historian Charles Bean, and Rural Bank chairman Charles McKerihan.³⁷

Steinberg turned the scheme into a *cause célèbre*. The Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney, Charles Venn Pilcher, wrote to the Minister for the Interior, Senator Foll, on 19 August 1940 warning of the moral consequences in rejecting Steinberg's request and reminding him about the parable of the Good Samaritan. 'We should go down in history,' the Bishop wrote, 'with the stigma of the Priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side.'³⁸ Other clergymen who supported the scheme included Archbishop Daniel Mannix,³⁹ the Primate of Australia, Archbishop Henry Le Fanu, the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church, the Right Reverend Robert Macaulay, and the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Howard Mowll.⁴⁰

Far from regarding the influx of refugees as a threat to Australian workers, left-wing union leaders and the ACTU were solidly behind the former Russian revolutionary and saw the struggle to save refugees as part of the campaign against Fascism.⁴¹

Others felt the proposals would fail. For example, former explorer Charles Conigrave, who had led an expedition to the Kimberleys almost thirty years before said Europeans could not cope with the harsh conditions and described the plan as a 'good instance of ultra-optimism'.⁴² And while some feared the isolated foreign community would spark racial tensions, there were others who rejected it simply because they did not like alien immigrants.

In Sydney, the *Sun* on 14 December 1939 even suggested the scheme was unpatriotic and demanded that aliens 'bring up their children to be patriotic Australians without even that reminder of alien blood'. Naturally, those who were overtly anti-Semitic attacked the proposals. The *Bulletin* on 24 January 1940 warned of Jews 'swarming into Australian cities if they had to burrow under wire netting'. The *Publicist*, which was put out by the quasi-Fascist, anti-British, anti-Semitic Australia First movement, predicted that unscrupulous Jewish financiers would allow most of the settlers to drift into the cities 'where in time, they will become usurers, rackrenters, sweatshop owners, bookmakers and so forth'.⁴³

But the most vehement critics were the local Jews. For all his efforts, Steinberg never managed to turn the Freeland League proposals into a cause that could inspire a mass movement in the mould of Zionism. Only a fraction of the Jews supported it. The established Anglo-Australian community, fearing that a sudden influx of migrants arriving *en masse* could unsettle the racial balance, were generally — with some exceptions — opposed to the scheme. For example, in September 1939, after the outbreak of war, the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board president and

MHR, Archie Michaelis, was initially unenthusiastic about saving his brethren. 'We have our hands full in looking after the migrants already', he told the press. 'If the Kimberley venture should fail through any cause, it would obviously be impossible to absorb settlers in capital cities'.⁴⁴

The most virulent opposition, however, came largely from the Zionist establishment, which feared that any attempt to plant Jewish pioneers in the Australian outback would undermine efforts to do the same in the Middle East. Sydney Zionist leader Max Freilich said the territorialists were among the greatest enemies of the wartime Zionist cause.⁴⁵ His Melbourne counterpart, Dr. Aaron Patkin, was particularly scathing in a series of attacks which at one stage targetted the 'gentile idealists and dreamers' and those 'somewhat lacking in political wisdom and responsibility', claiming the scheme would never work because it was just too Utopian.⁴⁶ While Steinberg argued that the Kimberley scheme was not intended as a substitute for Palestine,⁴⁷ Zionist leaders feared it was a dangerous alternative, siphoning off energies and resources from their efforts in the Middle East. In an interview, former Zionist Federation of Australia chief Alec Masel confirmed that the Zionists were concerned that Britain would deny the Jews Palestine if they had the Kimberleys.

When Steinberg finally approached Canberra in August 1940, he had attracted substantial publicity, both negative and positive, but the Minister for the Interior, Senator Foll, was reluctant to change traditional policy opposing group settlement of foreigners. Fearing the refugees would become a problem for the government if the colony were to collapse, Foll reported to Cabinet on 11 November 1940 that 'it would be impossible to deport them to countries from which they originally came and that they would have to be absorbed in Australia'.⁴⁸ The government subsequently postponed its decision until after the war.⁴⁹ Steinberg resubmitted his proposals when the Curtin Labor government took office in 1941⁵⁰ but the decision was again deferred when Japan brought the war to Australia's doorstep following the bombing of Pearl Harbour.⁵¹ Seeing his plans shelved again, Steinberg decided to join his family overseas. Before he left in 1943, he established pro-Kimberley committees in Melbourne and Sydney to keep the heat on the government.

On 15 July 1944 Curtin wrote to Steinberg informing him that the government, after a detailed examination of post-war migration, had decided to reject the scheme and adhere to its 'long-established policy in regard to alien settlement in Australia'.⁵²

There were strong protests when the government announced its decision in November. The ACTU urged Canberra to reverse its decision.⁵³ The *Sydney Morning Herald* condemned the government,⁵⁴ while the *West Australian* declared: 'The amiable thesis that all men are created brothers seems to be accepted in high places . . . there is little evidence that it extends to the cruelly persecuted race of European Jews'.⁵⁵

Steinberg himself refused to admit defeat, telling reporters this was not the government's final decision.⁵⁶ Encouraged by the findings of a 1944 Gallup Poll which found that thirty-seven per cent of Australians favoured a Jewish settlement,⁵⁷ he continued to lobby Canberra. But hopes for a Jewish colony outside Palestine were dashed after the state of Israel was established, and Jews became more concerned about ensuring the survival of the Jewish state.

In retrospect, Steinberg probably never had a chance of getting his scheme off the ground. Aside from fears that the scheme would have created a state within a state, material from the government archives suggests there were fears that the colony

CRITCHLEY PARKER (1911–42): AUSTRALIAN MARTYR FOR JEWISH REFUGEES

Hilary L. Rubinstein

This paper will recount the poignant, though little-known story of Critchley Parker Junior, who in pursuit of his proposal to settle a substantial though apparently unspecified number of Jewish refugees in Tasmania after the Second World War, became surely the only Australian gentile to lose his life for a Jewish cause.¹

Like the Freeland League's grand vision of settling 50,000 Jewish refugees in the East Kimberleys, Parker's proposal was predicated on not the physical annihilation of European Jewry but rather their displacement and need of refuge at war's end. The Kimberley proposals, lobbied vigorously by the Freeland League's emissary, Dr. Isaac Steinberg, between 1939 and its rejection by the Federal Government in 1944, was the main focus and occupied the major energies of the League and its Australian supporters. But Steinberg met Parker in 1940 and, later, as we shall see, accompanied him to Tasmania, perhaps willing to give consideration to a subsidiary settlement in Tasmania, or — and this was probably more likely — to use the Tasmanian Government's evident sympathy for the scheme to prod the Federal Government into a favourable verdict on the Kimberley settlement. Parker's scheme (the essential nature of which he concealed from Steinberg, as we shall see) will be described in detail here, but first it is necessary to introduce its originator and his background.

Critchley Parker, called 'Junior' to distinguish him from his father and namesake, was born in Melbourne in 1911. He was the only child of F. Critchley Parker (1862–1944) whose own father had emigrated to Victoria from Devon during or soon after the goldrush, and of Kathleen, daughter of a Melburnian of obviously Scots descent, Andrew Kerr.²

Parker Senior was a man of some means and influence, already approaching fifty years of age when his son was born. At that time he owned and conducted (1908–12) the *Money Market Review* in London. For several years (since about 1896) he had also owned the *Industrial Australian and Mining Standard*, then the only specialist journal of its type existing in this country. He was an expert on mining and fisheries, and had written widely on the mineral resources in the various states of the Commonwealth. Apparently he was also — and this seems to have been of some significance — a close associate of a well-known (presumably Jewish) geo-physicist, Mark Milstein. In 1927 Parker Senior became editor of his own *Mining Standard*, continuing in that role until ill-health and advancing age forced his retirement over ten years later.³

Unlike his father Parker Junior followed no occupation and presumably had some private means, perhaps a parental allowance. Although he was a keen hiker and bushwalker, who had pursued his hobby both at home and abroad, he had been declared unfit for active service and the inference is that he was a young man with time on his hands, and hoping yet to find a purpose in life. Even his mother hoped he 'would find himself' in his pursuit of a Tasmanian settlement for the Jews, and pledged to help the cause.⁴ Despite his own comfortable middle class back-

ground — or perhaps because of it — he conceived a sympathetic interest in the Soviet economic system and it was that system which he envisaged as the basis for a Jewish settlement in Tasmania.

How well this sat with Parker Senior can only be imagined but Parker Junior certainly shared his father's deep interest in Tasmania and concern for its economic development and prosperity. The Parker family did not come from Tasmania, as Dr. Steinberg assumed, but Parker Senior, a keen fisherman, had in the pursuit of his hobby been a regular visitor to the island since the turn of the century and was well-acquainted with all it had to offer. He had become so attached to the island that he had authored a thick illustrated booklet, *Tasmania — the Jewel of the Commonwealth*. The exodus from Tasmania on the part of many of its young people, seeking employment opportunities on the Australian mainland and even in Britain, and the further depletion of the island's population owing to the wartime conscription worried him. He passionately sought Tasmania's economic development.⁵

Parker Junior envisaged a Jewish refugee settlement in the sparsely populated south-west region of Tasmania, in the area about Port Davey and the Bathurst Harbour. This rugged area remains largely unsettled today, and is the location of a national park: 'The area is mountainous and has great natural beauty, but no settlement has taken place here because of its isolation. It is accessible only by sea or by a little-used track, some 60 miles long, from the Terminus of the Hobart-Maydena railway to the north-east. The harbour is used only for shelter or by fishing craft.'⁶

Parker, however, was convinced of the area's potential and suitability. His comments in his *Journal*⁷ — the indispensable source for our knowledge and understanding of this episode — show that he shared his father's love for Tasmania and concern for its future. He had obviously consulted his father about the natural resources of the Port Davey area and its viability for settlement, and was also not only familiar with the work of Mark Milstein (who had dubbed the area a 'treasure chest')⁸ but in personal contact with him. Parker Junior was also well acquainted with — and contemptuous of — the abortive history of proposals to develop the region.⁹

Parker believed that his confidence in the suitability of the Port Davey region for refugee settlement would be borne out by independent physical and economic surveys.¹⁰ The Tasmanian Government was to look favourably on the development of 'the area . . . bounded in the north by the Hartz Mountains . . . on the south by the Antarctic, on the east by the strip of settlement along the D'Entrecasteaux Channel with a port at Recherche Bay and on the west by the New River'. Parker believed that this area 'should . . . be extended to Port Davey in the west with Birch's Inlet (on Macquarie Harbour) and the South Bank of the Gordon up to Adamsfield'. (It was this extended region which, as we shall see, he went on to explore, with a view to convincing the authorities of its feasibility.) He believed that independent surveys would confirm the mineral resources and agricultural and industrial potential of the area.

He believed that 'mining must be the first action of the new settlement owing to the presence of considerable deposits' of gold, tin, iron, copper, and probably coal and oil too. 'These sources can be used to finance the other activities of the settlement . . .' He invoked the success of the Jews on the land in Palestine as evidence that they could succeed in mining, and he advocated the establishment of a thirty-five hour week, one month's annual holiday with pay, and attractive recreational



Critchley Parker Junior, photographed in 1933. (Courtesy LaTrobe Collection, State Library of Victoria, Miss G.E. Morris Papers.)

facilities on site. He believed that for several years, initially, the settlers would have to import most of their food from elsewhere in Tasmania but would ultimately be made self-sufficient, a fact which would not be resented by gentile Tasmanians who would have come to appreciate the benefits of the mines to their State.

Following the foundation of the mining industry, Czechoslovak and German Jews could be introduced to facilitate expansion into iron and steel manufacture: should no iron ore be available in the area, he felt certain that the Tasmanian Government would 'have no objection in making over to us on certain conditions the iron ore deposits at Corinna, Nelson River, Arthur River or elsewhere. . . . This industry, iron and steel, only competes with B.H.P. and therefore should be welcomed by [the] whole of Australia'.

Refugees could then establish a fish canning and processing industry — 'crayfish, trumpeter, excellent eels in Macquarie Harbour and probably other edible species abound' — and expand into Antarctic whaling and a passenger shipping service across Bass Strait. 'If Tasmanian fisherman are displaced by these developments they must be *liberally* compensated . . .'

Parker also believed that ultimately settlers might produce liqueurs including Scotch whisky, wool and cotton goods including English serges and worsteds, carpet weaving and tapestries, and perfumes — 'there seems no reason why Port Davey should not become the Paris of Australasia both as a centre of fashion (import French Jews) and a centre for articles *de luxe*. Both excellent for revenue.' They would also produce electrical goods — 'As Hydro-Electric power will play so large a part in settlement . . . many of the appliances can ultimately be manufactured locally' — and leather goods. A fur industry might be developed using rabbits, wallaby, perhaps other native species, and silver foxes. Agriculture would gradually develop, flax could be grown for twining into rope, and 'a considerable furniture industry' could rest on the local timber.

What a magnificent centre this will be for the settlements, one of the finest harbours in Australia, a country rich in mineral wealth and water power, that their native parts and skill will make one of the most prosperous parts of the Commonwealth . . . Port Davey . . . is the natural centre. As a tribute to the Australian Aboriginal . . . the name of the capital might well be Poynduk, the original name. We have no interest in perpetuating the memory of a bibulous lieutenant governor . . . I think the most suitable form of government would be moulded on that of U.S.S.R. collective ownership, that is each member of the settlement possessing the mines, fields, ships, houses and other property of the settlement . . . A committee of experts will determine the amount of food, clothing, heat, amusement, etc. . . . At the beginning of the year the various experts will meet and decide what is to be done during the year and possibly subsequent[ly] (Soviet Five Year Plan).

Throughout, Parker was mindful of fair and positive ways to arrest resentment on the part of gentiles, particularly native Tasmanians who might feel that they were being economically dispossessed by the settlers. He also considered the 'problem of preventing settlers going to other parts of Tasmania, thus creating possible unemployment there and so anti-Semitic feelings' and suggested 'that before he is accepted for the settlement any person must sign a document stating that in return for transport to Tasmania, employment there, etc. [he] owes . . . a sum that will require ten years work at settlement to obtain. Anyone therefore leaving settlement can be legally proceeded against . . .'

Parker also urged that, in the interests of the refugees, their image and the welfare of Australians in general, the settlement, at its own expense, should become the focus of annual sporting events, eisteddfods, trade fairs and the locale of a university.

Nothing will develop persons more than sport . . . In Australia nothing is more likely to interest people in the settlement than such an institution . . . This should ultimately occupy the same place in

Australian life as did the Olympic Games . . . In addition to the usual athletic events including yachting . . . readings of plays, reading of poetry, oratorical contests, musical performances, exhibitions of sculpture, weaving, potteries, tapestries, book [sic] will be held. The competitors will have their works published at the expense of the community and will also secure all royalties once the initial expense has been recouped. (No interest to be charged.) The community however will receive the manuscripts, works of sculpture and painting will be purchased by the community as also tapestries and pottery to be used for the adornment of the public buildings of the community.

Annual shows should also be held representative of all branches of the community's activities.

Other Tasmanian industries should be encouraged to display the perfect amity and concord existing between the settlement and Tasmania be emphasised in this practical way. Later other states of Commonwealth and countries should be encouraged to come here so as ultimately to make the equivalent of the Leipzig Fair. This could be called the Pacific Fair. America's Jewry will be most useful here.

As the future of the settlement depends on the children, the finest pre-natal medical service for women, paid holidays for adequate periods before and after confinement (say a month in each case), creches, kindergartens, schools, parks or playgrounds, technical schools and university should all be provided and all education be at the expense of the community up to eighteen years.

The University should so remunerate its professors that some of the finest in the world (irrespective of colour, race or creed) will come there: that it may become the finest seat of learning in Australasia and the Pacific. Scholarships should also be established for a certain number of Tasmanians as well as Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Indians, Burmese, Arabs, Malays, South Americans and African negroes as well as any other peoples in the Pacific and Indian Ocean areas that the community may uphold the principles of racial tolerance and international brotherhood. These peoples will be considered in every way as the guests of the community.

The settlement, moreover, was to spearhead the collection of art and antiquities, and the preservation of historical Australian (Parker suggested several specific items worth acquiring.)

The community as its wealth increases should buy whenever possible any art treasures of Europe, Asia, Africa and America (Aztec, etc.) that come on the market as well as entire buildings, castles, etc., that can be reconstructed in identical surroundings in Tasmania and other parts of Australia . . . Scientific expeditions should be sent to study at Easter Island, conditions at South Pole, excavate Jewish town sites in Palestine and elsewhere . . .

Social justice and social welfare work would also prominently feature:

When the settlement has increased in wealth and numbers I hope it will actively interest itself in the welfare of the less fortunate members of the Tasmanian and Australian communities. Tasmania has a moral obligation towards the halfcaste descendants of her aboriginal inhabitants who live on Cape Barren Island . . . The real wealth of the community will be in its people and I desire that their whole life will so amaze the people of Australia that the little settlement of Poynduk will be the heaven which will completely change the economic and financial system of Australia.

Parker was undoubtedly a good-natured idealist and committed anti-racist, concerned for the genuine advancement of all the world's peoples irrespective of creed or colour and desirous of peace and harmony between them.¹⁰ In such an outlook, philo-Semitism *per se* is not necessarily a component, and it is impossible to surmise to what extent (if at all) admiration and love for Jews over and above general humanitarianism featured in Parker's scheme. Steinberg reports that Parker told him of his familiarity with the Bible and Jewish history,¹¹ and Parker wrote of his vision for 'a new Jerusalem'.¹² These are slender threads to offer as indications of an overriding philo-Semitism yet, Mark Milstein aside, Parker did have personal grounds for his involvement with the Jewish cause.

Cherchez la femme! say the French, and in the saga of Critchley Parker and the Tasmanian settlement there was most certainly a woman — a daughter of Israel. She was the Melbourne journalist Caroline, or Linka, Isaacson, best remembered now as Women's Page editor of the *Age* and, after the war, as the first Organising Secretary and Public Relations Director of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies. Although, for reasons best known to herself, she also became Melbourne editor of the anti-Zionist *Australian Jewish Outlook*, organ of the 'Anglo-Jewish' elite during

its swansong, she was, as Steinberg found, 'very much a Zionist' and was chairman of WIZO (Southern Section) in Melbourne. Although born in Britain and a member of the patrician St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation, she was, as Shmuel Rosenkranz recently reminded a meeting of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (Victoria), one of the few Anglo-Jews to actively support the cause of the *Polaks* and refugees. In 1942 she was one of the signatories to an open letter initiated by the Community Re-organisation Movement in Melbourne, calling for the complete democratic overhaul of the Jewish communal structure in Victoria in order to meet the needs of the post-war epoch. Although married (to a husband many years her senior) Mrs. Isaacson appears to have become more than just good friends with young Critchley Parker (a man many years her junior).

When Linka Isaacson died in 1962 a friend remembered:

She was, with her look of great frailty, blonde, blue-eyed good looks, and far-away voice, the complete picture of the clinging vine. No-one could look and sound so helpless . . . and no-one was ever less so . . .

She was an exceedingly pretty woman who could by some peculiar magic get people to run hither and thither, doing the most unlikely things, not at all sure how they had been inveigled into situations for which, more often than not, they were surprised to find they were very well suited. I always told her she worked by a mixture of hypnosis and sheer charm.¹³

This, then, was the persistent and persuasive woman with whom Critchley Parker was involved. Her son, Peter Isaacson, told me that he believed that Parker pursued the Tasmanian settlement proposal for 'my mother', though Mrs. Isaacson herself told Steinberg that for Parker that proposal was the culmination of 'a profound spiritual longing'.¹⁴

Perhaps it is fair to say that that longing comprised three elements: a genuine concern for the refugees, Tasmania's economic interest, and his romantic attachment to his Jewish lady friend.

Caroline Isaacson was responsible for successfully urging Steinberg to meet Parker and it was she who, with Parker, kept the Tasmanian proposal before Steinberg through a constant stream of correspondence. For after that initial meeting with Parker Steinberg all but dismissed it from his mind.

At that meeting, in the lobby of Steinberg's Melbourne hotel, Parker struck the Freeland League's emissary as a rather ordinary, almost bashful, young man whose words at first tumbled out in a curiously confused, hasty manner. But he spoke with earnestness, enthusiasm and conviction, 'like a mother', observed Steinberg, 'praising a daughter whom she wishes to engage to a worthy young man'.¹⁵ The Soviet nature of the proposed scheme was not, of course, revealed since Parker conceded that it would give ex-Menshevik Steinberg and his associates 'mental palsy'.¹⁶

'What answer was I to give such an offer on the spur of the moment?' Steinberg asked after that initial encounter, 'should I not discard it as simply Utopian? . . . But do we not constantly concern ourselves with Utopias? And was it not strange and wonderful that a Gentile, an Australian, approached us with such a proposal of his own accord? How often had we Jews dreamed of such an event, when "they" would of themselves come to us with an offer, an invitation?'¹⁷

Initially, Steinberg was cool towards Parker's proposal not only because he suspected Parker's true motives but because he was adamant that nothing should deflect attention away from the Kimberley Scheme. As Steinberg wrote: 'Kimberley was by now more than a geographical name of a particular free land; it had become symbolic of the idea of Jewish colonisation in Australia generally. Fighting for Kimberley we were fighting for a principle — and it would be harmful to change slogans in the middle of a campaign.'¹⁸

Subsequently, however, Steinberg — blissfully unaware of Parker's preferred Soviet economic model — seems to have become convinced of Parker's sincerity. Even though the Kimberleys were the primary focus of his endeavours, and even if he supported the Tasmanian scheme as a lever to induce the Federal Government to commit itself on the Kimberleys, it may have occurred to him that the Tasmanian venue had one advantage over far north-western Australia — the temperance of its climate. Opinions differed, controversies raged, over the suitability of the Kimberleys for European settlement, but there was no such doubt regarding Australia's southernmost state. Besides, since — as Steinberg wrote — Kimberley 'had become symbolic of the idea of Jewish colonisation generally', it did the Freeland League's cause no harm to explore other areas for settlement. Certainly, the Tasmanian scheme could not be regarded as a fail-safe alternative to Kimberley in case the latter was rejected, because whatever the Tasmanian Government might have to say on the matter, the final decision rested with Canberra.

Whatever his reservations and enthusiasms, Steinberg was persuaded, probably by Caroline Isaacson, to meet Critchley Parker's father at the latter's South Yarra home, to discuss the idea of Jewish settlements with the old gentleman. Parker Senior was then nearing eighty years of age. Like most other Australians of his time and class he was a supporter of Britain and British imperial interests, championed White Australia, and opposed the group settlement of foreign immigrants, advocating the usual method of immigration and the swift acculturation of people from outside the British Isles. However, to Steinberg's surprise, his journal, the *Mining Standard*, had on 15 March 1940 carried a leading article entitled 'Refugees as Pioneers'. While stressing the need for 'immigration by infiltration' and avowing opposition to the principle of group settlement, the article warmly praised the Jewish people, denied that they were in any sense foreigners, and commended the Kimberley Scheme. Although this article appeared on the *Mining Standard's* editorial page, it bore initials (R.E.S.) other than Parker Senior's. In his book, *Australia — The Unpromised Land*, published in 1947, Steinberg attributed the exact statements verbatim in that article to Parker Senior, claiming that the latter made them to him at the South Yarra meeting. This is, obviously, to take an extraordinary amount of literary licence, but there is little doubt that the old gentleman, as the journal's owner, endorsed what appeared on the editorial page. At the meeting with Steinberg — which 'overjoyed' Parker Junior — he also endorsed the Tasmanian plan and urged Steinberg to visit the island shortly, in company with young Parker. He also revealed that he had already canvassed the scheme with Edward Parkes (1890–1953), Tasmanian Under-Secretary of State.¹⁹

Steinberg's interest in the Tasmanian settlement came soon afterwards, at the end of 1940 while he was lobbying on behalf of Kimberley at the state premiers' conference in Canberra. Steinberg relates that Tasmanian premier Robert Cosgrove avoided his state's interest in such a settlement.

Cosgrove was the successor to a resolutely philo-Semitic politician, A. G. Ogilvie, premier of Tasmania from 1934 until his untimely death in 1939. Ogilvie, as a recent article by Paul Bartrop informs us, was extremely sympathetic to the cause of the refugees but was thwarted by the Federal authorities in his attempts to admit numbers of them into Tasmania.²⁰ Cosgrove, while not as committed or as demonstrative as Ogilvie, was also well-disposed to the Jewish cause. In the words of Under-Secretary Parkes, whose official report is more reliable than Steinberg's often exaggerated account, on 5 November 1940 Cosgrove 'communicated with Dr. Steinberg (through an intermediary) . . . and suggested that proposals for the settle-

ment in Tasmania of Jewish migrants from Europe could not be advanced very far until Dr. Steinberg could visit the state. Transport facilities were offered, and the premier undertook that any information desired would be made available by Government departments'.²¹

As a result of these encouraging trends, Steinberg flew to Hobart on 12 January 1941, accompanied by Parker Junior, who was so excited that he could not eat, and who as a result became ill on what — to his embarrassment, for he regarded himself as the expedition leader — proved for him an uncomfortable air journey. 'I am so glad', young Parker had written, 'that you agree with the preparations for our visit to Tasmania. I can hardly wait for our trip, knowing that in the west and south-west of Tasmania you will find your "promised land" for a great part of your people. . . . True, there are areas which lie near the towns and villages, and others might perhaps have chosen them. I feel, however, that, like the ancient prophets, it is your mission to lead your people into the wilderness, neither looking to the right nor to the left, in order there to reap a harvest ten times larger than anywhere on our island'.²²

A few days later Steinberg and Parker were joined by Caroline Isaacson and a photographer, Bert Pearl. In the meantime, following the advice of the urbane and kindly Under-Secretary Parkes, who foreshadowed a meeting with Premier Cosgrove at which the plan would be discussed *in toto*, Steinberg consulted a variety of relevant Tasmanian officials. He was impressed by their co-operation and frankness. They included the Surveyor-General (C. McK. Pitt), the Secretary for Agriculture (H. G. Smith) and two senior agricultural officials (F. W. Hicks and J. T. Gemmell), the Conservator of Forests (S. W. Steane) and the Director of Mines (W. H. Williams). Particular enthusiasm for the plan was shown by W. E. Maclean, the engineer in charge of hydro-electric stations, who heartily desired a Jewish colonisation that would bring men, capital, initiative and enthusiasm to the country.²³ He was echoed by the senior agricultural officials who accompanied Steinberg, Parker, Mrs. Isaacson and Pearl on their Tasmanian tour.²⁴

The route was planned by Parker, who with the aid of a car, a boat and horses took the party from Dover to Huonville, Hastings and Ramsgate, questioning the locals closely about the realities of farming in their areas.

'You should have seen Critchley in those days', Steinberg recalled. 'There, in the city, while he wore a black coat and stiff hat and his face expressed keen concentration, he looked almost like some Jewish hermit. Here, he bustled about hatless, in a simple shirt, like a host who wished to throw all his doors wide open for his long-awaited guests.'²⁵

Caught up in this enthusiasm was J. T. Gemmell, one of the accompanying agricultural officials.

Gemmell would sit with us in the car and speak endlessly of the great opportunity available for colonists. Along with Critchley and the others, he climbed the mountain-tops to show us the breadth of the land. On every side there was room for countless families. But this was, after all, not the aim of the Freeland League. We were not looking for room for individual colonists; we sought a place for a large Jewish settlement. We still had to transfer our research from all these flourishing villages and towns to the distant south and west.²⁶

Before embarking on the second leg of their journey, a tour of the south-west where Parker envisaged the settlement, the party returned to Hobart. He awaited receipt of 'a concrete plan'. There, on 20 January 1941, Steinberg had an audience with Cosgrove and Parkes. In the latter's precise bureaucratic prose, Steinberg

said that he was interested, on behalf of the Freeland League, in obtaining preliminary details of some "considerable and coherent area for the establishment of a settlement of refugees from several countries of Eastern and Central Europe".

[He] went on to make observations to the following effect:

'It is to be clearly understood that the settlement is not intended to become a political or national unit separated from the state and the Commonwealth. The colonists should become, in due course, Australian citizens, and the English language and Australian administration would be introduced in the settlement from the beginning. It is intended to establish an economic unit: this means, firstly, the development of an area selected as a balanced economy, based on a comprehensive plan for many years ahead, embracing agricultural, pastoral, and mining activities, as well as some secondary industries; this is the first meaning of an economic entity; and, secondly, this plan should be so construed as to fit in with the economy of the state as a whole.

'The area first in question is the south-west part of the state, to which place the Freeland League would be prepared to send, at its own expense, a commission of experts in order to prepare details and a scientific survey for the country, and to make the necessary financial estimates for development in the pioneering stage. We could send this expert commission after getting the goodwill of the Government of this state, and after having an assurance from the Commonwealth Government that if the report of the commission of experts should be favourable to the scheme, they will give their consent to the entry of the migrants. We should expect the State Government to approach the Federal Government and to get the necessary permission'.²⁷

That, then, was what Steinberg requested, and in return Premier Cosgrove advised that his Government was interested in and willing to consider the scheme very carefully when more precise details became 'available'. He could, of course, not yet commit his Government to accept it. But, Cabinet would examine it, and parliamentary notification might prove necessary in some aspects of it such as land tenure. Tasmania 'would require guarantees of a very substantial character when final decisions were under consideration'. Furthermore, 'the Government would undertake to make representation to the Commonwealth concerning permission for the migrants to enter Australia, should a scheme acceptable to the State be formulated at a later date'.²⁸

On the following day, an ever-cautious Steinberg requested, and readily obtained from Cosgrove, a written statement confirming that the settlement would be specifically Jewish. '[My] Government accepts in principle (subject to the reservation already set out) the proposal that a settlement of Jewish migrants should be established in Tasmania', wrote Cosgrove. 'As soon as a concrete plan could be formulated, the necessary investigations into the details of the scheme would be put in hand'.²⁹

Armed with this assurance, and delighted with the warm support of the Tasmanian Treasurer, E. Dwyer-Grey, the Tasmanian Trade Union Movement, and the Refugee Council of Tasmania, Steinberg departed for the mainland. He left Parker, Caroline Isaacson and Bert Pearl to undertake the inspection of the south-west which would precede formulation of the 'concrete plan' Cosgrove expected, while he resumed his pro-Kimberley activity on the mainland. He had been impressed by the friendly attitude of the Tasmanian Government and wrote to tell it so.³⁰ 'Permit me to say, in reply', responded Under-Secretary Parkes, 'that from the Premier downwards we regarded it as a privilege to facilitate your enquiries, and to extend official courtesies to you'.³¹ Before long, however, war with Japan broke out, and as Steinberg put it, 'Kimberley and Tasmania alike receded for the time being into the mists of uncertainty'.

Critchley Parker, Caroline Isaacson and Bert Pearl returned to Melbourne. But the Tasmanian plan remained at the forefront of Parker's mind, and he determined that, war or no war, a detailed exploration of the south-west should still be undertaken. 'I am so glad that you think our trip to Tasmania will help the many oppressed people in Europe, a cause for which I shall always be happy to work', he wrote to Steinberg on 11 December 1941. 'As you so rightly said, however, one

must prepare as much as possible now, and I hope to leave soon again for Tasmania to obtain more information'.³²

Ignoring the pleas of his parents, and the advice of Tasmanian officials, he set off for Port Davey in May 1942, when the island was already in the grip of a harsh winter. 'I never imagined that he would all alone undertake this preparatory work', wrote Steinberg, 'but he must have believed in it as his absolute personal duty. . . . [An] inner urge drove him there.'³³

Parker was disappointed in his expectation that the Tasmanian Government, which had hitherto proved so accommodating, would provide him with technical assistance. The government refused to abet what was a foolhardy venture given the seasonal conditions. But Parker was an experienced walker who had once trekked through no less bleak a terrain than northern Lapland.³⁴ Undaunted, he headed for the remote and inaccessible south-west. 'This great uninhabited region, known only to a few hunters and prospectors, has always fired the imagination of the more adventurous walkers but never is the journey undertaken alone', explained a fellow member of the Melbourne Walking Club several years later. 'Critchley, in his enthusiasm, unfortunately disregarded the rules of bushcraft and ventured into unknown country without a companion'.³⁵

Apparently, this acquaintance was unaware of the true reason for Parker's visit. Parker had taken few people into his confidence, though the reasons for his reticence are uncertain. Perhaps, since the authorities were co-operative, he saw no need to actively lobby among the population at large and was afraid of kindling a possible anti-Semitic or economic backlash which could defeat the scheme's implementation.

One who he trusted enough to enlighten was Tasmanian fisherman Charlie King, 'an honest man with whom I had a pleasant stay'. King, who knew the south-west well, was plied with questions, and confirmed that he 'has seen gold in [quantity] between Birch's Inlet and Port Davey'. On learning the true reason for Parker's visit he 'was most enthusiastic and though suffering from a bad rupture and a worse cough insisted on taking me over here' [to Port Davey].³⁶ Subsequent events can be traced from the Journal in which Parker pencilled his thoughts and messages.

On 28 March 1942 King landed him at Long Bay, Mount MacKenzie, at the start of Marsden's Track which leads to Fitzgerald, sixty miles to the north-east. This was the country whose potential Parker intended to investigate in the hope of convincing the Tasmanian Government to incorporate it in their approved plan for a Jewish settlement. It had been agreed that if Parker wished for any reason to discontinue his journey he would 'make two smoke columns by firing the button grass on Mt. MacKenzie' and King would row across and pick him up.

He set off in high spirits, carrying his rucksack. 'If only you were with me that we could enjoy together the beauty of Port Davey', he wrote to Caroline Isaacson on his first day. 'A sheet of water studded with green islands and beyond hills and massive mountain ranges now blue in the evening light'. He was elated because he found Marsden's Track swiftly 'thus saving a long search tomorrow morning'. On the second day 'a long dew followed by a very hot day . . . made walking with a heavy sack most unpleasant'; he 'halted frequently' and headed 'across country believing that quicker than following the track'.

Things, however, went tragically wrong. The next day 'hail, rain and violent gales' lashed the area (they were to continue for weeks). Parker had not progressed very far and he returned to base to light the agreed signal. 'Three times on different days I have made this signal when the weather has allowed it to be seen', he wrote

on 8 April, 'but as there has been no response he [King] cannot have seen them'. Pushing on to Fitzgerald or returning to Port Davey was impossible given Parker's deteriorating state of health; by the seventh day he suspected pleurisy of the lungs caused, he supposed, by damp conditions. 'I could neither walk sixty miles to Fitzgerald, the river now being in flood, or walk fifty odd miles to the tin miners, though only sixteen by water it is much more difficult by land'. He had used up many matches in his vain attempts to contact King, and he now made the grim discovery that he had only two boxes of matches instead of four (as he presumed) and that much of the contents had been ruined by rain. Before long he had no matches — and no camp-fire.

In these frightening circumstances the experienced bushman tried to make himself as comfortable as possible, horribly aware that the inevitable was imminent. He lay his sleeping-bag on a bed of bracken and surrounded his tent with a barricade of brushwood for warmth and to forestall the predation of a bush rat which had earlier nibbled his supplies. He believed that the clothes in his rucksack were sufficiently warm to protect him from unbearable discomfort. Moreover, 'I do not feel that there will be anything more than a gradual loss of the senses and a final sinking into unconsciousness'.

To Caroline Isaacson he confided: 'I should like my body to lie at the southern side of the entrance to Port Davey, close to the edge of the yellow cliff that stands there, so that I shall see all the vessels that go in and out of the Harbour from our settlement'. He had a final message, on 9 April, for Dr. Steinberg: 'It is at Port Davey that I hope the Jewish settlement will start, not far from where I sever all earthly connections with it. . . . To die in the service of so noble a cause is to me a great satisfaction and if, as I hope, the settlement brings happiness to many refugees and in so doing serves the state of Tasmania, I die happy'.³⁷

He was however, evidently discounting any further involvement by the Freeland League, and one obvious stumbling block was his (still clandestine) championship of the Soviet system. He advised Mrs. Isaacson that

As Steinberg's friends are advancing the money they may demand some sort of small-holding scheme, every family possessing a cottage and cow. Nothing could be more disastrous for the S-W and west of Tasmania where only collective agricultural enterprise can possibly succeed. If they insist on their 'pig in a poke' scheme repudiate all connection with the enterprise and do likewise for me. I do not wish to be the means of indirectly bringing more suffering on the Jewish refugees. . . . Provided the Steinberg group receive their money back and I suppose they will demand interest, they should have no further influence in the project. . . . After the war you could visit London, see Steinberg's principals and so impress them with your ability and charm and position in Australian Jewry and [convince them] that Australian Jewry is suspicious of Steinberg.³⁸

While Parker was recording his plans for the happiness of others, a search had apparently been mounted. Charlie King and another local, Harry Evans, claimed to have followed his tracks for three days before losing them and shifting their search, futilely, to Mount Hayes. Another search party, consisting of state troopers, reportedly set out from Huon but also drew a blank. The only relic of Parker's ill-advised lone trek was an empty biscuit carton, found on 26 May. But on 4 September a party of Bellerive fishermen sheltering from severe weather at Port Davey made the discovery. Sydney Dale — who had earlier enthusiastically advised Parker on the region's fisheries and was specially commended by him to Caroline Isaacson as 'an honest man with a great knowledge of and love for the sea' — with his sons Sydney and Colin and his stepson Clyde Clayton went ashore at Channel Bay at the foot of Mt. MacKenzie. They had walked about thirty yards inland when they spotted a small cloth bag on a stick with the word 'Help' written on it. Nearby were the

remains of Parker's tent, shredded to ribbons by the storms, and, inside his green sleeping-bag, Parker's corpse. Parker's rain-soaked Journal, his compass, camera, photographic equipment and wallet of bank notes, littered the site.³⁹

At an inquest held at Hobart on 26 October 1942 the Coroner, J. P. Clark, found that Parker had died of 'starvation and exposure'.⁴⁰ Several weeks earlier, Parker's remains had been buried near the spot where they were found. Critchley Creek and Parker Bay commemorate the tragedy.

The burial party comprised Syd Dale, his two sons and stepson, state trooper Arthur Fleming, government pathologist Samuel Duncan, and Under-Secretary Edward Parkes, who rendered sterling service to Parker's grieving parents during this sad time.⁴¹ Over the grave was erected a simple white cross on which the inscription reads:

*In Memory of
Critchley Parker Jr.
who lost his life
on a walking trip from Port Davey
and
rests peacefully here
where he was found
on
4 September 1942
Aged 31 years*

As a result of the Federal Government's rejection of the Kimberley Scheme in 1944 the Tasmanian settlement scheme was also a closed issue. The historians of Tasmania's south-west, Robert and Kathleen Gowland, comment:

Fantastic as the idea sounds now, there is little doubt that it would have been highly successful if implemented. When one considers how the Jews have made a far worse wilderness blossom like the rose, with the help of sympathetic nations and wealthy members of their own race throughout the world, it does not seem unreal at all. The areas of Israel and south-west Tasmania are not incomparable; the agricultural problems of the Palestinian deserts would have been far more challenging than anything the south-west could offer.⁴²

This noble-hearted if eccentric young man might have died in vain, but his story is an inspiring one in the annals of the Jews in Australia. It should be recalled amidst all the adverse talk of 'reffos' which greeted the arrival of Jews in some quarters. As Dr. Steinberg put it, 'this unknown man of another people' died 'a martyr for the cause of human dignity and for the Jewish people . . . Critchley Parker's name is closely linked, for all time, with the Jewish people'.⁴³

NOTES

1. A version of this article was presented at the Conference of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies, St. Hilda's College, Melbourne, July 1989.
2. See La Trobe MS 8787, State Library of Victoria, Miss G. E. Morris Collection.
3. *Ibid.* I. N. Steinberg, *Australia — The Unpromised Land*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1947, pp. 122–26; *Who's Who in Australia 1944*; *Argus*, 23 October 1944.
4. 'Journal', written by Parker for the benefit of Mrs. Caroline Isaacson, in the possession of Mr. Peter Isaacson, to whom I am most grateful for granting me access to it. Appreciation is also due to Mr. Alan Jacobs of Sydney, who with Mr. Ken Chown is presently making a documentary on the Kimberley Scheme, for generously making this Journal available to me. Thanks also to Rabbi John Levi, for telling me of the Journal's whereabouts. The Journal is not complete, because Parker's mother had necessarily to excise those pages in it on which he had written last messages to his friends, before giving it to Caroline Isaacson. See Kathleen Parker to Caroline Isaacson, 13 September 1942. (Letter in possession of Mr. Peter Isaacson). From the Journal, it is apparent that Maurice Sloman of Melbourne was also, in some degree, associated with Parker's scheme.
5. La Trobe MS 8787, State Library of Victoria, Miss G. E. Morris Collection.
6. *The Australian Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, p. 198, Sydney: The Grolier Society, 1963.

7. Parker 'Journal'. 'I had always hoped that you would be able to prove your belief some day in this part of Tasmania . . . Now I believe the moment is not far distant when you shall do so. Mrs. Isaacson will tell you how these regions will be opened up after the war and the part you will play'. Extract of letter to Milstein, *ibid.*
8. Parker, 'Journal'.
9. The information and direct quotations concerning the proposed structure of the settlement is taken from the 'Journal'.
10. *Ibid.* The remarks regarding the university bear this out. He also envisaged 'Incas, Aztecs as well as those of Spanish descent' attending.
11. Steinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
12. Parker, 'Journal'.
13. Pamela Ruskin, *Australian Jewish News*, 2 February 1962. In his letters to Caroline Isaacson, Parker spelled her diminutive 'Lynka'.
14. Telephone conversation with Mr. Peter Isaacson, July 1989.
15. Steinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
16. Parker, 'Journal', where he referred twice to 'mental palsy'.
17. Steinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
18. Steinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 128–9.
20. Paul Bartrop, 'The Premier as Advocate: A.G. Ogilvie, Tasmania and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–39.' Tasmanian Historical Research Association, *Papers and Proceedings*, vol. 35, no. 2, June 1988, pp. 49–57.
21. E. Parkes, Memorandum, 21 January 1941; Steinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 135. For Parkes, who appears to have been a personal friend of Parker Senior, see *Hobart Mercury*, 25 March 1953; *Launceston Examiner*, 25 March 1953.
22. Steinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 132–3.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 133–4. For Maclean, see *Hobart Mercury*, 19 February 1964.
25. *ibid.*, p. 134.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
27. E. Parkes, Memorandum, *ibid.*, p. 137.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
30. E. Parkes to Steinberg, 20 February 1941, *ibid.*, p. 140 note.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 140–1.
35. *Melbourne Walker*, vol. 18, 1947, pp. 61–62. Parker joined the Melbourne Walking Club in 1939. There is a 'Critchley Parker Junior Reserve' in Upper Beaconsfield, Victoria.
36. Parker, 'Journal'.
37. *Ibid.*
38. It appears from the remainder of this letter that Parker expected Mrs. Isaacson eventually to be laid to rest alongside him.
39. Press cuttings in the possession of Mr. Peter Isaacson.
40. Parker's death certificate, 21 November 1942: details provided by 'E. Parkes, representative of deceased[s] parent'.
41. Parker Senior was ailing and unable to travel. In December 1947 and January 1948 Kathleen Parker, with a female companion, made a commemorative visit to Tasmania. For her scrapbook and other relevant material see La Trobe MS 8787, State Library of Victoria, Miss G. E. Morris Collection. Photographs of Parker Senior and Parker Junior are in this collection as are photographs of the latter's burial and grave.
42. Robert and Kathleen Gowlland, *Trampled Wilderness: the history of South-west Tasmania*, Devonport, Tas.: G. L. Richmond, 1975, p. 137.
43. Steinberg, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

THE 'JEWISH RACE' CLAUSE IN AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION FORMS, 1939: REASONABLE OR RACIST?

Paul R. Bartrop

For any non-British person intending to come to Australia as an immigrant in 1939, a permit to land in the country had to be obtained from the Australian Government. In order to obtain one of these, an official Government form had to be procured, filled out and returned to Canberra for processing as to the desirability or otherwise of the applicant. In this paper I wish to examine the way in which the Government used the wording on its application forms to regulate the entry of Jews from Europe during 1939.

An immigration application was filled out on one of two official Government forms. Form number 40 was headed 'Application for Admission of Relative or Friend to Australia', and was filled out and submitted to the Department of the Interior in Canberra by a person resident in Australia who was guaranteeing the maintenance of the migrant to be introduced. The migrant would be permitted to come to Australia upon satisfying a migration officer that he or she (but usually he) was of acceptable health and character standards, and that, upon landing, he was in possession of at least £50 (Australian) as landing capital.

The second form, Form number 47, was a more general 'Application for Permit to Enter Australia', and this was to be filled in by all intending migrants who were not guaranteed by a person resident in Australia. The amount of landing capital required by these people was, from 1936, set at *at least* £200 (Australian), but as 1939 progressed the migration authorities began to take the term 'at least' to mean almost any figure over £200. I have seen instances where £1,000 and £2,000 and even £5,000 and £10,000 were set for individual cases of Jews wishing to enter Australia.

It has already been shown in a number of studies that the Department of the Interior was anti-Semitic and discriminatory in its execution of existing policy and proposals for the future. It successfully managed to adapt the landing permit system, which had been developed as a safeguard over immigration for economic reasons during the Depression, into a tool for the exclusion of immigrants on racial grounds. To discerning observers, the bias became obvious as 1939 progressed. Many people, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, began to question the foundations of the Government's refugee policy, and, although there was never agitation for a wholesale revision of the Government's selection procedure, there were public statements made which voiced severe criticism of the landing permit system. One of the most caustic of these came from Dr. Leon Jona, the President of the Australian Zionist Federation at its National Conference in Melbourne on 5 March 1939. While keeping his comments general, there was little doubt as to the direction in which they were being steered:

It is pathetic, indeed, and tragic to a degree to note the efforts of great countries with millions of population to keep out a few thousand of these unfortunate expatriates who wander through months of anxiety and distress for a permit to enter some haven of refuge, there to begin a life over again.

When the history of the Jewish people of the early decades of the 20th century comes to be written, it will be found that the greatest curse of the Jewish people was not the tyrants and their murderous

henchmen, but the permit system, which prevented these refugees, driven from one land, from entering another — one of the most cruel and vicious inventions of this generation.¹

Jona was to be in for more disappointment. The following month, it was announced that the Department of the Interior had amended the wording of the application forms required to be filled in by all applicants for immigration and guarantors resident in Australia. Henceforth, every application for admission to Australia, regardless of the applicant's country of origin, would be required to state whether or not the applicant was 'of Jewish race'. The furore caused by this forced the Department to retreat from its set position — the only occasion on which outside pressure had this effect throughout the entire Nazi period.

It is not altogether clear when this new type of application form was actually introduced. Michael Blakeney refers to 'immigration documents from as early as May 1938' which obliged intending immigrants to state whether or not they were 'of Jewish race',² but this is clearly too early to be considered in view of the nature of subsequent correspondence which took place in mid-1939. The Minister for Immigration (A.A. Calwell) ten years later (May 1949) stated that the practice originated 'during the pre-War years' and 'was approved by the Hon. J.E. McEwen, then Minister for the Interior'.³ The available evidence would suggest that the move to have all immigration applicants declare whether or not they were Jewish took place in March or early April 1939.⁴

The timing of the introduction of this new form is important in that it represents yet another example of Departmental anti-Semitism at a time when Europe's Jews were more dependent on an unbiased and non-discriminatory attitude from the Department than ever before. Inspector Roland S. Browne of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch was firm in his condemnation of the move, and clearly charged the Department of the Interior with unjustifiable discrimination. He declared that it may even have been unconstitutional, and suggested that, if the Department wanted to elicit certain information from the applicants, it should have asked what the race of the person in question was. The form was certain, moreover, to 'raise a controversy as to what is the Jewish race', as, he wrote, even 'Eminent scientists hold that the Jewish race is a myth'.⁵ Browne sought to know whether Australia was about to accept Hitler's definition of a Jew, which would be nonsensical if only for the reason that there are 'thousands of mixed marriages among the refugees, and the Jews are as mixed a crowd as the English'. It was, to Browne,

an amazing and disquieting departure, for a Government form, and the question is impossible to answer in a great number of cases, that is answered with any degree of authority. . . .

If such discrimination is to be shown, will the Department go a step further and logically define what is the Jewish race?

I should think even the most ardent Nazi will praise the author of this form, who, modest in the fame which his work brings, may desire to add a new line such as 'Roman Catholic or not', or 'Salvation Army or not'.⁶

As an officer of the law, Browne believed that 'the wording of the form is bound to invite strong criticism on the purest democratic and ethical grounds', and, although he thought the Department of the Interior had its reasons for wanting to know the race to which an intending migrant belonged, 'one can only ponder over the mentality which inspired the wording as it is'. His letter to the Director of the Investigation Branch concluded with the hope, 'for the sake of Australia's good name', that the form would be immediately withdrawn, as 'it is monstrous, offensive, quite absurd and provocative'.⁷

The Director of the Commonwealth Investigation Branch, H.E. Jones, took up the matter with the Department of the Interior at once, and had a reply from the Head of

Form No. 47.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO ENTER AUSTRALIA.

(Immigration Act 1901-1935).

NOTES.—(1) If the applicant is residing in the British Isles or Europe this form should be forwarded to—

The Official Secretary,
Australia House,
Strand,
London,
England.

If the applicant resides elsewhere the form should be forwarded to—

The Secretary,
Department of the Interior,
Canberra,
Australia.

- (2) This Application must be filled up in the English language, and the Certificate from a qualified medical practitioner, police officer or other public official, if not in English, must be accompanied by a certified translation in that language.

Full Name—
Surname to be
stated in block
letters.
Address.

I,
of do hereby
make application for permission to enter Australia, and in support of the application submit the
following information, which I declare to be true:—

- (1) Full name.....
(2) Nationality.....
(3) Race (State whether Jewish or not).....
(4) I was born at..... on the day of
....., 19
(5) Marital status (single, married, widowed or divorced).....
(6) I shall be accompanied by the following members of my family:—

If unaccompanied
by wife and children
state "Travelling
Unaccompanied."

—	Name.	Sex.	Date of Birth.	Birthplace.
Wife
Children {

- (7) My last place of permanent residence was.....
(8) My present occupation is.....
(9) My proposed occupation in Australia is.....

Standard Form No. 47 before amendment.

(Source: Australian Archives, CRS A434, file 49/3/7034, 'Admi. of German Jews — Cabinet Decision Re (1933-1936)').

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO ENTER AUSTRALIA.

(Immigration Act 1901-1935).

NOTE.—This Application must be filled up in the English language.

TO THE SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
CANBERRA,
AUSTRALIA.

I, of
do hereby make application for

permission to enter Australia, and in support of the same submit the following particulars :—

- (1) Full name.....
- (2) Nationality..... Race.....
- (3) I was born at..... on the.....
day of..... 19.....
Marital status (single, married, widowed or divorced).....
- (4) I shall be accompanied by the following members of my family :—

	Name.	Sex.	Age Next Birthday.	Birthplace.
Wife				
Children				

If unaccompanied by wife and children state "Travelling Unaccompanied."

- (5) My last place of permanent residence was.....
- (6) My present occupation is.....
- (7) My proposed occupation in Australia is.....
- (8) The amount of money in English currency which I undertake to bring with me to Australia is.....
- (9) I attach a certificate by a qualified medical practitioner as to the mental and physical health of myself and the members of my family.
- (10) Neither I nor any member of my family has ever been in prison or in a mental hospital.
(To be supported by a certificate from a police officer or other public official.)
- (11) The European languages in which I can read and write fluently are.....
- (12) The names and addresses of friends and/or relatives in Australia are :—

Full Name.	Address.	Relationship.

- (13) My intended place of residence in Australia is (if known).....
- (14) I attach two photographs of myself and the members of my family who will accompany me.

Signature of Applicant.....

Dated at..... day of..... 19.....

WARNING.—Any person whose admission has been authorized may be prevented from landing on arrival if it is found that he has given misleading information in his application.

By Authority: L. R. JENNINGS, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra.

Standard Form No. 47 with the 'Jewish Race' clause as amended after protests from the Australian Jewish Welfare Society.

(Source: Australian Archives, CRS A445, file 235/5/9, 'Alleged Discrimination against Admission of Jews [question of Jewish or not on Dep. I. Forms]).

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

*Immigration Act 1901-1935.*APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION OF RELATIVE OR
FRIEND TO AUSTRALIA.

(NOTE.—A separate form should be used for each person. In the case of a married man who will be accompanied by his wife and/or minor children, their names may be included on this form.)

THE SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
CANBERRA.

I,
(Insert full name: surname in BLOCK letters.)

of
(Full postal address.)

desire permission to introduce to Australia the following person who is of
nationality and (1) is of Jewish race.

Name. State whether "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Miss" or "Master". (Write surname in BLOCK letters.)	Date of Birth.	Birthplace. (Town and Country.)	Present Address.	Present Occupation.	Relationship to Applicant. (State whether "Brother", "Sister", &c., or merely "Friend.")

1. The nominee (1) is personally known to me.

I have known the nominee for years.

2. (2) I have made this application at the request of
..... of

3. The nominee will engage in the following occupation in Australia:—

Name of Nominee.	Intended Occupation.	Name and Address of Employer. (If nominee will be engaged in business on his own account full particulars should be inserted in this column.)	Weekly Rate of Pay.

Standard Form No. 40 as amended for use before protests from Australian Jewish Welfare Society.

(Source: Australian Archives, CRS A445, file 235/5/9, 'Alleged Discrimination against Admission of Jews [question of Jewish or not on Dep. I. Forms]).

the Immigration Branch, A.R. Peters, within a week. This showed that a rethink had already taken place in the Department. Jones was informed by Peters that

Exception has been taken by some members of the Jewish community to the use of the words 'Jewish race' and it is, therefore, desired that the words 'of' and 'race' should be crossed out on the forms already distributed, so that the phrase reads simply 'is/is not Jewish'.

If inquiry is made as to how a nominee should be described who is of Christian faith, but Jewish extraction, the reply could be to the effect that such person could be shown as 'not Jewish'.⁸

Peters commented that it was desired to bring the new forms into operation forthwith, and invited Jones to 'kindly issue the necessary instructions to your Inspectors and request them to withdraw from use stocks of the form hitherto used'.⁹

The exception taken by 'some members of the Jewish community' had been transmitted to Peters from no less a source than the Australian Jewish Welfare Society. In a letter dated 21 April, Frank Silverman, the Secretary of the Society, acknowledged that the wording used on the form 'greatly facilitates the working of the Department in determining those applicants who would come under the category of Jewish refugees and be included in the special quota' of fifteen thousand announced by Minister John McEwen on 1 December 1938.¹⁰ At the same time, though, he noted that the Society had

received numerous protests from members of the Australian Jewish Community in Victoria and New South Wales, who have taken great exception to the words 'JEWISH RACE'. They are most emphatic in their protests and wish to point out that they are BRITISH SUBJECTS of JEWISH FAITH, and that the word 'RACE' especially, is most obnoxious to them.¹¹

The Department immediately backed down, and in a subsequent letter of 27 April the Departmental Secretary, J.A. Carrodus, informed Silverman that 'in view of the objection taken to the use of the phrase "JEWISH RACE", it will be arranged for the word "RACE" to be deleted and the form amended to read simply "is/is not Jewish"'.¹² This was sufficient for the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, which neither broached the subject again nor demonstrated any objection to the continued employment of an official categorisation which was, irrespective of the word 'race', nonetheless still discriminatory.

Opposition came from another sector, however, that of the Victorian Refugee Immigration Appeals Committee (VRIAC). This body had been established by the Australian Council of Civil Liberties in league with the Trade Union Movement¹³ as a watchdog organisation overseeing the rights of refugees, and had as long ago as February 1938 been bringing to the attention of the Minister individual cases or those which had been rejected without apparent reason.¹⁴ When news of the new Form 40 reached VRIAC, a vigorous exchange of correspondence began between the Honorary Secretary, Marjorie Coppel, and the Department of the Interior. In her first letter, dated 4 May, Coppel noted that VRIAC had been made aware that the new Form 40 was to be replaced and that the insertion of the racial clause was due to a mistake. On behalf of the Committee, she wrote 'We hope that this is so'.¹⁵ Of equal concern was that 'no discrimination as to race or religion will be introduced in any way into Form 40'. The issue of who was to be classed as being of Jewish race was important here:

As the distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish members of the Australian community is solely a religious distinction, we cannot understand any Government Department imposing a different significance to the term 'Jew', when it deals with persons coming into the community. On the other hand, discrimination on a religious basis would be repugnant to the spirit of religious tolerance on which our constitution is based.

It was a very important point, but the Department, in replying to VRIAC, tried to play it down by reassuring the Committee that its fears were groundless. On 14

May, Carrodus wrote back that only the AJWS had disapproved of the word 'race', and that, as no objection was taken to the Jewish clause remaining on the form at all, the form was simply amended by the omission of the word 'race'. He went on to state that 'no discrimination is shown against an intending immigrant merely because of his religion', though in the case of refugees certain information was necessary which intending migrants had not hitherto been required to give. Such information was mainly for 'statistical purposes'.¹⁶

VRIAC was far from convinced that this reply was good enough. A letter from Coppel to Carrodus dated 25 May stated that the Committee did not feel 'that its protest against the racial or religious discrimination, involved in this new departure [that is, the revised Form 40], has been satisfactorily met'.¹⁷ Coppel informed Carrodus that VRIAC was not making its protest 'particularly on behalf of the Jews', but rather 'for the interests of the community, which we do not think are served by a discrimination of this sort'. She then requested that her letters be placed before the Minister, with the comment that 'If the Government persists in this discrimination, our Committee feels that such a vital matter concerning refugee immigration should be brought before the public'.¹⁸ By way of closing, she sought the definition of the term 'Jewish' according to which the Department operated. This, among other things, was included in the Departmental response which followed.

The main thrust of this definition was that the term 'Jewish' was intended to apply to 'persons who would ordinarily describe themselves as being Jews, and not to persons who may be of partly Jewish blood and who could be classed, for example, as non-Aryan Christians'.¹⁹ A.R. Peters, who drafted this definition, was very wary in his use of words beyond this. 'It is appreciated', he wrote,

that there are a number of points to be taken into consideration, but the broad distinction as to whether an intending migrant would class himself as Jewish or non-Jewish will serve the immediate purpose of the Department, as further inquiries can be made if it is considered necessary to obtain more precise information in any individual case.²⁰

In an aside to Carrodus, Peters appended the comment that 'It is a bit of a poser to define what exactly we mean by "Jewish", ... but I hope my evasive attempt will suffice for the present'. Cryptically, he included the remark that 'we don't want to confine the term merely to persons of Jewish blood and faith'.²¹ Precisely what he meant by this is unclear, for if a person did not necessarily need to satisfy the criteria of blood *or* faith, it was by no means certain as to what *would* qualify him thus. Perhaps Peters had easily perceptible cultural differences in mind. If so, this was a case of Peters leaving the Department's options open to a far wider degree than could normally be justified.

Marjorie Coppel persisted in her quest for satisfaction from the Department over Form 40. In another letter to Carrodus on 23 June, she speculatively asserted that 'surely the Department is taking into consideration in granting permits not only the absorptive capacity of the refugee but also the information as to whether or not the refugee is a Jew'.²² In its subsequent reply, the Department was not to offer a comment on this, but other remarks by Coppel enabled the Department to begin a new (and ultimately successful) defence. Coppel concluded her letter with the words

This Committee is not concerned with the numbers, whether great or small, of Jews admitted under the quota. It is only concerned that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race or religion against the refugee and that the sole criterion of admissibility should be absorptive capacity.²³

This was the opportunity Interior needed to bury the can of worms the Form 40 issue had become. In a letter which was determined to agree with Coppel's final point, Peters drafted a considerable number of circumstances under which an

immigrant may be permitted entry to Australia. All these ultimately fed back to the issue of maintenance guarantees, the financial standing of the guarantors, the degree of capital possessed by a non-guaranteed applicant, and the nature of the industry or occupation in which an immigrant proposed to seek employment.²⁴ This did not remove the offending clause in Form 40, but it did serve to eliminate Coppel's scepticism over whether or not the Government was operating a discriminatory policy, especially when, as a final parting shot, the letter made the declaration that

The Government has placed a quota on the number of refugees that may be admitted within three years, i.e. 15,000. The Department is working on a basis of roughly 5,000 per annum. Within the limits of the 5,000 there is no discrimination on the grounds of religion.²⁵

Coppel was convinced. A letter of acknowledgement and thanks that the issue had been explained and clarified in such detail followed for Carrodus on 11 July,²⁶ and the issue concerning Form 40 was effectively closed until raised again by Henry B. Gullett, in a Question to the House, ten years later, in 1949.²⁷

It received a brief airing in London in September and October, 1939, however, when Ronald Kidd, the Secretary of the British National Council for Civil Liberties, drew the matter to the attention of Cyril Picciotto of the British Board of Deputies. Unaware that the matter had been resolved to the satisfaction of those in Australia, the question was raised as to whether or not there was 'the possibility of some kind of discrimination against Jews'.²⁸ The discussion which then took place between the Board of Deputies and the London-based Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC) indicates that the policy of the Australian Government had successfully been able to pull the wool over prying eyes. The JRC believed that the Australian Government did not 'have any wish to discriminate against Jewish people', and that there was nothing improper in the Australian Government requiring Jews 'to register as Jews' for the purpose of the quota.²⁹ A later comment from the Board of Deputies suggested that 'it may be inferred that the discrimination, if any, was in this case in favour of the refugee rather than against him'.³⁰ By this stage, however, the matter was of purely academic merit, as the outbreak of War on 3 September had brought to an end all immigration into Australia.

This was the first suggestion, from any source, that the Australian Government might actually be trying to help the Jewish refugees through the 'Jewish race' clause in its immigration forms. The reasoning was as follows: if each Jewish applicant stated his Jewishness, the Government would be able to more easily identify him and thus facilitate his entry in accordance with the declared quota of 15,000 refugees over three years from 1 January 1939. Until this time, there had been no accurate monitoring of how many applications from Germany and Austria had been from Jews, though the Government was operating from a working figure of perhaps 90 per cent. Now, it would be able to tell precisely who was and who was not Jewish, and thus help Jews to come into Australia more easily.

That, at least, was the logic which would justify the insertion of a 'Jewish race' clause. The Government's motives must, however, be viewed more sceptically, especially the motives of the Department of the Interior which drew up the form and put it into operation. It can be seen as a simple case of bureaucratic racism designed to identify Jews for the purpose of exclusion rather than admission. The Department was in 1939 under pressure, certainly, but the pressure was more along the lines of how to restrict Jewish entry than facilitate it. Until the introduction of this new form, there was no fixed way of ascertaining whether an applicant was Jewish or not. The new Form 40 and Form 47, as we have seen, now required *every*

immigration applicant — from Europe, from the USA, or from European territories abroad — to state whether he was 'of Jewish race'. This would give the Department accurate figures of how many Jews, from any source, were applying to come in, and intensify or relax its restrictive energies accordingly.

Given that, was there any acceptable defence for the introduction of the new Form 40 and Form 47 in 1939? I do not think so. It cannot be accepted that the Department of the Interior was acting reasonably, and it must be concluded that it tried to camouflage an obviously racist and discriminatory tactic through deliberate subterfuge. The whole issue was one which yet again demonstrated the ignominy of the Australian Government's attitude toward the refugee problem. Equally disturbing — as if it was not bad enough in 1939 — is that the 'Jewish race' clause was to remain on Australian immigration forms until November 1952, long after Australia had been actively pursuing a vigorous and healthy immigration programme.

NOTES

1. ZFANZ Papers (Melbourne), Presidential address delivered by Dr. J. Leon Jona at the opening of the Eighth Zionist Conference at Melbourne, Sunday, 5 March 1939.
2. Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees 1933–48*, Sydney, Croom Helm Australia, 1985, p.140.
3. AA A445, File 235/5/9, 'Alleged Discrimination against Admission of Jews [question of Jewish or not on Dep. I Forms]', Department of Immigration Answer to House of Representatives Question asked by Henry B. Gullett (Henty, Vic.) prepared on 19 May 1949.
4. Suzanne D. Rutland has also concluded that the new form dated from April 1939, based on evidence in the *Australian Jewish Herald* of 20 April 1939 and 4 May 1939. See Suzanne D. Rutland, 'The Jewish Community in New South Wales 1914–1939', MA (Hons) thesis, University of Sydney, 1979, p.205.
5. AA A367, file C3075, 'Miscellaneous: Admission of Aliens, Forms, Instructions, etc.', Inspector Roland S. Browne to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 19 April 1939.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, Interior memorandum (*Applications by Persons Resident in Australia for the Admission of Alien Relatives or Friends — Form No. 40*) prepared by A.R. Peters, addressed to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 26 April 1939.
9. *Ibid.*
10. AA A445, file 235/5/9, 'Alleged Discrimination against Admission of Jews [question of Jewish or not on Dep. I Forms]', Frank Silverman to A.R. Peters, 21 April 1939.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, J.A. Carrodus to Frank Silverman, 27 April 1939.
13. Fitzpatrick Papers, ANL, Series 1, Box 3, 'NSW Committee Correspondence File, 1938–39', Brian Fitzpatrick to R. Dixon, Esq. (Sydney), 12 May 1939.
14. *Ibid.*, Series 1, Box 2, 'Correspondence file, 1939', Brian Fitzpatrick to J.M. Alexander, Esq., 18 February 1939.
15. AA A659, File 39/4641, 'Victorian Refugee Immigration Appeals Committee', Marjorie J. Coppel to J.A. Carrodus, 4 May 1939.
16. *Ibid.*, Carrodus to Coppel, 15 May 1939.
17. *Ibid.*, Coppel to Carrodus, 215 May 1939.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, draft reply to Coppel prepared by A.R. Peters dated 14 June 1939. Approved for transmission by J.A. Carrodus in handwritten minute, 15 June 1939.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, handwritten minute by A.R. Peters to Carrodus, 14 June 1939.
22. *Ibid.*, Coppel to Carrodus, 23 June 1939.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, draft reply to Coppel prepared by A.R. Peters, dated 7 July 1939. Presumably approved by J.A. Carrodus for transmission under his name on the same date.
25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*, Coppel to Carrodus, 11 July 1939.
27. See n.3, above.
28. Board of Deputies of British Jews Archives, file E1/13/1, Ronald Kidd (Secretary, National Council for Civil Liberties) to Cyril Picciotto (Board of Deputies), 25 September 1939.
29. *Ibid.*, Overseas Settlement Department, Jewish Refugee Committee, to A.G. Brotman (Secretary, Board of Deputies), 12 October 1939.
30. *Ibid.*, Secretary of Board of Deputies to Ronald Kidd, 15 October 1939.

THE PILCHER CONUNDRUM

Rodney Goultman

The name of Charles Venn Pilcher, Anglican Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney, is certainly writ large across Jewish causes in the 1940s. Whether campaigns against anti-Semitism, vigorously opposing the political and bureaucratic oppression of Jewish refugees, advocating the Kimberley scheme, or vociferously agitating for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, Bishop Pilcher was to be found leading the charge. While most Jewish commentators have been willing, for obvious reasons, to describe and welcome his actions, few have questioned his motivation. This issue is made all the more important when one realises that at least to the outbreak of World War Two, this cleric was an outspoken Germanophile.

Michael Blakeney has suggested four reasons which combined to arouse the Bishop's ardent support for the Jewish cause.¹ These included his early ministry in Birmingham, in an area in which many victims of Russian pogroms had sought refuge, and his academic interests as Professor of Old Testament Studies at Wycliffe Theological College, University of Toronto, in Canada. Then, there was his basic humanity; and finally, the comment of Dr. J. M. Machover that his actions stemmed from 'a deep sense of guilt for the age-long suffering inflicted on the Jews by the Christian Church'.² While the first three of these aspects may have influenced him, they do not provide the explanation for the intensity and fervour which attended his activism on behalf of Jewish refugees. If these reasons were so important, why did the Bishop not voice his opposition to a rampant Nazism in the 1930s, with its racial laws, its overt anti-Semitism, and its concentration camps? On the contrary, Pilcher was ever willing to lay the blame for the rise of Nazism solely at the feet of the First World War Allies, and especially, Great Britain. Moreover, Machover's observation, even if true, was by its very nature a *post-factum* event. Indeed, none of these factors appears to resolve the question as to why, before 1939, the Bishop was so overtly pro-German, and yet, within a few months after the outbreak of war he threw himself headlong into defending the civil rights of its victims.

In 1940 an anonymous phone call to the police sparked a Commonwealth Investigation Bureau (C.I.B.) secret enquiry into the behaviour and motivations of Bishop Pilcher. This even spread to Canada, to his former employer, Wycliffe College. It was alleged that the Bishop was a 'German lover', entertained Germans at his home and had a German maid. It was also said that his 'sister's' work at an A.I.F. canteen and his interest in the Rose Bay Flying Base in Sydney had subversive intentions.³ While there was little doubt that two elements encouraged this faceless accusation — anti-foreignism and the fact that Germany was once again the enemy — the Bishop's quite public pro-German sympathies did not help. His views were even tinged with a racism that was pertinent in Australia at that time.

In a speech delivered in Launceston in February 1938, Pilcher exhorted Australia to return its League of Nations mandate over New Guinea to Germany.⁴ In return, a grateful Germany might stand as a bulwark shielding Australia from the 'Far Eastern nations'. His recollections were of his father, who had spoken of Germany with reverence and affection. The Allies at the Versailles Conference were castigated for the unjust yoke applied to the neck of Germans which inflicted great hardship on the nation.

The Bishop said he had visited Germany and found its people friendly but imbued with a deep sense of having suffered personal injustice. He said that the current situation in Germany has in fact been created by the Allies, and that Nazism was its product. He declared that if the Allies had been more sympathetic, there would have never been a Hitler or a Nazi party. It was his belief that rejecting Hitler's peaceful overtures was a great mistake. Indeed, he was amazed at 'the psychological ineptitude of some British politicians', presumably those who opposed appeasement. He justified Hitler's march into the Rhineland on grounds that Germany was taking something which truly belonged to her. For this she did not deserve the excoriation of the Allies. Indeed, he felt that Germany could be a great friend of Great Britain in the Western Pacific.

As he stated:

The real danger to a white Australia comes not from a European nation but from the Asiatic peoples . . . and what is there between Asia and Australia to support us. . . . If the mandate were given back to Germany the boundaries between Australia and the Eastern countries would be strengthened. There would be nothing we may want more than the help of people kindred in blood, language, art, and ideals.⁵

While many people refused to help the officers investigating Pilcher, at least three did. These included two Wardens of St. Andrew's Cathedral. The first, Robert Stewart, said that the Bishop had often voiced pro-German utterances before the outbreak of World War Two. On the other hand, with the outbreak of the conflict, he was forceful in his assertion that refugees reaching Australia ought to receive far greater official sympathy. Stewart was sure of Pilcher's pro-German partisanship.⁶

The second Warden, Sam Barlow, quoted the Bishop's views that there would have been no war if Germany had been treated as 'an educated nation' at Versailles, that Germany was in the forefront of every intellectual movement, and that if the German colonies had been returned, its friction with other states would have been minimised.⁷

A third interviewee was Joan Kingsley Strack, wife of an army officer, with a son serving in the R.A.A.F. She recalled a pre-War church service at St. Andrew's Cathedral during which Pilcher had surmised that half the bitterness and resentment existing in the world was caused by the cruelty of the British towards the 'poor Germans'. He appeared to her that he was saying that the real villain and cause of the subsequent war was Great Britain.⁸

The investigation found that Pilcher's maid was a German Jewish refugee, Else Goldstein. Pilcher confided to C.I.B. officers that she harboured a deep and abiding hatred of the Hitlerian regime. During the course of his interrogation, for which the Bishop was given no reasons, he declared that it was through his association with refugees that he had not only acquired a deep sympathy for their plight, but also a hatred of the Hitlerian state.⁹

The Principal of Wycliffe Theological College, the Rev. Dr. Armitage, swore that his former employee, Charles Venn Pilcher, was a staunch defender of the Crown and of British institutions and that his humanitarian qualities were outstanding. However, he was courageously outspoken to the point of being misunderstood. An example given was that shortly after World War One, he was involved in a committee established to care for and feed the children of the combatant states, including Germany. This led some people to accuse him of being too pro-German.¹⁰

The Bishop's pleading to political authorities to lift the burdens placed on refugees as a result of their being classed as 'enemy aliens' was constant, as was his

public advocacy on their behalf in the Press. Initially, he spoke as Chairman of the New South Wales Church Committee for non-Aryan Christians. He pointed to the absolute absurdity of treating the victims of Nazism as criminals, and having them interned with those of fascist tendencies. The more Australians studied Hitler and his methods, the more they would come to sympathise and help the refugees. In 1940 he could say that the fury of the German nation was turned against the Jews by the constant repetition of the canard that the Jews had led to the collapse of Germany in 1918 by 'stabbing the undefeated and undefeatable armies of the Fatherland in the back'. He could also admit that this was buttressed by a popularist German resentment that allowed Hitler to round-up Jews, and others, to place them in concentration camps where imaginable and unimaginable cruelty was practised on the unfortunate victims'.¹¹ Of course, in 1940, he was not to know that even worse was to come.

The Bishop's constant needling of officials over the refugee issue caused even the security services to question his motives.¹² His movements were watched and, where possible, his conversations monitored. In 1942 C.I.B. officers reported that they had many amicable meetings with the Bishop and that his views were those 'of the average churchman who is more concerned with alleviating suffering than with other issues'. He was judged to be not disloyal in any way.¹³

W. D. Rubinstein has suggested philo-Semitism emerges from a sympathy or admiration for Jews because of some unique innate capacity they bear, even for suffering.¹⁴ Indeed, Pilcher advised the Zionist Council of N.S.W. on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, that not only had his life been enriched by his Jewish friends, but that he was a Zionist because he knew the Jews would make a great contribution to the world once they had a land of their own.¹⁵ However, such a statement failed to provide the essential clue to his frenetic support of Jewish refugees in Australia and Palestine. While he certainly made Jewish causes his own, and did so in a manner that would put most Jews of his time to shame, there is little direct evidence that corroborates Machover's view as to Christian guilt; for one might speculate that if extirpation of guilt was involved, it had more to do with Pilcher's previously long-held Germanophilia. The jury is still out.

NOTES

1. Blakeney, M., *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-48*, Croom Helm, Sydney, pps. 200-1.
2. Machover, J. M., *Towards Rescue: the Story of Australian Jewry's Stand for the Jewish Cause, 1940-48*, JAJHS, Vol. 7, Pt. 1, 1971, p. 36.
3. Australian Archives (AA): NA60262, Dossier 10401, 10 June 1940.
4. The *Launceston Examiner*, 17 February 1938.
5. *Ibid.*
6. AA, *op. cit.*, 9 September 1940.
7. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1940.
8. *Ibid.*, 27 August 1940.
9. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1940.
10. *Ibid.*, 17 December 1940.
11. *Daily Telegraph*, 10 October 1940; 6 November 1940; 3 March 1941.
12. AA, *Ibid.*, 2 April 1942.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Rubinstein, W. D., *The Left, the Right, and the Jews*, Croom Helm, Sydney 1982, p. 89.
15. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 November 1942.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ITALIAN JEWISH REFUGEES TO ANTI-FASCIST ACTIVITIES IN WARTIME AUSTRALIA: AN INTRODUCTION

Marcello Montagnana

This essay does not and cannot present an exhaustive outline, complete with biographical and quantitative data, of the Italian Jewish refugees who came to Australia immediately before the outbreak of war with Italy: actually basic researches on this theme — such as a thorough survey of the immigration registers, of the classification of refugees, of their internment, *et cetera* — have not as yet been undertaken. Therefore a mere provisional sketch of the political activity in which some of the Italian Jewish refugees were engaged during wartime will be offered here, but without neglecting some of the problems all refugees had to face.

The work is based on a previous study, regarding the Australian-Italian Anti-Fascist Movement *Italia Libera*, to which new information gathered during a recent visit to Australia has been added. Another article, more or less regarding the same subject, has recently been written by Joseph Gentili, while general studies on the political activity of Italians in Australia — and therefore on some of the Jewish refugees coming from Italy — have been published in Australia and in Italy by Gianfranco Cresciani.¹

Certain aspects clearly require further specification and more documentation. For instance: (1) we only know that, out of some 6,000 Jews who left Italy on account of the anti-Semitic laws of late 1938, the number of those who emigrated to Australia was approximately fifty, including women, children and some foreign Jews;² (2) we do not know whether this destination was freely chosen or — as Gentili puts it — was 'simply due to lucky events and coincidences'; (3) nor do we know how many out of that number had any anti-Fascist background or had been in contact with underground political groups opposed to Mussolini's regime.

On the other hand, some findings may be held to have been already established: (a) a significant number of Italian Jewish refugees became involved in political activities with the foundation of the anti-Fascist movement *Italia Libera* in Melbourne, in March 1943; (b) the number of Italian Jews interned in Australia after the outbreak of war with Italy (10 June 1940), compared with the total of Italian Jewish refugees (though still not exactly determined), amounts to the same proportion of Italians as a whole interned from 1940 to the Fall of 1943, i.e. about ten percent (five Jews interned out of about fifty); (c) Jewish refugees contributed decisively to the growth of the *Italia Libera* movement, in quality and in quantity; for example, in the first Committee, five of the fifteen members were Jewish refugees, and so were the first Secretary and Vice-Secretary, Massimo Montagnana and Fulvio Levi; altogether ten or so Jewish refugees became its most qualified promoters and emerged as the chief leaders of the anti-Fascist movement, just as had happened both in the Mazzini Society and in the Communist group acting in the United States, as well as in other anti-Fascist movements all over the world.³

As to the quality of their contribution, its value may be clearly estimated if the very dim picture of pre-war anti-Fascism in Australia is borne in mind. On this matter Cresciani correctly remarks that

an important obstacle met by the opposition to Fascism was the absence in its ranks — with the exception of Schiassi — of an educated elite, of an intellectual leadership. In Australia there were no *fuorusciti* as in France or the United States who could be at the fore of an articulated and informed opposition; instead, here, the character of Italian anti-Fascism was brisk, rough and sharp-tongued.⁴

A few years after the end of World War II the Italian historian Aldo Garosci wrote a short but fundamental essay, *Storia dei fuorusciti*, based on his own personal experience as a political refugee. In describing the anti-Fascists' activity, especially in the United States, he speaks at length of the Jewish refugees who had left Italy after the anti-Semitic laws of 1938, and he points out the importance of their contribution to the *fuorusciti's* work.⁵ Though further studies on this matter have not in later years added many new facts to those given by Garosci,⁶ it is widely acknowledged by Italian historians that the flow of Jews to Great Britain and to the American continent, which took place just before the outbreak of war, brought to the local anti-Fascist circles not only fresh and firsthand news about the situation in Italy during the 'thirties, but also a substantial help (in number and in quality) in the task of explaining to the Allies that not all Italians were Fascists, as Mussolini's propaganda had proclaimed, nor that the dictator's regime did really represent Italy.

However, in the case of Australia, the essay written a few years ago by Michael Blakeney on the Jewish refugees in Australia does not carry any information about the Italian Jews who took refuge in Australia (as if none of them had come here) and it states that the inflow of Jewish refugees ceased in September 1939.⁷ As far as Italian Jews are concerned this is certainly not correct. In fact, some of them still landed in April and May 1940 from the last two Italian ships (*Romolo* and *Remo*) which reached Australia before Mussolini declared war, and though the number of Italian Jews is very small compared with those coming from Central Europe (according to Blakeney, some 6,500), nevertheless the political work done by a dozen of them in founding and developing the anti-Fascist movement *Italia Libera* is quite remarkable and should not be underestimated.

On the other hand, the activity of the anti-Fascist groups operating outside Italy during the war should not be over-emphasised, because the real struggle against the Nazi Fascists took place in Europe and in Italy. But it certainly should not be disregarded or altogether ignored, as two books on the Australian Italian community published in Australia on the occasion of the Bicentennial have done. Neither accepts that the *Italia Libera* played a positive role in defending the Italo-Australian community during wartime, and both overlook a key chapter of the political history of Italian immigrants, without a knowledge of which many events of those years become incomprehensible.⁸

When examining the events regarding Italian Jewish refugees some basic points should be borne in mind. Italian Jewry differed substantially from the pattern considered universal to the world's Jews. Italian Jews were less than fifty thousand when Mussolini imposed the anti-Semitic laws in 1938. After the ghettos had been abolished in 1848 by Carlo Alberto of Savoy, and Jews had been given the same civil rights as all other citizens, at first in Piedmont and then throughout the kingdom of Italy, the overwhelming majority tended to integrate completely into the newborn nation and took active part in the country's political life as Italians and not specifically as Jews.

The attitude of Italian Jews towards Mussolini's regime was thus determined by class and by political or ideological factors rather than by their Jewishness. In fact, amongst the founders of the Fascist Party and the first of Mussolini's supporters,

Jews were not at all absent, a significant number occupying high posts in the Army, the Fascist Party, the Government, and in the Judiciary. Suffice it to say that from November 1935 to February 1937 the Italian Consul General in Australia was Paolo Vita Finzi, who was of Jewish origin.⁹

Of course, many Italian political leaders opposed to Fascism were also of Jewish origin: the Communists Umberto Terracini, for instance, and Emilio Sereni, Mario and Rita Montagnana, the Socialists Claudio Treves, E. Modigliani, Musatti, Donati, and Della Seta, as well as the Rosselli brothers, Paolo Treves, and the Mondolfo brothers.

Italians of Jewish origin had become assimilated into the national community to such a degree that Mussolini had to invent *ex nihilo* some kind of definition that could enable the policemen and the registrars to understand upon whom the anti-Semitic laws were imposed.¹⁰ For at least three generations, persons of Jewish origin had not been discriminated against; some of them even discovered that they were identified as Jews only when the first racial decrees were enacted in September 1938. Having always considered themselves simply as Italians, Italian Jews could not be transformed overnight by the anti-Semitic laws into anti-Fascists, nor did their persecution necessarily restore to a Jewish self-consciousness those refugees who eventually did work with the anti-Fascist movements. It must rather be noted that no Jewish anti-Fascist movement was founded anywhere by Italians and that the Italian Jewish refugees supported or founded anti-Fascist groups exclusively as 'Italians' and never as 'Jews'.

The reason why these persons were eventually brought together, therefore, lies only in the so-called 'racial laws'. No other affinity or link between them can be found, for Italians of Jewish origin did not form at all a highly distinct and homogeneous community; besides, the idea of fitting all persons of Jewish origin into a stereotyped pattern is imbued with exactly the same prejudice on which anti-Semitism is based — that Jews are different from all other citizens.

It should finally be stressed that, in keeping with all people living in Italy, the Italo-Australian community did not consist only of Fascists and anti-Fascists, but mainly of non-Fascists (in Italian, *afascisti*). Likewise, among the Italian Jews who came to Australia, there were Fascists, Communists, Liberals, non-Fascists and even close friends of the Mussolini family. Furthermore, the pluralist nature of the Italo-Australian anti-Fascist movement must be considered: indeed amongst the fifteen hundred or so members of the *Italia Libera* there were Socialists, Republicans, Anarchists, non-Fascists, and even some ex-Fascists, because the movement was open to all those who felt that good Italians should help the Allied cause and bring about the downfall of Mussolini's regime.

As for the situation in Australia it should be remembered that, not unlike Cabinet and political leaders in Great Britain, the Australian Prime Ministers Lyons and Menzies had also expressed sympathy and admiration for Mussolini and the Fascist regime right up to the outbreak of war with Italy;¹¹ that Fascist propaganda had therefore been allowed in Australia, and was spread through the Italian Consulates, through the Fascist Party's sections, and through the Catholic Church, whose powerful hierarchy contributed greatly to giving credit to Fascism among Italo-Australians and among Australian political and trade union circles; and the Australian Government's attitude towards Jewish refugee immigration had been negative as far back as 1921, when the British Secretary of State for the Colonies had asked in vain whether the Commonwealth could receive any of the Jews who had fled from Russia.

With respect to this last point, it must be noted that things did not change after Hitler's accession to power in 1933: 'it is not considered desirable that any special facilities should be given for Jews from Germany to migrate to Australia'.¹² This was still the Government's position when Hitler invaded Austria in March 1938. It is true that a few months later, in July 1938, Australia agreed to attend the Evian Conference on the migration of political refugees from Europe, promoted by the United States, but the Prime Minister stressed again that 'no special facilities can be granted for the admission of groups of Jewish migrants whether from Germany or Austria'.¹³ When the report of the Australian delegation to Evian was presented to Parliament on 1 December 1938, the *Kristallnacht* (9 November) had completely changed the situation and compelled the Government to review its immigration policy. The High Commissioner in London had suggested that Australia should take 30,000 refugees over the next three years; but in Parliament the Minister of the Interior, J. McEwen, announced that 15,000 permits would be issued over that period, without saying how many would be given to Jews. The Cabinet later decided that four-fifths of the annual quota should consist of Jews. However, by the outbreak of war in September 1939 only 3,000 permits had actually been taken up by Jewish males, bringing the total figure (including their families) to an estimated 6,500–7,000.¹⁴

With regard to Mussolini's opponents in Australia the following points should also be taken into account: the considerable size of the organisation developed by the *Italia Libera* country-wide, compared with similar movements in the American continent and in Great Britain (the movement had a Central Committee, six State Committees and many sections all over Australia); the connection with the *Alleanza Internazionale Giuseppe Garibaldi*, founded in Mexico in November 1941 by Italian Socialists and Communists; the many distinguished Australian personalities who were patrons of the *Italia Libera*, first of all Sir Isaac Isaacs, former Governor-General of Australia, as well as Federal Ministers. On this point it is worth recording the following lines about the origin of the *Italia Libera*, written by its Honorary President, Professor A. R. Chisholm, in 1945:

It was launched openly, at a public meeting in Melbourne, while we were still at war with Italy. At the request of several of my Italian friends, all sincere anti-Fascists and many of them exiles from Mussolini's Italy, I accepted the office of Honorary President (the chairman was my old friend Dr. Omero Schiassi, who has eaten the bitter bread of exile for over 20 years). At the public meeting in question one of the speakers was an Australian Minister of the Crown. The purpose of the association was, from the beginning, to combat Fascism and to assist the Allies in their struggle against it. Realising that this was an Italian viewpoint that they could legitimately expose even in wartime, some very distinguished citizens consented to act as patrons. They include Sir Isaac Isaacs, Sir Harry Lawson, Profs. Boyce Gibson and Walter Murdoch, Judge Foster, Dr. John Dale, several well-known Australian writers and three Commonwealth Ministers.¹⁵

The resolutions passed by the Italian Cabinet during its meeting held at the beginning of September 1938, and enacted on 5 September, were the first official signs of the State's anti-Semitism. The decree ordered that all foreign Jews must leave the country within six months — some ten thousand had come to Italy, especially after 1933; it also excluded Italian Jewish children (over 5,000) and teachers (over 200) from school, as well as students (over 200) and professors (about 100) from universities. Two months later, on 17 November, the first anti-Semitic legislation was completed with the *Measures in Defence of the Italian Race*: Jews were dismissed from all State employments, and obviously from the Army; they could not own real estate or other property above a fixed amount, or be managers of firms with more than a hundred employees; they could not work as lawyers, physicians, engineers. In short, Jews were dispossessed of all civil rights.

Though these measures had been preceded shortly before by a *Manifesto of the Race* (published 14 July) and by a decree against foreign Jewish students (3 August), nevertheless they startled nearly all Jews and caused widespread surprise. Racism had never developed in Italy as anti-Semitism. Before 1938 Mussolini had even considered the racist theories as absurd: in 1932 the *Italian Encyclopaedia* gave this definition of 'race': 'Only the Italian people and the Nation of Italy exist, not the race. No Jewish race or Jewish nation exist, but only the Jewish people; nor (the biggest mistake of all) does an Aryan race exist, but an Aryan civilisation and language'. Mussolini used more or less the same terms when speaking to Emil Ludwig: 'Obviously a pure race doesn't exist any more, not even the Jewish one'. In the 1932 interview with Ludwig, Mussolini also stated that 'there is no anti-Semitism in Italy. Italian Jews have always been good citizens. They are in the top ranks of the universities, of the Army and of the banks'.¹⁶

In order to emphasise the Jews' loyalty to the Fascist regime, a monthly magazine had been founded in 1934 in Turin by a group of Jewish Fascists, *La Nostra Bandiera* (Our Flag). In 1935, the Chief Rabbi of Rome, Angelo Sacerdoti, explained to a French journalist why there wasn't any anti-Semitism in Italy: 'First of all many Jewish patriots joined the Fascist ranks right from the beginning. And secondly Mussolini has never had the slightest anti-Semitic thought in his mind'. Rabbi Sacerdoti also added: 'I don't know if Fascism in other countries will become a threat to Jews, but I do know that democracy is even a greater danger' (sic!). In 1936, the Foreign Minister and the Minister for Propaganda entrusted an Austrian Jew to write a pamphlet on Italian Jewry for Anglo-Saxon readers: it stressed the Jews' fortunate situation in Italy and praised the liberal attitude of Fascism towards them.¹⁷

The artificial and ambiguous characteristics of the law enacted in November 1938 appeared clearly in the rules regarding those Jews who could claim 'special Fascist or military merits' (which Mussolini could not or did not want to ignore), and against whom some of the law's obligations were not to be enforced. In fact thousands of applications were sent to the Authorities, which had already estimated that out of the 15,000 Italian Jewish families, some 3,500 were entitled to apply: 724 families had at least one member who had joined the Fascist Party before the 'March on Rome' or during the Matteotti crisis of 1924; 51 had a 'legionary of Fiume'; 3 had a 'Martyr of the Fascist Cause' and 20 a person disabled for the same cause; 406 had had someone killed during the first World War; 721 had a volunteer in the same war; and finally 1,597 had a member of the family decorated with a Military Cross.¹⁸ No wonder so many Jews trusted that no real tragedy could befall them in Italy, and were ready to please the regime and obey the Authorities! Even during the war, in 1941, some ten Jews wrote to Mussolini begging to be enlisted in the Army as volunteers.¹⁹

Finally, it may be worth mentioning briefly the hostility of the Catholic Church of Melbourne (where the *Italia Libera* was founded) towards the Jewish refugees and their political activity. It has already been noted that the Catholic hierarchy approved of Mussolini's regime and often spoke in its favour. However, after the outbreak of war and in the wake of internment of some of the refugees and the difficult position of all 'enemy aliens' in Australia, some leading Catholic personalities, such as C. Venn Pilcher, Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney, sided with other Churches and with the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in the attempt to persuade the Government to be considerate in treating the refugees.²⁰ But it must also be underlined that the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Daniel Mannix, his close

Jesuit collaborator Father Ugo Modotti, and other Catholic personalities such as the Federal Minister, A. A. Calwell, and the rich businessman Gualtiero Vaccari, mounted a disparaging campaign against the anti-Fascist movement as soon as it had begun gaining wide support within the Italo-Australian community. The unexpected growth of the *Italia Libera* and the new situation brought about by the downfall of Mussolini in July 1943 and the ensuing armistice on 8 September sorely disturbed Melbourne's Catholic hierarchy. A heavy offensive against the movement and its Jewish leaders was conducted on instruction of the Archbishop and by Father Modotti, mainly through the religious magazine *L'angelo della famiglia*; and even in public speeches these persons did not refrain from expressing both their admiration for Mussolini and their hostility towards the anti-Fascists.

On 12 September 1943, just four days after Italy had proclaimed it would fight alongside the Allies, the Archbishop of Melbourne invited all Italians to a meeting in the Cathedral Hall at Fitzroy. The speakers were Father Modotti, A. A. Calwell M.P., Gualtiero Vaccari and the Archbishop himself. The Secretary of the *Italia Libera*, Dr. Massimo Montagnana, attended the meeting and asked permission to speak too, but was not allowed. A three-page report on the meeting was written by an officer of the Security Service, part of which is worth quoting. With regard to the Archbishop's speech, the officer remarks:

He made the following statement: 'I have never been a supporter of Mussolini, but I think that history will have to confess that Mussolini will go down as one of the really big men of this world'. At this stage the applause was tremendous, consisting of clapping, cheering, stamping of feet, and whistling; and it was fully four minutes before Dr. Mannix was able to make himself heard. He later said that [...] the fact remains Mussolini had done a lot for Italy and was one of the greatest men of the world.²¹

During the meeting, Mr. Calwell said: 'I have been happy at all times to render any service that his Grace the Archbishop has asked of me', and concluded with a special advice to the politically-minded: 'I say to those who have been associated with *Italia Libera* that they are not rendering any service to the Italian community by maintaining that body in existence'. Addressing himself to all Italians Calwell said: 'I think you would be very wise to continue your work and say your prayers'.²² Father Modotti, in turn, had begun his speech saying 'this is not a day for jubilation', and went on remarking that those persons who rejoiced for the armistice were 'criminals, inhumane and anti-Italian'.

The same officer made the following comment in his report: 'the most amazing thing during the afternoon was the applause given to Dr. Mannix's reference to Mussolini'; but he was also 'astounded to hear Mr. Calwell say, "I want you then to forget all about this *Italia-Libera* movement, because it would do no good"'. In reference to these same points, the official Organ of the Australian Protestant Federation, *The Vigilant*, published a note a few months later. If 'those who were committed to the *Italia Libera* movement' should not be considered self-respecting Italians — as Dr. Mannix had declared — 'surely this is coming very close to aiding and abetting our enemies, since he knows only too well that *Italia Libera* is anti-Fascist'. The note ends with the following words: 'We have seen that Archbishop Mannix and Father Modotti gave virtual instructions that all Italians must remain Fascist, since they told them that they must not join the anti-Fascists'.²³

The leading Melbourne newspapers did not carry any news about the meeting and refused to print a letter sent by the Secretary of *Italia Libera*. Only the *Mid-day Times* agreed to publish it, but without mention of any of the speakers' names. With reference to Father Modotti's address, Dr. Montagnana wrote:

The reactionary elements here — both Italians and Australians — instead of drawing conclusions from the last events for a greater union and collaboration between the Italians and the Allied people, say that any Italian who rejoices at the armistice is a criminal, because Italy today is in the worst situation it ever was in, as there is a civil war in Italy. No, dear Italian reactionaries, your keen wish has not been fulfilled. There is no civil war in Italy. The Italians do not fight amongst themselves, but are all united to fight one enemy, the Nazis and the few battered Fascists.

As for the Archbishop's praise of Mussolini, the letter went on:

In answer to those other reactionaries who, openly or covertly, affirm that Mussolini is one of the greatest men of Europe, we say that the present situation [...] has been caused not by Liberals, Democratic Catholics, Socialists or Communists, who have for twenty years been barred from participation in the political life of the nation, but only by the series of enormous errors committed by Mussolini himself.

And with reference to Mr. Calwell's call 'to forget all about this *Italia Libera* movement', Dr. Montagnana concluded:

The activity of these reactionaries has only one aim, viz. to stir up hatred between Italians and Australians; somebody even went as far as suggesting that the *Italia Libera* movement . . . is in bad odour with Australians who do not like free movements here. These people lie with full knowledge of the facts, because, just recently, the Australian people have shown by their electoral figures that they support all those who have sympathised with all free democratic movements founded here since the outbreak of the war.²⁴

At this meeting, Gualtiero Vaccari appeared to be just a secondary figure, but his role became clear three months later when Mannix called another meeting at the same Fitzroy Cathedral Hall (5 December). It was here announced that the Government had appointed Vaccari as liaison officer for the Italian community in Australia. The official letter, signed by the Minister for External Affairs Dr. Evatt, was presented in such a way to make believe that 'the Commonwealth Government had empowered Mr. G. Vaccari, an Australian citizen of Italian origin, to open an office for the purpose of looking after the interests of Italians in Australia'.

Besides, it appeared that 'Mr. Calwell, Minister for Information, expressed the hope that Mr. G. Vaccari would become the future Consul-General for Italy in Australia'.²⁵

Actually, the Archbishop of Melbourne had written to the Prime Minister, John Curtin, (13 September) with reference to the new position of Italians in Australia. In connection with an enclosed report prepared by Father Modotti on this subject, the Archbishop suggested that 'pending the appointment of Consuls, the Government would appoint an Italian as an accredited liaison officer between the Government and the Italian community' concluding that he would be 'very happy to nominate an Italian who, I am confident, will give you complete satisfaction' i.e. Gualtiero Vaccari.²⁶ In fact, despite the Security Service's objections against the appointment of a liaison officer,²⁷ Mr. Calwell — who was always 'happy to render any service' to the Archbishop — had managed to persuade his colleagues that the designation of Vaccari was perfectly all right (but it was stressed that 'no Press discussion was desired upon the subject').²⁸

Of course the leaders of *Italia Libera* in Melbourne were astonished by the news. But, on the advice of the movement's patrons, they made what proved to be a correct response to the clerical-Fascist attack. Instead of engaging in a public campaign against the Government (which would have proved advantageous to Mannix, who believed that *Italia Libera* would be thus outlawed), they carefully avoided any publicity on the incident. Schiassi and Montagnana simply sent a letter to the Prime Minister (8 December) in which they pointed out that Vaccari 'had always been and still is a Fascist',²⁹ and they referred to the speeches delivered at the meeting called by the Archbishop in September. All else was left to the political pressure exerted by the patrons of *Italia Libera* on the Government, also through a

question put in Parliament to Dr. Evatt. The Minister for External Affairs (who was a friend of the anti-Fascists) replied on 17 February 1944, saying 'there was no appointment' and declaring that 'when Mr. Vaccari was authorised to act, the Government had no knowledge of any alleged association by him with the Fascist party'.

The result was 'that the Government decided to withdraw the letter' sent by Evatt to Vaccari, and that instructions were issued to the effect 'that the authorisation of Mr. Vaccari . . . should be discontinued'.³⁰ Therefore, in the end, far from being a setback for the *Italia Libera*, the Vaccari question turned out to be a boomerang against the clerical-Fascists and proved that the anti-Fascist movement had the capacity to face even the powerful Catholic Church of Melbourne.

It might be mentioned that a few months later (on 7 August 1944) Vaccari tried once again 'to secure some form of recognition', this time by the Italian Prime Minister Bonomi, to whom he sent a seven page report on 'the composition and political attitude of the Italian community in Australia'; he did not succeed, the Security Service having easily foreseen this: 'Vaccari's hopes in this direction are not likely to be realised'.³¹ Not knowing much about the political situation in Italy, Vaccari attacked the chairman of *Italia Libera*, Omero Schiassi (who knew Prime Minister Bonomi prior to Fascism), defamed the Jewish refugees and — needless to say — considered the Communists as enemies. Vaccari wrote:

Since the outbreak of war about one hundred Italians of Jewish descent have reached Australia. They were generally Fascists in Italy up to 1938–39 before the Racial laws; and here they have been rabid anti-Fascists. . . . At the beginning of 1944 notwithstanding the abrogation of the Racial laws in liberated Italy they have classified themselves as 'Refugees, Stateless' (Refugee Aliens). . . . The majority of this contingent of refugees exacerbated by comprehensible personal resentments against Fascism and dazzled by the Russian victories has made common cause with the Communist group and with the anti-Fascist concentration in Australia in the new association *Italia Libera*. . . . they continue to make almost exclusively political propaganda shouting against a non-existent Italian Fascism in Australia.

Any comment on Vaccari's report is unnecessary; but in regard to the last words mentioned above, it must be noted that he obviously had completely forgotten the 'tremendous applause' given to Archbishop Mannix when — not even a year before — he had stated that 'Mussolini will go down as one of the really big men of this world'.

The sharp reaction of the Catholic Church against the *Italia Libera* corroborates the fact that the movement had introduced something new into the anti-Fascists' action, establishing a regular contact with the immigrants scattered all over Australia, through its official organ *Il Risveglio*, as well as cultivating friendly relations with the Australian political, cultural and trade union circles. In fact, only the *Italia Libera* then defended in Australia the image of a motherland clearly distinct from Mussolini's regime, and promoted the ethical values of political and social solidarity on which the Liberation war based itself, and by which the principles of the Italian Constitution were later inspired.

NOTES

1. Marcello Montagnana, *I rifugiati ebrei italiani in Australia e il movimento antifascista 'Italia Libera'* (1942–1946), in 'Notiziario dell'Istituto storico della Resistenza di Cuneo de Provincia', n. 31, giugno 1987, pp. 5–114; Joseph Gentili, *Italian Jewish Refugees in Australia*, *AJHSJ* Vol. X Part 5, 1989, pp. 420–441; Gianfranco Cresciani, *The second awakening: the Italia Libera Movement*, in 'Labour History', Canberra, n. 30, May 1976; Id., *Italian anti-Fascism in Australia 1922–1945*, in 'Affari sociali internazionali', Franco Angeli, Milano 1978; Id., *Fascismo, antifascismo e gli italiani in Australia 1922–1945*, Bonacci, Roma 1979.

2. The foreign Jews in Italy were mainly Germans. Out of the 10,000 or so foreign Jews living in Italy in 1938, about half of them had recently fled from countries where the Nazis were in power, while the other half had already integrated themselves into the Italian Jewish community. The number of Jews who managed to leave Italy has been established by Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, Einaudi, Torino 1972 (see Footnote 3), p. 361. In order to fix the approximate if not the exact number of those who came to Australia, it would be necessary to examine all the Immigrants' records of 1938, 1939 and 1940 held in Melbourne and Sydney. As to Perth, the records have been examined by Gentilli who has estimated the same number of fifty refugees.
3. On the Mazzini Society see Antonio Varsori, *L'antifascismo e gli Alleati*, in 'Storia e Politica', a. XIX, fasc. III, settembre 1980; Id., *Gli alleati e l'emigrazione democratica antifascista 1940-1943*, Sansoni, Firenze 1982; Id., *Sforza, la Mazzini Society e gli Alleati 1940-1943*, in A. Varsori (ed.), *L'antifascismo italiano negli Stati Uniti durante la seconda guerra mondiale*, Proceedings of the Cesena Conference 4-6 November 1982, Archivio Trimestrale, Roma 1984; Aldo Garosci, *Storia dei fuorusciti*, Laterza, Bari 1953; Maddalena Tirabassi, *La Mazzini Society 1940-1946: un'associazione degli antifascisti italiani negli Stati Uniti*, in Spini-Migone-Teodori, *Italia e America dalla Grande guerra a oggi*, Marsilio, Roma 1976. For general information on the Communists in the United States see Paolo Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*, Einaudi, Torino 1967, Vol. IV; Ambrogio Donini, *L'unità del popolo e Lo Stato Operaio*, in A. Varsori (ed.), *L'Antifascismo italiano negli Stati Uniti*... The Jews who worked with the Communist leaders Berti and Donini at New York were Duccio and Giuliana Tabet, Elsa Fubini, Bruno Pontecorvo, Salvatore Luria, Eugenio Falco, and Giuseppina Jona. It may also be remarked that the following Italian Jews were active in anti-Fascist movements: Giorgina Levi in Bolivia; Mario Montagnana in Mexico; Aldo Cassuto, Bruno Foa, Piero Treves and Uberto Limentani in Great Britain; Laura Levi and Enzo Sereni in Egypt. Besides Montagnana and Levi, the other Jewish refugee members of the first Italia Libera Committee were Franco Forti, Ernesto Monti and Rosa Narducci Montagnana. In the following months other Jewish refugees took up official posts in the movement or were engaged in its activity: Bruno Forti in Melbourne; Alberto Levi, Claudio and Orlando Piperno Alcorso, Paolo Sonnino, in Sydney; Adriano Muggia in Brisbane.
4. G. Cresciano, *Italian anti-Fascism*, p. 155. Only Omero Schiassi — a lawyer who was a member of the Socialist Party — had already been very active in politics before coming to Australia in 1924. In 1927 he was appointed 'Instructor in Italian' by the Melbourne University, where he later lectured also on Dante. In 1931 he was eventually granted naturalisation, which was an essential protection against deportation back to Italy. *Fuorusciti* means 'political refugees'.
5. A. Garosci, *Storia dei fuorusciti*, pp. 192-93.
6. Even R. De Felice, in his otherwise masterly survey *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, simply confirms at p. 423 what Garosci had written ten years before. See also Guido Valabrega, *Ebrei, fascismo, sionismo*, Argalia, Urbino 1974; Piero Treves, *Antifascisti ebrei o antifascismo ebraico?*, in 'La Rassegna mensile di Israel', a. XLVI, n. 1-2-3-, gennaio-giugno 1981.
7. Michael Blakeney, 'Australia and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe: Government Policy 1933-1939', in *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book XXIX*, London 1984.
8. Robert Pascoe, *Buongiorno Australia: Our Italian Heritage*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond Vic. 1987; Nino Randazzo & Michael Cigler, *The Italians in Australia*, AE Press, Melbourne 1987. Unlike these two works, another publication — mainly with photographs and documents — ends significantly with three pictures regarding the Italia Libera movement: Ivano Ercole & Maria Tence, *Victoria's Italians 1900-45*, Co.As.It., Carlton Vic. 1986.
9. On Paolo Vita Finzi see 'Gli intellettuali e il fascismo', in *Nuova Antologia*, a. 123, Fasc. 2168, ottobre-dicembre 1988, pp. 253-306. Amongst Mussolini's first supporters, also financially speaking, were Elio Jona and Giuseppe Toeplitz. One of the five or so Jews who took part in founding the Fasci in Milan (23 March 1919), Cesare Goldmann, had procured the hall for the 119 persons who attended the meeting. A very close friend of Mussolini was E. Jarach, a lawyer, and his private secretary (and mistress) was Margherita Sarfatti, who wrote a biography of the dictator, worked for Mussolini's newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* and for the Fascist Party's monthly *Gerarchia*. When Mussolini came to power, Aldo Finzi, member of the Grand Fascist Council, was appointed junior minister for Internal Affairs, and Dante Almansì was confirmed as vice-head of the Police. In 1932 Mussolini appointed Guido Jung in his Cabinet as Financial Minister. Amongst the Fascist university professors we may mention Gino Arias, who studied for the regime a theory on industrial relations, and the Rome university Rector Giorgio del Vecchio. Coming to the Army, General Modena was in command in Sardegna; to Admiral Moroni Mussolini gave the command of the troops concentrated in Majorca; and even during the war (when all Jews had already been dismissed from the Army) Admiral Umberto Pugliese was recalled to service in November 1940 for a special operation in Taranto harbour. At the head of two major Insurance Companies in 1938 were Edgardo Morpurgo and Arnoldo Frigessi di Rattalma. Vice-Governor in Lybia and Governor of Somalia was Maurizio Rava. Renzo Ravenna was mayor of Ferrara for fifteen years.

- It is not beside the point to note that three Italian Jewish refugees in Australia — all interned until Mussolini's downfall — had positively been associated with the Fascist regime. Orlando Piperno Alcorso, schoolmate and close friend of Vittorio Mussolini, served as volunteer in the Fascist aviation in Spain and brought his military decorations to Australia (AA, NSW, CRS C 329, item 16). His elder brother, Claudio, also a fighter pilot, had been 'in the Fascist party since 1928 [...] and was an ex member of the Directorate of the Salario Regional Fascist Group'; at the end of the war he claimed all the Fascist books (speeches by Mussolini and other Fascist authors) which had been confiscated in 1940 on the occasion of his internment (respectively: AA, ACT CRS A 1533/XM, item 54/3092, pt. 2, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Consulate-General, Sydney, 24 August 1939; *ibid.* pt. 3, Alcorso to Director General of Security, 24 September 1945). Adriano Muggia, Superintendent to the Casale Hospital, praised Mussolini's regime in many articles and speeches from 1927 to 1938; on arrival in Australia he got in touch with Dr. Vattuone ('Vattuone was a rabid Fascist'); furthermore, 'when Muggia was interned, he had in his possession copy of a letter written in May 1939, addressed to the Countess Ciano Mussolini'; and later he admitted 'that the sentiments expressed in that letter are the sentiments of a convinced and active Fascist' (AA, ACT, CRS A 1533/XM, item 54/3092, pt. 3, Director General of Security to J. H. Scullin, 28 July 1945).
10. It might be mentioned that even the Nazis found some difficulty when it came to state who could be recognised as a Jew on a racial basis. In January 1942, at the Wannsee Conference which discussed the final solution plans, the number of Jews in each European country included 'only persons of Jewish faith, because the essential conditions on which a definition of Jews on a racial basis can be given are still lacking'. See the *Record of the Wannsee Conference*, document NG-2586 G, Evidence 1452, in *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals*, vol. XIII, United States Government Printing Office, Washington 1952, pp. 210–17, now in *La Conferenza di Wannsee*, Aned-Franco Angeli, Milano 1988, p. 70.
 11. As late as 28 September 1938, Mr. J. A. Lyons sent a cablegram to N. Chamberlain, U.K. Prime Minister, in which he wrote: 'At this late hour I venture to suggest that there may be some possibility of averting war by personal appeal to Signor Mussolini. I can think of no other individual who might be able to influence Herr Hitler towards peaceful solution'; and stressed that 'as Prime Minister of Australia [I] am on good personal terms with Signor Mussolini' (Department of Foreign Affairs, *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy, 1937–1949*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1975, Vol. I 1937–1938; document 288, p. 469). As to Menzies, one of his 'eulogies of Nazi Germany' was interrupted in Perth during a speech of his in July 1939. At the same time the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Henry Gullett, spoke of Mussolini's 'genius, his patriotism . . . and almost superhuman capacity', and also stressed Hitler's 'shining record of service to his people' (Eric Montgomery Andrews, *Isolation and Appeasement in Australia, Reaction to the European Crises*, Australian National University Press, Canberra 1970, pp. 171–72). A few weeks before Mussolini declared war Menzies opened the short-wave radio transmissions Australia-Italy with a message to the Italian people which ended with these words: 'Your country is neutral while we are at war; but I am sure all the precious things we have in common are of such supreme importance that we will have your sympathy and understanding' (translation from the Italian text published in 'Il Giornale Italiano', 1 May 1940, now in 'Il Veltro', a. XVII, n. 2–3, aprile-giugno 1973, pp. 377–78).
 12. M. Blakeney, 'Australia and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe', p. 106.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
 14. *Ibid.*, pp. 130–33. Blakeney also mentions that the United States received 136,000 refugees between 1933 and the Fall of 1939; more than 55,000 entered Great Britain; 40,000 went to France; 25,000 to Belgium; 23,000 to Netherlands; 10,000 to Switzerland; 22,000 to Argentina, and 20,000 each to Brazil, Colombia and Mexico.
 15. A. R. Chisholm, 'Italia Libera Honorary President answers Modotti's Attack', in *Il Risveglio*, n. 21, 3 ottobre 1945, p. 6. Professor Chisholm was Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Melbourne University.
 16. Emil Ludwig, *Colloqui con Mussolini*, Mondadori, Milano 1970, p. 87.
 17. Giuseppe Gaddi, *Il razzismo in Italia*, Edizioni della Lega italiana contro il razzismo e l'antisemitismo, [Parigi] 1939, now in 'Qualestoria', Bollettino dell'Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia, n. 2, ottobre 1988, p. 17.
 18. R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, p. 75. Between 1928 and 1933 4,920 Jews joined the Fascist Party. After 1933 all State employees were compelled to be members of the PNF.
 19. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Direzione Generale Demografia e Razza, Invent. 251, busta 6, fasc. 29, Segreteria Particolare del Duce to Ministero Interno, 23 Marzo 1941.
 20. AA, Vic., Department of the Army, MP508/1, General Correspondence, 115/703/264, box 174, Notes of a Deputation from Representatives of the Churches and Welfare Organisations which waited on the Minister for the Interior, 22 July 1940. Dr. Pilcher was later also a patron of the Italia Libera in N.S.W. See *Il Risveglio*, ottobre 1944, AA, ACT, CRS A446, item 57/67255.

21. AA, ACT, CRS A6126/XMO, item 58. The officer's report appears quite accurate if compared to the account (which can be regarded as official) of Mannix's and Calwell's speeches published in *The Advocate*, Melbourne 23 September 1943, 'Archbishop Addresses Italians'.
22. *Ibid.*
23. 'Dr. Mannix and the Fascists', in *The Vigilant*, Organ of the Australian Protestant Federation, 14 June 1944, from the copy in the Elda Vaccari Collection of Multicultural Studies, Footscray Institute of Technology, Vic., Department of Humanities, fasc. Gualtiero Vaccari.
24. Massimo Montagnana, 'Italian people rise against Fascism', in *Mid-day Times*, Melbourne, 2 October 1943. Movements in favour of Greece, France and other countries occupied by Hitler were very active at the time.
25. AA, ACT, CRS A6126/XMO, item 58, Italia Libera to Prime Minister, 8 December 1943.
26. *Ibid.*, Mannix to Curtin, 13 September 1943.
27. *Ibid.*, Melbourne Deputy Director of Security to Director General, 22 September 1943. This report informs that Vaccari had arrived in Australia in 1912; became naturalized only in July 1939, 'after which date he withdrew from active participation in the work of the local fascio'; had been given the title of Cavaliere in 1936 'on the recommendation of the Fiat Motor Co.'. See also the report sent by the Director General of Security to the Attorney-General, 24 September 1943.
28. *Ibid.*, memorandum on the 'meeting in the Attorney-General's room', held 23 November 1943; present: the Attorney-General, the Minister for Information, the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, and Mr. Vaccari.
29. *Ibid.*, Italia Libera to Prime Minister, 8 December 1943. As to Vaccari's connections with the Fascists in Australia it might be noted that he actually kept in contact with them even after his naturalisation (see footnote 27). In a file of the ACT Australian Archives there are several letters of his to the Fascist paper *L'Italiano* dated up to 16 May 1940. In one of these letters he praises the editor C. Albanese because his 'paper is not anti-Fascist — nor Judean' (11 April 1940). The day after he points out that the article he is sending had already been considered with favour by the local Secretary of the Fascio and 'should also be welcomed by the Consul-General A. Mammalella, as it cancels the fable that we are anti-Fascist' (AA, ACT, CRS A373, item 6230).
30. AA, ACT, CRS A6126/XMO, item 58, respectively: copy of Hansard, 17 February 1944; Director General of Security to Vaccari, 20 March 1944; Attorney-General to Brigadier Simpson, 21 March 1944. On Vaccari see G. Cresciani, *Fascismo, antifascismo e gli italiani in Australia*, pp. 81–83, 1933 and 186–91.
31. *Ibid.*, Melbourne Deputy Director of Security to Director General of Security, 17 August 1944; Vaccari to Italian Prime Minister, 7 August 1944. As to Vaccari's remark that Jews should not be regarded as 'Refugees Stateless', it must be remembered that, on the contrary, by the laws of Mussolini's *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (set up shortly after 8 September 1943), Jews were not Italians any more but 'enemy aliens'. In fact, some seven thousand of them were captured by the Fascists, sent to the Italian concentration camps (such as Fossoli) and then to Germany. This is what happened to Fulvio Levi's parents and to the brother and father of his wife, Jucci Iona.

TRACKS ALONG THE WAY Thoughts and Views from my Life

Joseph Gentilli

The recollections that follow are mainly based on observations made during three-quarters of a century. They are not dramatic, emotional or controversial. Life, all life, is viewed as a Way extending into infinity without a conceivable beginning and a conceivable end. Our individual tracks and paths are insignificant in comparison, at times distinguishable, at times merely like a suggestion of light footprints. The direction of our paths may seem to change, but the Way continues unaffected.

FAINT AND DISTANT PATHS: BEFORE 1912

My life came, as was often the case in widely scattered Jewish communities, from an arranged marriage. As I view it now, it was lucky that the two parties came from different paths, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, because I could benefit from two biological streams and different lines of tradition. I was affected by the fact that my parents were born at the end of the last century, when traditions were already greatly weakened.

On the Ashkenazi side, the Hefetz family was already established at Trieste in the 16th Century. A member of the family was given the Italian name of Gentile (in which the *-ll-* is a mis-spelling) and soon Gentile or Gentilli, still present at Trieste today, became the 'lay' family name. Even now, we are one of the few families to have a dual surname, Hefetz in Hebrew (also rendered as Cheifetz in German and Hafez in some Italian transliterations)¹ and Gentilli in lay life.

By 1548 a branch of the family had moved to Gorizia (Goerz in German) to decentralise its banking and money-lending business.² It was an established practice that concessions to allow Jews to reside and work in any town or village would normally be renewed every five or ten years, in the Venetian domains³ and in the Austrian Adriatic domains⁴ alike.

San Daniele del Friuli is a small town initially built on a small morainic hill at 252 metres above sea level, about 20 km to the north-west of Udine. A castle stood at the top of the hill. The town is over a thousand years old. Two Jews, the brothers Luzzatto, settled there in the 1400s, founded a bank and pawn shop, and built a small synagogue (called *scola*, the school, in the Venetian dialect) inside a private courtyard. The Luzzatto family became famous for its doctors, philosophers and writers; it remained the core of San Daniele's Jewry until the early 1800s.

The first Gentilli, Joel, came to San Daniele (from Trieste?) in 1676. In that year the established Jewish resident Abram Luzzatto complained to the authorities that 'Gioel Gentile, Jew, native of Trieste . . . not even of the Venetian State' intended to reside at San Daniele in defiance of the permission given to other families. (This Joel, who died in 1747, is almost certainly my direct ancestor; his wife's name was Ricca, short (and mis-spelt) for Enrica. Joel in Italian Jewish custom is usually rendered as Giulio (i.e. Julius, a very Roman name). My father's name was Giulio, and his older sister was Enrica.)

The prime occupation of the Jews at San Daniele was the running of the bank and pawnshop; some were also corn merchants and buyers of silk cocoons, and later on a few (mostly newcomers who were not banking partners) ran general stores.⁵ Half of the ground floor of the Gentilli home, on the street side, was still used as a general store in the 1920s.

In the 18th century the Venetian regime became more repressive: in 1714 a public pawn shop took the place of the old Jewish bank, already weakened, which had to close. Some taxes and other charges on Jews were raised, and new ones were imposed. In 1722 came a prohibition of moving home to other States without a permit.⁶ Several Jews became so poor that they had to live on charity. The control of permits of residence became more strict, but on the other hand in 1751 the Jewish community finally obtained possession of its cemetery, which it had been renting during the previous twenty years.⁷ In 1765 Donato (Donà, Donadin) Gentilli wrote a petition asking to be allowed to stay at San Daniele del Friuli, 'submitting that more than one hundred years ago my great-grandfather named Menasse came to live and stay in this land and eventually his son named Joel and then Menasse and Donà my father and I born in this land . . . I cannot believe that my Ancestors may have come to stay here without permission . . . [but] I could not find any paper concerning this permit . . .'⁸

In 1777, following pressure from the Inquisition, the Venetian Government, which had always protected Jews from physical attacks or any form of violence, decreed that all of them were to be strictly confined to the Ghetto, and that those living in the smaller centres of the mainland where there was no ghetto were to be expelled forthwith. (The only exception was made in favour of the Jews living in Corfu;⁹ this decision affected the other half of my ancestry). The decision was so sudden and drastic that its ruinous implications were not even fully understood by the Jews of San Daniele, whose *Università* was to end so abruptly after two centuries. By 1778 most of them had left; 'Joel Gentile and his sickly wife' are allowed to delay their departure, but they 'will leave for Tuscany'.¹⁰

Popular demand led to the recall to San Daniele of Dr. Isacco Luzzatto, who returned alone at first, and was soon followed by his family. In 1795 they were the only Jews in San Daniele.¹¹ It is not known exactly when a Gentilli returned there, but in 1833 there is record of a 'Scimon Cheifetz' (Simone Gentilli) donating some fittings to the synagogue.¹² (The rendering of Hefetz into Cheifetz, with the *Ch*-having the German sound, came into usage during the Austrian rule of the region, and lasted a short while after its end in 1866). A somewhat vague family tradition says that a Giulio Gentilli (Joel Hefetz) son of Simon, from Gorizia, went to live in San Daniele in the early 1800s. He must have bought the old dwelling built around the courtyard where the small synagogue was. There was one front door which opened on the small square where the weekly market used to be held each Wednesday; the three-storey house was built around two sides of the yard. The third side was occupied by the synagogue, with a small central balustrade and the women's loft at the back. The square used to be called by the peasants *la plazute dai Abreos*, the little square of the Jews, while Luzzattos and Gentillis used to live there. Not many years later the family bought a very large building, or rather a building complex on a large block of land a little further up the street, with three cellars or stores, stable, hay lofts, and plenty of living space. The earlier owners had their private chapel, decorated with religious frescoes which were painted over later on. The main entrance was through a double-gated porch which allowed coaches to stop under shelter at the foot of the main stone staircase leading to a huge hall with

terrazzo floor laid in the best Venetian tradition. An inner wooden staircase which I remember from my childhood was gradually closed at different levels (we children had used it as an escape route from unwanted duties) and finally omitted in the restoration and refitting works designed by my brother after the 1976 earthquake. In the course of these works it was found that originally the building had a much nobler aspect, with a long colonnade giving a fine upward view of the slopes to the castle.

Giulio had five children: Isacco Joel (1804–83, unmarried), Moise (married Isabella Doerfles, from Trieste), Bassevina, Raffaele (1812–90, married his cousin Enrichetta Gentili, 1822–91, from Gorizia) and Anna (married a Priestster). Moise and Raffaele had five children each. Moise had Estella (Stellina in the family), Felice, Anna, Isacco and Regina (Malka in Hebrew, 1857–1941, my grandmother). Raffaele had Simone, Giuseppe (1849–1911, my grandfather), Benedetto, Vittoria and Rosina.

Old Isacco Joel had a pet theory¹³ that in order to strengthen the family (financially) cousins should intermarry as much as possible. His brother Raffaele did it. His other brothers' children followed suit: Simone married cousin Estella in the late 1860s, Giuseppe married cousin Regina about 1880, and Felice married cousin Rosina about 1890.

Simone died in 1898 aged 51 and his wife Estella a year later, aged 52; they had eight children, including a stillborn Moise, another Moise who died aged 10, Angelo who died aged 24, Eugenia who died of cancer in 1926 aged 49, after having to support an unemployed husband, Angelina, the youngest and most energetic of all, who ran a busy drapery store at Gorizia, and died childless and broken-hearted in 1940 after the Fascist government had installed an 'Aryan' manager; the oldest daughter, Emma, had married a Dalla Torre from Rome; the next one, Ida, had married a cheerful Dr. Ettore Sachs who died in his thirties leaving her with two young daughters — poor aunt Ida had to let rooms at Udine to educate them and make ends meet; the third daughter, Olga, married a well-to-do Benveniste; they had a house at Capri, but remained childless. Perhaps great-uncle Isacco Joel's theory generated a bad heredity.

My grandparents Giuseppe (Beppi to the family, Yoseph in Hebrew) and Regina had six children, also with three girls being the eldest: Enrica (1882–1957, married Emilio Campos originally from Split in Dalmatia, lived in Venice, had four children), Lina (1883–1901, of modern views, was a brilliant student of Economics and Commerce in Venice when she died of typhoid), Maria (born 1885, married to Vittorio Morpurgo of Split, Dalmatia, had three children), Giulio (Joel in Hebrew, 1886–1941, my father, had four children), Felice (Pinchas in Hebrew, 1887–1950, married his cousin Alice Sachs, had two sons) and Simone (1888–1962; changed his name to Nino before World War I because he thought that a name too obviously Jewish might have handicapped the diplomatic career he had in mind; was vice-consul at Casablanca and blew his career by speculating in sugar futures; married Rita Bassan; had four daughters, and lost a succession of jobs with banks and at the stock exchange of Venice, partly through bad luck and partly because of speculations aimed at 'earning a dowry for his daughters').

Grandfather was a kind and peaceful giant, not qualified in any way, but very good at doing business in the small town of San Daniele. He ran his grocery store and did business with the peasants and small farmers, buying cattle, occasionally lambs or kids, silk cocoons for delivery to the *filanda*, the spinning works. He had a total integrity that earned him a total respect: when he bought a pregnant cow and

later on the calf was born, he returned to pay part of the extra earnings to the former owner, who later never ceased to say, in the local Friulian language, that '*Sior Bepo al è un omp just*' (Mister Joseph is a just man). On the other hand, he used to sprinkle himself with some flour before going to the taxation office to bargain about how much he should pay — he thought it might have made the officials think that he was a modest grocer.

My father was in love with his father's business. About 1897 he was sent to a college in Venice, from where he wrote home that he 'was shedding two litres of tears every day'. After two years he was allowed to stay at home and work in the business. He was indefatigable and had a very good eye for business opportunities.

My father had to take charge of the business when he was only 25: grandfather, a chain smoker, died of cancer in 1911, only a few months after my parents' wedding. The unmarried brothers, particularly Felice, resented the new bride as an intruder, and so my parents decided to buy them out of their share of the family home. This drastic move, which had grandmother Regina's approval, proved right in many respects, but aroused a deep animosity in Felice, who until the day he died became increasingly obsessed with the idea of having been cheated.

Far less documented is mother's side. Mother, born at Venice on 1 May 1886, was Elisa (known as Lisetta) Jona (Hebrew for dove). She used to tell us children that her family had belonged to the nobility in Spain, with the name '*della Colomba*' (= of the Dove), which of course should have been *de la Paloma* had the story been true. Her father Massimo (= Maximilian) was born at Corfu in the mid-1840s. Apparently life under Venice had been relatively good, the Jewish community having been exempt from some of the usual tributes and restrictions. Freedom and complete equality were gained during the French Revolution, but did not last long because Great Britain, which occupied the Ionian Islands in 1815, promptly disfranchised the Jews again. It was near the end of British rule, in the early 1860s, that Massimo's father and uncle decided to move to Venice, then under Austrian control as part of the Lombardo-Veneto Kingdom. They took young Massimo with them. Life was not easy for emigrated businessmen, and Massimo did not have much schooling, probably having to help father in his business as importer of Greek products, and particularly olive oil.

Venice and its former mainland were annexed to the new Kingdom of Italy in 1866, and when a military campaign for the occupation of Rome and the papal domains began in 1870 grandfather Massimo promptly volunteered for the special assault corps, the *Bersaglieri*. He was very proud of the two service silver medals he was awarded at the end of the short war, and he used to tell how he was the first Italian soldier to enter Rome — walking on a fine September afternoon through an open city gate at the time of the traditional Roman evening stroll, and appreciating all the hugs and kisses and handshakes. His third medal was in fact a bronze medallion awarded by Rome 'to its liberators'.

Grandfather Massimo married Elda Rocca, of a very old Italian Jewish family. He was a firm authoritarian, towards himself as much as towards everybody else. Even in his eighties I remember him with a straight, upright figure and a firm step. His fingers had been nearly crippled by arthritis. Grandmother Elda was small, fragile and self-effacing; she had been blonde, with grey eyes. She was quite healthy, but hardly ate anything — I suspect now that simply there was not enough food to go around and she pretended not to be hungry, poor dear Nonna Elda. How she could bear five children was a mystery; they were Leone (Nello to the family), Giulia,

Giuseppe (Beppi), Elisa (Lisetta, 1886–1972, my mother) and Umberto (Berto to the family).

Uncle Nello remained single — I was told that he suffered a bad haemorrhage after his circumcision, and this had affected him all his life. Giulia, blonde and with pale blue eyes, had died as a teenager, probably of tuberculosis (another disease of which one did not speak in those days) leaving in the family a terror of coughs and colds from whatever origin. Uncle Beppi was a scholarly type who unfortunately had not been able to afford any studies; he became a commercial traveller and could thus read his favourite books during the long train journeys. Blond and with pale blue eyes, he married a very blonde cousin, Luisa Franco, daughter of Beatrice (née Rocca; Bice to the family), sister of my Nonna Elda. Lisetta was trained as a kindergarten teacher; she had inherited her father's stature and straightforward character, but had jet black hair and dark eyes. Uncle Berto was the luckiest as to education, because he could complete high school studies, qualifying as an accountant.

A SHORT TRACK ALONG THE ROAD: 1912–22

My birth, on 13 March 1912, was uneventful. A photograph a year or so later shows me very much like a fat and satisfied piglet. My sister Regina (always known as Ginetta) came on 2 September 1914, when World War I had just started, then without Italy's participation. My early years were very happily uneventful, with a large courtyard in which to play and an orchard usually out of bounds because mother was terrified of anything, from our eating unripe fruit to our falling from trees which we would not have been able to climb anyway, not to mention the danger of catching a cold. I was disgustingly healthy, but Ginetta had enough minor problems to keep mother a little preoccupied.

When Italy declared war on Germany and Austria, in May 1915, father was called up, but because of his business experience was given administrative work near the front. San Daniele was a supply centre and depot, and so we had some officers billeted in our spare rooms.

In 1917 the Austrian army, bolstered by German contingents, broke through the Italian lines at Kobarid/Caporetto and spread westwards into Friuli. Soldiers with families in the region were given short leave to go home and rescue whom and what they could. Mother had already been warned by the officers who had to leave suddenly with their units. Father arrived and we packed two suitcases of essentials. I suggested that the silver cutlery could be hidden under a small trapdoor on a wooden step between two rooms. I still remember the long walk in the rain, riding piggyback on father, while mother carried Ginetta, among an endless stream of refugees all making for the only bridge some 6 km away, leading west across the Tagliamento River. Our dear old black dog, aptly called Moro, followed us to the bridge but then got lost among the crowd. The bridge was blown up very soon afterwards by the Italian army engineers.

On the other side, at Pinzano, was the nearest railway station. We waited for the last train south at a friend's home with a roaringly hot fireplace, and I still remember with emotion the tenderness with which the lady of the house took off my wet socks and replaced them with warm black woollen socks handknitted by herself for one of her children. I kept them for years, and was furious when mother, like all tidy mothers, eventually threw them away without telling me.

The train arrived very late, and had interminable stops. It was packed with refugees and soldiers, and combed by military police looking for deserters. One bright spot — the looting of a truckload of muscatel grapes from Sicily, marooned at Mestre on their way north.

Our destination as refugees was Bologna. We were allowed to rent part of a large semi-rural house at an outer suburb called Corticella. Father rejoined his unit immediately, but the family grew to a pretty crowded state with the arrival of my maternal grandparents, Uncle Nello, and Aunt Luisa (whose husband had been called up) with my cousin Mino (officially Guglielmo), about a year younger than myself. Grandfather supplied all the grumbling, and Aunt Luisa used to do all the tedious work of queuing up with the various authorities to obtain ration books and the like.

Mother organised my instruction by finding a young teacher whom I don't remember at all, but I was told later that one of her first problems was to extract me from under a table where I had taken refuge from too much education. I probably learnt more from mother, because I was already very fond of books with animal pictures and anything about animals, which she had to read to me, and wanted to be more independent.

Very early on 7 April 1918 I was awakened by an unusual confusion and rushing of people, and then I heard a baby cry, and was told that was my new sister Magda, whom I had never suspected of being in the vicinity. Grandfather grumbled more than ever, but the baby was healthy and mother quite strong. Father, while continuing his military service, had never really ceased to do some business in any spare moment, and was able to buy some extra food to supplement our rations. At the end of the war, just before being discharged, he caught the terrible influenza that was to ravage the world and, without then knowing why, I remember mother repeatedly in tears.

Uncle Felice Gentilli had been promoted to captain in the *Alpini* regiment, and I vividly remember the bold eagle feather in his special hat. Uncle Berto Jona was an infantry lieutenant when he was buried by a bomb that exploded near him, but luckily a soldier was able to pull him out by his wounded leg. He spent the rest of the war as a prisoner at the Mauthausen camp, which was to play a role in the Holocaust 25 years later.

At last, father had recovered and was discharged, and after some time — did we stay at grandfather's home in Venice for a while? — we were able to return to San Daniele. The train crossed the lower Tagliamento on a temporary bridge, because some extraordinary flood had wrecked the existing one; the other bridge at Pinzano was of course still down. At home, we found a huge hole in the wall, where a cannon ball had crashed after having damaged the castle's tower on its way down. And, wonder of wonders, the silver cutlery was still inside the wooden step, under its little trapdoor. In the orchard we rediscovered our forgotten and badly neglected fruit trees; the green persimmons bound our teeth and tongues for quite some while.

To my undisciplined self it was very hard to go to school; I was allowed into the last stage of grade 3, where all the boys but one were bigger and older than myself. It was the first time that I found myself living among a real group of people; observing them and their behaviour and guessing or reconstructing their relatively simple thoughts was an unexpectedly interesting exercise.

In grade 4 we had an old teacher who knew very little and simply wanted a quiet life. We learnt very little, and everybody had a restful time.

The Regional Superintendent of Education collected beetles as a hobby, and I remember keeping close to him on school excursions, and collecting what I could. Once our yardsman killed an unlucky mole, and I asked mother to stuff it for my incipient collection. Alas, after a few days the poor mole was smelling very badly and had to be buried in the orchard.

From childhood we became conscious of our trilingual society. At home we spoke that form of Venetian dialect which had evolved in Friuli under Venetian rule. It was spoken by the middle class, to which the women in the family were very conscious of belonging. (Mother told us children that we should always play with children from better families, because that would improve us, to which Ginetta retorted by asking with whom these superior children would then be allowed to play. I remember grandmother being most embarrassed because she had walked as far as the main square of San Daniele still wearing her pinafore). The peasants and most people, including of course most of my school mates, spoke the beautiful and slightly harsh language of Friuli (a form of Rhaeto-romanian to linguists), which mother said we should not learn (although she had in fact learnt it surprisingly well to speak to younger housemaids and to peasants at the market and elsewhere). Teachers, taxation officers and police spoke literary Italian, which sounded rather foreign to us. Our (mother-approved) playmates were from other parts of Italy and so we had to speak Italian during our games. My school mates occasionally cut me off by speaking Friulian among themselves.

Our religious life was very simple, because we were the only Jewish family in town. Mother clearly told us that we believed differently from our friends because of our religion, but as children we had great difficulty in understanding what 'religion' was. It did mean that we did not go to church, neither were we allowed to eat pork, which was rather significant because San Daniele del Friuli produces the best ham in the whole of Italy. I gave mother some ethical worries when I asked who was right and who was wrong, after she had stated that our friends and ourselves held different beliefs on some very important issues. When she replied that there was no such thing as 'right' and 'wrong' in matters of religion I placed some very important queries on 'hold' at the back of my mind, the more so after on another occasion some time later she told me after a party that I could have eaten a ham sandwich offered to me (and which I had politely refused) 'because it was once only and I was not at home'.

Another time, I attended the funeral of a little schoolmate, a girl, who had been bitten by an adder. The whole primary school attended, and I asked the teacher whether I could wait outside the church because of my different religion; it was a strange feeling for a little boy of less than ten, to be standing right at the top of a huge stairway, alone at the side of that enormous church. I did not move for the whole time of the service, because I was mourning too.

Father arranged for a rabbi or at least a celebrant to come for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, when friends and relatives were invited to come. When *berachot* were said on any occasion, they were definitely in the Italian Sephardi pronunciation. *Pesach* was celebrated at home, and we had an old Sephardi *Haggadah* with its wonderfully simple woodcuts. Mother called us *tandan de l'Agada* (simpleton from the *Haggadah*)¹⁴ in that delightful Judeo-Venetian when we looked too deeply immersed in our own thoughts.

There was some contrast between Sephardi and Ashkenazi in the use of Hebrew words. The only agreement was in their being inserted into our Venetian speech. *Te daber, varda el manzer* ('Don't talk, watch the crook') would say my grandmother

when someone she did not trust came near. *Negro de ti* ('Poor bloke¹⁵ that you are'), mother would say with some concern when I landed myself into an awkward or silly situation. The almost encyclopaedic term *negrigure* (silly or sad or worthless facts or things) was used very often.¹⁶ *Menuha se ghe fassa* ('Pray for its peaceful rest') used to say uncle Nello when something could not be remedied.¹⁷ Some Hebrew verbs, with Venetian endings, were used by grandmother Gentilli: *Dabra* (talk, speak), *Ngaina* (look). Traditionally, the *ng* was still pronounced fully.

In retrospect, I would say that perhaps the Hebrew words used on the Gentilli side were more relevant to a contrast situation, towards other people, while those used on the Jona side were rather directed at one's own person or feelings. The difference was due to the different environments: the Gentillis were alone and still felt almost foreign among a friendly but alien peasantry, the Jonas had many friends and relatives in Venice and other cities. A Gentilli would be energetic and enterprising, a Jona gentle and caring.

Yiddish was not known at all, not even to grandmother. The only relict that survived was the remembrance of the *Yorzeit* (*Jahrzeit*, anniversary) of a person's death. In the family the word, no longer understood, had been rationalised and dissected into *i orsait* (the *orsait*) non-existent term which was assumed to mean anniversary. And in good Italian, say in a letter, it became formally *gli orzait*. Ashkenazi, or rather Germanic, was the great emphasis placed on birthdays. Pure Ashkenazi was the confection of gooseneck salami and goose sausages; father was *shochet* for poultry, and every year slaughtered two to four geese and stocked the larder. Over the years some peasants had learnt to fatten geese, and to take them to the market on a Wednesday when they were ready.

After I finished my primary schooling, in 1921, a problem arose. Father was not very worried about my studies — after all, he had managed very well without his — but mother had always put her own headmaster on a ridiculously high pedestal, and had definite hopes for me. San Daniele had only a primary school, and some tradesmen's classes which had just started. There was some demand for at least some proper secondary schooling. A few local teachers formed a voluntary group and launched the first secondary classes. I was enrolled, and greatly enjoyed the new challenge. Having proper textbooks was a real delight. We were even expected to own a bilingual French-Italian dictionary which was a true revelation to me.

I vaguely recall that there were only seven or eight students. I had immense difficulties with mathematics, which were taught by a rather impatient teacher, and unfortunately I remained scarred for life with a 'maths complex'. On the other hand, French was taught by a Polish refugee lady, Miss Sophie Dunyow, who knew the subject perfectly and was kind and very patient.

The classes were run privately and each year we had to go to Udine (the nearest city) to sit for the annual examinations as private candidates. Miss Dunyow could foretell my future vocation. Mother was talking to her, complaining that I never studied and spent so much time watching the clouds and the ants. Miss Dunyow (so mother told me many years later) calmly answered: 'But, Mrs. Gentilli, that boy always studies, even when he watches the clouds and the ants.'

I was too young to understand much, but I remember seeing truckloads of singing youths in black shirts and coloured scarves ready to leave for Rome — it was the Fascist 'March on Rome' of October 1922. Our yardsman told me that he belonged to no political party but if hard pressed was ready to admit loyalty to any one of them as the case might be. He left me wondering when he added: '... but certainly not Fascism'.

THE LONG ROCKY STRETCH: 1923-38

In 1923 many things happened. My parents decided that we should move to Udine: father, who had expanded and diversified his business, felt that he had to be in a more central place; both thought about our schooling. Ginetta had already started to play the piano, and needed more advanced tuition. We had a new house built in a street just behind the railway station of Udine, where there had been a maize field. Part of the field was cleared soon afterwards, and teams of boys came to play soccer regularly, arousing my interest and envy, and mother's worries about sweat and colds and terrible unspecified woes.

Mother was also expecting her fourth child, my brother Roberto, born in the new house on 17 September 1923. Beautiful and well behaved baby, just what I needed to counterbalance a mother and two sisters, I thought — but I had overlooked the fact that he was more than 11 years younger than myself.

At the end of the third year of studies, in the middle of school reforms launched by the new government, I found that I was qualified as a junior bookkeeper but could not proceed to higher studies and matriculation unless I passed a one-year bridging course. This bridging class was attended by nine students only, and at the final exam in June eight of us had failed in Mathematics and eight in Shorthand. Mother promptly arranged for some coaching, and I passed at the October supplementary examinations.

The move to Udine affected our religion, because the city had no synagogue, and only a very small Jewish section in the cemetery. One had the feeling of being transplanted into a new and much greater garden — the few bookshops alone were a feast to my eyes, and the many historic buildings a food for very vague thoughts — but it was a feeling of having been uprooted just the same.

When the time for my *Bar Mitzvah* came (in Judeo-Venetian, *entrar de miniam*, to enter the number of those qualified to pray),¹⁸ the family decided to delay by a few months until it could be celebrated at the main synagogue of Venice. My sister and I were taught some Hebrew by an old lady who did it for a living, but knew very little indeed; I still now have some doubts about the truly correct pronunciation of some consonants, which I suspect with her had a noticeable Venetian component.

Of the occasion I remember very little, apart from some derisory remark by one or two of the old women from the ghetto who had assembled at the door (if I remember rightly, there were three of us boys celebrating that day, which was rather exceptional). My mother's insistence in dressing me in a white sailor suit like a young boy, in shorts, while the other boys, much smaller than myself, wore grey suits with prematurely long trousers, fully justified the amusement.

The only upper high school which was open to me, with my commercial junior studies, led to a diploma in Accountancy and matriculation in Economics and Commerce. Two foreign languages were compulsory, French and either English or German. The teacher of German had just died and the Ministry in Rome decided to replace German with Slovene, because of the proximity to Yugoslavia, in which Slovene was one of the official languages. Since everybody opted for English, the Principal decided that all the girls and as many boys as could fit in could take English, and all the overflow would take Slovene. At the time I felt rather hostile, but as soon as I discovered the beautiful peculiarities of Slavonic languages I felt that this was one of the best things that could have happened for my mind's development. The teacher of Slovene was Dr. Andrej Budal, a very intelligent man and very keen linguist, to whom I am still grateful. I still remember the thrill of dis-

covering that China was called *Kitaj* in Slovene, from the name *Cataio* brought back to Europe by Marco Polo in the Middle Ages.

My class mates were all friendly, but very different from those at San Daniele; most of them had missed a couple of years during the Austrian occupation, and were far more mature than I was. I had worked out that being second or third in the class was better than being first and having special duties to perform and perhaps some envy to cope with, and to mother's slight disappointment kept at that level.

The subject near my heart, General Science, was taught inadequately by a very old teacher, and did not satisfy me. Fortunately, I met a Dr. Gagliardi, a Tuscan engineer, who taught at the Technical College and was a great collector of beetles, with a national reputation. Friuli was marginal to the Italian peninsula and had some interesting species; I learnt from Dr. Gagliardi far more about beetle collecting, and for a while kept my own collection, with a French manual because there was no scientific volume available on Italian beetles (most of the species were the same anyway). After his death, Dr. Gagliardi's collection became the first nucleus of Friuli's Museum of Natural History.

Italian and History were taught by Arnaldo Ferriguto, an original thinker from Verona with a deep interest in Renaissance painting and modern military history, a strange combination indeed. When he was informed that the final examination in his subjects was abolished, and pass would be by credit alone, he gave us the most informative lectures on Napoleon's campaigns in Italy, insisting particularly on the characteristics of the terrain, and bringing the whole thing back to life. In the Italian classes we heard the most inspiring lectures on the paintings of Giorgione and their philosophical messages, for which I am ever grateful. I still wonder why his very logical interpretations were not adopted by the critics.

Not being really very busy at school, I began to read scientific books. I also read to some extent in philosophy, trying to find some answer or perhaps a satisfying universal system of guiding principles. At the time a Jewish publisher of Bologna, but established in Rome, A. F. Formiggini, was issuing a series of *apologie* of the chief religions. They were small, elegant books, well written by sincere believers. I read the basic tenets of Judaism, Catholicism (with the *imprimatur* of the Curia), Protestantism, and then Buddhism and finally Taoism. Buddhist philosophy was more general than those I had read previously, its non-violence in both this world and the next strongly appealed to me, but as a keen naturalist I could not understand its alienation from sex. In the booklet on Taoism¹⁹ I found a more naturalistic approach in its concept of a Way along which everything and everybody moves at different times and different speeds. Progress along the Way is inevitable, and past, present and future are all part of it. Strong attachments to persons or objects are not part of the Way, and only bring sorrow when the inevitable parting occurs. All this was presented in a clear, objective and constructive way. It was also said that Taoism at present has degenerated into a lot of shallow rituals which have nothing to do with the original philosophy.

With some occasional pocket money only, I was assembling a small library. Dear Aunt Ida, when I showed her my books with great pride, said from her heart: 'Oh, how many books! But are they not too many?', to which I really did not know what to reply. My father told me a couple of times that the more books I read, the sillier I became, which from his practical point of view was probably more than half true.

About 1926, aged 82, Nonno Massimo died in Venice. He had gone to the *caffè* in St. Mark's Square, as was his daily habit; it was a bleak and foggy day and some friend had advised him to return home, but the old soldier would not listen. He died of pneumonia.

A couple of autumns I was sent to watch the picking of the grapes at the San Mauro estate, in the hills above Gorizia, that my father had bought in partnership. It was only 42 km from Udine, and I went on my bicycle, staying the few nights at Aunt Angelina's home at Gorizia itself. I enjoyed the occasion, not only because I love grapes (a Riesling type which was particularly delicious when forgotten on the vine to become *Spaetlese*) but because the local share-croppers were Slovene and spoke their language with me. I disagreed with my father when he decided to fire a share-cropper who had become too weak to be profitable. The man was married, with two little children, and had tuberculosis; I fought until father 'for me' decided to let the family stay as tenants at a moderate rental, an arrangement which allowed the widow to continue to run the small vineyard after her husband's death.

It was at Gorizia that I saw the ugly face of Fascism. In the building where my aunt lived one flat was rented by a Slovene parish organisation, which published its own bulletin in Slovene. We heard a terrific din of things being smashed, and aunt called out that 'they were at it again'. We went to investigate and saw eight or ten frenzied young men smashing furniture, tearing paper, throwing a typewriter through the window, and then rushing downstairs and into the street. The old priest and two or three middle-aged women helpers stood there clasping their hands in terror. Aunt rang the police, who arrived fairly soon, and asked me where 'they' had gone. I pointed in the right direction, whereupon their chief set out in pursuit — in the opposite direction. The whole thing was so blatant, that it damned the regime in my mind for ever.

At last the final exams came. Level with a boy in the other class, I topped the list for the Leaving Diploma in Accountancy in both provinces of Udine and Gorizia, with an average of 90% (Italian marks were very high, because pass was at 60%). He had one mark above me in Accounting, I one over him in Physical Training, and frankly I liked it better that way. My lowest mark, 8/10, was in my favourite subject, General Science, and was entirely due to my own poor handling of the examination. All told, it was a wonderful success, but I wept that evening back in my room. Strange and sad tears: I clearly realised that the carefree part of my life was gone for ever.

What to do next? Father thought that I should seek employment with a bank, mother that I should study at a university. I certainly wanted to continue my studies. First disappointment: university authorities ruled that the subjects of my Leaving were not acceptable for enrolment in Science, where I wanted to do Zoology. I pleaded with them to be allowed to sit for Leaving in any 'new' subject required, while being allowed to carry any required subject already passed. No, I had to sit for an entirely new and complete Leaving examination in all subjects, as befitted a proper matriculant. At that point I sent them mentally to hell and settled for enrolment in Economics and Commerce, which also pleased my father a little better. The choice was between Trieste and Venice, and father, who knew the ways of the world, recommended Venice because social life in Trieste was too free and easy. And so, during terms over four years, I became a boarder with an old Jewish Venetian household, the sisters Calimani, both teachers, one retired and the other nearing retirement.

As soon as I began my course I felt my old mental blockage against Mathematics, which had gained nothing in beauty by becoming Financial Mathematics. Accountancy, although the professor was a well known authority, showed no sparkle at all. With my parents' rather reluctant agreement I transferred to the small sub-Faculty of Sciences Applied to the Diplomatic and Consular Career, a clumsy label indeed which covered enough legal studies to satisfy a lawyer's needs, languages (which were what I really wanted) and a garnishing of History and Economic Geography. A lot of little subjects, which suited my 'lick and spittle' way of preparing for the exams. I liked the various legal subjects, which were based on the Napoleonic code adopted by Italy, plus international law which was — and still is — in a continuous state of flux.

My real happiness was in the languages. Again, French and either English or German were compulsory, and Spanish and Serbo-Croatian were optional. Italian was no longer studied. Defective German verbs and declensions repelled me within one week, and I embraced all the other languages available. There was some superficiality caused by the close resemblance of Spanish to Italian (and even more to Venetian) and Serbo-Croatian to Slovene, but the resemblances also stimulated my liking for comparative linguistics. While linguistic comparisons were fascinating, I also maintained that one should avoid grammatical and semantic confusion between languages by using a separate compartment in one's memory for each language, carefully avoiding any cross transfer. My friends did not believe me, but I proved my point by successfully taking and passing oral examinations in four languages within three days (there was some choice in the timing of oral examinations). I must admit that my Serbo-Croatian compartment was three-quarters empty, and my Spanish one was not much better off. The thorough grounding I had in French proved very rewarding, and I ended up with great satisfaction — and full marks.

Membership of the GUF (*Gruppo Universitario Fascista*) was compulsory, or at least only members could obtain the lecture notes, which were necessary for some courses. In fact, I had to edit those for the course on Emigration and Foreign Trade, a small labour that earned me full marks at the end. However, I used the membership to good effect because every time there was a GUF gathering at Venice I happened to be in Udine, and every time youth organisations in Udine called their gatherings I could honestly say that I was in Venice.

National (and definitely non-political) military service was compulsory. Fortunately just then a new system was introduced, which allowed university students to do their training and service each weekend during term and then at a reserve cadet officers' unit throughout the summer vacation. In my case two years had already gone, so it meant all term weekends and three months of service as a cadet at the end of my third and fourth university years, and six months' service as a reserve officer with a regiment after the end of my studies. Part of the training months was spent at the castle of Moncalieri, near Torino, and part, as field training, in some magnificent mountain country in the western Alps. In the first summer we ate very poorly for reasons that were whispered about. When we returned the following summer, we heard from the commandant that someone had written a letter of complaints to the War Ministry, and that such letter was totally unjustified and would never produce results, but the fact remains that from then on we ate much better because, miraculously, much more money was available. All told, I viewed this training as good physical exercise which my body needed and enjoyed.

I found the variations in personality between all the young colleagues most

interesting, and at times somewhat puzzling. I also acquired my best friend, Giorgio Pucci, a born musician and a dreamer with some most brilliant practical flashes. Dear Giorgio, who had reported sick with a slight knee injury, greatly annoyed the medical officer who had prescribed 'castor oil for everybody' after the sick parade, by asking whether the castor oil was meant for his knees too. Another time, while on duty, he came across the remark 'The electric globe works' in the daily journal. He worked backwards over two months' entries, finding the same sentence some sixty times, until he came to the solution of the riddle: 'The electric globe on the stairs is out of order', followed next day by the only legitimate 'The electric globe works'. From then on, the future officers had mindlessly followed — and could not care less.

The hero of the camp was a small Jewish cadet from Torino, a Formiggini, who was 'officer' on duty when the whole battalion of some 300 had food poisoning. We were camped in very hilly country, under enormous chestnut trees which had shed countless very spiny fruits, and woke in the middle of the night with absolutely no time to reach the toilets before facing disaster. Next day poor Formiggini, always smiling, and his four 'soldier' helpers on duty had to clean it all.

In my fourth year the professor of Economic History, Gino Luzzatto, from an ancient Jewish Venetian family — he still spoke in beautiful Venetian to those students who could understand — suggested that I might write my thesis on the Jewish settlements in Palestine. By then I had some thoughts of a diplomatic career, and opted for something less committed, and I ended up with a very boring screed on the competition between road and rail transport. It should not have deserved it, but I got full marks because the final result was also based on the results of the preceding years. (I thought so little of the thesis that I don't recall bringing it to Australia when I emigrated).

Almost by definition, a totalitarian government tends to ignore individual feelings. Mussolini decided that every Italian subject had to have an Italian surname, with the only concession that the subject had some liberty of choice. Some foreign surnames which were easy to pronounce in Italian escaped this forced Italianisation, but the rabbi of Trieste, Dr. Zoller, had to become Zolli, and many Slavonic names ending in *-ich* or *-vich* were suddenly made to end in *-i* or *-o*. Greek surnames at Castellorizo/Castelrosso, then under Italian rule, were also Italianised.²⁰

'Uncle' Raffaele Gentili (actually, a cousin of my father) was sentenced to three months' enforced residence in a remote village for having criticised Mussolini: the silly man had uttered his fateful words in a busy barber shop.

During my years in Venice I realised that there were different types of totalitarianism. When I told my Aunt Rica that I had chosen to do my national service as soon as possible, she tried to talk me out of it and spoke at length about her intention to have both her sons exempt from military service. I told her that physical training and good discipline were highly desirable and that was what I sought from my service, but she did not budge from her firm views.

Worse still, another time she shocked me by standing up and solemnly declaring that 'rather than having any of (her) children marry *goyim* or *goyoth* she would rather see all four of them dead at her feet' — firmly pointing at the floor around the aforementioned feet.

The six months of national service as a lieutenant were spent with an Infantry regiment stationed at Trento, surrounded by beautiful but not overwhelming mountains, and getting to know alpine flowers and fungi. We were rather unfor-

tunate with our captain, who had been in the Fascist hierarchy at Gorizia and was anxious to resume a military career: I had hardly ever met a less militarily minded man. He seemed to enjoy making other people unhappy. When the company received the anti-typhoid vaccination he immediately told the men that they were useless for duty, and their being useless for duty automatically cancelled their daily leave. Needless to say, he was hardly out of the door when I told the men that they were fully entitled to their leave and were free to go, provided they avoided excesses and remembered that the injection had some temporary side effects.

Another time, during a field manoeuvre, I was to take a platoon to the other side of a small stream. I took the men to the stream and we took up good positions, and when the 'enemy' approached from the other side we informed them that they were 'dead'. They accepted it. The captain kept asking me whether in a real situation I would have crossed the stream, and I assured him that then, but only then, I would have made my men wade through the water. The poor man then commanded one of the men to ferry him across, piggyback, which he obediently did, promptly slipping on a stone midstream and giving the captain a good (accidental?) bath.

Once, at Trento, I was on duty when one of the majors walked in. A very small man, he was known as a great drinker. In a stormy mood, he called me and ordered me to tell the men to 'remove all those rags from those trees', to which I assented immediately with a perfect salute and a straight face. The 'rags' were the clusters of blossoms on the horse-chestnut trees.

More seriously, in 1934 Hitler had massed some of his forces against the Austrian frontier, ready to march in. Mussolini was then still free, and ordered a whole Division of troops to march to the Brenner Pass, ready to enter and defend Austria if needs be. It was a rather imposing display; our regiment was then sent to camp in the Fleres/Pflersch valley nearby, a magnificently gloomy valley covered in fir trees and blueberry bushes. The men kept me well supplied with blueberries and mushrooms as long as we stayed there.

Discharged from service, I was very lucky to be accepted as an assistant lecturer in the Geography department of the University of Florence. I was recommended by dear Professor Ricci, who had taught me Economic Geography at Venice. Professor Biasutti, a perfect gentleman, welcomed me in Florence, arranged for the required examinations and interviews, and finalised my appointment. The pay was not much, but there was a fairly good library and the work load was very moderate. The students were perhaps a little casual, with the girls rather more serious than the boys. I got some additional fees from lectures on the geography of Italy given to a small group of students from an American college. The *Istituto di Geografia* was also the home of the quarterly *Rivista di Studi Geografici*, which received periodicals in exchange from all over the world.

Peace was shattered by Mussolini's decision to attack Ethiopia. The official Italian statement was that the Ethiopians had attacked Italian troops, but this found little credibility among geographers, who could clearly see that the place of the attack was a long way within Ethiopia. I was called up, but disappeared over the mountains. By the time my father convinced me to return, the Ethiopian campaign had ended; I was court-martialled and lost rank, but there was no lasting scar. The officers of the jury were not vindictive and not politically inclined. But of course, although Professor Biasutti had accepted my apology, the job at the university was gone.

A good thing that happened about that time was the regularisation of the position of 'other religions' (i.e. non-Catholic) in the Italian State. Under the old constitution

they were just 'tolerated'. This was changed to 'admitted'. Jewish communities were given official recognition, with the power to levy a small annual contribution from their members, collected like any other tax. The new system allowed the communities to budget with far greater certainty. It also meant that many Jews were clearly reminded of their obligations. There were petty squabbles as usual, with the Gentilis being adamant that they would never be part of the Gorizia community, and a compromise being reached with the recognition of an Udine-San Daniele community.

After my discharge, father stood by me and employed me as a typist and more or less secretary, but he was never able to communicate well and did not suffer fools gladly. I did as I was asked, but was not in the spirit of things. Obviously, only a move out of Fascist Italy would have solved my problem. Fascist adventurism continued with the Spanish civil war, in which Nazi Germany was an ally. I was horrified when I found out that people who had been called up for action in Ethiopia had been shipped off to Spain without any warning or explanation: '... when we woke up in the morning, we should have had Sicily on our right, but there it was on our left — we were bound for Spain.' Britain and France were still playing by the rules — against Hitler and Mussolini, who had always made their own rules! I just felt trapped in a Europe that was going to explode any time, and could not get out because, born in 1912, I was still subject to military call-up. I was sure that Germany would soon start to use the colossal armaments which it had been amassing for years. I thought that Italy's reaction was unpredictable, but not much good was likely to come from whatever it might involve.

There was no hint of anti-Semitism; the Italian Geographical Congress was held in Udine in the summer of 1937, and I well remember the president, Professor Roberto Almagià, who never denied his Jewish origin, disporting an ample black shirt.

THE LANDSLIDE AND THE ABYSS: 1938-45

I sent two papers to the 1938 International Geographical Congress in Amsterdam. The shorter (and, in my view, more important) paper suggested that, to minimise international misunderstandings, history and geography textbooks should be shown in the draft stage to expert representatives of adjoining countries so that any doubtful or controversial matter could be discussed and amended where necessary. (A similar procedure was adopted in Central Europe and in the Far East a few years ago). As could have been expected, a Fascist newspaper attacked me with a bitterly sarcastic note, mainly because my paper was in French (on purpose, to ensure a wide audience) whereas it should have been in Italian. Its conclusion: 'Here is a man who shall never be able to understand the spirit of Fascist Italy'.²¹

A first not so veiled warning to Jews came through a *Manifesto della razza*, in which several well known scientists declared that Italians belonged to the 'Aryan race'. This of course was in line with one of the basic Nazi principles. No wonder that Enrico Fermi, member of the Italian Academy and 1938 Nobel Prize winner for Physics (and from an old Roman Jewish family) decided not to return to Italy with the prize money.

In the autumn of 1938 the government issued its first racist decree, cancelling all naturalisations of foreign-born Jews and expelling them forthwith. I immediately told my father that I would leave Italy as soon as possible. He replied that we were

not affected, but I insisted that a government which cancelled unilaterally a solemn compact with a subject deserved no loyalty whatsoever.

Next day any doubt was removed. Another decree banished Jews from any position in the civil service (which included teachers, lecturers and professors) and from any scientific or cultural society. Father agreed that I should go if I wished, but reiterated that he was born in Italy and was going to stay there. I went to the passport section of the police office, and politely said that, as a Jewish swine, I wished to leave for abroad. They replied that they would not let me go until they were sure that another country was willing to accept me, because they did not want to have to pay for my return if I was not admitted. Fair enough; I must have set a speed record starting all documents through the pipeline the same day, and picking up next day the application form for immigration into Australia from the British consulate at Trieste.

I also applied for Canada and New Zealand. No United States — too competitive — and no South Africa for reasons which were already then far too clear to me.

In the meantime my study of Friulian placenames derived from plant names, in course of publication by the *Società Filologica Friulana*, bore my name below the first two instalments, only my initials after part three, and nothing at its conclusion. I am glad to say to their eternal praise that all my friends remained loyal and helped in every way they could, which unfortunately was very little indeed. By then I felt very detached from everything, ready for a fresh start at the back of beyond.

In the many volumes of proceedings from the Amsterdam Congress there were four papers by Australians on the ability of white people to populate tropical regions. I wrote to each author stating my case and my urgent need for advice and support. All four replied sympathetically but only one — Wynne Williams from Queensland — did something constructive: he passed my letter on to his Member of Parliament. I wrote to the University of Western Australia and received a very friendly letter from the Academic Secretary, T. H. Roberts, stating that no Geography was taught there, but that I should call if I had the opportunity. In the meantime Canada informed me that I was welcome provided I was a housemaid or a dairy worker, and New Zealand replied rather curtly, sounding as if applicants from Italy could not even be considered.

At last the official reply from Australia came, informing me that a landing permit would be issued if I could undertake to have £300 with me on arrival. That was just about all my savings, but the problem was that Italy allowed only the equivalent of £200 to be exported. At any rate, with the landing permit I was able to get a passport, with which I could 'go to England to practise some English', and the £100 crossed the Italian border with the kind help of a friar who had befriended me during the train journey.

I advertised in the newspapers asking for samples of merchandise that I could sell in Australia, and got a few replies, accompanied by some very tiny hand looms, a few pairs of shoes, lists of perfumes, etc.

Father was sad but very helpful. Mother had hopes for my future in a free country. I booked my passage on a British ship, the *Ormonde*, both to practise English and to be under the British flag in case of war. With all the arrangements made, I was not in a desperate hurry to leave. I witnessed the Albanian adventure and the worsening war psychosis that was creeping over Europe. At last, on 20 August 1939, I embarked at Naples, with a ticket to Sydney because one was then allowed to break journey at each port. Father was ready to forward two large boxes

with all my books, which I had already cleared with the Customs for export, by cargo boat as soon as I had an address.

War was declared while we were near Aden. Most refugees on the ship were Czech; they had left after the events of 1938, and feared no internment. Italy had not yet declared war and so I also was not an 'enemy alien' — not yet, anyway. I had fun playing deck sports with some very friendly Australians. Fizzy lemonade was horrid, 'coffee' came out of a bottle, and pouring tea was almost a ritual which a poor foreigner like me could not comprehend. A dear lady was horrified when I poured her tea and milk in the wrong order, and I was shocked when her denture slipped half an inch off her gums as she started to speak. I had never seen a denture until then.

Arrival in Australia (12 September 1939) was fascinating. Someone said that we should have seen the lighthouse of 'that small island off the coast' (Rottneest), and I realised how ignorant I was. Then we entered Fremantle harbour, at the mouth of the Swan: what a simple, bucolic scene, with those huge and so plain Customs sheds. I chose to land at Fremantle and continue later if necessary. I was benevolently 'processed', but I had made the mistake of taking with me a fine brass tray which Uncle Nino had brought some 25 years earlier from Casablanca, and the officer assumed that I had bought it during the journey, and made me pay duty. Pairs of shoes could not be imported without paying a very high duty, and so I had to sacrifice half of each pair on the altar of protectionism. Worst of all, I had packed in the luggage my beautiful Beretta handgun, part of my uniform and never used, just in case it was needed in the outback, and of course that was impounded under some cloud of suspicion.

After we had docked, there came on board a friendly young man with a small piece of cardboard dangling from his lapel, with the word 'interpreter' written in blunt pencil in many languages. He was Lyonel Lobstein, who had volunteered that day to help the Catholic refugee relief organisation, and began to talk to me in French, Spanish and Italian. The representative of the Jewish organisation was much older (I have some idea that it might have been Meyer Breckler, then President of the Perth Hebrew Congregation), and he simply invited me to go to the welfare office in Brisbane Street. Everybody was trying to help. Someone found me a lift in a sidecar, and I made my entrance in my new country flanked by a motorcycle rider who wore a battered slouch hat, and with tears of joy and gratitude streaming down my face as we skirted that beautiful Perth Water.

At the Brisbane Street office everybody was very friendly. Josh Shimenson had found me a place to board, Harold Boas (the architect and planner, President of the Jewish Relief Organisation) arranged for me to meet Professor Alexander at the University, and I first met my good friend Paul Smetana, Austrian-born, who had just arrived as a refugee from Italy. At the synagogue, Meyer Breckler gave me a place of honour.

Things moved very fast. The University needed a part-time lecturer in Statistics for a very elementary course, and I accepted the job for the princely sum of £125 a year. In fact, it was just enough to pay for my board and lodging, by then at a place in Thomas Street nearer to the University, but it entailed only two lectures and one tutorial per week, leaving me plenty of time for reading, meeting people and, I hoped, one day, for writing. My English was still rather strange.

Professor Alexander had just returned from a visit to the United States, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation. He invited me to a party at his home so that I could meet a number of people. Later on, I was talking about this to a new friend,

René Levy, a French wheat buyer, whom I had met at the local Alliance Française, when he suddenly said: 'Why don't you write to Carnegie?' I asked the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor F. R. Beasley, what he thought of the idea, and if he agreed, could he act on behalf of the University, rather than having myself to proclaim my good merits. To my great relief, he did agree.

At the 'Summer School' in January 1940 I gave some lectures on geography for Adult Education (now the Extension Service of the University), directed by Hew Roberts who had just left the academic registry. There was a good attendance, which showed that the time was ripe for some more geographical work.

On my birthday, 13 March 1940, Professor Beasley told me that the Carnegie Corporation had agreed to pay my lecturer's salary for three years, at the rate of £350 a year. My best dream had come true, and I hastened to inform the family back in Italy. For a long time I was just one step ahead of the students, but we made steady progress; I was forced to devise simple methods of graphic presentation of formulas, which proved a very useful exercise for my non-mathematical mind.

Some of my relatives had also emigrated, but language problems (lack of English) directed them towards South America. Uncle Raffaele and wife, with daughter Egle married Reinhardt and family, with a good agency for office stationery, moved to San Paulo, Brazil. One of mother's cousins and husband Frankental, a railway construction engineer, also went to Brazil. Uncle Raffaele's son Mario went to the bleak Argentinian south on a contract as resident doctor. My second cousin Giacomo (Nino) Dalla Torre, his wife cousin Giulia and their young son came to Perth, where he could practise as a doctor.

Italy's declaration of war created some problem. I suddenly fell into the category of 'enemy alien' and was arrested pending investigation. That pistol in my luggage had stuck in someone's memory. I became an inmate of Fremantle jail (in a wing set aside for civilian internees), whereupon I wrote a long memorandum of protest, stressing my status of refugee. A few German Jewish refugees had also been interned, and I remember giving one, Arnold Zweig (no, not the famous one), some hints on what to write in his submission to the authorities. He was freed: in fact all the refugees were. After a week I was questioned by a captain and a lieutenant and told that I should be set free, which actually happened after a further week.

I was anxious to learn about Australia, and set out to transform bare statistics (of which there were many) into thematic maps (of which there were none). Having completed a set of (very crude) maps of Western Australian agriculture, I showed them to the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor G. A. Currie, who was also Professor of Agriculture. He liked them, and suggested to the manager of the University Bookshop that they might be published.²²

The printing of those maps brought me into contact with Joshua Pilpel, born, if I recall rightly, at Rechovoth, who was very sympathetic and did his best to support the publication, to the extent of buying it up from the Bookshop when its manager got cold feet over distribution problems. Teachers, who I thought would rush to buy it, claimed that 2/6 was too expensive.

I offered to the Vice-Chancellor to begin a new course in Economic Geography in 1941, and the University Senate accepted 'on the understanding that it shall not involve the University in any further expenditure'. From then on, academic work kept me very busy.

Towards the end of 1941 my father died suddenly in Italy, of septicaemia complicated by diabetes of which he was not aware. He was only 55. The news came via the Gentilli cousins in Brazil.



Dr. Joseph Gentilli (centre) receiving an honorary degree from the University of Western Australia. Sir Zelman Cowen is the speaker. (Courtesy Dr. Joseph Gentilli.)

For several years, Josh Pilpel had printed and published the local Jewish monthly, *The Westralian Judean*, aided by a small contribution from the Perth Hebrew Congregation. The editor was Osher Silbert. I was asked to write an article, which I did with pleasure. By then I saw Josh every week and got from him some knowledge of the local Jewish scene. In the meantime, I joined the local Alliance Française and kept up my French.

The evolution of my thought may be followed through my writings. Basically, it was a two-pronged approach: to analyze the Jews' position, and to evaluate their actual situation. This may seem detached from the realities of the time, but it must be remembered that there was no indication of the horrors that would follow.

In January 1941, using published census material, I made a statistical study of Australian Jewry, finding that Jews were at about midpoint among other religious groups in terms of growth in numbers, but already well below the Australian average, were 'over represented' in Western Australia, N.S.W. and Victoria but almost

negligible in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, and were around 90% urban residents, mostly married but with very small families. The statement of religion is not compulsory, and that reduced the accuracy of the findings. 'Our children are still fewer, so that very few, a handful, will be the nucleus of Australian Jewry within a score years or so'.²³ Dr. I. Steinberg, who had tried to launch a plan for a Jewish settlement in the Kimberleys, wrote from Sydney that he could not tell 'how delighted (he) was to see this scientific essay on the important and yet most obscure problem of our people in this country. . . . This must be brought to their knowledge as often as possible, as well as the very unsound social structure.' He invited me to contribute to the recently founded *Australian Jewish Forum*. (This was done immediately: see below).

In my view, the fundamental war to be fought was against totalitarianism of any kind. In practice, one could try to detach oneself from the present and ask whether there was any similarity between the 'thousand-year *Reich*' and the Roman Empire of old.

The two worlds, Roman and Jewish, could only live together, could only collaborate in some fields, if they respected the sanctity of each other's spiritual life. The conflict is a fundamental one, and its elements remain to determine other conflicts century after century, until the present time. For centuries Roman society had been totalitarian. Its only absolute value was the State. The State was all and everything . . . There is no contradiction in the fact that while Jews had lived many years in Rome, Romans could not occupy Palestine peacefully. In Rome, the Jews were guests, they kept to their own faith and beliefs, and did not interfere in Roman politics. But in Palestine the Romans imposed a complete domination . . .²⁴

Without surrendering to totalitarianism, it may be possible to mimic or merge with the human environment, to assimilate with it.

Assimilation . . . means exactly to make or to become similar. Then there must be two elements in any assimilation: one to be taken as a standard or model, and one to make or become similar to the standard. . . . Assimilation may imply the radical and complete change of the varying party, or only a change in some of his peculiarities. It may be perceived, when the varying element realises that the change will occur, or unperceived when it takes place without being noticed by the varying element. A general scheme of assimilating processes may be: 1. By action of a foreign subject upon the object to assimilate: (a) violent or sudden, or (b) mild or gradual; 2. by the subject's acting upon himself: (a) gradual, which could be (i) cultural (x — artistic, and/or y — scientific) or (ii) social; or (b) sudden, (i) familiar (ii) religious).

It cannot be said that in the western world there is any Jew who is not at present culturally assimilated, at least in part. . . . We are very far at present from the non-making of images. . . . In Russia there might come a Jewish national music out of a compact Jewish life — but there are far better probabilities that this will occur in *Eretz Israel* . . . Scientific assimilation did not mean necessarily assimilation . . . but it meant a going away from faith and belief, which implied an easier indirect assimilation. Jewish absorption of modern scientific thought could agree with the strictest religious principles, if we had a philosophical school able to cope with the new problems arising from modern scientific progress. Unfortunately, for too many a Jew scientific knowledge means scepticism, which paves the way to opportunistic assimilation.

Social assimilation was the worst form of assimilation during the last century. From Heine and Disraeli who sought admission to social life through baptism, to the generation of the late (eighteen)-nineties, who only tried not to show any Jewish characteristics, there is a generalisation of the same idea. The Jew was granted full rights . . . and he tried to show his gratitude by disappearing altogether . . . He would never say that he was not a Jew, but he would never say that he was a Jew . . . his children were even less Jewish than he was. . .²⁵

What was then the position in Australia? How could it affect immigrants in general, and refugees in particular?

This country opened a generous home to all, and a thorough selection of the applicants was carried out only in the best interest of the country and the immigrants themselves. How do Jews who come here to live, reciprocate within their possibilities? First of all, by working . . . not to become a burden to the community. Secondly — in order of time — by becoming a loyal citizen as soon as possible. And then? The Jewish immigrant should be aware of Australia's population needs, and his best way of

thanking this country for the holy refuge obtained, for the possibility granted upon him of reviving a peaceful family life as a free man in a free country, is to create or re-create a family. A family means children, and at least three or four children, not the one-child or the two-child family, which mean decline and gloomy future, for the sake of present comfort and luxury and fun. It is by giving this country young citizens of tomorrow, that we shall fulfil our moral obligation.²⁶

No informed view may be obtained and no constructive policies can be formulated without adequate information. How can we monitor the situation of Jews in Australia, and any changing trend, demographic or otherwise?

There is a need, an urgent need, for good Jewish statistics. The appeal may well come from these columns. It is an appeal to fresh, juvenile energies to co-operate to found our own statistical institute . . . The first, urgent research work aims at a better knowledge of the refugees; there are many human problems involved, many scientific questions of high value which can perhaps be solved by a methodical study of the stream of refugees from Nazi-Fascist countries. In order to avoid the past mistakes which led to the misplacement of so many brains and hands, the best knowledge of the human subject must be obtained . . .²⁷

It was a good idea, but nothing came of it, which was a great pity, and the same problems still arise now, nearly half a century later, concerning the refugees from Asia. A deep-seated mistrust of forms to fill and total apathy towards statistical findings are particularly strong in Australia; the newcomer assimilates these attitudes far too soon after his arrival, perhaps helped by well-meaning friends and neighbours.

The concept of human rights had not yet been accepted internationally.

The League of Nations failed in its policy of minority protection because it often felt that it was not worth risking international troubles to support a few subjects of a State against their Government . . . The very fact that in some countries Jews enjoyed every right and were not a minority but citizens with perfect equality, made it impossible to protest against any policy directed against them by a Government which had the support of the majority of the citizens, irrespective of ethnic or religious characters. In other words, in the moment any group of subjects of a State obtained perfect equality, they ceased to be a minority . . .²⁸

These had been my thoughts, my contribution to some clarification of vital issues. From my own observations, one of the most difficult things to achieve in life is the recognition of the flow of History around oneself. Normally, personal considerations, being much closer to the observer, hinder or totally hide the perception of History. My first editorial in the *Westralian Judean* said that

perhaps we all realise that we are at the crossroads of history, that during the next few months, or years, the future destiny of mankind will be decided upon . . . It is to be hoped that the voice of all of us, expressed as public opinion, will be listened to in the final decision. What will we say? Will we be able to speak?

And then the crucial question:

Who are we? Before the Emancipation, we were Jews because we belonged to the Jewish Faith. After the Emancipation we became citizens belonging to the Jewish Faith. With the *Agudath Israel* we retain everything of our past. With Zionism we retain our citizenship as long as we do not go to Palestine to settle there and acquire that new citizenship. With Liberal Judaism, we discard what seems obsolete in our religious tradition. With modern thought, we discard what seems devoid of certain values which we arbitrarily assess . . . Do we not realise that we Jews are far too much divided? . . . We need unity, discipline, self-control. We need capable leaders, able to speak openly and courageously . . . Aloofness does not help. Things go on, whether we like it or not. History will not stop for us. We must in fact run to keep pace with History. We must know where we stand, and what we really want. And once we decide, we must carry on consistently, be it a matter of thought, religion, or politics . . . We shall live if we save our faith, not if we preserve our superstition. We shall live if we gather knowledge, not if we accumulate money. We shall live if we are our children's friends, not if we are merely the family's money-bag. We shall live if we teach ourselves, not if we believe that we are chosen . . . We shall live if we are able to carry out a thorough introspection, a complete self-analysis, each one of us, and all of us as a people. We shall live if we understand how near extinction we are, now.²⁹

War came to the Pacific, and realities had to be faced.

By now, the world is in such a condition that one cannot foresee how and when the present conflict will end. That it will end, is the only certainty. That it will end with freedom for mankind as a whole, is the main hope.

I could sense some shade of rhetoric (Churchillian?) in the Atlantic Charter, and felt the need for some reasoned realism in its interpretation:

Freedom from want we need, because there were wide social, political and racial differences. We are born different and will live differently, as we are individuals and not pieces of machinery. But we are all entitled to the same feeling of security, as long as we socially deserve it. In the future world, there should be an equal chance of employment and progress for all. There should be no barriers against advancement, improvement, migration. Each one should work where his work is best for mankind. Each one should do what is most useful to mankind. Mankind may yet redeem itself by giving the best social security to the man and his family, irrespective of race, creed, or nationality. Freedom from fear we need, because we know the agony of these last few years . . . Such a catastrophe should become impossible, through the institution of a truly international police system, through the internationalisation of means of transport and communication, through the suppression of boundaries to the social activity of men.³⁰

The lack of Jewish unity remained a serious problem. Perhaps satire might have some salutary effect?

We must be a very vital people, full of resources. We have not yet finished the discussion of a scheme, and there appears some more wonderful idea to be launched. We have tried to explain to some friend what the idea was like, and there comes another idea, much better, flashing and sparkling, so that we discard the old one to the great amazement of the friend . . . We are, indeed, the most dynamic people on earth. And yet, we are the most conservative, unchanging, stubbornly traditionalist people on earth . . . When Herzl wrote the *Judenstaat* in 1896, he was considered one of the most revolutionary, ill balanced and dreaming Jews who ever lived . . . The fight waged by Herzl against half-hearted Jews was at least as hard as that against the unconvinced world . . .

. . . Revisionists and Zionists want to evacuate their countries to go to Palestine. They may go, but the Bundist will remain, as his nationalism is broader, and his country is one great commonwealth of ethnical groups living together in a varied harmony. By now our friend of Zionism, who had already gone over to Revisionism, jumps back, takes a deep breath to readjust his general balance, and after a good deal of pondering rejects Revisionism as too radical, and retains a part of Zionism which may be useful if the Bundist idea does not materialise . . .

How many voices are there to be heard at a Jewish meeting? Here are some new voices, louder in the past few years . . . The World Jewish Congressman explains that he is first of all a very good citizen of his country, and (not 'but') desires to see Zionism firmly established, and (also, not 'but') he thinks that Jews belong to one single nation scattered all over the world, and therefore must have a kind of Congress . . . and must elect delegates for that purpose . . . [whose] mandate has only a limit of time, but no limit of scope. If our friend were an expert in international law, he would see a clear case of conflicting representations . . .

Our friend by now has had enough of Jewish politics and . . . proclaims his political agnosticism and walks to the Synagogue to meet there some non-political Jews. Should we say that he found there the Rabbi listening in a very sad mood to two wild groups, some claiming that they will never come to the Synagogue driving in anything on *Shabbes*, and the others stating that if they had to walk . . . they would never arrive in time? . . . Our friend walked away slowly, very slowly. He felt that something was crumbling, some sort of high opinion did not exist any more. He was shaken from his reverie by the leader of the *Shabbes* non-driving party, who, opening the door of his luxurious car, offered him a friendly, humanitarian lift.³¹

There were no smiles . . .

In a serious vein, it seemed very clear that after the war there could not be a simple return to pre-war conditions. Most minorities had then suffered some form of discrimination. If pre-war boundaries were restored, it seemed to me that a fair and workable solution of any 'Jewish problem' and other minority problems, particularly in Poland, could only come from some form of international federation.³²

The difficult war situation and the growing feeling that solutions of major problems will no longer come from Europe made some Australian communal leaders think and act.

The thinking minorities in every human group, be it a Jewish community in Australia or any other religious, economic, professional, cultural body of intelligent men (embracing, of course, women) have by now become aware of the pressing need for democratic reorganisation of their collective life. While the great majority of mankind fights for democracy, the slogan 'Democracy beings at home' can be accepted by a widening circle of people in every walk of life.

For us, the closest home, out of the domestic walls, is the Jewish community . . . It is more than a coincidence that at the same time, the two great Jewish communities in Australia have begun a movement toward democracy, following two entirely different ways of approach. While a committee was sending out a far-reaching message 'to all Jewish men and women in Sydney' representatives of several Jewish organisations were meeting under the auspices of the Melbourne Jewish Youth Council. The approach differed in that, whereas the Sydney appeal was the concerted achievement of a brains' pool, the Melbourne gathering showed the results of hard thinking by several leading individual personalities . . .

Quotations from individual statements from Melbourne and from Abram Landa, M.L.A. for Bondi, revealed a great awareness of the problems facing Australian Jews, and some basic agreement. My article concluded:

There is very much to think about in all this, and we invite our readers and all other friends to write us their opinions on the subject. Local conditions may be different, but a progressive trend is general . . . Every member of the community with heart and brain has his contribution to make, to add new ideas and by thinking in advance give that new vitality without which there can be no sound future for organised Australian Jewry.³³

An attempt to define 'Jewish problems' in September 1942 seems almost absurd now, in the light of subsequent events. Was there any basis for the complaint that Jews were 'over-represented' in the so-called liberal professions?

It is undoubted that German liberal professions would have been overcrowded even without the Jews, but it was certainly easier to accuse somebody rather than the whole system . . . What had been in a friendly atmosphere the source of great intellectual achievements became a justification for persecution. The happy collaboration of different mentalities was decried as the pollution of the 'superior' by the 'inferior' . . .

Since the French Revolution there has been a constant struggle in the Jewish world between conservatives and liberals. These two main parties never bore such names, but one feels they characterise them best. On one hand, religious orthodoxy loathed any novelty, be it spiritual or material, and looked at formal religion as the only escape from the world. On the other hand, assimilative liberalism realised that the outer world had changed, saw friendly hands stretched over the crumbled walls of the ghetto, and decided that true life had yet to be lived by the Jew in a free world . . . In the fading of religious creeds at the end of the last century, religion remained the only frail barrier between the Jew and the non-Jew in every progressive country . . .

. . . the peace settlement should see the beginning of a peaceful Palestine. But there are definite social and economic problems to be solved . . . The natural increase of the Arabs is such, that notwithstanding Jewish immigration Jews decreased in relative numbers since the last census; and it is unlikely that more than two or three million Jews will ever find living room in Palestine. What of the others? . . .³⁴

Without in any way diminishing the great debt of gratitude that refugees felt towards Australia, it became necessary to define and point out the many absurdities in the Australian handling of details.

The Australian definition of refugee for the purpose of admission to the Commonwealth was based on an ethnic principle: anybody of Jewish descent belonged to the special quota . . . As soon as the war broke out, the Commonwealth instituted alien registration . . . The Jewish refugee from Austria or Germany and the 'Aryan' German regularly attending Nazi meetings were 'enemy aliens' alike. The 'Aryan' German from the Sudeten and the Czech from Prague were 'friendly aliens', like Poles, Italians, Greeks, etc. . . The absurdity of the whole position is evident. The Nazi German (if he is not interned) must apply for travel permits. The refugee from Nazism is subject to these very same restrictions . . . This riddle is not displayed in order to confuse the Authorities. It is a very serious analysis of the implications of the present policy, . . . which is mainly based on the passport and only secondarily on the actual merits of the person. Nobody would object to the most severe tests being imposed in order to try loyalty of aliens here; every refugee would most likely prove his loyalty beyond doubt. What is most objectionable is the blind passport rule and its implications . . . The absurdity of other points is quite apparent . . .

The refugee is a friendly alien only for one purpose at present: he may wear the Australian military uniform and serve in a military labour unit, instead of serving with the enemy aliens in the Civilian Labour Corps . . . And why should the refugee who happens to be reserved because his present occupation is more useful to Australia than his rather doubtful bodily strength, be penalised by being still and completely an enemy alien? His family is not on the same footing as the family of the refugee in uniform . . .

Firstly, there must be one and one only Authority dealing with aliens' matters . . . The scheme of classification could [comprise] three classes: dangerous, suspected, loyal . . . Once an alien is classified as loyal, he should receive a document certifying this quality for all purposes . . . It is for a fair treatment of their heart and mind that the refugees plead at present. And they hope to be recognised for what they are: not refugees or guests here, but future citizens with a life-long gratitude towards Australia'.³⁵

On receipt of a copy of the whole text, the Attorney-General Dr. H. V. Evatt wrote ' . . . The position of refugees has been carefully examined by a special committee set up for the purpose, and I am forwarding to the secretary of this committee your article, which will be of interest.

At the end of 1942 Jews in Sydney were invited to meet and discuss a call for a wholly representative Board of Deputies. The general scheme was excellent and was duly praised, but some aspects were criticised editorially in the *Westralian Judean*, for instance the proposal that any group of twenty-five registered persons could present a list with any number of candidates, so that in effect 'if a strong organisation presents itself with a list of 50 people and backs it with all its means of propaganda, it has a great chance of securing an absolute majority . . . There should be no lists, only individual candidates . . .'³⁶

Some reports on the Holocaust were received in 1943, and I had a very difficult decision to make. The news was so horrible³⁷ that the first reaction was to treat them as Allied wartime propaganda, and wait for some confirmation. The next thought was for the Australian or refugee friends and relatives of so many victims: was it humane to spread such yet unconfirmed news, in the absolute certainty that they were utterly unable to help from here? In consultation with Josh Pilpel, at first we decided not to kill the last hope. However, I soon wrote in an editorial that

hundreds of thousands of Jews have been deported from Germany to Poland and locked into dreadful ghettos where they awaited death at any moment. Little or nothing has been said in the Press, by the wireless, anywhere . . . The world has been shocked for a while by the news of deportations from France, most likely because French Jews were closer to the Western European people in customs, costumes and outlook. When further news came to the effect that the deportees had been refugees from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, a dead silence fell again upon the tragedy. The deportations did not stop because the authoritative newspapers did not write about them any more . . . Two millions have been murdered — two millions of mutilated, violated, desecrated human beings — two millions of death cries, of agonising screams before the great silence fell. This means that during the last three years over 1800 Jews have been killed every day, nearly four score every hour. Think of people being killed during three years at the rate of over one a minute, by gas, by suffocation, by starvation, by torture, by bullets. Two millions — almost as many as all the people of Sydney and Melbourne put together.

At long last, 40,000 Jews in the ghetto of Warsaw decided to fight . . .

On the home front, I wrote (editorially) 'a letter to every Jew in Western Australia', advocating the creation of a Western Australian Jewish Board.³⁸

It is imperative that we do something now. Why should we take it for granted that during the years of the depression there should be anti-Jewish slogans up the walls, that during the war there be anti-Jewish rumours going about?.. Something must be done.

By whom? This is the difficulty. The Perth Hebrew Congregation, Inc. has done a very good job and during the depression its Advisory Committee has earned the gratitude of the community (has this gratitude ever been publicly expressed?). But the Congregation is a purely religious body and there are far too many Jews who are not members and yet proclaim themselves Jewish. The Zionist Association is very active and may play an important role in our communal life. And yet, Zionism is

political, and many people do not accept its political aims. The other bodies within the community confine their activities to certain groups or realms, such as women, youth, welfare, loans, etc.

What about setting up something entirely new? Cheap and efficient, independent and yet acting under mandate for the whole community? This may be the W.A. JEWISH BOARD.

Every Jew who for any reason still thinks he has some link with Jewish life may become a member upon payment of, say, 5/- . . . The whole community is to identify itself with the W.A. Jewish Board, which is strictly non-religious, non-political, and has the only aim of protecting the interests of any and every Jew in this State.

The policy of the Board is to be determined once a year and for the major issues by a Council of about 20 members, one-third of them under 40 years of age, elected at a general meeting of all members of the Board over 15 years of age . . .

There followed suggested organisational details, and finally a call for action.

How these suggestions were received and how I found myself elected secretary of the rather less democratic W.A. Council of Jewish Affairs which became the W.A. Advisory Board was recently told by Nate Zusman³⁹ and need not be repeated here. Essentially, the Board consisted of representatives of the various Jewish organisations, and provided no representation for 'unattached' Jews. This was a significant shortcoming because at the time there was no Liberal Jewish organisation.

Continued opposition by some leaders of the Perth Hebrew Congregation to my progressive ideas finally led to the appointment of another editor of the *Westralian Judean*. I readily agreed because I felt that with the approaching end of the war my task had been fulfilled, and with the re-establishment of normality the editor should have been in closer touch with the daily life of the community, including marriages, bridge parties and social life in general.

With the war coming near a victorious conclusion, at least on the military front, it was time to think of rebuilding the future:

. . . children have been saying all the time that their parents have failed to keep abreast of events, and the new things require a new approach . . . In most cases the children are right . . . We are living in one of the most significant and decisive periods of modern history, and what we do now may well shape the course of our whole life. This is why we must face the events in a clear-minded and straight way, without allowing any traditional, sentimental or hesitating words to interfere with our decisions . . .

It was an appeal to adolescents to pause and think carefully.

Freedom to follow your conscience and to shape your own life is what you must fight for. Your life has belonged to your parents for sixteen or eighteen years, but is going to belong to you for the next forty or fifty years. And the life you will live these next forty or fifty years will greatly depend on the decisions you make right now . . . Of course your parents say that they have lived long enough to know the world and tell you what to do, but they should not forget that the world of forty or fifty years ago has long ceased to exist and will never come back. It is your parents' duty to try to understand your times, just as much as it is your duty to try to understand theirs. The difference is that you have to understand their times in order to understand how your parents may have come to harbour certain ideas, while your parents have to understand your time — the present time — in order not to spoil your life. They must allow you to look forwards . . .

Remember that, if you act according to your free will, any mistakes you make are your mistakes, and the responsibility is entirely yours. There is no use in crying afterwards, and your parents would be wrong in trying hard to get you out of any trouble you may have led yourself into. Responsibility is not a mere word, and if you decide by yourself, you must live up to your responsibility . . . This world is changing fast. Once upon a time it was enough to do as you were told, and that alone made you a good child. It certainly did not make you a responsible human being or a progressive citizen . . . The young are in revolt and up in arms to conquer their own future. It is up to them to make a success of it.⁴⁰

The 'establishment' had a majority in the Council of Jewish Affairs, but had learnt something in those few years. The young were no longer overawed by authority but were constructive in their initiatives. Refugees had settled down with a varying degree of success, depending largely on their earlier trainings and adaptability.

The reality of a Jewish national home in Palestine was coming closer, and serious thought was addressed to its implications for Jews abroad:

... it is not surprising that the founder of political Zionism was a westernised Jew, actually an exponent of assimilationism until he saw that assimilation did not always work. Herzl, the former assimilationist, died as a nationalist, while his friends in Eastern Europe became more and more nationalist in outlook, and his own family on the contrary became totally assimilated.

The rise of nationalism among a people does not affect the children of that people abroad, as long as they are loyal to the country where they live. They will certainly develop a keen interest in the progress of nationalism among their brethren, but their own choice is made, and they owe no dual allegiance. As long as this fact is clear, fears seem out of place...

The great majority of Jews have their religion in common, although there are some slight ritual varieties... All Jews have a language in common — Hebrew — but with a large majority it is only a religious language... in Palestine it is a living language... Palestine is a new Jewish national home, where language, religion, customs and culture form an indissoluble bond... [The Jews] living in Palestine are undoubtedly a nation in the full meaning of the word.⁴¹

In 1945 there was also the problem of 'empty Australia'. The arid zone would always remain empty, but the level of population of the continent was dangerously low. Suggestions were made for better kindergarten and better school facilities for the children, but what about immigration?

Why do Australians often dislike immigrants?... [What should be done] is to encourage them to mix with the rest of the nation... Give them evening classes in English, Australian History and Geography, Civics. Examine their knowledge of English before naturalising them.

This is my proposal... If the Australian nation wants to acquire suitable immigrants, why does it not send... a person with a good knowledge of the local language, who could work with the assistance of the local Government. Let us call it an Australian Migration Officer... Upon having satisfied himself of the general appearance of the candidates, he could send them to a medical practitioner for full inspection. Then he should contact the local police for their report. If the candidate was still suitable, he would be given a provisional immigration certificate. Within two years, but if possible within six months, he should sit for an examination in English and the other subjects mentioned above. On passing the examination he would be given the landing permit... The Migration Officer should notify the Manpower Offices in Australia of the qualifications of the immigrant, so that upon his arrival he may be immediately useful to the community.⁴²

The minister for Immigration at Canberra (Mr. A. A. Calwell) 'read the article with great interest'; coincidence or not, it was very gratifying to see very similar procedures instituted when the great Australian immigration plan was put into operation.

My last note on the problems of youth in revolt [was] adversely criticised by two people... Well, as long as there are the fat and the thin, and 'the long and the short and the tall' in this world, there are likely to be differences among human beings, and as long as we do not slaughter or starve or otherwise persecute each other, these differences are welcome... To say that [two critics] do not constitute a significant sample is a technical expression, and does not mean that they are insignificant — this clarification may be necessary, seeing that so much that I say or write is eagerly misconstrued...

When I mentioned the need for a Jewish body free from religious or political ties, over two years ago, I was immediately outcast by the respectable leaders with respectable nationalist-conservative views, and a respectably imposing financial situation. I was charged with creating a split in the community, bickering, inciting the good people to entertain new and rebel views, etc. Not of course that anybody had the honesty of saying all this to me — I was taboo, and my name was never mentioned explicitly, too horrid for words I suppose. Now the new body with no political or religious ties has been created, it does some good work, and some of the past enemies are very active members of its Executive. So this organisation — I refer to the W.A. Council of Jewish Affairs — was not so bad after all. When the Maccabean Club was reborn last year, the very same conservative elements tried desperately to oppose it in every possible way.

But why on earth do the honourable conservatives, for whom we have the highest respect as long as they mind their own business, persist in this behaviour?... If the Perth Hebrew Congregation wanted to build a ten-storey synagogue I for one would say that it is their own business; if they wanted to acquire the services of ten Rabbis, it would be their own right. If the Free Loan Society decided to give £100 to every Jew with an upturned nose or with freckles, it would still be their own

business, although one might respectfully draw their attention to more urgent charities. But as soon as the W.A. Council of Jewish Affairs just wants to be born, which is the fate of every individual in this sad world, there goes an uproar that would frighten the lions of the zoo. The Maccabees begin their work anew, and there goes on a fight as bitter as the defence of the Temple against Titus.

The article I wrote

was what I thought, and what I still hope to think even when my own children will fight against me. But why should my children revolt against me if I will be their friend, with more experience because of age, but full of understanding for them, their times, and their needs? If I will treat them as equals . . . ? If I will make them express their ideas and opinions without any fear of punishment and repression as long as they treat me as a fellow human being?

'Honour thy father and thy mother' certainly does not mean to make their wrongs right . . . It means to rely on them and to trust them. But 'I freed thee from bondage' came long before, and it is freedom that will conquer.⁴³

At the end of the war in Europe I was too worried to write directly to my family: would there still be anyone alive? What might the address be? I wrote an inquiry to a friend in Venice, who forwarded the letter to Udine, and with immense relief I soon received a letter from mother, brother and the two sisters, all safe and relatively well. In September 1943 they had sought refuge in the Tuscan hills, then had been placed by a friendly priest in convents near Verona. Mother had scrubbed floors, Roberto survived dressed as a seminarist, one sister taught, including music, and the younger one helped with the housekeeping. A real miracle, and they also appreciated that they were sheltered as Jews, without ever hearing any hints of religion or conversion. Other Gentilli uncles, aunts and cousins had survived, helped in various ways, but an old great-aunt, her daughter and two grandchildren from Trieste disappeared, probably in the dreaded *Risiera*, the rice refinery near Trieste where the only exterminations in Italy were carried out. Another sad loss was that of father's cousin Vittorio Gentilli and his wife Norma, who were managing the old Jewish people's home in Venice: they had been warned to escape in time, but replied that their place was 'with their old folks' with whom they stayed through deportation and annihilation.

Uncle Nello Jona, who in September 1943 was still boarding in Udine, had been warned by the landlady that the Fascists had come looking for him, leaving word that they would have returned in the evening. I am sure that this was a way of giving him a chance, but he maintained that he had never harmed anyone and was not afraid. He was arrested and taken to our own house, which being empty had been taken over as the Gestapo headquarters. The family found the irons fixed to the wall of the basement, where he had been chained pending deportation. Uncle Beppi and family had been sheltered by Adriano Olivetti⁴⁴ in or near his typewriter factory at Ivrea, Piedmont, but as Nazi patrols began to comb the valley, they had to make for the Swiss border. Nothing more was heard of them. Uncle Berto instead had been very lucky, helped by an identity card supplied by friends, and surviving unscathed at Padova.

Cousin Mario Forti, from Venice, had been employed with the Italian tourist organisation, CIT, which transferred him to safety in its London office. When Italy declared war he began to broadcast in Italian for the BBC. He remained in London; his mother and sisters survived in Venice. Many wonderful episodes of help given cheerfully and spontaneously by the Italian population could — and should — fill volumes.

Vittorio, aunt Maria Morpurgo and cousin Tina had been deported from Split, Dalmatia, at first to Theresienstadt/Terezin, as a special concession to uncle Vittorio's good name as a historian, but the pretence lasted a short time — many inmates died there or were eventually sent to the extermination centres. The

younger cousins Beppi and Silvana joined the partisans and survived; they both married fellow fighters.

Roberto Almagià and Rabbi Israele Zolli were given refuge in the Vatican City, where the former continued his studies of old maps, and the latter eventually became a convert.

THE WAY CONTINUES AHEAD: 1945-...

After victory in Europe, June 1945:

At long last Perth is to have its European Relief Appeal. It is not an appeal like the many others we had in the past... Jews were singled out for complete annihilation, and we know how well the annihilation squads did their job... But while we mourn the dead, we must rescue those still alive, and there are some, perhaps many, who have miraculously survived... They were almost starved to death, but not quite. They were almost beaten to death, but not quite. Their souls and bodies hang together by some miracle...

Make up your mind to give a certain amount of money. Then close your eyes and see the mothers starving... the orphans wandering... the men who lost all their strength... — see them, feel them, in front of you. Double the amount you first thought of.

Think a little more. This appeal comes after the Americans and many other people have been giving for one, two or more years... Treble the amount, it is the only thing you can do... Feel that it hurts while you are giving, and then it might be enough...⁴⁵

My academic future was a pressing worry. The Carnegie Foundation had supported my employment by the University for 1940–43, and the Vice-Chancellor (Professor G. A. Currie, later Sir George Currie) used some of his research funds to finance my research in related fields during 1944–46, on condition that I continued the teaching of Statistical Methods and Economic Geography. At the end of 1946 the University established a lectureship in these subjects, within the Department of Economics, which was advertised as required by law. I was appointed, against several other applicants, as from the beginning of 1947. From then on we were extraordinarily busy because of the growing numbers of ex-servicemen who joined the classes through the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Training Scheme. It was a beautiful challenge; some of the students were older than myself, they were all strongly motivated, and among them I found real friends.

In the aftermath of the war and its enormous tragedies there was a real ferment of thoughts as people were trying to shape a better future. The *Maccabean* asked me to try to answer the question 'Is Jewish youth decadent?' a question which I deemed impossible to answer; I was told that in this particular case 'decadent' could be taken as meaning 'getting away from Jewish life' or something to that effect. If

the majority of those aged over 40 have come from abroad and the majority of those under 40 have been born here, we may expect a great difference between the environments in which these two generations have grown up.

The Eastern European environment... was to all intents and purposes one enormous ghetto. The very fact of living in a hostile environment tended to make the Jews crowd together as much as possible and support each other. Anyone who tried to leave the group was considered a traitor because he left his brethren while they still were in danger...

The Central European environment had been much more liberal, and it was quite easy to meet with Jews who had almost forgotten Judaism and its rituals. To the Jew who came from the East... German Jews were little short of renegades. To German Jews, Eastern European Jews were plainly medieval... [In Australia] the Central European Jew may have come back to Judaism because of the recent persecutions... but emancipation and assimilation had already gone too far in his environment...

The children themselves were born in Australia or came to Australia when very young. They practically ignore the 'herd instinct' and the 'fear complex' because they never felt them. They notice something different between their parents and the other people who were born and reared in a free society. Usually neither parents nor children are able to explain these psychological points. The result

is that the children would mix freely with any other youngsters, irrespective of religion or descent, but are often held back by the parents, who are afraid of their 'drifting away'. Hence the efforts of the parents to keep Jewish education, Jewish sport, Jewish dances going. The children usually feel that there is some justification for a course in Hebrew, Jewish History, Jewish Religion, but fail to see any reason for a specifically Jewish sport or dance, which plainly keeps out some of their best non-Jewish friends . . .

So I believe that Jewish youth is drifting away from Judaism, and would be drifting faster without the parental brake . . . Things are different now, and most Jewish fathers . . . don't say a word about religion except to quote several prohibitions and restrictions on the youth's activities, and then expect the youth to grow up with a religious fervour . . .

Secondly, religious differences matter much less at present. Religious principles are still there, but religious formalism is fast disappearing, and Jewish youth drifts away just as fast as the youth of any other creed. And if the trend is part of a general evolution, as I believe it is, no one can stop it. Jewish youth drifts away from spiritual ghettos; is this decadence? It drifts away from the small community and joins a greater national community; is this undesirable?⁴⁶

Needless to say, I was strongly attacked and accused of inventing the question, asking more questions 'of an insinuating kind that on the face of it cannot do anything else but harm to the young Jewish boys and girls of our community.' I was even pointed out 'as one who is ashamed of [my] Jewish faith, and yet [I] must be the first to admit that it is [my] Jewish . . . ancestry which has placed [me] in the high educational position [I] now hold.' The critic agreed that he had 'not endeavoured to write about the subject of the article itself and . . . might be justly blamed for making a personal attack upon its author.' At the same time, he did not think 'Dr. Gentilli ever intended to answer his question but only used it as a medium for throwing mud in an endeavour most probably to substantiate the line he has taken in ostracising himself from the Jewish community and in affording himself an excuse to hide his own shame.'⁴⁷

My reply was straight and direct, and of course not personal.

My questions were on the following line: is the abandonment of orthodox traditions a decadence in itself, and is it desirable? The questions were not insinuating, they were plain and clear. The trouble was that [the critic] did not like them. And I am the first to admit and support [his] right not to like them and say so, but I think that when he says that my questions can only do harm to the young Jewish boys and girls he should prove his statement. And by this I mean that he should offer clear and reasonable arguments in favour of his view, instead of a passionate flight without the backing of logic.

Many a time, and in Jewish history especially so, self-control and renunciation have led further than heroic rigidity. And, besides, any group of people is a motley in some way or other . . . Unless I am dangerously mistaken, mankind is slowly evolving . . . and human groups tend to broaden their membership and their views . . . I share the view that fight against a hostile environment contributes to a better selection and survival of the fittest, but . . . if one cared for such a way of improving the stock, one should then think that ghettos and concentration camps have fulfilled a useful function . . . I certainly do not think so myself.

I must point out that faith and ancestry are entirely distinct. If by 'Jewish faith' [the critic] means 'orthodox Jewish religious beliefs' then I hasten to say that I never held any, and never was ashamed one way or the other about this matter. That I may have inherited some quality or other through a very active and painful process of selection among my ancestors . . . I think so myself . . . The fact remains that I am not ashamed of anything in my ancestry for the very good reason that the whole of it was and is and always will be outside my control. For the same reason, I fail to see why I should be proud of it. It is just an accident that I happened to be born at a given time and place; and the combination of so many infinitely small inherited traits which make up my personality is also due to so many factors outside my control.

If it is true that we Jews have some special ability which we inherited from our ancestors, and if we are convinced that this ability is good, it seems to me that we should share it as widely as possible with our non-Jewish friends through exchange of views, through friendship, through marriage. Selfishness is sin in a race — or people, or whatever we are — just as much as it is in an individual.

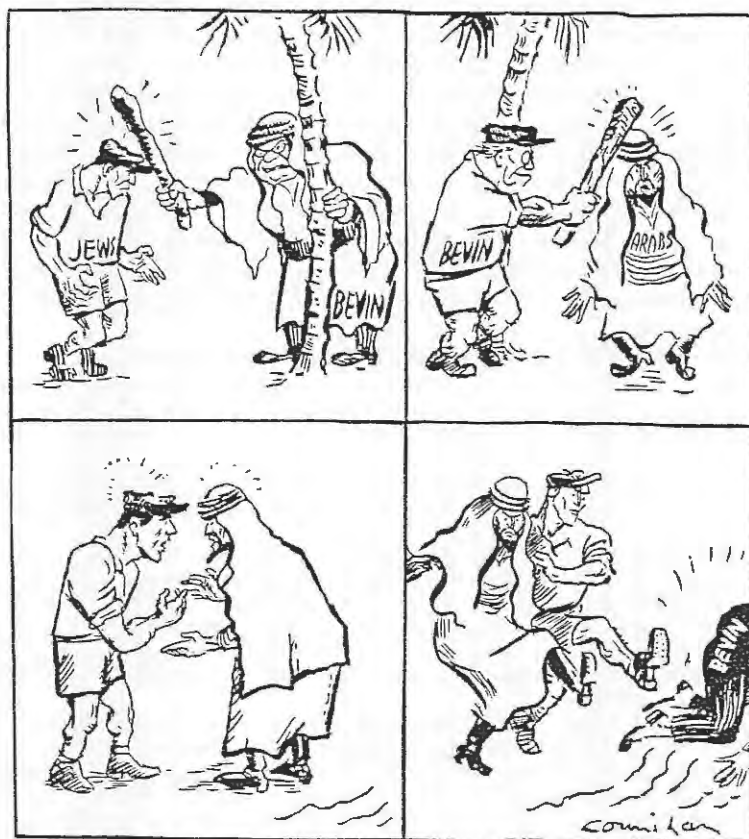
For [the critic], marrying or not marrying 'out' is a question of 'right and wrong'. Well, it is not for me. There is nothing wrong in concluding a happy marriage 'out' and there is a long wrong in concluding a rotten marriage 'in'.



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A JEWISH MONTHLY..

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PROGRAM FOR PALESTINE

Front page of an issue of the Voice co-edited by Joseph Gentilli and Isaac Gust. The cartoonist was Noel Counihan. (Courtesy Isi Leibler.)

I may remind [him] of the story of a little man named Adolf who also believed in racial inherited superiority, and carried it to its most logical extreme. And [the critic's] superior descent was very inferior according to Adolf. Which may at least prove that superior and inferior depend on the point of view. And civilised persons condemned Adolf because of the inhuman intransigence of his beliefs...⁴⁸

The subject of assimilation was still fascinating and, in my view, seen with undue pessimism.

If we take a dispassionate view... we see that whenever a culture is assimilated, the process works both ways, and the assimilating culture is enriched as well... Our specific problem is that of Jewish assimilation. The conflict is between the Jews that do not care and those that do care. The Jews that do not care just let assimilation work its way gradually and naturally, while those that do care resist the process with all their might. To state that those that let assimilation take its course do so because of cowardice or because of material advantage may be true in individual cases, but is certainly untrue for the majority.

Assimilation is not a disgrace unless we make it so. There is no such thing as a disgrace at all: it is only convention that makes this or that fact or act a disgrace. It is our own limitations that make the baptism of a Jewish friend or the circumcision of a Christian friend a disgrace for his former co-religionists and a motive for rejoicing for his new ones... I am not in favour of light-hearted conversion in any field, but I do think that any convert should be respected if he changed his mind honestly and truthfully. Far from being a disgrace, it is a warning to his old associates that there may be something wrong with their beliefs, because here is a person at least who thinks they should be abandoned. And if he was worth listening to when he belonged to the fold, he should be worth taking notice of when he had left it...

... assimilation should take place as a natural process and not be forced or imposed. For instance, to leave one's faith because of a mixed marriage would not be justified...

There is no doubt that life is much easier for the non-assimilationists. Their culture follows one well-set pattern, their family lives are well moulded by tradition and parental care, and there is little danger of religious disagreements in the family. On the other hand, the assimilationists have a wider horizon, the benefit of a many-sided culture, and if they face mixed marriage they do so when they feel justified in braving the many difficulties...⁴⁹

In 1947, the United Nations' Organisation decided to create a Jewish State in Palestine.

It is amazing indeed that a nation could build a State after two thousand years of uprooted existence... Jews who are citizens of another State will not be affected at all. They will follow with great interest and sympathy the growth and development of the new State... It would be unnatural if this interest and sympathy did not exist... They may have friends and relatives in the new State, and it is only natural that they may help them if help they need.

Jews who hail from the new State and travel abroad will be aliens subject to all the possible restrictions that may be imposed upon them, but at the same time they will enjoy full consular and diplomatic protection...

In the event of a discriminatory law... against Jews in any country, the new Jewish State will be able to protest through the ordinary diplomatic channels... Had there been a Jewish State in existence in 1939 it could have organised a wholesale exodus of Jews from Germany... Had this Jewish State existed during the war there would have been no *Patria* and no *Struma*, no deportations to Cyprus and to Mauritius...

Enormous difficulties arise when the actual existence of the Jewish State is considered against the varied and colourful background of the Middle East. Millions of Moslems have opposed the birth of the new State; will they ever accept it?...

... The flow of funds from American Jews is likely to increase, that from British Jews to decrease because of exchange controls when Palestine leaves the British currency area. The new State will immediately face an enormous immigration — relatively to its size...

The immediate conclusion is that there should be no fear among any Jews anywhere; the new Jewish State brings relief to millions of homeless people, and the only regret is that it could not come into existence much earlier. To Jews in other countries and with a home of their own, it is a welcome creation of great humanitarian value, politically very risky, economically every uncertain, a lively child of our century nevertheless, to whom it is only fair to wish good luck and godspeed.⁵⁰

The foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 was a millennial milestone, which unfortunately had a stormy start.

The background of the Palestine situation has evolved within the framework of the British mandate. It is most likely correct to say that Britain was in Palestine because of Imperial policy. It is also most likely correct to say that Britain was in Palestine out of humanitarian and religious idealism. And it is most likely correct to say that Britain was in Palestine out of sincere sympathy with the Zionist cause . . . There has been a tendency in some circles to oversimplify British motives, and this tendency is to be deplored because it has led to many rash statements and many unjust accusations. Human motives are highly complex, and the motives of the whole Government of a Great Power with centuries-old traditions of world diplomacy are likely to be even more complex . . .

It is of course true that British policy, while helping the Jews in Palestine, refrained from making enemies of the Arabs. This fact again cannot be used against Britain when judging her Palestinian policy . . . The situation in the Middle East is exceedingly complex . . . and it would have been unjustified for Britain or any other power to favour one side alone and always . . . And any fair-minded person must admit that the Arabs had some reasons for being perturbed by what went on . . . From suspicion to hostility is an easy step, especially in the emotional atmosphere of the Mediterranean and the Middle East . . .

. . . Britain enforced the White Paper, which contained a restrictive interpretation of the mandate, against the will of the mandating body, to wit the League of Nations . . . The official enforcement of the White Paper's clauses . . . was inhuman . . . the exclusion of harmless and defenceless refugees on the ground that they had arrived against the provisions of the White Paper was entirely illegal in international law.

It is true that Britain was in Palestine as a mandatory of the League of Nations, but would the League of Nations ever have considered a Palestinian mandate at all without Britain's intercession and recommendation? . . . There were unequivocal statements from Labour leaders which made everyone expect that the White Paper would be recalled as soon as possible, and yet when Labour went to power nothing happened . . .

British colonial history shows that wherever the natives have fought back and fought hard, if they failed to be exterminated in the fight, they won some fundamental rights . . . It was worth trying, in Palestine, for people that had nothing to lose. It was tried, and [Irgun] terrorism ensued. If the immediate aim of terrorism was the end of the British mandate, it may be said that terrorism has succeeded . . .

It is in this atmosphere of hatred that the new Jewish State comes into being. It will have to fight for its very existence, backed by a weak international authority . . . Out of the present crisis, the great work of building a nation will go on, and it is hoped that the future will see a friendly co-operation and a restoration of that traditional good feeling among nations, which did so much good in the past.⁵¹

Some of my relatives began a new life in Israel, be it as the start of a happy new family life or the beginning of a new vocational career. The majority of those who had escaped the horrors of war with the help of non-Jewish Italian friends found it natural to resume and continue their normal lives in Italy. Those who had sought refuge in the more progressive foreign countries remained loyal to their new homes. Thus the cousins from Brazil found the country congenial and did not return; the two doctors, Mario Gentilli from Argentina and Nino Dalla Torre from Western Australia, were happy to return to their positions in Italy. Nino Dalla Torre's older son, after graduating in Engineering in Italy, went to live in Israel, and so did other cousins.

Here in Western Australia, the seeds of freedom and progressiveness had been sown, and one of the most significant results was the foundation of a Perth Liberal Jewish group at the beginning of the 1950s. It was a development which was natural and to be expected, and should have been welcomed because it kept attached to Judaism or even attracted back to it many people who had never known or could not follow orthodoxy.⁵²

I was asked to describe what a good Jewish paper in Australia should be like.

The function of a paper should be to inform readers and to lead them to further enlightenment . . . Many papers today place financial considerations first, and try to please the widest possible section of the public. As a result of this policy many papers tend to follow the public instead of leading it, and thus contribute to the deterioration in standards which is so noticeable in the so-called popular press.

Is one, then, to assume that a paper which preserves high standards will necessarily be unpopular? In some respects, yes. A paper of high standards cannot achieve wide circulation until it becomes widely appreciated. At first, a paper of high standard will find it difficult to carry on . . .

The paper should then lead public opinion. This means that it must be outspoken, even when some of its articles are likely to hurt. High standards of morality and style must be carefully maintained, but otherwise contributors should feel perfectly free to express their views. The editor must not become a censor.

The editor's task should, in the main, be the putting together of a well-balanced paper, likely to appeal to different sections of the public without yielding to false popularity and bad taste. Aesthetic values should be carefully enhanced by using suitable types and pictures. A beautiful printing type costs the same as an ugly one . . . The paper must set out with the intention of lasting for ever . . . A monthly or a quarterly must appeal to the reader in such a way as to invite him to keep it for much longer than a month or a quarter. This may be achieved by using good paper, if possible, and good pictures. It will also be achieved by publishing articles of a lasting value. No gossip, travel talk, flash news, tabloids — they are all bound to die as soon as they are born. They may catch the eye of a few readers once or twice, but they do not add to the value of the paper. If they have to be published, they should be confined to a fixed corner, as undesirable guests that should not mix.

Every important section of the paper should have its permanent place, and its permanent type setting . . . This tidy arrangement is not meant to last for ever, because every year or so it should be varied a little, and improved upon. But for each volume of the paper — for I think the pages should be numbered right through for the whole year, so that the year's volume may be preserved — the main arrangement should be fixed.

Jewish life is rich in value, spiritual and worldly alike. It should be the task of a good paper to make these values known. For instance, no good history of the development and significance of religious festivals has been published in any of our papers for any length of time. This is an excellent field, provided the articles are written by responsible authorities and are reasonably uniform so as to be comparable with each other. The past and present history of Jewish communities abroad should be publicised. The lives of great Jewish men should be retold, not by copying hurriedly from this or that encyclopaedia, but by asking a good writer to compile a good article after some research. Literary and linguistic values of Yiddish and Hebrew could be studied and made known.

All this means that the planning of each issue is a major task, and has to be done months ahead. The editor needs courage and leadership, and he also needs a band of enthusiastic followers. Will they be available?⁵³

Thus ends my contribution to the Australian Jewish press, on a constructive note and with a query. The very fact that so many different and mostly short-lived periodicals have come and gone in these very few years is open to different interpretations; my own interpretation is rather pessimistic, because the underlying factor may be a great communal apathy which at length discourages the few public-minded creative innovators.

In a brief review of the lives of Italian Jewish refugees in Australia,⁵⁴ I outlined the Australian careers of those I could trace, including myself, and see no point in repeating the topic here. Perhaps a simple list of recognitions by those I have worked with may wind up these observations — it reflects the way other people have observed what I did:

Bronze medallion from the Alliance Française, of which I was secretary for many years.

Honorary life memberships of the Dante Alighieri Society of Western Australia (of which I was secretary or president for many years), of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club (which I incorporated while president in 1951–52, and to which I gave lectures and research papers for the *Western Australian Naturalist*), of the Institute of Australian Geographers.

Medallion of the Premio Epifania, for contributions to science in Friuli.

Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, for contributions to science.

Institution of the Joseph Gentili prize for the best student in second-year Geography at the University of Western Australia, funded by public subscriptions from hundreds of my ex-students.

Conferment of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science by the University of Western Australia, and appointment as Honorary Research Fellow (still current).

NOTES

1. Luzzatto, F., 1964. *Cronache storiche della Università degli Ebrei di San Daniele del Friuli*. La Rassegna Mensile di Israel, Roma. Pp. 74 and 143.
2. Del Bianco Crottozzi, M., 1983. *La comunità ebraica di Gradisca d'Isonzo*. Del Bianco, Udine. Note on p. 79.
3. Luzzatto, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–60, reproduces the text of earlier concessions allowing Jews to live and practise banking and moneylending at San Daniele del Friuli already in 1588 and more formally from 1626 onwards. On receipt of an application from the *Università degli Ebrei* (the local Jewish Council) the *Comunità* (Town Council) of San Daniele del Friuli made its recommendation to the Patriarch of Venice.
4. Del Bianco, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79.
5. Luzzatto, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
6. Patriarca, E., 1958. Ebrei a San Daniele del Friuli durante il Principato Civile dei Patriarcati d'Aquileia. Part 3 in: Paschini, P. and others, *San Daniele del Friuli nella Storia e nell'Arte*, Comune di San Daniele del Friuli, S. Daniele del Friuli. P. 40.
7. Patriarca, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–45.
8. Luzzatto, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
9. Luzzatto, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
10. Luzzatto, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
11. Luzzatto, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–136.
12. Luzzatto, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
13. I found it, written and signed by him, on the fly leaf of one of the family's prayer books now kept by my brother Roberto at Udine, Italy.
14. Fortis, U. and Zolli, P., 1979. *La parlata giudeo-veneziana*. Carucci, Assisi and Roma. Pp. 399–400.
15. Fortis and Zolli, *op. cit.*, pp. 319–322, devote much space to *negro*, this typically Spanish Sephardi word so rich in shades of meaning. It was used so often on the Jona side of the family that once, at 13 or 14, totally unaware of its origin, I puzzled the family doctor by using it, believing that it was a good old Venetian word. After he had left, mother told me it was improper to use Jewish parlance words with non-Jews.
16. Many examples of very personal usage of both *negro* and *negrigura* are quoted by Natalie Ginzburg in her charming *Lessico familiare* (Einaudi, Torino 1963 and Mondadori, Milano, 1971), pp. 5–6. I have not found the terms among the many Italian Hebrew ones mentioned in Primo Levi's *The Periodic Table* (Einaudi, Torino 1975, English translation published by Michael Joseph, London 1985), probably because of the absence of earlier Spanish connections in that part of Italy.
17. This expression, which I heard many times, does not appear in Fortis and Zolli's work, and yet I would say that it was quite typical of Judeo-Venetian.
18. Fortis and Zolli, *op. cit.*, pp. 303–304. I never heard the term *minianista* which they quote as typically Judeo-Venetian for the boy in the ceremony.
19. Tucci, G., 1924. *Apologia del Taoismo*. Formigini, Roma.
20. See examples in Gentili, J., 1983, *Italian Roots in Australian Soil*, Italo-Australian Welfare Centre, Marangaroo WA, p. 94.
21. *Il Regime Fascista* of 25 June 1938 [author's translation].
22. Gentili, J., 1941a. *Atlas of Western Australian Agriculture*. University Bookshop, Perth WA.
23. Gentili, J., 1941b, 'Australian Jewry — A statistical study', *Westralian Judean*, January 1941, pp. 4–7. Colin Clark, then Director of the Bureau of Industry in Queensland, found the paper 'extraordinarily interesting'.
24. Gentili, J., 1941c, 'The spirit of Bar-Kochbah', *Westralian Judean*, March 1941, pp. 3–4.
25. Gentili, J., 1941d. 'Assimilation', *Westralian Judean*, May 1941, pp. 3–8.
26. Gentili, J., 1941e, 'The Twilight of Australian Jewry', *Australian Jewish Forum*, March-June 1941, 19 pp. [reprint].
27. Gentili, J., 1941f, 'Do we know ourselves?', *Australian Jewish Forum*, Aug.–Sept. 1941, pp. 18–23. This statistical study was further expanded to cover earlier years and later published in the *Second Australian-Jewish Almanac* (Sydney 1944?), pp. 113–144 in Yiddish translation.
28. Gentili, J., 1941g, 'The World Jewish Congress', *Westralian Judean*, October 1941, pp. 4–6.
29. [Gentili, J.J. 1941h. Introspection — Now. [Editorial]. *Westralian Judean*, December 1941, pp. 1–2.
30. [Gentili, J.J. 1942a. War in the Pacific. *Westralian Judean*, January 1942, p. 4.
31. Gentili, J., 1942b, 'Wandering and Wondering', *Australian Jewish Forum*, Jan-Feb 1942, pp. 23–27. It is worth recalling that in the old days in Perth Jews used to live within a small area, and 'the synagogue was at the core of the area and all homes were within easy walking distance of this main religious symbol.' (R.S. Hill, 'A social geography of Perth Jewry', unpublished B.A.(Hons.) thesis,

- Department of Geography, University of Western Australia, p. 35. The desire for better housing and neighbourhood and the advent of the motor car caused a gradual but fairly rapid northward shift (Hill, *loc.cit.*, pp. 37 ff.).
32. Gentilli, J., 1942c, 'Federation', *Westralian Judean*, April 1942, pp. 4-5.
 33. Gentilli, J., 1942d. Towards Democratic Jewish Communities in Australia. *Westralian Judean*, June 1942, pp. 3-5. A history of the gradual development of similar ideas in Perth was recently written by N. Zusman: 'The W.A. Council of Jewish Affairs — A milestone in the history of W.A. Jewry', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, (Sydney), 1988, pp. 151-158.
 34. Gentilli, J., 1942e, 'Jewish problems', *Westralian Judean*, September 1942, pp. 40-45.
 35. Gentilli, J., 1942f, 'Refugees', *Westralian Judean*, October 1942, pp. 3-5. The article was reprinted in full in the *Australian Jewish News* of 9 October 1942.
 36. [Gentilli, J.], 1942g, 'For a Jewish Democratic Community', *Westralian Judean*, December 1942, pp. 4-5.
 37. Much has been written on the fate of European Jews under Nazism: I found Martin Gilbert's *Atlas of the Holocaust* (Michael Joseph, London 1982) a most chilling and informative document on those infamous years.
 38. Gentilli, J., 1943, 'W.A. Jewish Board', *Westralian Judean*, July 1943, pp. 5-6. See also Zusman, *op. cit.*
 39. Zusman, N., 1988, *op. cit.*
 40. Gentilli, J., 1945a, 'Youth in Revolt', *Maccabean*, January 1945, pp. 9-10.
 41. Gentilli, J., 1945b, 'Jewish nationality', *Westralian Judean*, April 1945, p. 7.
 42. Gentilli, J., 1945c, 'The Unwanted Alien', *The West Australian*, 14 April 1945, p. 3.
 43. Gentilli, J., 1945d, 'In revolt but not revolting', *Maccabean*, May 1945, pp. 8-9.
 44. The appearance and character of Adriano Olivetti come through beautifully in the book by Natalie Ginzburg, *Lessico famigliare* (Einaudi, Torino, 1963 and Mondadori, Milano, 1971), pp. 63-65 and 156-158.
 45. [Gentilli, J.], 1945e, 'Don't let them die [Editorial]', *Westralian Judean*, June 1945, pp. 1-2.
 46. Gentilli, J., 1946, 'Is Jewish youth decadent?', *Maccabean*, November 1946, pp. 6-7.
 47. Cass, J., 1946, 'The question that didn't get answered', *Maccabean*, December 1946, p. 21. I had already forgotten Jack Cass's criticism, and was deeply shocked when less than two years later he met with a fatal accident at the Mt. Lawley subway while riding a bicycle on the way to deliver an urgently needed medicine to a patient.
 48. Gentilli, J., 1947a, 'Inheritance and pride', *Maccabean*, January 1947, pp. 6-7.
 49. Gentilli, J., 1947b, 'Assimilation', *Maccabean*, April 1947, pp. 13-14.
 50. Gentilli, J., 1947c, 'The new Jewish State — some passing thoughts', *Australian Jewish Outlook*, December 1947, p. 19.
 51. Gentilli, J., 1948a, 'Palestine — An appraisal', *Westralian Judean*, April 1948, pp. 7-8.
 52. I was not involved in this development, but I followed it through my friendship with Dr. Ronald Taft, a colleague at the University and a founder of the Liberal Movement in Perth, and other friends among the refugees from Austria and Germany with whom I had shared the dark hours of the war. The sequence of events and the very unfriendly and obstructive behaviour of the Perth Hebrew Congregation are well recorded by Eric Silbert in his *Dinkum Mishpochah*, Artlook Books, Perth 1981, pp. 222-239.
 53. Gentilli, J., 1948b, 'The Jewish paper I should like to see', *Unity*, May 1948.
 54. Gentilli, J., 1989, 'Italian Jewish refugees in Australia', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* (Sydney), Vol. X Part 5, pp. 420-441. A shorter version was included in Gentilli, J., *Italian Roots in Australian Soil*, *cit.*, pp. 95-96.