

CHAPTER FOUR

NEWMAN'S SECOND TERM 1957-1967

During the period of Gerald de Vahl Davis' illness, Horace Newman was acting president and, following Davis' resignation, he officially resumed the presidency in May 1957. At that time he promised to 'do his utmost to serve Jewry in Australia and wherever else his influence may lie'.¹ His second term was to last a decade when he continued to devote himself to the needs of the community. Most of the problems and issues, especially relating to constitutional matters and standing orders, which had created so much controversy during his first term had been resolved, so that in this period the Board was able to consolidate its work in the major areas of anti-defamation and public relations, overseas Jewry, co-ordination of communal activities, and education.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE EVOLUTION OF SYDNEY JEWRY

In the second half of the 1950s the government's discriminatory policy² towards Jewish migration came to an end. By the time of the Hungarian Revolution in late 1956 there was little sign of any discrimination in Australia against Hungarian Jews. The Hungarian escapees arrived in Vienna where various organisations, including the Jewish Agency, prepared for their resettlement. The November 1956 Board meeting was informed that the situation of these Jewish refugees from Hungary was 'causing grave concern'³ and that every effort was being made to assist them. While world Jewish policy was to encourage all escapees to settle in Israel, many preferred to settle in the West, including Australia. The Australian government initially agreed to accept 5,000 of the 150,000 Hungarian escapees located in Vienna by January 1957. Sydney Einfeld, who was about to go overseas to attend a Claims Conference meeting, was accredited by the Department of Immigration to the Australian Mission in Vienna to consult in regard to the Hungarian Jewish refugees.³ In January 1957 Einfeld, together with Walter Brand, spent a week in Vienna where he found the Australian migration officials most co-operative. Working in conjunction with the American Joint Distribution Committee, the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) and Australian immigration officials he went to meet the thousand or so refugees crossing the border every night. Later he assisted in the selection of suitable Jewish applicants for Australia and in the processing of their visas.⁵

One of the first ships with 800 Hungarian refugees on board (about 300 of them Jewish) to arrive in Australia was the *Fairsea*. The International Committee for European Migration officer on the ship, Kathleen Pulciani, claimed that some of the Hungarian Jews on board 'had large sums of money (and)... were richly dressed' and that this resulted in tensions due to envy between the Hungarian Jews and non-Jews.⁶ This report was published in the *West Australian Daily News*⁷ but the allegations of Jewish wealth were denied in a subsequent article based on information supplied by Rabbi L. Rubin-Zacks.⁸ These allegations of Jewish wealth did not spread or affect the government's policy as occurred previously.⁹

By the end of July 1957 1,750 Hungarian Jewish refugees had arrived, 1,050 settling in Sydney, 650 in Melbourne and the rest going to the smaller Jewish communities. A further 400-500 had their visas approved in Vienna. Out of a total of 9,000 Hungarian escapees who arrived in Australia in 1957 the number of Jews was over 2,000, close to 25 per cent. For 1958 the government agreed to a further 5,000 Hungarian visas and 800 of these were Hungarian Jews.¹⁰ The large number of Hungarian refugees meant that there were too many for the Australian Jewish Welfare Society hostels and some were initially sent to Commonwealth migration centres such as Bonegilla, although they did not remain there long. Orthodox Jews were even supplied with *kosher* food by the Department of Immigration during their stay at Bonegilla,¹¹ while those in government hostels near Sydney were to be visited daily by at least one rabbi.¹²

The Hungarian saga indicated a complete change in departmental policy towards Jewish refugee migration. A large percentage of migrants were Jewish and there was close co-operation between Einfeld and the Department, with the Welfare Societies taking over the task of assisting with accommodation and employment for the Jewish Hungarian refugees. As a result the Hungarian migration of 1957 and 1958 was not 'a repetition of the International Refugee Organisation story'¹³ when Jews were almost totally excluded from that program, a fear expressed by the Welfare Society in Sydney.

During the 1956 Suez crisis, Egyptian Jews who sought to migrate to Australia experienced a different situation and they faced many problems which were discussed by the Board's executive.¹⁴ In 1956 some were admitted through family reunion on humanitarian grounds and many settled in Adelaide as a result of chain migration and the assistance of Rev. and Mrs Abram Berman. Negotiations through the ECAJ under Sydney D. Einfeld's presidency in 1957 together with the support of a South Australian federal parliamentarian, P. Galvin, resulted in some more concessions for Egyptian Jews in March 1957. The Minister, Athol Townley, agreed to the admission of relatives from Egypt on humanitarian grounds provided they could reach a country outside Egypt to be seen by an Australian overseas post as there was no Australian immigration office in Egypt at that time.¹⁵

The late 1950s also witnessed a revival of Polish/Russian migration to Australia. In 1957 Polish Jews living in Russia were forced to return to Poland. Poland did not wish to accept these repatriates, many of whom were allowed to migrate to Israel. By February 1957 a thousand Jews a week were leaving Poland for Israel and later in 1957 the Joint Distribution Committee opened offices in Poland to facilitate this migration.¹⁶ Given this situation the Immigration Minister, Athol Townley, and head of the Department, Tasman Heyes, agreed that relatives from Poland could be nominated for admission to Australia but the Federation of the AJWS could not sponsor Polish Jews.¹⁷ Before Einfeld departed for the 1958 Claims Conference meeting in December 1957 he was allocated permits for twelve Polish Jewish families on behalf of the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies. Heyes desired Einfeld to select these families in person, but he found he was unable to include a trip to Poland within his time constraints. Australia House, London, agreed that H. Trobe, executive director of United HIAS, could go to Poland instead of Einfeld who believed that 'every facility was given to Trobe'.¹⁸ The twelve

families selected were processed afterwards in London at Australia House. On his return in February 1958 Einfeld addressed a special meeting of the Board and expressed his gratitude to the Department of Immigration, stressing that 'Australia was the only country in the free world which had agreed to accept Jewish migrants from Poland in large numbers'.¹⁹ In March 1959 further steps were taken by Einfeld, Fink and Lippmann to facilitate migration of Jews from Poland and also Rumania, the majority of these Jews settling in Melbourne.²⁰

In 1960 the Board became aware of the problems facing South African Jews. A new group of immigrants who left South Africa largely for ideological reasons after the Sharpeville riots of 1960 began to arrive on Australian shores. There was much debate within the Board as to how the community should react to the Sharpeville riots. Syd Einfeld, acting president at the time, advised that:

...while the situation was deeply deplored, it was not a matter affecting the Jewish people particularly, and the Jewish authorities in South Africa and other parts of the Commonwealth were unanimous in their advice to their respective communities in this direction. However, as citizens of Sydney, members of the Jewish community would no doubt participate in the Protest Meeting called by the Lord Mayor, at which Rabbi Dr I. Porush [would] sit on the platform, thus indicating that the Jewish community as a whole is represented.²¹

This wave of new arrivals from South Africa faced a number of problems resulting from the downturn of the economy in 1961 and the subsequent problems of unemployment. As a result, the Board decided to establish a Communal Integration Committee, chaired by Bernard Ferster, to assist newcomers from South Africa and also from Russia. This new committee sought to complement the work of the AJWS.²²

As a result of the arrival of the postwar migrants, supplemented by further waves of newcomers, the community continued to develop. As new congregations and other organisations were formed, they sought to join the Board. By 1970, 25 years after its foundation, the number of organisations affiliated with the Board had almost doubled from 23 to 38. These new organisations reflected the growing diversity of the community as well as its geographical spread.²³

There was some controversy surrounding the application of the Eastern Jewish Association for membership of the Board. When the Eastern Jewish Association applied for membership in June 1961, its application was opposed by the New South Wales Association of Sephardim on the basis that it was a 'breakaway group' and 'merely duplicated the functions' of the Sephardi Association so that its activities did not serve the best interests of the community.²⁴ At the August 1961 meeting, a resolution was passed that the Board create a special conciliation committee 'to bring the two organisations together to a round table conference'²⁵. This attempt at reconciliation failed as the Eastern Jewish Association refused to attend the meeting. The matter of affiliation was raised again in November 1961 when Max Friedman moved that the Eastern Jewish Association be admitted. After further debate, this motion was put with the required two-thirds majority supporting it. In this case, the antagonism between two groups within the community impacted for a short period

on the Board, but the majority decision prevailed, even though the Sephardi Association abstained during the actual vote.

The Board continued to be cooperate with the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ). The ECAJ represented the community on the key issues of immigration and restitution which continued to be an important issue for Australian Jewry in the 1960s. At the August 1960 plenum a resolution was passed requesting the ECAJ to take up the cause of Polish Jews whose property was confiscated at the end of World War II, and the following month a similar resolution in regard to Czech Jewry was introduced by Dr Hanns Wachtell and passed. In May 1962 Albert Halm raised the issue of 'heirless property' in Swiss banks and proposed that the ECAJ should make representation for Australian Jewry to receive a share of the fund established by a Swiss Act of Parliament.

The ECAJ was also an important spokesperson in relation to crises in Israel and the Board also sought to initiate action in this regard. After the Suez crisis of 1956 the ECAJ sent a resolution to Eisenhower requesting that Israeli ships be granted free passage through the Suez Canal; that Eilat be kept open through placing the Straits of Tiran either under Israeli or international control; and that the Sinai be occupied by United Nations forces until a settlement was reached. In 1958 the Board passed a series of resolutions in relation to Egypt's development of atomic weapons, and requested the ECAJ to take up this issue, while in 1964 the Arab boycott was discussed, as well as concern being expressed with the Qantas decision to locate its Middle East office in Teheran rather than Tel Aviv. Qantas denied that it was influenced in this decision by the Arab boycott.

These broader issues, as well as matters affecting the local community, were dealt with on a regular basis by the annual conferences of the ECAJ. Conference resolutions were drafted by the various Boards of Deputies; the New South Wales Board was always involved in this process, as well as sending its elected ECAJ councillors. There was some constitutional debate as to how to fill a vacancy in the ECAJ contingent when an elected councillor was unable to attend at the last minute. In all, the Board and the ECAJ continued to be effective representatives of Australian Jewry, although there were conflicts and tensions, the most significant of which was over Senator Sam Cohen's position on Soviet Jewry which will be discussed later in this chapter.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOARD'S REGULAR ACTIVITIES

In the period from 1956 the Board continued its regular activities such as the annual communal *Seder*, a solemn commemoration for the destruction of European Jewry, and an annual cocktail party in conjunction with the State Zionist Council (SZC) to celebrate Israel's Independence Day. Special functions were organised to greet leading Jewish visitors to Sydney, and key local and overseas speakers were invited to address the plenum. The Board also continued its endeavours to co-ordinate all local appeals, both for Israel and for local causes. Day to day work was managed by the various sub-committees and further constitutional amendments and regular elections ensured that the Board continued to function as a democratic organisation, meeting the needs of the community.

One of the major activities of the Board was, and continues to be the commemoration of the destruction of European Jewry. After 1943 this began as a commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and in the late 1950s was still run on this basis. The program was organised by a sub-committee from the Overseas Jewry Committee. For many years, A. A. Port was in charge. With so many pre and post-war migrants, the seriousness of this commemoration was especially important to the community. In March 1957 the Board executive discussed ways of implementing the ECAJ resolution that people be asked to refrain from arranging public functions and entertainment on the day of the commemoration and they decided to place an advertisement in the Jewish press.²⁶

By the end of the 1950s, it was felt that the Warsaw Ghetto commemorations should have a broader focus. At the plenum meeting of April 1959, it was suggested that the commemoration be replaced by a memorial service for all the six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust. It was felt that this approach would attract more people and that the function could be held in a larger hall. The executive decided to accept this suggestion and renamed the annual commemoration as the 'Solemn Memorial Day'.

The first function held on this basis took place in April 1960. In 1964 the Solemn Memorial Evening attracted over 1200 people to hear an address by Senator Sam Cohen. This commemoration was held at the Town Hall, but was marred by Nazi stickers being put on cars parked near the Town Hall. These stickers had been imported from England and read: 'In the Memory of British Victims of the Jewish War of Revenge, 1939 - 1945. Never again must the British go to war on behalf of the Jews. NATIONAL SOCIALIST MOVEMENT'. Other stickers from the United States read 'Hitler was Right'. The matter was investigated by the police who suspected a man called Pope who had recently moved from Brisbane to Sydney, but no charges were laid.²⁷ At the April plenum, it was suggested that the Solemn Memorial Evening should be held at a Jewish location to avoid a repetition of such antisemitism. Special publications such as Hyam Brezniak's *Voice of the Ghetto* and Isi Leibler's pamphlet on Soviet Jewry were also especially printed and either sold or distributed at these evenings. For example, in 1963, 2000 copies of *Voice of the Ghetto* were printed for distribution.²⁸

Another regular function is the cocktail party jointly sponsored with the SZC (or the ECAJ and ZFA) for *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, Israeli Independence Day. Key leaders within the general community in politics, business and all areas of the arts are invited to attend and this annual activity is considered to be of great public relations value. In 1961 the Israeli consul-general, Haim Raphael, suggested holding a diplomatic function instead, but it was felt that the 'public relations value of cocktail parties previously arranged by the Board of Deputies and the ECAJ was such that the continuation of this effort was warranted, provided a suitable agreement could be made with the consul'.²⁹

Throughout this period the annual communal Seders continued to be held. Harry Goldstein was in charge for some years and, after the opening of Central Synagogue in 1960, they were held at the Goodman Hall. In 1959, 156 people attended the seder which was conducted by W. Lazaroff, but it was noted that as

'in previous years, it was found hard to keep order during the ceremony'.³⁰ These annual communal seders continued to be run by the Board until 1990 when they ceased as so many other community groups were running communal seders and it was felt that there was no need for the Board's seder.

The holding of receptions, either at lunchtime or in the evening, for important local and overseas dignitaries was another regular activity during this period. When some members of the Israeli Olympic Team visited Sydney in December 1956, a reception was held in conjunction with Zionist and sporting organisations. In May 1957 a very successful ECAJ/Board luncheon was held for NSW parliamentarians during the visit of Moshe Sharett to Australia. A major function was organised for Sydney's Lord Mayor, Harry F. Jensen, after his return from his first visit to Israel in June 1958. A luncheon was held for Chief Rabbi, Israel Brodie during his visit in 1962 when attempts were also made to solve problems of rabbinical disagreement at a ministers' conference. In November 1964 a luncheon was held for Abram Landa to mark his 25 years of service to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

While many of these functions were well attended, Newman complained in October 1957 about poor attendances at three recent social functions: a farewell to then governor, Sir John Northcott; a public meeting to welcome Dr Evatt on his return from Israel; and a reception for Jacob Halevy, chairman of the British Section of the World Jewish Congress (WJC). It was resolved that, wherever possible, large public functions should be held in the eastern suburbs where the majority of Jews resided, that there should be no charge at such functions, and that a selective list of invitees should be drawn up so that members of the community would view an invitation to such a function as an honour.³¹ It is difficult to assess how successful these policies were, but when functions for a key person were held, such as the luncheon for Danny Kaye in 1959 or a special dinner for Dr Fanny Reading in June 1961, they were very well attended.

Visiting Jewish leaders from across the world were invited to address the plenum from time to time, as were local leaders who went overseas to attend conferences or who visited Israel for particular events. ECAJ presidents, Ashkanasy and Einfeld, also addressed the plenum on their representations at Claims Conferences. Among the distinguished overseas visitors were David Marshall, former chief minister of Singapore who spoke in September 1958; Dr Judah J. Shapiro, director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, Washington, in July 1959; and Sir Barnett Janner (later Lord), an outstanding leader of British Jewry, in August 1964. In September 1965 the executive director of the Jewish Community Federations, Hartford, Connecticut, B. Gottlieb, addressed a meeting of presidents of organisations and the Board's executive about fundraising. At this meeting Gottlieb highlighted the 'great waste and inefficiency in the approach to Jewish communal life in Australia and the dissipation of leadership resulting in severely overburdening those who are willing to work because of the duplicating of appeal causes and consequent efforts'.³² His message may have acted as a seed for the formation of the Joint Communal Appeal (JCA) in 1967 following the Six Day War which was the main catalyst. The formation of JCA was an important watershed in the history of Sydney Jewry.

Board elections were held every three years, with elections in November 1957, 1960, 1963 and 1966 for both general franchise deputies and representatives from the constituent organisations. There was a great deal of debate over how to conduct these elections. At the time of the 1957 elections, Newman stated that he believed that the election procedure was too burdensome and costly and needed to be simplified, especially given the small number of deputies who nominated as candidates for the general franchise elections. In 1957 only 56 people nominated for 52 vacancies and disappointment was again expressed at the small number of nominations for the 1960 election. After this election, it was decided that only enrolled members of the Board should be entitled to vote — previously all members of constituent organisations could vote and, in 1960, 8,414 ballot papers had been posted to voters. However, nomination papers would continue to be sent to the financial members of constituent organisations, as well as to enrolled members. In addition, votes had to be recorded at the office of the Board, rather than by post.³³ Despite efforts to improve the system and subsequent constitutional debates, the Board continued to be faced by apathy and in 1966 only 44 nominations were received for 50 positions. At the September plenum, deputies complained that insufficient time was given to general franchise candidates to find three nominators, but Newman replied that the election had been widely publicised at Board meetings and in the Jewish press.³⁴

Much of the work of the Board continued to be carried out by the various sub-committees, especially the Public Relations, Overseas Jewry, Finance, Education, and Youth Activities Committees. In addition, new committees were established from time to time, although some did not last for very long. For example, in September 1957 a social functions committee was created with Sam Travers as chair, but this did not operate for long, while in September 1958 a Judicial Committee was created.³⁵ In the 1950s Victoria's Judicial Committee carried out a number of investigations of accusations against Jewish survivors that they had acted as *kapos* (Jews who collaborated with the Nazis for their own gain) during the war. In New South Wales the Judicial Committee was finally constituted in February 1959³⁶ but it did not function for long.

The second half of 1959 and early 1960 was devoted to debates on constitutional issues. John Einfeld, chairman of the Constitutional and Standing Orders Committee proposed a reduction in the number of deputies, including general franchise deputies, as it was felt that the Board was too large. After many debates which continued over a number of months, the proportion of general franchise deputies was retained, but the overall size of the Board was reduced by increasing the number of financial members of each organisation per deputy. In addition, affiliation fees were increased. In 1963, the constitution was amended so that constituent organisations would elect their own deputies, rather than this being done through a postal vote conducted by the Board itself.³⁷ In 1965 Maurice Allen introduced further constitutional amendments in relation to the number of deputies, fees of constituent organisations, the issue of the president's casting vote, numbers required for a quorum and the number of meetings to be held each year, but no changes of substance were introduced.³⁸

OPPRESSED JEWRY IN THIS PERIOD

During this period the problems facing oppressed Jewry in different parts of the world were dealt with by the Overseas Jewry Committee, led by Dr Lotte Fink from April 1955 until her death in 1960, and then by Maurice Allen, as well as by the executive and the plenum. Throughout her chairing of the Overseas Jewry Committee, Dr Fink produced a monthly *Information Bulletin*, often almost single handedly, even during her period of failing health in the late 1950s. After her death, Allen changed the nature of the *Bulletins* so that they focused on specific issues or countries and he only produced these three to four times a year.

In 1957 the problems of Jewish refugees from North Africa to Israel were discussed at the plenum, and Dr Max Brenner led a drive for used clothing to assist these refugees. Problems facing Jews in other parts of the Arab world, especially in Syria, were also discussed. In 1959 a resolution was passed 'condemning the treatment of the Jews in Rumania, especially the continual arrests and long sentences of imprisonment for no other apparent reason but sympathy for the State of Israel or contacts with members of their families who have settled in Israel'.³⁹

However, the major problem focus from the 1950s until 1989 was the plight of the Jews in the former USSR. After the death of Stalin in 1953, the problems of Soviet Jewry were not resolved. A special five page memorandum prepared for the meeting in April 1958 stressed that:

After forty years the Soviet regime has not found a solution to the Jewish question and does not follow the example of the West, where Jews are integrated citizens with the right to be Jews or not to be Jews as they wish and in their own way. In the Soviet Union the Jews still constitute a national group but a group utterly unlike any other national group in the Union; it is a group deprived of any right of self expression; it has no national territory; it has seen its national languages, Yiddish and Hebrew, proscribed and the instruments of its national culture liquidated. Although it has tried hard to integrate itself, it has been rejected and refused and is to-day suffering from national discrimination which affects it not only as a collective unit, but also affects Jews as individuals. The children of Jews must be registered as members of Jewish nationality.

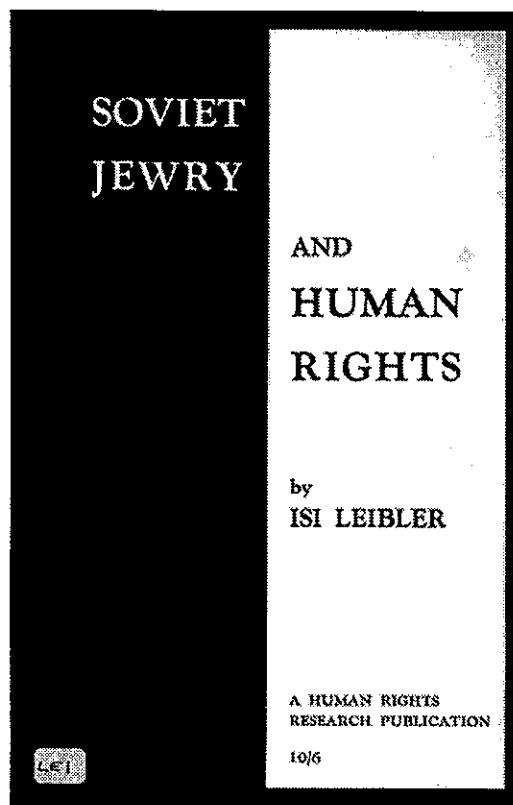
At the meeting the issues were discussed, with Nate Zusman unsuccessfully moving an amendment that the ECAJ request that the World Jewish Congress send a delegation to the USSR to take up these matters directly with the Soviet government. The following resolution was passed by the plenum:

- 1) The situation of Jews in the Soviet Union has become one of the central problems of our generation;
- 2) They are denied essential facilities for religious, cultural and communal development and education;
- 3) They are denied the right of general communal organisation for religious and cultural purposes;

4) They are denied rights of free emigration, particularly in order to settle in Israel;
and accordingly the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies requests the ECAJ:

- a) to ask the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia to press at UNO for the redress of the wrongs perpetrated against the members of the Jewish faith in Russia;
- b) to request the Conference of Jewish Organisations which is to meet again in New York on 21 May 1958 to take steps to inform world opinion of these serious crimes against Jewry in Russia; and
- c) to call upon the Jews in Australia to make known the serious situation at present existing.⁴⁰

Throughout the 1960s the situation of Soviet Jewry continued to concern the community. In 1965, Isi J. Leibler, then chairman of the Public Relations Committee of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, published pamphlets on the issue including 'Soviet Jewry and Human Rights' and 'Soviet Jewry and the Australian Communist Party' and these pamphlets were distributed by the NSW Board.



Cover of Leibler's pamphlet on Soviet Jewry

SOVIET JEWRY AND THE 'SAM COHEN AFFAIR'

A serious threat to communal cohesion occurred in November 1962. This conflict arose over what the New South Wales leaders saw as the Victorian Board of Deputies' unilateral actions over the issue of Soviet Jewry. During the late 1960s, Isi Leibler wrote a series of articles in the general press highlighting the plight of Soviet Jewry. This included an article published in the *Bulletin* on 29 September headed 'The Sea of Soviet Jews - Not so different from Nazi Germany' and a subsequent letter published on 27 October in response to a letter written by the Soviet press attaché defending Soviet policy.

During the same period the VJBD approached W.C. Haworth, Liberal member for the Melbourne seat of Isaacs, which had a large Jewish electorate, to raise the issue of Soviet Jewry in Federal Parliament. Haworth did this on 3 October 1962 and requested the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, to raise the matter in the United Nations. This speech was supported by Einfeld, then member for the Bondi seat of Phillip (Sydney), who stressed that 'it is a fact that for some considerable time members of the Jewish faith in Russia have suffered very serious discriminatory treatment on various levels'. W.C. Wentworth (Liberal, Mackellar, New South Wales) also supported the request stating that 'we cannot ignore these things any more than we could ignore them in Nazi Germany'.⁴¹

Following the debate in the House of Representatives, the matter was raised in the Senate by Senator Hannan, a Liberal member from Victoria. Senator Cohen, who was a Victorian Labor member and president of the left-wing Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism, responded to Hannan's speech, stressing his own role in combating antisemitism, but at the same time seeking to downplay the extent of antisemitism in the Soviet Union. He commenced his address by claiming that his parliamentary opponent had 'delivered himself of an extraordinary series of allegations, some of which I believe have substance. But some of them are so outlandish, absurd and exaggerated that no sensible body of responsible people could pay any attention to them.'⁴² He then went on to argue that the move to have the matter of Soviet Jewry raised in the United Nations had been motivated by anti-Australian Labour Party politics. These allegations were supported by members of the left-wing Victorian ALP Executive, including its president, Robert Holt, who claimed in a 19 page secret document which was leaked to the press that this campaign was orchestrated by Isi Leibler, Dr Frank Knopfmacher and Maurice Ashkanasy.

Haworth raised the question again on 25 October 1962, when Barwick informed the House that he had investigated the issue and had found an appropriate item on the United Nations' agenda, that of 'manifestation of Racial Prejudice and National and Religious Intolerance'. On 2 November 1962, the Australian representative, Douglas White, spoke at the General Assembly Social Committee, condemning the anti-Jewish conduct in the USSR which was denied by the Russian delegates. This move was seen as 'historic' because it was the first time that the plight of Soviet Jewry was raised at the United Nations in a human rights context.⁴³

Cohen's apologetic Senate speech on behalf of the Soviet Union created a furore in the Jewish community. He was denounced by Isi Leibler and Ashkanasy at

the VJBD, while the *Australian Jewish Herald* was even more outspoken in its attack on Cohen than were the communal leaders. In a front-page editorial headed *J'Accuse* - a reference to Emile Zola's use of the term in the 1890s during the Dreyfus Affair - Sam Lipski accused Senator Cohen of 'sabotaging efforts of a democratic government to raise the persecution of his fellow Jews before the conscience of the world'.⁴⁴ This editorial was reported in detail in the mainstream press and drew comment from many politicians, including the federal opposition leader, Arthur Calwell, who spoke out in defence of Cohen, stating that 'I deplore and resent the unfair criticism of Senator Sam Cohen, QC'.⁴⁵ The 'Sam Cohen Affair', as it became known, and the *Australian Jewish Herald's* reporting and editorial comment during the months which followed, proved a turning-point in Melbourne communal politics in the ongoing conflict between the Jewish left, which was further marginalised, and the communal leadership.

The whole issue of how to conduct the campaign for Soviet Jewry and the way these events unfolded in the Australian parliament almost led to the disintegration of the ECAJ, while also placing its president, Sydney Einfeld, in a most invidious position. The Sydney based ECAJ believed that Victoria had acted unilaterally without consultation with the ECAJ executive, and had undermined the principle of unity. On 20 November 1962 a resolution expressing these sentiments was moved by H.B. Newman. In regard to the VJBD's defiance of the authority of the ECAJ as the only body authorised to represent and speak officially on behalf of Australian Jewry, it stated that:


This meeting expresses its great concern that such action has caused:

- a) Sensational publicity in the Australian general and Jewish press, indicating alleged serious conflict within the Jewish community;
- b) Disturbance of the most cordial relationship which has always existed between the Jewish Community and the major political parties;
- c) A weakening of the status and effectiveness of the ECAJ as the cohesive unifying force and spokesman of Australian Jewry.

This meeting calls the Executive Council of Australian Jewry to censure the offenders and to take action to prevent the occurrence of such activities.

This meeting expresses its confidence in the President, Mr S.D. Einfeld, and the Committee of Management of the ECAJ and requests its delegates at the forthcoming ECAJ Conference to:

1. Take all steps within their power to ensure similar breaches do not occur in the future and, in view of the VJBD's failure to observe promises given in the past regarding similar occurrences, to seek definite assurances from the VJBD that under no circumstances will it take any unilateral action in matters of importance to the Jewish people.

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2. Ensure that the Committee of Management, in whatever State the Headquarters may be, takes action in matters of a major nature only after consultation with its constituents and approval of the majority thereof, in accordance with Clauses 16 and 17 of the Constitution of the ECAJ.⁴⁶

This motion was seconded by Harry Goldstein and, after lengthy discussion, carried unanimously.

At the ECAJ meeting 24 -5 November, moves were made not only to pass the above resolution, but to state that if it was not passed, the executive would be retained in Sydney until March 1963. Ashkanasy stated that the VJBD would withdraw from the ECAJ if the ECAJ did not move to Melbourne. Finally, a compromise resolution was drawn up which stressed the importance of maintaining the correct channels of communication, but removed any censure of the Victorians. This prevented the community from being totally split. A number of NSW members criticised the compromise, but Newman stressed that it had been necessary 'in order to preserve the ECAJ'.⁴⁷ This view was shared by Syd Einfeld who believed that Victoria would have split from the ECAJ if New South Wales had not agreed to the compromise.⁴⁸

There were attacks on Einfeld in the general press, with *The Bulletin* publishing an editorial entitled 'The Einfeld Case' in which it argued that Einfeld's loyalties were divided over the issue and that he could not be head of the ECAJ while also being a member of parliament.⁴⁹ Dr Frank Knopfelmacher, among others, argued that Einfeld had been approached by Leibler as early as July 1962 and had been given the opportunity of raising the issue in parliament on behalf of the Labor Party, and that the VJBD only approached Haworth and the Liberal Party after Einfeld had failed to act.⁵⁰ The editor of *Sydney Nation*, the paper where Knopfelmacher published this accusation, disagreed with his line of argument and pointed out that Leibler had eventually 'told the ECAJ conference that he had erred in not approaching the ALP as well as the Liberal Party'. In defending Einfeld's position, the editor stated that: 'the speciousness of Dr Knopfelmacher's account makes us reluctant to accept his version'.⁵¹

The bitterness of the conflict remained for some time. In his address to the NSW Board of Deputies in June 1963, Ashkanasy raised the issue again, referring to the protest resolution of November 1962 which, he implied:

. . . indicated a lack of concern for the fate of Russian Jewry but apprehension of local and political consequences, while a breach of channels of communications was made the basis of the attack on the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies... The NSW Board would realise that it had acted wrongly, no matter how it was led or misled at the time, and should repent for having acted as it did in carrying the resolution of censure on the Victorian Board, and while he was prepared to overlook the past, Mr Ashkanasy said that memories could not be undone'.⁵²

This censure of the Board was rejected by both Newman and Einfeld, with Newman suggesting that Ashkanasy 'might apologise for his statements in this respect'.⁵³

New South Wales leaders were further offended by Newman Rosenthal who alleged that Einfeld had failed to respond to Senator Cohen's speech because he was bound by Labor party rules. Newman argued that 'the scars inflicted by the outburst of so much feeling and bitterness have still to be removed' and that the president of the ECAJ must 'owe political allegiance to none'.⁵⁴ In the following week, Harry Goldstein published a strong letter defending Einfeld and stressing that:

The leadership of NSW Jewry has no desire to see the attempts to rekindle the cold ashes of last year's trouble. We have all pledged our loyalty to the President of the ECAJ and are eager to assist in matters vital to the well being of our Jewish community. Unfortunately, the [ECAJ] Committee of Management seems to be pre-occupied with attempts to humiliate Mr Einfeld and embarrass the NSW Councillors to the ECAJ.⁵⁵

Thus, while the schism between New South Wales and Victoria had been papered over, the bitterness continued and the healing process took a long time.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

From 1957 to 1966 the Board continued its efforts to combat antisemitism and to foster good relations with the broader community. A number of groups caused the community concern, including the Australian League of Rights led by Eric Butler, the Australian Workers' Nationalist Party, the Australian Nazi Party and various European migrant groups which brought their antisemitism with them. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Eric Butler was most active in sponsoring antisemitism both through political activities and through the sale of anti-Semitic publications. Butler was born in Benalla in north-eastern Victoria in 1916 and commenced his career as a journalist with the Social Credit publication, the *New Times*, in 1938. He was to continue his support of Social Credit philosophies after the war when he became a co-editor of the *New Times*. He was anti-Labor and played an active part in the campaign against the National Health Scheme, publishing a pamphlet entitled 'The Real Policy Behind Free Medicine' which was not only anti-Labour but also antisemitic.⁵⁶ His bookshop, the Heritage Book Shop in Melbourne, continued to sell other infamous antisemitic works including the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Butler's acceptability amongst mainstream Australian society is seen in the fact that in 1958 he was shire president of Eltham and a member of the Anglican Synod.⁵⁷

In 1946 Butler formed the Victorian League of Rights. His bookshop was the League's headquarters. Another branch was formed in South Australia, and in 1948 it started to publish *The Vigilant* which the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism claimed 'contains some of the most venomous anti-Semitic matter currently published in Australia'.⁵⁸ In 1949 the Queensland League of Rights was formed, while the League maintained close links with the anti-Labour organisation, the People's Union, in Sydney, led by T. C. McGillick.⁵⁹ In 1960 the Australian League of Rights was formed at a national level and the movement experienced rapid growth, winning support from sections of the rural community and small businessmen who felt threatened by large corporations, trade unions and the expansion

of government control. The League began to play on fears of exploitation and emerged as 'a significant "third force" in Australian politics'.⁶⁰

Totalitarian antisemitism was central to League of Rights' ideology. It saw Jews as conspirators who aimed to dominate the world through political and economic strategies, including both capitalism and communism. Jews were portrayed as the source of the world's problems, as well as being a cultural and racial threat to the homogeneity of the Australian people. Butler developed his antisemitic ideology in *The International Jew* (1946) which was a commentary on the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. In the opening pages he wrote:

It is essential that we refuse to allow the alleged anti-Semitism of Hitler and his associates to colour our investigations of the Protocols.

As we shall see later, Hitler's policy was a Jewish policy; it helped further the declared aim of International Jewry, in spite of what Hitler SAID about International Jewry.⁶¹

Butler's disregard for truth or ethics is reflected in all his writings on the 'Jewish conspiracy'. The *New Times* also sought to whitewash Hitler, and Butler denied that six million Jews were murdered during World War II, describing this fact as Jewish propaganda.

Butler was also anti-Zionist. In 1957 in an article entitled 'Israel and the Communist Advance in the Middle East' he claimed that:

'It seems grotesque' writes Judge Sparrow in his book, 'that the Jews so recently released from race persecution and the whole machinery of the Gestapo by British, American and Russian Armies, should, almost within a decade, be practising the very same odious doctrines themselves. There is not a single malpractice of the Jewish Government today that had not its counterpart and inspiration in Nazi Germany'.

In some ways Israel is worse than Nazi Germany or any other Communist country. Little or no official action is taken concerning the numerous murders of Arabs by Jewish terrorists.⁶²

Butler sought to influence politicians with his anti-Israel sentiments and he claimed to be successful in his impact on D.J (Jim) Killen, member of the House of Representatives for Queensland. In August 1958 Killen claimed that all the problems in the Middle East were due to the creation of the State of Israel, although he did seek to differentiate between 'those of the Jewish faith and those of the Zionist movement'.⁶³ In June 1962 Killen undertook an overseas lecture tour to address meetings on the Common Market under the auspices of the League of Rights.

Butler helped distribute viciously antisemitic publications such as *Mugs Wake Up*, which consisted of about forty pages containing chapters such as 'Jews financed Russian Revolution, Communism a Jewish trap'.⁶⁴ The Heritage Bookshop also stocked antisemitic pamphlets and leaflets produced by D.W. de Louth of Beaudesert, Queensland, and other antisemitic material circulated by

Einar Aberg of Sweden, but no action was taken by the government to close the Heritage Bookshop. Among other claims, de Louth alleged that the Salk vaccine against poliomyelitis was a Jewish plot and should not be taken. He also was very anti-Israel and circulated pro-Arab publications such as a booklet entitled 'Terror and Peace in the Middle East', published by the Arab Refugee Office in New York.⁶⁵ The ECAJ wrote to the federal government in an attempt to stop the circulation of this material in Australia and abroad, but Menzies decided that no action should be taken because he believed that 'as the material was obviously the outpourings of a crank, the less official notice it received, the less public attention it was likely to attract'.⁶⁶ The ECAJ was informed that the government had no power to interfere with individual mail which was separately addressed, as such action was only taken as part of war-time censorship.

Other fringe groups which had no mass basis of support employed antisemitism as part of their program and also distributed antisemitic literature. They included the Australian Nationalist Workers' Party led by Graham Royce, which caused the Board concern from 1960 to 1964. In 1960 and 1961 this group had a platform in the Domain on Sundays, and later they distributed leaflets in the Bondi area. In early 1962 Royce moved to Queensland and the party appeared to go out of existence in New South Wales. In February 1964 Royce was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on charges of fraud.

Even more concern was felt with the activities of the Australian Nazi Party which was featured in a Four Corners program on Channel 2 in May 1964. The television crew managed to film a gathering at the party's Ashfield headquarters, showing uniformed and plain clothed members arriving at a meeting. The meeting room itself was adorned with pictures of Hitler and swastikas, and had well known Nazi books on its shelves. Part of an address given by Brian Raven in full SS uniform was also presented. Another segment featured an interview with Arthur Smith, 'self-styled leader of the Party'.⁶⁷ Newman was concerned that this program 'would tend to publicise rather than condemn the activities of the Party' and issued a press statement about his concerns which was reported in papers throughout the Commonwealth. Abram Landa, MLA, also wrote to Premier Renshaw requesting him to direct the security forces to investigate the activities of the party. A police raid on party headquarters led to the arrest of four members of the party, including Smith, on charges of unlawful possession of explosives, fire arms and narcotics, conspiring to defraud, and receiving stolen goods. The party was featured on the front page of the Sydney University paper, *Honi Soit*, on 30 June and 7 July 1964, together with an interview with Smith and an article by Colin Jordan entitled 'The Great Lie of 6,000,000'. Subsequently, the University Senate suspended the editor for his decision to publish this material. *Tharunka*, the student paper of New South Wales University, also sought to include information on the Nazi Party but due to community pressure withdrew the material, leaving the page intended for the Nazi Party empty, with the following statement:

Due to authoritarian measures employed by Jewish elements in the Sydney community and on the campus of NSW this article was withdrawn under duress.⁶⁸

After the arrests in 1964, the party went underground for a period, but by mid 1965 had started to regroup and distribute antisemitic materials as well as holding meetings in the Domain. In 1966 Smith again became openly active and addressed meetings. Party advertisements were placed on railway awnings, but this time Smith was careful to take legal advice to ensure that he always acted within the law.

Some migrant associations had fascist sympathies and were led by men who had a fascist or SS past and had collaborated with the Nazis. Among these groups were the Russian Anti-Communist Centre, the Ukrainian Society, the Ukrainian Liberation League, the Slovak Society, the Hungarian organisations and the main Polish organisations.⁶⁹ These various associations formed the United Council of Migrants from Communist Dominated Europe in 1953, which was a roof organisation for groups some of whose members had openly supported the Nazis during World War II.

A number of Hungarian organisations were known for their antisemitism and concern was felt for the support of some Hungarian migrants for the Arrow Cross leader, Szalasy. In Western Australia, Bela Kantor of Merridin published a newsletter called *Hungarista Mozgalam* which included antisemitic material, while another antisemitic newsletter, *Newzetszolgalat*, was produced for a short period by F. Megadja at the Railway Camp, Chullora, NSW.⁷¹ Many Ukrainians in Australia idolised their former leader Petlura whose responsibility for the pogroms and mass murders of Jews in the Ukraine in the period from 1917-1920 was denied by the Ukrainian publication, *The Flag*. Petlura's memory was commemorated every year in Australia. In 1957 Jaroslav Stetzko⁷¹ visited Australia and addressed a public meeting organised by the Ukrainian organisation and chaired by John Gorton, then Minister for the Navy.⁷² The Jewish community was also concerned that some of the German migrant social groups in Australia were becoming 'thinly disguised centres for political activity'.⁷³ It was claimed that a group of German migrants distributed a magazine called *Deutsche Soldat* (German Soldier) which was produced in Hamburg, West Germany. The PRC was concerned to ensure that such social groups of German migrants did not participate in any antisemitic activities.

Most migrants were law abiding citizens and the existence of some fanatical extremists did not 'imply that all of the migrants from these countries should be tarred with the same brush. There is no doubt that many are proving good citizens...'⁷⁴ The majority of East European migrants who settled in Australia in the late 1940s and 1950s quickly became part of the Australian democratic process but fringe elements continued to espouse antisemitism, supported publications such as *News Digest International*, and joined forces with Butler and his League of Rights.

The Jewish community in Australia was deeply disturbed by the visit of Baron Alfred von Krupp in February 1958. The VJBD issued a press statement protesting against his visit in which they stressed that Krupp was a 'convicted war criminal sentenced to gaol for inhuman atrocities committed against slave labourers'.⁷⁵ The ECAJ president, Einfeld, wrote to Menzies requesting that Krupp not be accorded any special treatment by the government and that he should be prevented from establishing or having shares in any industrial enterprise in Australia.⁷⁶



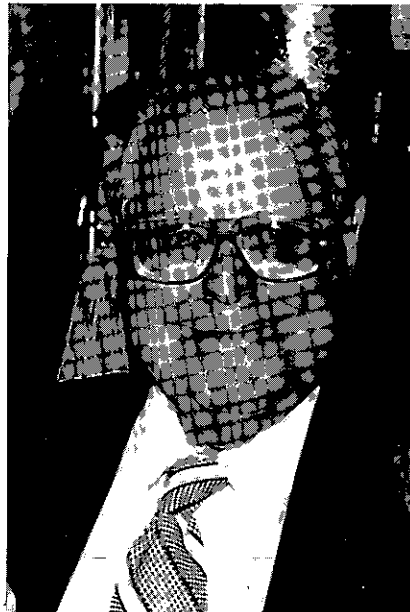
Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, a key spokesman in the 1950s and 1960s

Another issue which created antisemitic overtones was the accusation that the Jewish method of animal slaughter was cruel and should be prohibited. The Animal Welfare Organisation in Victoria organised a number of meetings in 1955 and 1956 protesting against *shechitah*. In 1958 the honorary secretary of the NSW Branch of the World League for the Protection of Animals wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* in reference to the 'cruel method of ritual slaughter'. After detailed representations by Harry S. Goldstein, then chairman of the Board's PRC, T. Bogue Atkinson, on behalf of the World League, apologised for the false assertions and wrote that he had come to the conclusion that 'if animals had to be slaughtered for human consumption the Jewish method is more humane.'⁷⁷

Among the various Christian denominations there were very few incidents of an antisemitic nature. There were occasional letters in church publications where again the PRC usually took immediate action; for example, the Catholic publication, the *Record*, Perth, carried a letter disagreeing with Rev. Dr. L. Rumble's radio comments that Judaism was incompatible with Communism.⁷⁸ In response, Dr Rumble assured H.S. Goldstein, Public Relations chairman that he dissociated himself from such views.⁷⁹

In order to foster better understanding, a Council of Christians and Jews functioned in New South Wales for five years from 1943 to 1948. Formed on the initiative of Rabbi Porush, its main aim was to combat racial and religious intolerance. The Council faded away because Bishop Pilcher, one of its leading figures, 'had lost interest as a result of the Council's unwillingness to deal with any Zionist matter'.⁸⁰

Subsequently, interfaith relations were handled by individual religious leaders, especially Rabbi Porush and Rabbi Dr R. Brasch of the Temple Emanuel. As a member of the public relations sub-committee of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Rabbi Brasch gave regular radio broadcasts and, also undertook regular visits to country towns. Brasch continued this interfaith work on behalf of the Board for many years.



Rabbi Dr R. Brasch, active public relations representative for the Board.

In October 1965 in *Nostra Aetate* the Vatican Council announced a major amendment to the Jewish Chapter dealing with relations between Catholics and Jews, stressing that crucifixion 'cannot be blamed on all Jews then living without distinction nor upon the Jews of today'.⁸¹ The Council also condemned antisemitism. *Nostra Aetate* was seen as a great step forward by the Board and the community. The editor of the *Jewish Times* commended the new policies which deleted, after 2,000 years, collective guilt of all Jews for the death of Jesus.





The late 1950s saw a revival of Nazism overseas, a rash of swastika daubing throughout the world and a number of antisemitic incidents in Australia. Syd Einfeld, acting president of the Board, gave a number of television and radio interviews and requested that the Lord Mayor, Alderman Jensen, call a public protest meeting. Before this could be organised, an unofficial protest meeting was held on 10 January 1960, addressed by Leslie Haylen, Labour MLA, and Sam Cohen, president of the Jewish Council. This meeting was held despite Einfeld's efforts to dissuade them.⁸² A special meeting to plan the Town Hall protest was called; this meeting being 'unprecedented, as not previously in its history over the past 14 years had the Board had to be called together for an emergency meeting'.⁸³ At this meeting Einfeld stressed that the 'painting of a swastika on the wall of any building is an insult to

every citizen of a country which believes in democracy'.⁸⁴ The Citizens' Protest Meeting at the Sydney Town Hall was attended by three thousand people and was considered the largest such meeting to be held over the last forty years. The State Premier, R. J. Heffron, promised that the government would not tolerate such antisemitic outrages. The Board of Deputies also opened a special appeal fund to defend the position of Australian Jewry and received an excellent response, easily raising the funds needed to cover the costs of the meeting. Swastika daubing and antisemitic graffiti continued, both in the city and in suburbs such as in French's Forest and Bankstown, but there were immediate reactions from local citizens' groups and the police. Isolated incidents of this nature continued throughout the 1960s.

The Eichmann trial in 1961 aroused great emotions within the community, including concern at a possible antisemitic backlash because of the manner of Eichmann's arrest in Argentina. Sydney University student paper, *Honi Soit*, published an article condemning the way Eichmann was arrested in Argentina but the general press, with the exception of the *Daily Mirror*, all wrote editorials supporting the trial and in May 1961 Newman claimed that 'one result of the Eichmann trial was the concern now felt by thousands who had previously been unmoved by the deeds of the Nazi regime'.⁸⁵ Professor Julius Stone wrote a series of articles on the trial which were published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as giving an address to the International Commission of Jurists; this address was reprinted and distributed by the Board.⁸⁶ There was again a favourable reaction in the general press to the verdict announced in December 1961.



A continuing issue was how the PRC should deal with antisemitic incidents and whether legal action should be taken. There was always the concern of drawing greater attention to antisemitism than was warranted. This dilemma was illustrated with the Brian Raven case over daubing on the *Chevra Kadisha* in 1963. While Gerald Falk and members of the PRC wished to press for legal action, the Chevra Kadisha board was opposed to taking any action and, in the end, the time period lapsed so that it was no longer possible to issue a writ, even though the ECAJ president, Maurice Ashkanasy believed that action should be taken. The difficulties of taking legal action were demonstrated with the A. K. Chesterton case; Chesterton issued a writ against the *Daily Telegraph* as a result of an article published in that paper describing his alleged antisemitic activities. The information in the article was supplied to the paper by the Research Bureau of the VJBD. The *Daily Telegraph* and the ECAJ eventually settled out of court, following negotiations involving Sir Frank Packer, J.E. Cassidy QC, and Gordon Samuels. The ECAJ was faced with a large legal bill of 3000 pounds which had to be covered by the Boards of Deputies.⁸⁷

To counteract antisemitic tendencies the suggestion was made in February 1957 that a speakers' panel be established to give lectures to non-Jewish groups, but it took a number of years to bring this proposal into reality. It was felt that notes needed to be prepared to assist speakers — Rabbi Lionel Singer laid the groundwork for the program in 1961, and Rabbi Shalom Coleman developed set notes on a number of topics. These were only finalised in late 1964 so that it was only in 1965 that the lecture service was successfully introduced, with a lecture a month being given to various non-Jewish groups by Rabbis Coleman and Dr Alfred Fabian. There was also a proposal to establish a Jewish museum but this did not



eventuate. A luncheon club was formed in 1962 with its first meeting addressed by Dr Wyndham, director general of the Department of Education, but there was insufficient support and the scheme was abandoned after a couple of luncheons because the Board did not wish to lose money over the program.⁸⁸ A plan to create a regular half hour television program Judaism, begun in 1961, also lapsed with the departure from Sydney of the Great Synagogue's Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky, one of its central advisers. Another initiative was the establishment of a Research Committee, with representatives of the *Lamed Vav* United Jewish Club, NAJEX, B'nai B'rith, and the Board, as a fact finding body, similar to the Research Committee associated with the VJBD. In May 1966 suitable premises were obtained in the city and Dr George Bergman was employed on a part-time basis as research officer. Throughout this period, the Board insisted that all public relations activities taking place through its PRC and it was stressed that the Board would not tolerate independent actions as these might have been detrimental to the community.⁸⁹

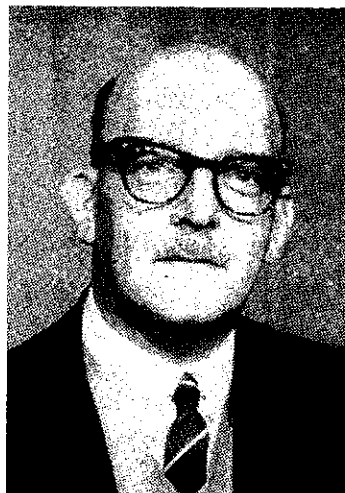
In general it could be said that during the 1950s Jews enjoyed almost complete freedom from discrimination after the early post-war hysteria against Jewish refugees which had led to a discriminatory immigration program. In 1952 the question 'Are You Jewish' was finally removed from the immigration forms following objections expressed by the ECAJ. The antisemitism which existed in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s was insignificant within the broad scope of attitudes held within the general community. The daily press was, on the whole, very critical of any antisemitic incidents, as were leading figures in politics, public life and the church. Where there were problems, the public relations activities of the Board were, on the whole, successful in dealing with the effects of the fringe antisemitic movements and their publications in New South Wales.



PRIMARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES SYLLABUS

An issue which created enormous concern within the community and the Board of Deputies was the teaching of Christianity in the general social studies syllabus of state schools. This issue was first raised in October 1959 in relation to plans by the Council for Christian Education in Schools to teach Christianity in all secondary schools. In June 1960 Rabbis Porush and Freedman, together with David Benjamin, met with the Minister of Education, Ernest Wetherell⁹⁰, and the Director-General of Education, Dr Harold Wyndham, to express the objections of the Jewish community to religious instruction being given in the course of normal lessons by secular teachers. Then in May 1961 Dr John Hirshman of the Humanist Society approached Benjamin, seeking cooperation with the Jewish community to fight the teaching of Christianity in state schools. Benjamin decided that the best way was by consulting the teachers in the field, but before the scheduled meeting took place on 3 October 1961, David Benjamin died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 46, thereby depriving the community and the Board of one of its most committed leaders. Nothing further took place until May 1962 when Max Friedman tried to revive the issue, giving notice of a motion to be discussed at the June plenum. Friedman, however, became ill and had to undergo major surgery. By the time he was well

enough to return to the plenum in September 1962 it was felt that too much had happened, with a further meeting with the Minister of Education being held on 12 July 1962, and his motion was no longer relevant.



David Benjamin, Chairman of the Education Committee for many years.

In June 1962 the Humanist Society established a Secular Education Defence Committee, but the Board was not interested in working with this committee because of its secular orientation compared with the Board which believed in the importance of religious education given within the Right of Entry program. The Board's leadership was extremely upset in October 1962 when Archbishop Gough, addressing the General Synod, stated:

Christian teaching in State Schools should not be regarded as an optional extra taken by 'a few peculiar children' ... the basic truths of the Christian religion should be an integral part of the curriculum.

Gough expressed concern at a move by the Secular Education Defence Committee to stop all religious teaching in State Schools, other than that given by ministers of the various Churches for voluntary periods. He also stated that: 'It is significant that the members of this group are mainly humanists, agnostics, atheists, and sad to say, Jews'.⁹¹

The Board decided to send letters to the four main dailies, disclaiming any connection with the Secular Education Defence Committee and stressing the Jewish community's support of religious instruction through the Right of Entry system, but opposing such instruction being part of secular subjects. In addition, Rabbi Porush met with Archbishop Gough to explain the reasons for Jewish opposition to teaching the Christian religion through the general education of children in state schools.

By early 1963 the matter appeared to have been defused by the Minister removing the teaching of religion from the primary social studies syllabus. Members

of the Teachers' Federation were opposed to the teaching of religion by secular teachers and the government was influenced by this opposition. The Jewish community through the Board wrote a letter of appreciation to the Minister in regard to this decision.

However, in September 1964, following representations from the Protestant churches, Wetherell reopened the matter and established a special committee to investigate the situation. The Board immediately prepared a memorandum opposing the syllabus. This memorandum was submitted to the government on 13 November 1964. Despite these representations, in December 1964 the Labor government suspended the new religion syllabus and reverted to the 1959 syllabus for General Religious and Moral Education which was reintroduced into the primary schools at the start of the 1965 school year.

The clerical leadership and the Education Board felt that the syllabus had an overall Christian influence and in January 1965 the clergy and the Board of Deputies advised parents to withdraw their children from social studies classes because 'such instruction is detrimental and not compatible with Jewish religious teaching'.⁹² Rabbi Porush, together with other rabbinic leaders, met with Wetherell in January 1965 to try to persuade him to change his mind. Following this meeting, which was tape recorded, Porush stated:

The Minister summed it up in this way — he appealed to us not to withdraw the children. That is what it really amounted to.

And when we pointed out to him the idea that Jews have to try to retain our identity — we just cannot live as a small minority in the midst of a large majority unless we are conscious of the distinctiveness of our own life and try to retain it — the Minister said that this is the product of a long-aged chain of persecution. That we are suffering from the mania or bogey of persecution, still so much afraid - but time had changed and we should not be under that impression . . . My impression was that the mind of the Minister was set before we came and that we talked at cross purposes from the beginning to the end, that we talked two different languages. He talked his own language, well-meant, well-motivated, but he did not grasp the meaning or the purpose of our arguments.⁹³

As a result of the failure of this meeting, the Board decided to continue with its withdrawal policy, even though Wetherell had recommended against this.

In early 1965 meetings were held at various congregational centres to explain the Board's withdrawal campaign. At Maroubra Junction Primary, for example, of the 24 sets of Jewish parents, 14 had decided to withdraw their children, 11 decided to follow the majority decision and only three opposed withdrawal, while at Rose Bay Public 120 of 124 parents signed requests to withdraw their children. As a result, the headmaster at Rose Bay obtained the cooperation of all but two teachers not to teach the offensive material, so that in the end children were withdrawn from only two classes, affecting a total of 16 children.

The editor of the *Australian Jewish Times*, George Garai opposed the withdrawal policy and proposed the alternative suggestions of contacting the Teachers' Federation to urge them to ensure that teachers be objective in their teaching; making a legal challenge; and urging all authorities to improve their religious teaching. Despite further parent action, legal advice, the formation of a Special Action Committee in March 1965 led by Gerald Falk⁹⁴ and the presentation of a memorandum, prepared by Gerald Falk and Marcus Einfeld and submitted to the government in September 1965, the syllabus was not changed. Indeed, it took until February 1966 for the Minister for Education, at the time C. B. Cutler, to respond to the Board's memorandum, and this was only as a result of the personal intervention of Syd Einfeld who was, by then, a member of the NSW Legislative Assembly. In this letter Cutler stressed that 'as a matter of Government policy in the public schools of New South Wales, the present syllabus will be supported and the right of withdrawal of pupils for those parents who do not desire their children to participate in the instruction under the General Religious & Moral syllabus will be maintained'.⁹⁵

The efforts of the Board of Deputies on this issue were subject to much debate and were seen by many as half-hearted. It was felt that the Board's executive did not believe they would be successful since both the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics supported the new syllabus while it was claimed by some at the plenum meeting of March 1965 that the executive had delayed debate on Max Friedman's motion 'for political reasons'.⁹⁶ Therefore, the *Jewish Times*' criticism of the Board's action on this matter was justified. It is interesting to note that at the time of the Bondi by-election of October 1965 the executive resolved that 'it would be most undesirable to have the question of the curriculum and the representation of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies in the matter made an issue in the by-election campaign'.⁹⁷

One of the most difficult issues facing the Board was whether they should encourage individuals to take legal action in the matter. Some members of the community believed that the social studies syllabus contravened the Public Instruction Act of 1880 and that the Jewish community should contest the new syllabus in court on this basis, while others believed that such legal action could be counterproductive and could result in a negative outcome for the community. This issue was debated at length during a special meeting with key rabbis and Dr S.W. Cohen, vice chancellor of Macquarie University. At this meeting, held in March 1966, Newman stressed that the Board had 'reached an impasse in its campaign against the General Religious and Moral Education Syllabus in Primary Schools issued by the Minister for Education in the former (Labor) Government in December 1964'. During this debate, Rabbi O. Abramson strongly favoured legal action, stating that 'a courageous stand by the community in a matter of this nature would be most desirable', while Rabbi Brasch opposed this argument because 'it might tend to split the community, and any public indication of such split over this issue would only lead to a deterioration of the situation generally'.⁹⁸ At the end of the meeting it was decided that both a *halachic* ruling from the Beth Din and a general canvassing of communal opinion should be undertaken before any decision was made in regard to legal action. There was further debate on the issue, and in June 1966 the plenum decided to support an individual member of

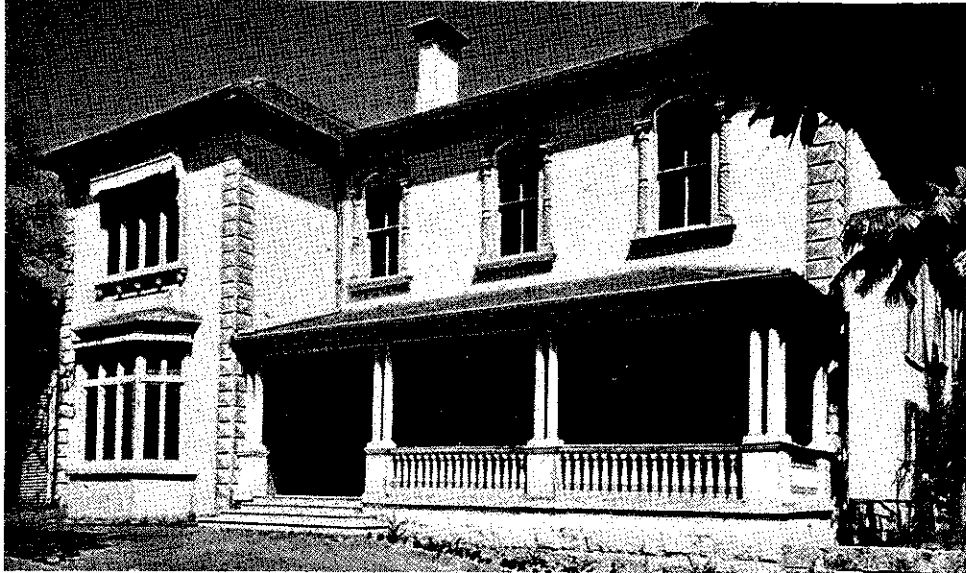
the community who planned to take legal action on the issue with Max Freilich acting as a liaison officer to raise funds for the court case. However, in the end nothing eventuated from this decision.

KING DAVID SCHOOL AND OTHER EDUCATION ISSUES

One of the major developments in this period was the foundation of King David School (KDS) which was described as 'one of the most important undertakings of the Board of Deputies.'⁹⁹ Debates on the need for a community day school occupied much time at plenum meetings but, from 1945, Moriah College remained as the only Jewish day school, controlled by its founder, the philanthropist Abraham Rabinovitch. In 1952 a NSW Council for Jewish Day School Education had been formed with wider representation than Moriah College¹⁰⁰ and in September 1956 it was proposed by the Board that the quorum at the Council should be not less than nine, including one representative from at least three of the four main bodies: the Board of Deputies, the Board of Jewish Education, Moriah College and the Sydney Beth Din. Negotiations over these constitutional amendments reached a stalemate when it was discovered in early 1957 that the Moriah College Trust Deed contradicted the powers of the constitution of the Day School Council.¹⁰¹ In October 1958 a sub-committee consisting of Theo Freilich, Hannah Kessler and Billie Einfeld was appointed to negotiate with Moriah over its trust deed. For a further four months the Board continued to negotiate, with Newman also being personally involved.

Finally, in February 1959 the sub-committee recommended that the NSW Board of Jewish Education be approached to take the initiative to establish a Jewish day school in Sydney. The February 1959 plenum meeting approved the proposal. Newman stressed that 'a stage had been reached where a community Jewish day school could be established in Sydney which would eventually be able to command the support of all congregations and other interested organisations'.¹⁰² However, negotiations with the Board of Education did not advance quickly enough so that in May 1959 the Board's executive decided that it should take the initiative of establishing a school along the lines of Mount Scopus College in Melbourne. A special meeting was called for 8 July 1959 when the resolution to establish a Jewish communal day school as soon as possible was passed. A provisional board of governors was appointed with Israel Green as chairman, Max Freilich deputy chairman, and Adolph Bassar, CBE, David J. Benjamin, H. B. Newman, H. H. Pryer, Ruby Rich-Schalit and Professor Julius Stone as governors. Harry Goldstein was to be honorary secretary.

In November 1959 it was announced that the new school, to be called King David School, was to open in January 1960, under the Board's auspices, with classes being held initially at Hillel College in Old South Head Road, Bondi Junction. The governors decided to build the school gradually by adding a class each year and the first class had a small enrolment of eight children. Over the next few years the school built up slowly so that by 1962 it had a school population of 34. At the beginning of 1962 the school also introduced its own school uniform and school badge — an emu and kangaroo holding a Star of David, surmounted by a crown within a shield. In 1961 an Association of Parents and Friends was formed and in



FACTS ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Situated in attractive surroundings in $\frac{7}{8}$ acres of ground in 17 Albert Street, Edgecliff.
- Accommodation sufficient for 140 pupils in full primary school.
- Ample playgrounds.
- Highly trained teachers in all departments.
- Expert coaching provided for sporting activities, e.g. football, basketball, swimming, etc.
- Citizenship training.
- Smaller classes than most schools.

KING DAVID SCHOOL

17 Albert Street, Edgecliff

Telephone

Office:
61-4423

School:
32-3397

Turner and Henderson Pty. Ltd., Sydney.

Poster for King David School, 1963

August 1962 the State Zionist Council purchased a property at 17 Albert Street, Edgecliff as the new school's campus. In October 1962 the school received council approval to utilise the site as a school which was also incorporated. A major appeal was held with the aim of raising 100,000 pounds over five years. The new property was officially opened in August 1963 by J. B. Renshaw, MLA, then acting premier, with 300 people attending this opening.

Throughout this period the Board provided secretarial assistance to the school, with Ilse Robey even working overtime to assist the school, and it often advanced funds when the school was in financial trouble. When Sam Vandersluis requested information on the work done for the school at the Board's office, John Einfeld stated that all the administrative work of the school was done at the office and that he believed that it would be at least another ten years before the school was fully independent. However, he believed that it was such an important communal enterprise that the Board's help was justified.¹⁰³

Although the King David School did experience gradual growth, constant disappointment was expressed at the slowness of its development. In January 1962 KDS Chairman, Max Freilich, urged deputies:

... to realise that King David School had been established by the Board of Deputies, was its responsibility, and needed the support, not only of every member of the Board, but of every member of the community. He deprecated disparaging references to the school, which had been made repeatedly at meetings of the Deputies, with regard to the fact that the Board's funds are devoted to its maintenance, to the small number of enrolments and other matters. He assured the meeting that King David School had been established for the good of the community and that it would continue to develop and flourish.¹⁰⁴

Freilich's statement was strongly supported by Harry Goldstein, the school's honorary secretary. In 1966 Freilich again expressed disappointment at the lack of support for KDS which he described as 'pathetic and disturbing' and this opinion was supported by John Einfeld, deputy chairman of the school, who provided it with very dedicated service throughout its foundation years.

At the plenum meeting of August 1966 and again in November 1966, Mark Braham suggested that the Board should approach Moriah about a possible merger. King David School president, John Einfeld, stated that Sydney with a population of 29,000 Jews should be able to support two schools, but Rabinovitch's death in 1965 removed the obstacles to amalgamation. Einfeld was close friends with Moriah's new president, Shya Redelman, and they began to discuss a possible merger which finally eventuated in 1968. The Edgecliff property was sold and later the Moriah campus at Dover Road, Rose Bay was renamed the King David Preparatory School, thereby continuing the name of the Board's school.

Another important Board initiative in this period was the creation of the Council for Jewish Education in Schools to provide tax deductibility for Jewish education in schools. In 1957 this idea was proposed and in October 1959 the Council for Jewish Education in Schools was ratified. The Board was also active in the early

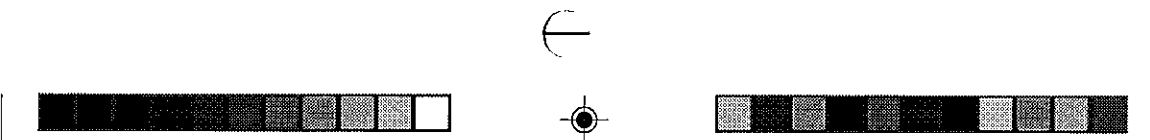
1960s in assisting the NSW Board of Jewish Education (BJE), which in 1960 faced a 'parlous state with an overdraft of 25,000 pounds to a private bank'. A special meeting was called on 31 August 1960, chaired by Newman, to help organise the Kol Nidre appeal, which traditionally raised funds for the Board of Jewish Education. In 1961 other proposals were canvassed as ways of assisting the BJE, including creating a link between United Israel Appeal fundraising and the Board of Jewish Education and placing a levy on synagogue seat rentals. While these proposals were rejected, the Board's assistance did prove to be of value as there was greater support for the BJE's fundraising efforts in 1961.

In April 1961 the education sub-committee was formed with Edgar Newman as chairman with the brief to survey and co-ordinate Jewish education in New South Wales. Newman tried to organise some functions which would highlight the problems facing Jewish education in Sydney, including the limited funds available for right of entry classes; the small percentage of Jewish children receiving any type of Jewish education; and the fact that very little was done for the post Bar/Batmitzvah age group.¹⁰⁵ The first such function was held at Central Synagogue with a debate on the issue of state aid to private schools, but the attendance was disappointing. State aid was a burning issue among the general community at the time, but the Board executive decided that they would not take sides in the state aid debate. This position was opposed by Maurice Allen who argued that state aid could be very important for the community in the future, but the executive did not support his position.¹⁰⁶ In May 1966 Philip Barg suggested that the education committee organise a Jewish Book Month and offered to organise the first such book month for the Board, but he died suddenly in June 1966, so that the proposal was not implemented in that year. Concern was also expressed about the lack of qualified Hebrew and Jewish Studies teachers in Sydney. In 1963 Rev T. Rafalowicz was sent overseas in search of Hebrew teachers, the cost of this trip being shared by King David School and the BJE. In 1966 Syd Einfeld suggested applying to the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture for assistance with teacher education, but no immediate steps were taken.

JUNIOR BOARD OF DEPUTIES AND OTHER YOUTH ISSUES

In 1956 a Committee for Jewish Youth Activities was established as another sub-committee of the board. In May 1958 an outstanding youth rally was held for Israel's Tenth Independence Day and, following this, the idea of creating a roof body for youth was raised. This idea was brought to fruition with the establishment of a Junior Board of Deputies during the second half of 1959 following a series of meetings held between September and December. Syd Einfeld was very involved in this development and Maurice Allen was appointed initial chairman of the Junior Board so that he was the link person between the two Boards.

The role of the Junior Board was 'to administer, to guide and to settle disputes'. It was also 'a training ground for future leaders'.¹⁰⁷ During the seven years of its existence it tried to encourage co-ordination between youth groups, held leadership training programs, an annual youth week or youth month, youth camps and conventions. It also tried to encourage youth participation in the Solemn Memorial Evening and in the annual UIA campaign and held special functions for Israel's



Independence Day. Other successful activities included the annual drama festivals and support for the Hillel Foundation which was established in Sydney in the early 1960s; Alan Crown of the Department of Semitic Studies at the University of Sydney was appointed as Hillel Director in December 1964. Other ideas included the establishment of a youth centre, with the possibility of combining with the Hakoah centre in Wellington Street, and the creation of a National Council for Jewish Youth, but these ideas did not come to fruition.

Despite its achievements, the Junior Board of Deputies faced constant problems. It lacked funding, secretarial support and professional leadership. Numerous suggestions were made on ways to meet these needs and the senior Board did offer some assistance, but the lack of a professional youth leader remained a real problem. In March 1962 a special meeting was convened to discuss this issue by Junior Board president, Robert Baxt. Syd Einfeld outlined the problems associated with the appointment of a professional youth leader, including the fact that the it was 'difficult to foresee how such a person could do his work in practice in view of the fact that the various youth groups that are to be assisted are autonomous organisations. Therefore, the proposed appointee, while responsible to one roof organisation such as the Senior or Junior Board, would actually be required to work for a considerable number of individual groups whose requirements, as regards his time and efforts, would most probably clash'.¹⁰⁸ In addition, there was the problem of cost, including office and secretarial costs and the running of a car, would be at least 3000 pounds per annum. Einfeld suggested that the first step should be to conduct a survey of the needs of Jewish youth; this did not eventuate. Following Baxt's departure for the Harvard Law School in 1963 the whole idea lost its momentum.

Another problem was that of duplication between the work of the Board's Youth Activities Committee and the Junior Board. By 1964 the Youth Activities Committee had attracted a very active leadership¹⁰⁹ while the Junior Board started to experience real problems. In November 1964 it was reported that the activities of the Junior Board were lagging and that they needed advice as to what they should do. A number of meetings were held to try to resolve these difficulties and in November 1965 a special committee was set up to investigate the clash between the Youth Activities Committee and the Junior Board,¹¹⁰ but the issues were not resolved. In May 1966 Junior Board president, Frank Marks, claimed that he was the only person to be doing any work for the Junior Board and within a few months it ceased to function. Marks felt that this was 'a poor reflection on the community as a whole and the youth in particular' but, despite a further debate on the issue in September 1966, the Junior Board could not be resuscitated. As Harry Goldstein commented, the Junior Board experienced problems when members got married, went overseas or were faced with the pressures of establishing themselves in their careers, so that there were not enough people interested in maintaining it compared with the Senior Board.¹¹¹

FURTHER CRISES OVER KASHRUT

Dissatisfaction with the situation of kashrut continued to simmer. In 1957 Horace Newman conducted further negotiations with the Sydney Beth Din in an effort to establish a United Shechitah Committee and a Kashrut Commission, but to

no avail. In December 1958 the high cost of kosher food again occupied the attention of the Board when Mark Braham moved the following resolution:

That in view of the exorbitant cost of kosher meat it be resolved to establish a Committee of three, whose function it will be to investigate and report to the Board their findings relating to the high cost of kosher meat in New South Wales.¹¹²

This resolution was passed and the committee, consisting of Braham (chair), Lawrence Einfeld and Isador Lewinnek, presented their report to the Board in June 1959. This report was highly critical of the operation of the three Shechitah Boards (Conjoint, Great and Adath) which it described as 'quite ridiculous and a disgraceful waste of money'. It suggested a new Shechitah Board representing all orthodox congregations in Sydney be created. The Board endorsed this in principle, delegating H.B. Newman to call a meeting of involved representatives. In August 1959 Newman convened a meeting of the Conjoint and Great Synagogue boards, with a representative from Adath, but it took a further two years until these two synagogues combined their boards under the Conjoint.

In 1964 the cost of kosher meat was again raised at the Board but, given the failure of the 1958/9 investigation, Newman saw no value in a further inquiry. He felt what was needed was the formation of a Federation of Orthodox Synagogues and this was finally achieved with Arthur D. Robb as president for two years, followed by Victor Smith who, in 1967, introduced a Kashrut Commission which was initially only in charge of Shechitah but later also took over the supervision of kosher catering.

CREATING A NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE

In 1954 Sydney Einfeld conceived the idea of building a modern community centre, since it was obvious that the Maccabean Hall was outdated and a number of organisations, such as the Zionist Federation, the National Council of Jewish Women, B'nai B'rith, Young Men's Hebrew Association and the Folk Centre, were planning to build their own centres. Einfeld proposed joint participation on a condominium plan with each organisation having its own area, plus general facilities. Many meetings were called, but problems arose owing to differing requirements. The *Jewish Times* supported this plan, although it felt that the project was not being pushed in the correct manner.¹¹³

In 1959 the problems associated with the Maccabean Hall were raised again when its Council decided that the property was in need of extensive repairs which were beyond its means. It believed the property should be sold, but felt that since the hall had been built as a war memorial for the use of the entire community, such a decision should be made by a more representative body. It referred the matter to the Board of Deputies.¹¹⁴

In December 1959 the Board called a meeting of all communal organisations to discuss the matter. At this meeting, attended by 53 people representing 15 organisations, a resolution was passed requiring the Board to set up a select committee to examine the future of the Maccabean Hall.¹¹⁵ In January 1960, Justice Bernard

Sugerman agreed to chair this committee. After wide consultation with the community, the Sugerman Report recommended that the Maccabean Hall be retained and the new Community Centre be built onto it on additional land owed by the War Memorial.

In April 1961, Gerald Falk, president of the Jewish War Memorial, announced plans for building the Community Centre with six floors at the cost of 162,000 pounds. However, the architect, Harold Epstein, experienced much difficulty in producing a financially acceptable plan and from 1961 to 1964 the scheme was stalled. In the meantime the National Council of Jewish Women and the B'nai B'rith had built separate centres, and the Folk Centre had withdrawn. The dormant Young Men's Hebrew Association voted over 15,000 pounds to the scheme and the State Zionist Council and the Australian Jewish Welfare Society remained committed, so that in September 1964 it was decided to go ahead with the rebuilding. On Anzac Day 1965, the foundation stone was laid by S.D. Einfeld and in July 1966 the centre was officially opened by the governor, Sir Roden Cutler.

The Board decided to rent office space in the new building and in July 1966 moved from its city premises.¹¹⁶ A motion was passed in appreciation of Harry Goldstein's negotiations in this regard in his dual roles as honorary treasurer of the Board and president of the War Memorial.

Throughout 1964 and 1965 the Board executive had time consuming debates over the constitution of the War Memorial Council and the Board. Key issues included the president of the Board of Deputies also being president of the Community Centre; Board representation on the Council; enrolled members of the Board also being members of the War Memorial; and the financial obligations of the Board to the Community Centre. In 1966 Newman stated that it was too much to be president of both organisations, but in the end it was decided that the Board president would be president of the War Memorial Council in an ex-officio capacity but with no executive responsibilities. Regarding the issue of membership of both organisations, there was conflict between those opposed to 'forcing the individual [Board member] to join another organisation in which he may have no interest or desire to be associated' against the principle that 'pride of ownership of the War Memorial should be given to the whole Jewish community through the Board of Deputies'.¹¹⁷

THE CONSTANT FINANCIAL STRUGGLE

The issue of insufficient funding continued to plague the Board and to hinder its activities throughout this period. The main elements of the Board's fund-raising continued to be membership fees paid by enrolled members, subscription fees paid by the constituent organisations, the annual appeal, which was centred most years on a luncheon held in February or March, the annual ball, and the production of the Board Handbook. These activities needed to raise enough to cover the Board's annual budget of 5000 pounds, and were carried out by the Finance Committee with the assistance of the honorary treasurer.

From 1957 to 1959 the annual ball was organised as an Israeli Independence Day Ball, for the first two years in conjunction with the Jewish National Fund and then together with WIZO and National Council of Jewish Women. Problems were experienced in terms of dividing the profits from this combined ball and in 1960 the

Board decided to hold its own ball in October. Billie Einfeld was the ball convenor and her team produced most successful results. In 1962 Z. Nebenzahl organised a particularly successful ball when he managed to attract a large number of patrons, sponsors and donors.

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Invitation for the Annual Ball, 1963,
with other side being a Menorah designed by Lou Rose

In January 1960, following the impetus created by the Citizens' Protest Meeting at the Town Hall, a special campaign fund was launched by the honorary treasurer, Dr Max Brenner, and this proved to be very successful. At the time of Dr Brenner's early death in September 1960, Newman commented on the fact that by early 1959 Brenner had managed to place the Board's finances on a sound basis. Dr Brenner had arrived in Sydney from Poland in the 1930s and was not only honorary treasurer of the Board but was also active in the State Zionist Council, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, and the Fellowship of Jewish Doctors. His loss was sorely felt. He was succeeded by Harry Goldstein, while Zygmunt Nebenzahl proved to be an effective chairman of the Finance Committee, serving from 1961 to 1964, when S.J. Vandersluis took over.

Over the period from 1957 to 1967 there were various membership drives. In mid 1957 the Board sent speakers to constituent organisations to raise the awareness of its work and attract more individual members, while in the following year there was an intensive membership drive with Bernard Ferster drafting a special letter which was posted to a large number of members of the community inviting them to

join the Board. In 1958 there were lengthy debates on the idea of compulsory Board membership following the European model, but it was felt this idea would be offensive to Australian Jews and it was not accepted. In 1965 a door to door canvass for members using JNF lists was discussed and it was hoped that members of the Junior Board would assist in this, but in the end the idea did not prove feasible. Therefore, the Board decided to carry out another intensive mail campaign for membership.

The Board also brought out publications in order to improve its public profile within the community and to increase membership and financial support. In November 1956 the Board produced its first handbook, with a second edition of 1700 copies being produced in 1959 and a third in 1961. In 1961 a pamphlet dealing with community integration for newcomers was also published. In March 1966 the Press and Publications Committee produced its first *Information Bulletin*, edited by Phillip Barg, in order to foster the work of the Board and in the hope that it would become 'the voice of the Board and, in fact, act as a link between it and the general community'.¹¹⁸

Another idea of increasing community awareness of the work of the Board was the holding of annual conferences. The first of these was held at North Shore Synagogue in November 1957 with M.B. Isaacs as convenor. Nathan Jacobson was brought up from Melbourne to address the conference on the topic, 'Is There Still a Need for a Zionist Organisation?' while other topics included the idea of appeals coordination, the importance of communal leadership and the settlement of newcomers. This first conference was seen as a success and a second one was held in 1958 at the Maccabean Hall with Rabbi Dr H. Freedman speaking on 'Zionism in a Changing World', David Benjamin on 'The Jewish Day School Movement' and Trevor Rapke from Melbourne on 'The Organised Jewish Community in Australia', but there was a small attendance at this second conference and this idea lapsed. Another proposal to run a campaign in the Jewish press on 'Know Your Deputies' also failed because of lack of support — many deputies failed to provide the autobiographical details required to run this campaign. In 1963 the Publications and Press Committee carried out an unofficial poll and found that most people had no idea of the purpose or functioning of the Board. Various ways of increasing community awareness of the Board's activities such as inviting members of the public to attend plenum meetings, rabbis publicising the Board's activities from the pulpit, and a paid newspaper column in the Jewish press were canvassed but again nothing concrete eventuated.

Despite these various projects, great concern was still expressed at the lack of support of the Board and its continuing financial difficulties. In 1957 Newman deplored 'the apathy of the members of the Board towards the enrolment scheme and community activities in general'.¹¹⁹ In 1964 the comment was made that the legal costs arising out of the A.K. Chesterton case, and the expense of supporting King David School had caused a serious drain on the Board's finance and in 1966 this was further aggravated by the move to the new Community Centre and the need to pay Ilse Robey for her leave following her retirement from the Board.

While the Board acquired additional expenses, it did not find new ways of fundraising. Different ways of increasing its financial capacities were suggested, but none were successfully introduced. In 1957 it was suggested that all constituent

organisations donate a percentage from their fundraising activities to the Board and, in return, the Board would establish a special committee to give active assistance to help promote any particular fundraising function. As with the earlier proposal of a 5% levy on all fundraising, the Zionists stressed that any fundraising for Israel could not be included and in the end this idea lapsed. Another proposal was that all congregations should be asked to include Board fees on their membership invoices. Although in May 1958 the Great Synagogue leadership stated that they were willing to support this proposal, it also did not come to fruition. This suggestion was then expanded to all constituent organisations and it was suggested that ten shillings be added to each constituent's membership fees and that this should be remitted to the Board of Deputies. It was argued that this proposal would raise a total of 3000 pounds and would overcome all the Board's financial problems. Although a motion supporting this concept was passed at the plenum in May 1959 and the NSW Association of Sephardim added four shillings to its membership fees, this idea also fell by the wayside. Reinstating the Community Chest or another form of a coordinated appeal was also regularly proposed. In October 1965 an American visitor, B. Gottlieb addressed a special meeting of the presidents of organisations and stressed the importance of a coordinated appeal. As a result, a special Appeals Coordination Committee was established with Maurice Allen as chairman and in 1966 this committee investigated the proposal of rationalising appeals. All of this planted the seeds for the formation of the Joint Communal Appeal (JCA) in 1967 which will be discussed in the next chapter. It was only the formation of the JCA and its effective evolution in the 1970s that enabled the Board to overcome its financial difficulties by the early 1980s.

END OF AN ERA

In 1966 Newman, at the age of 77, decided to retire as president, having served the Board for a decade during his second term. Already in November 1959 Newman had been honoured by the Board on his seventieth birthday with a portrait commissioned from the painter William Pidgeon. This portrait was submitted for the Archibald Prize and today hangs in the Board's office. After his seventieth birthday, Newman was granted leave of absence for five months when he travelled through Britain, the United States and Israel. During his absence, Syd Einfeld served as acting president. Following his return in May 1960, Newman was to serve the Board for another seven years.

Throughout this period Newman worked closely with Freilich and Einfeld, who served as his vice-presidents for many years. (In addition to his work as president and senior vice-president of the ECAJ, Einfeld served as vice-president of the Board from 1952 to 1966.) In November 1966 these three stalwarts were elected as the first honorary life members of the Board of Deputies with permanent seats on the executive. At that time the Board adopted the following resolution:

Whereas: The Constitution of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies provides for the appointment of persons as Honorary Life Members



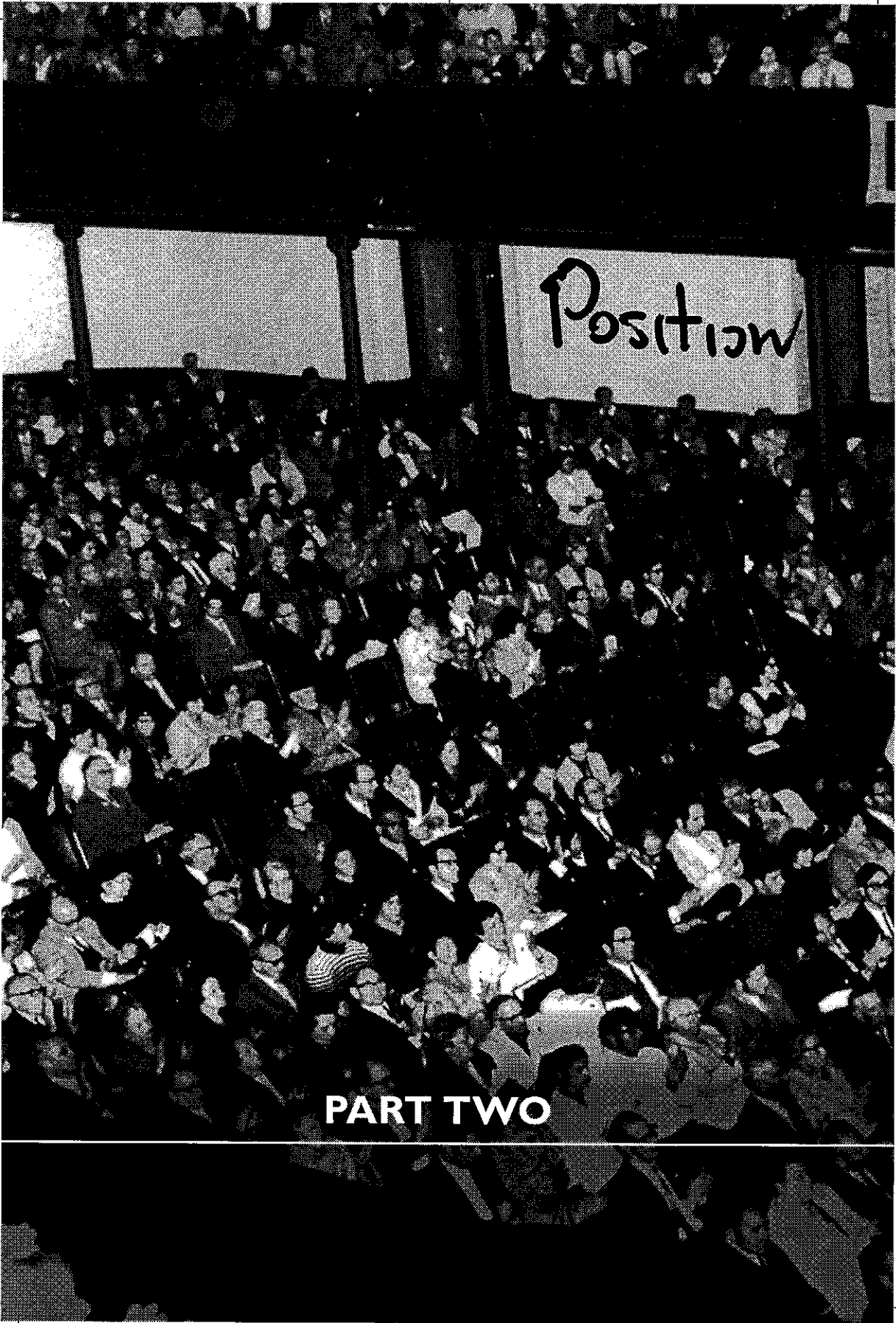
Ilse Robey resigned in 1966, after 24 years of communal service

Each of: Sydney D. Einfeld, MLA Esq.,
Max Freilich, Esq.,

Horace B. Newman, Esq., has over a period of many years occupied Senior Honorary Offices of the Board with Dignity and Distinction and have by their Diligence and Ability and Dedication furthered the interest of Jewry in many spheres and have represented the Jewish Community with World Jewry, as a result of which the Reputation and standing of the Community in this State has been Enhanced and Improved: The Executive and Members of the Board desire to honour the said persons by appointing them the first Honorary Life Members of the Board.¹²⁰

In the same year Ilse Robey also submitted her resignation which the Board accepted with regret. She had given a total of 24 years of service to the community, three with the New South Wales Congregational Advisory Board and 21 with the Board of Deputies itself. The Board passed a motion, placing on record 'its very great appreciation and sincere thanks for all the services which Mrs Robey has rendered to the Board and the community during her incumbency'.¹²¹ Mrs Robey was replaced by Marie Lutman who only served the Board until the end of the year when she resigned to travel overseas.

In this way, 1966 marked a watershed in the Board's history. The original leaders, both the lay and the professional, stepped down and a new generation took over. By this time the procedures of the Board were well established and it had developed a good reputation as the voice of New South Wales Jewry. A clear forum for the community's leadership had been created and the Board had played an important role, particularly in the areas of public relations and defending oppressed Jewry across the world. It had also made a valuable contribution to community development, particularly with the creation of the King David School and in its efforts to encourage greater unity in the area of kashrut. One vital issue which had not been resolved was that of providing adequate funding for the Board's activities, although the seeds for greater cooperation had been laid with the creation of a sub-committee to deal with this issue. However, it was the Six Day War of 1967 and the establishment of the Joint Communal Appeal after the war that was to really change the community and the Board. These momentous events will be discussed in the next section.



PART TWO



WATERSHED YEARS

Sophie Caplan

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