




CHAPTER FIVE

A PERIOD OF CHANGES

The year 1967 was a watershed in the evolution of the NSW Jewish community and indeed also in the history of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

The mounting anxiety which Jewish people felt during 1966 and the first five months of 1967 as the leaders of the neighbouring Arab regimes, more and more raucously, called for the destruction of the State of Israel, made even those Jews who had previously not been conscious Zionists aware of how important the State of Israel was to them, and determined to help its survival. Each border incident had its resonance in the consciousness of the Australian Jewish community.

When, on 22 May 1967, the Egyptian ruler, Gamal Abdel Nasser, declared the blockade of the Straits of Tiran to all ships bound to or from Israel¹ this anxiety reached a climax. Israel had built up trade with several countries in East Africa and with others in the Far East, and with Australia and New Zealand, and its ships travelled regular routes between ports in East Africa, the Far East and Australia, which used the Red Sea by entering it through the Straits of Tiran. When the crisis of the Sinai campaign had been resolved in 1957, Israel had clearly stated in the Armistice agreement that re-imposition of the blockade by Egypt would be an act of war. As Moshe Dayan commented:



Not only the United States and other Maritime Powers, but Egypt too, fully understood that this was our position. On May 26, Nasser announced that Egypt intended to destroy Israel. Four days later, King Hussein placed Jordan's armed forces under Egyptian command. So did Iraq. Expeditionary units arrived from Kuwait and Algeria to add to the Egyptian strength in Sinai. By the opening days of June, Israel was threatened on all fronts by Arab armies vastly outnumbering us in troops, tanks, artillery and warplanes. To the world, Israel seemed doomed.²

The closure of the Straits to Israel's shipping was itself an act of war against Israel, striking it through its economy, and Jews in Australia held their breath to see what was going to happen. The Jewish leadership called for a moratorium on all entertainments in the community and also for the cancellation of annual appeal periods by various organisations whose turn it was, in favour of an emergency appeal for Israel. The whole emergency period which preceded what later became known as the Six Day War of June 1967, caused a response of unity of purpose among the Jews of NSW and common actions in which the Board of Deputies, and in particular its president, played a prominent part. In some ways, the period May-July 1967 marked a coming of age of the community roof-body, a coming of age made possible by the various changes which occurred in the previous few years.

These changes included the retirement of the long-time General Secretary, Ilse Robey, and of her chosen successor, the rebuilding of part of the Maccabean Hall as the NSW Jewish Community Centre, the retirement from the presidency of

the Board of Horace Newman, and of several others who had served on the Executive with him for two decades, the amendment of the constitution so that executive offices were filled for only one year at a time instead of three, the move by the Board into the Jewish Community Centre, and several others.

Ilse Robey had been the general secretary of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies since its inception in July 1945 and before that for three years of the NSW Jewish Congregational Advisory Board. She had served under Saul Symonds, Gerald de Vahl Davis and Horace Newman, and had served for a total of twenty two years when she decided, in late October 1964, that she wanted to work only four days per week and to begin training a successor.³



Barbara Benjamin, General Secretary 1966 - 1983
Barbara Benjamin, on left, at farewell to long-serving secretary,
Joyce Gordon in December 1988, with Executive Director Margaret Gutman
and former General Secretary, Ilse Robey

Barbara Benjamin applied for the position of assistant to the general secretary on 1 December 1964 and was appointed to start on 3 May 1965⁴ but she only stayed until the end of the year. Ilse Robey stayed on for another eighteen months until 29 April 1966 when her successor was Marie Lutman⁵ who was welcomed as general secretary in July 1966, but who left at the end of the year to travel to England.⁶ Barbara Benjamin re-applied for the job in November 1966 and started duties on 5 December 1966 at a commencing salary of \$52 per week.⁷ She was to serve the Board as general secretary until April 1983, when she retired to open a small women's dress shop in Mosman.

Barbara Olga Benjamin was born in Mosman, Sydney, on 13 March 1927, the only child of Maurice Samuel Benjamin and Esther Ethel Levey, both of old Australian Jewish families, connected to Sir Benjamin Benjamin of Melbourne and to Percy, Ernest and Hilda Marks, although her father was born in the USA.⁸

At the Board office, Barbara Benjamin served briefly under Horace Newman who retired in February 1967, then under Gerald Falk, Harry Goldstein, Maurice Allen, Sidney Muller, Robert Goot and Leslie Caplan, a larger number of different presidents than her predecessors.

At its inception, the Board was housed in a building at 243 Elizabeth Street, in the central business district of Sydney, opposite the Museum railway station between Liverpool and Bathurst Streets. This belonged to a part of the Protestant Church and the rent was very reasonable. Executive meetings were held in the office at lunchtime between 12.30pm and 2pm, which was very handy for those executive members who were businessmen and worked in the city and also for the general secretary who took minutes, but inconvenient for those who ran shops or who were employees or civil servants, or professionals with busy practices. In late October 1964 the contract was signed for the extension of the Maccabean Hall building, and its transformation into the NSW Jewish Community Centre and War Memorial, and on 27 October 1964 the first evening executive meeting took place at Darlinghurst Road. It was then that Ilse Robey first decided to retire as it would make her trip to work more complicated.⁹

During the building of the NSW Jewish Community Centre, the monthly plenum meetings, which had always been held in Darlinghurst, took place in the Brenner Hall of Central Synagogue in Bondi Junction for a period of fifteen months.¹⁰

The first executive meeting was held in the rebuilt centre at 140-146 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst on 12 July 1966 and the first plenum on 19 July 1966. The official opening of the NSW Jewish Community Centre and War Memorial was on 16 July by the Governor of NSW, Sir Roden Cutler.¹¹ The Board, instead of being isolated in Elizabeth Street, far from its constituents and other Jewish organisations, came to be in a building of which other floors were occupied by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, the State Zionist Council of NSW, the Sheltered Workshop, United Israel Appeal, and for some years, the Jewish National Fund, and later the *Australian Jewish Times*, as well as the yet to be founded Jewish Communal Appeal and Australia-Israel Publications, and for some years the Sydney Beth Din. Thus the Board, by moving its offices to Darlinghurst, found itself at the nerve centre of the NSW Jewish community. This was an advantage for its staff which could communicate easily with the staffs of the other Jewish organisations and for those who needed to call at more than one community office during the one visit. Parking was never very convenient and the area at various times was very close to the red light district, but it truly became the centre of Sydney Jewry.

Horace Bohmer Newman, who had been president of the Board for nearly thirteen and a half years, decided to retire early in 1967. By 1966 he was tired and ailing, and on 11 October 1966 he announced that he would not stand for president again. He was 77 years old at his retirement and suffering from the early stages of cancer of the lymph glands.¹²

The generally agreed candidate at that juncture was Victor Moss Smith, born in London, who had risen to the rank of Lt Colonel in the British Army during World War II. He had been the president of the North Shore Synagogue and had commissioned the building of the synagogue. He was also president of the Kashruth Commission and of the Federation of Orthodox Synagogues in NSW.¹³ He had

also just spent three years as a most successful chairman of the Public Relations Committee and impressed all those who came into contact with him.¹⁴ Unfortunately, on 24 December 1966, Victor Smith was found to have inoperable terminal cancer, and two weeks later he had a relative inform Horace Newman that he had to regretfully withdraw his candidacy for the presidency.¹⁵

An alternative candidate waiting in the wings was Maurice Allen, a solicitor, who had in 1960 taken the presidency of the NSW Junior Board of Deputies and since early 1961, had been a member of the Executive of the Board as chairman of the Committee for Communal Integration and Overseas Jewry. In 1961 Maurice Allen had also become one of the fifteen bank guarantors for the Board of Deputies account. Allen's earlier activities within the community had been more controversial. In 1945, after his discharge from the Australian army, Maurice Allen became the foundation chairman of a group called the Jewish Unity Committee, which later became the Sydney Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism, and developed close links with the much more prominent Melbourne Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism. Though the Sydney Council eventually became a constituent member of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies in its first decade, some of its activities remained a source of controversy within the Board.¹⁶ Its leaders sometimes took the initiative in public relations activities which the executive of the Board believed should be its prerogative, and this had led to initiatives by the Board executive to curb the Council's activities. From 1949 to 1951 the Council had taken the initiative in protests to the Australian government about its plan to foster large scale German immigration. At times the Board and the ECAJ had not disapproved these initiatives, but then it was felt that such protests should be made through proper channels, that is the elected representatives of the community, which was the Board. In 1952 matters were not helped when the Council did not protest against the Prague trials of Jewish communists accused of treason. It seemed as though the Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism did not condemn antisemitism from the Russian camp. By 1966 the Sydney Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism had virtually ceased to exist, and so, in late July 1966 it applied to disaffiliate from the Board.¹⁷

Although Maurice Allen had been one of the original deputies on 29 July 1945 as a representative of the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), also now defunct, he was still seen as a somewhat dangerous radical who should not be allowed to take the reins of the NSW Jewish community as president of the Board. So, during January 1967 Horace Newman and others used their best powers of persuasion to urge another executive member of the Board to put forward his candidacy for the presidency. This was Gerald Yedidiah Falk who, after becoming chairman of the Public Relations committee of the board from 1961 to 1963 inclusive, had been elected the Honorary Secretary in 1964 and was still serving in that position at the beginning of 1967.¹⁸

Gerald Y Falk was the second son of Rabbi Leib Falk and his wife Fanny. He was born in 8 July 1918 in Plymouth, England, and came to Australia with his parents in 1922, when his father came to take up the post of second minister of the Great Synagogue in Sydney. Rabbi Falk had served in Palestine for a few years as Chaplain to the Royal Fusiliers Jewish Legion Battalions during World War I, and in Australia he also served as Chaplain of the Australian Military Forces Eastern Command.

Gerald, who was educated at Sydney Boys' High School, joined the Australian Citizens Military Forces at the age of eighteen in 1936, attaining the rank of sergeant. When war was declared, Gerald joined up and was commissioned as lieutenant in the Australian Army. He served continuously in the army throughout World War II until 1946. On discharge, he was promoted to the rank of substantive captain and was awarded the Efficiency Medal.¹⁹



Billie and Sydney Einfeld with Gerald and Joyce Falk

After leaving school, he had joined Australian General Electric Pty Ltd and studied Electrical and Illuminating Engineering at the Sydney Technical College, then in Ultimo. Soon after his demobilisation from the army, he started his own business, Planned Lighting Company Pty.Ltd. In February 1954, he married Joyce Lazarus at the Great Synagogue, and they had two children, a son Antony, and a daughter Jaclyn.

From his return to civilian life onward, Gerald Falk became active in the Sydney Jewish community, initially in the NSW Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women's Association (NAJEX) and in the NSW Jewish War Memorial where, from 1953 onward, he held a variety of honorary positions ranging from council member to honorary treasurer and from 1957 to 1963, president of the NSW Jewish War Memorial. As such, he was one of the initiators and chairman of the Rebuilding Committee of the NSW Jewish Community Centre.

Falk had originally joined the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies in May 1953 as a NAJEX deputy until March 1954, but later came back and stayed on as a deputy to the end of his life. In March 1957 he had become president of the NSW Jewish War Memorial until 1963, after several years as honorary treasurer of that organisation. He was a man with a creative mind and initiator of new projects.

In 1961 he had defeated Maurice Allen for the important chairmanship of the Public Relations Committee of the Board, and he kept that post until early 1964 when he was elected honorary secretary unopposed. Now, Horace Newman came to persuade Gerald Falk that, Victor Smith being unavailable, he should stand for the presidency of the Board. Horace Newman had often found himself opposed to Maurice Allen in the days of the Sydney Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism, and despite the fact that Maurice was now middle aged and also an ex-serviceman, Newman felt that what he saw as Allen's left-wing views made him an unsuitable candidate for the presidency of the Board. After all, despite the disappearance of McCarthyism in the 1960s, the United States Government continued to refuse all Maurice Allen's applications for an American visitor's visa.²⁰

In 1967 nomination lists for the executive of the Board were published in the Jewish press and it became clear to all its readers that Gerald Falk was the candidate for the presidency who had the accolade of the retiring office-bearers, whereas Maurice Allen, who since early 1963 had been the chairman of the Communal Integration and Overseas Jewry Committee and had also, over the previous two years, carried for many months the acting chairmanship of the Constitutional and Standing Orders Committee, first during Maurice Isaacs' absence overseas, then after his resignation, was left as the outside candidate.²¹ His protests at this blatant indication of who was the favoured candidate of the establishment resulted, a few months later, in a constitutional amendment proposed by Marcus Einfeld, the new Constitutional Committee chairman, that nominators' and seconders' names no longer be published.²²

At the elections on 21 February 1967, Gerald Y Falk, the candidate of the retiring office-bearers, was elected president, and Maurice Allen with Harry S. Goldstein, the previous honorary treasurer, were both elected vice-presidents. Zygmunt Nebenzahl, who had been chairman of the Finance Committee a few years earlier, defeated Sam J. Vandersluis as honorary treasurer, and Bernard Levy, a young solicitor, defeated Ted Whitgob as honorary secretary. Altogether, the Board of Deputies elections in February 1967 signalled a change of leadership, with several new young executive members gaining office, and other long-serving executive members stepping down from office at the same time as Horace Newman.

On 25 October 1966, it had been proposed and resolved that Horace Newman, as well as two other long-serving Board executive members would become Honorary Life Members of the Board Executive - that is, they would stay members of the executive without portfolio, even though they no longer had to stand for election. In that way, their services and advice would never be lost to the Board executive during their lifetime, but younger deputies would be able to fill places on the executive without making older leaders feel unwanted. To ensure that honorary life members would not become too dominant a group, a limit of six honorary life members at any one time was chosen. In fact, during the first fifty years of the Board's existence, the number of living honorary life members never exceeded three.²³







Executive in session under Gerald Falk's presidency

From left to right: Dr Hanns Wachtell, Zygmunt Nebenzahl, S. Weber, Ted Whitgob, Barbara Benjamin (General Secretary, obscured), Gerald Falk, Harry S. Goldstein, Marcus Einfeld, Ken Symonds and Dr Joachim Schneeweiss.

The other two executive members who became honorary life members of the Board executive on 25 October 1966 were Max Freilich and the Hon. Sydney David Einfeld MLA. Max Freilich, who had lost his vocal chords to cancer some years before had found it increasingly difficult to communicate with the plenum and his primary communal commitment for some years had been to the United Israel Appeal.

Sydney Einfeld had lost his seat as a member of the House of Representatives at the federal election in December 1963, but had been elected as the State Member for the Bondi electorate in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales in November 1965. From then on he ceased to play an active part on the Board, although he was still a vice-president in 1966, but his role became more that of a sounding board for various initiatives and his advice on sensitive political issues was sought by the executive for years to come, even when night time sittings of the Legislative Assembly precluded his attendance at Board executive and plenum meetings.



In February 1967, Sydney Einfeld's brother, Lawrence Einfeld, replaced Victor Smith as chairman of the important Public Relations Committee, and Sydney's only son, Marcus Einfeld, a young lawyer, took up the portfolio of chairman of the Constitutional and Standing Orders Committee. Thus the name of Einfeld continued for some years to play a key role in the affairs of the Board.



When Gerald Falk became president, he initiated the recording of attendances at executive meetings at the start of executive minutes, so that the role of the Einfelds is clearly visible. By the beginning of 1967 elections to the Board for both General Franchise deputies and for deputies representing organisations had become more flexible. The expensive and cumbersome previous system which required close perusal of 'effective membership lists' of constituent organisations had been jettisoned in favour of a more trusting and less time-consuming system. Over the next few years Marcus Einfeld, in his role as Constitutional chairman, would continue to fine tune the Board's Constitution and make it more responsive to democratic demands of the community.

Other executive members elected in February 1967 were Lou Rose for Press and Publications; Ted Whitgob for Finance; Dr Hanns H Wachtell for Communal Integration and Overseas Jewry; Isaac Norman Goodman for Education, (a portfolio which had been left vacant the previous year after the demise of Edgar Newman in October 1965); and Frank Marks for Jewish Youth Activities. After some years a Social Activities chairman was again elected in the person of Vera Cohen, the long-time leader of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) who was to organise the annual dinner dance of the Board and any cocktail parties or dinners in honour of visiting personalities which the Board might see fit to sponsor.²⁴

Although Dr Lotte Fink had served as Overseas Jewry Committee chairman from early 1955 to her death on 3 June 1960, no other woman had chaired any committee since then, although Vera Cohen had already played a part previously in the Board's social activities.



Lou Rose, the Press and Publications chairman, had conceived the idea in 1964, as an ordinary deputy, of an information bulletin to be sent to all deputies, containing committee reports and interesting articles or snippets from overseas Jewish publications. Although the idea met with approval, its execution was postponed to 1965 for financial reasons and then to March 1966, when it first appeared with the agenda for the March plenum meeting and committee reports. Within a few weeks proposals were made for the information bulletin to include the previous plenum meeting minutes, and also what ordinary deputies other than executive members had said.²⁵ The publication of the Information Bulletin (from here onwards IB.) was another step in the democratisation of the Board, making ordinary deputies, who may have missed a meeting, aware of what issues had been dealt with and what decisions reached, and also being an instrument to disseminate news from overseas communities and their concerns by reprinting important short articles from a range of Jewish journals.

Two new initiatives of the new executive were firstly Maurice Allen's proposal to conduct a survey of NSW Jewry for the purpose of establishing, not only demographic criteria on which to base decisions for the community, but also to get a profile of community attitudes. Discussions were undertaken with Prof Sol Encel, Professor of Sociology at the University of NSW, with a view to researchers, under his guidance, undertaking this sociological survey. The second initiative was Lou Rose's endeavour to design a pocket-sized communal directory or calendar. He also undertook, together with Ted Whitgob, to have the Information Bulletin registered as a periodical to make postage costs less onerous.²⁶

NSW JEWISH COMMUNITY EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE EMERGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE MAKES THE FOLLOWING URGENT ANNOUNCEMENT:

1. \$1,000,000 TARGET IS PROCLAIMED FOR THE EMERGENCY APPEAL IN NSW

Emergency Appeal targets have been set every Jewish Community in the world. The Australian target demanded of us is \$4,000,000.

2. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT CRISIS ARE INCALCULABLE AND BEAR NO RELATION TO NORMAL APPEAL STANDARDS

Those who have already given to the Appeal, must re-examine their donation in the light of this demand upon us.

3. The Emergency Appeal Committee has been charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the contribution from each of the 7,000 families required to raise the target of \$1,000,000 shall be equitably distributed throughout the Jewish community.

4. TOKEN CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH BEAR NO RELATION TO THE INCOME OR ASSETS OF THE CONTRIBUTING FAMILY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS ADDRESSED TO EVERYONE WHO STANDS UP TO BE COUNTED AS A JEW!

SIGNED BY: Gerald Y. Falk, President, NSW Jewish Community Emergency Committee; President NSW Jewish Board of Deputies; Alon Blum, Hon. Secretary, State Zionist Council of NSW; Mrs. B. Cohen, ASE, National President, National Council of Jewish Women of Australia; The Hon. Margaret Davis, M.P., Ph.C., M.L.C., S. D. Einfield, M.A., Deputy President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry; Bernard Ferster, President, State Zionist Council of NSW; Max Freilich, President, United Israel Appeal; H. S. Goldstein, President, Australian Federation of Jewish Ex-Service Associations; The Hon. Asher Joel, OBE, M.L.C., L. Klein, Chairman, United Israel Appeal, NSW; Mrs. A. Kessler, President, Australian Federation of WIZO; S. Muller, President, District Grand Lodge No. 21 of Australia and NZ; H. B. Newman, Councillor, Executive Council of Australian Jewry; L. Rogovin, Vice-Chairman, Zionist Youth Council; Victor Salth, President, Federation of Orthodox Synagogues; Max Wassner, President, Jewish National Fund of Australia and NZ.

Every Jewish home will be visited on SUN., JUNE 18, 1967

OPERATION SHALOM

EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR ISRAEL

OPERATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

• **UPPER NORTH SHORE**

LINDFIELD SYNAGOGUE, TREATTS ROAD, LINDFIELD
Dr. H. Dresdner Day 89-1275; Night 44-2615, 49-2447

• **LOWER NORTH SHORE**

CREMORNE SYNAGOGUE, 10 YEO STREET, NEUTRAL BAY
Mr. M. Mansell Day 29-5184; Night 90-4283, 96-4800

• **WESTERN SUBURBS**

STRATHFIELD SYNAGOGUE, 19 FLORENCE STREET, STRATHFIELD
Mr. A. Shaw Day 642-1727; Night 642-1727, 642-0351

• **EASTERN SUBURBS**

ZONE I: COOGEE SYNAGOGUE, 121 BROOK ST., COOGEE
Mr. K. H. Wiener Day 27-6020; Night 92-8287

ZONE II: SCOUT HALL, 2nd JUDEAN, WAIROA AVENUE, NORTH BONDJ

Mr. M. H. Goldberg Day 28-6146, 30-5354; Night 37-0471, 74-8704

ZONE III: SOUTH HEAD SYNAGOGUE, 666 OLD SOUTH HEAD ROAD, ROSE BAY

Dr. L. Bernstein 36-5816, 36-5126

• Voluntary workers are required for "OPERATION SHALOM". Please phone your area liaison officer as shown above.

Public Advertisement for the Emergency Appeal, 1967

When the emergency regarding Israel arose in May 1967, the executive officers of the Board were immediately involved, particularly Gerald Falk, who became president of the Emergency Appeal for Israel, inaugurated during the emergency period from mid-May to mid-June 1967. The Appeal itself and other matters connected with the emergency period which included the coordination of seventy-three medical volunteers to be sent from Sydney to Israel took Gerald Falk to national prominence within the Jewish community. There was the organisation of a huge solidarity rally for Israel, the largest ever in the history of Sydney Jewry, bringing an estimated crowd of six thousand people to Central Synagogue.²⁷

But the emergency period had other consequences. The feelings of anxiety for the survival of the State of Israel, followed by the euphoria, as the swift victory of the Israel Armed Forces became apparent, led to a growth of communal solidarity not known since the dark days of World War II. The local organisations which were to have had appeal periods from mid-May to late June 1967 when the Emergency Appeal was still operative, needed to replenish their coffers or to cease operating. The solidarity and the work during the emergency period led the leaders of different organisations of the Sydney Jewish community to try again an experiment which had been tried from 1947 for a few years under the name of Community Chest, but which had then failed. It was launched under the name of Joint Communal Appeal, or JCA, in August 1967. Gerald Falk, together with Louis Klein, then chairman of the United Israel Appeal in NSW, who had been joint leaders of the Emergency Appeal for Israel, each played a key part. As well, other present and past leaders of the Board were involved, and others who, coming to the fore through their work for JCA, were to be future leaders of the Board.

Apparently the original meeting was called at the suggestion of Sydney D. Einfeld, MLA, with sixty-five representatives of ten communal organisations attending. An elaborate leadership system evolved which sought to involve as many people as possible, but all were men. There were four honorary presidents: Sydney D Einfeld, Horace Newman, Max Freilich and Sidney Muller, then leader of B'nai B'rith in NSW. Gerald Falk became president of the Standing Committee, while E.H. Lesnie became appeal chairman and Louis Klein and Maurice Allen co-chairmen, with the honorary treasurers, Sam Karpin, a deputy and president of Wolper Jewish Hospital, Harry S. Goldstein and Cecil Whitmont of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS). This plethora of leaders must have made it difficult to know who did what job, but it reassured the community that a majority of well-known people led the JCA, and it gave those with titles a sense of involvement. Shortly after its inception, Paul Torok, a former Hungarian immigrant, became the first paid Executive Director of the Joint Communal Appeal.

Ten organisations were the original participants and beneficiaries of the Joint Communal Appeal: the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, the Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home, the Isabella Lazarus Children's Home, the Wolper Jewish Hospital, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Moriah College, King David School, the Hillel Foundation of NSW and the NSW Board of Jewish Education. Shortly after the creation of JCA the presidents of each of these organisations were grouped in what was at first known as the 'Presidents' Club', later changed to Council of Presidents, which sought to ensure that each president of a benefiting organisation would play

his part in involving his office bearers, his committee and his members in support of the Joint Communal Appeal. The JCA was presented as being not only useful and valuable, but bringing prestige to every participating organisation and its office bearers by show-casing its aims and its achievements in the publicity for the fundraising campaign. The guest speakers for the three original dinners were Sir William McKell, a former Governor General, E.G. Whitlam QC MP, then leader of the Federal Opposition, and the Hon. William McMahon, both future prime ministers.²⁸

The initial JCA campaign of 1967, using donor lists augmented by those who had first made themselves known during the Emergency fundraising campaign for Israel, was a door-knock campaign in September 1967, using JNF district collection points and JNF voluntary collectors. The unity and wholehearted support of many community members was remarkable, and even the very first JCA Appeal campaign brought results which were better than expected. The door-knock campaign was followed by three dinners for big donors. The dinners brought disappointing results, but even so by 24 October 1967 Maurice Allen could announce that pledges to the value of \$60,000 had been made.²⁹ Already in early August it had been decided that the allocation of funds would have to be decided by a committee completely independent of the Appeal directorate.³⁰ The persons chosen for the Allocations Committee were men who had retired from active leadership of the participating organisations, or who were associated with non-participating organisations. All those chosen had been actively involved with the Sydney Jewish community. One of the early members of the Allocations Committee was Sidney Muller, then president of B'nai B'rith District 21 of Australia & New Zealand, who was later to be closely involved with the Board.

For the Board the creation of JCA meant an absolute change from dependence on collecting small sums from individual supporters, whose numbers varied from year to year, and from sometimes recalcitrant constituent organisations whose executives often dragged their feet in paying their dues to the Board, to the certainty of a basic yearly income from the JCA, with which to pay staff and rent, and to plan new initiatives for the community. The spectre of the days in the late 1950s, when Horace Newman would lay out 100 pounds from his own income to pay secretarial staff wages and rent, could now be laid to rest.³¹ Just as to an individual the certainty of a regular income spells independence and the ability to concentrate on creative activities, so the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies now found itself able to promote activities it could not have contemplated earlier. Its initial allocation was 4.7% of the total JCA distribution.³²

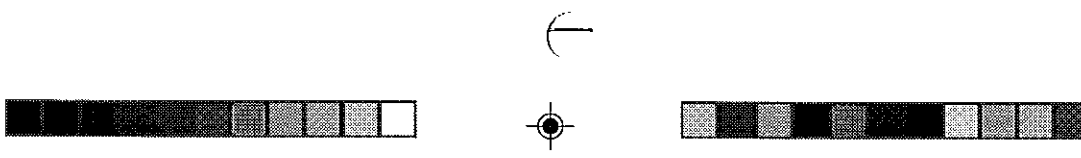
The door-knock campaign continued with a second door knock Appeal on Sunday 29 January 1968, and eventually the amount raised that first year was \$250,000. One of the strengths of the JCA was that it was able to be tax-deductible. It also helped to eliminate many smaller appeals from individual organisations, which meant that donors no longer had to budget for a plethora of donations to each of the community's key organisations which they wanted to support, but could make a larger, more substantial donation which would be allocated with as much fairness and far-sightedness as possible by a small body of community honorary workers who no longer played a key role in any individual organisations, but who had presumably acquired some wisdom in their previous positions. This became known

as the Allocations Committee, and decided not only on allocations to each constituent organisation according to its needs, but also on principles which direct a certain percentage of fund allocations to each of the various sectors of the community's vital functions - education, general welfare, care of the aging, public relations affecting the community. Over the years one or two organisations have dropped out, such as the War Memorial which had no further need of fundraising, some amalgamated, and many others joined. Within two years of its foundation, the JCA altered its name, but not its initials, to Jewish Communal Appeal. The following additional organisations joined as constituents of JCA, years of joining in brackets: Masada College (1968); Mount Sinai College (1981); The Emanuel School (1985); Shalom College (1973) which in 1992 amalgamated with the Hillel Foundation of NSW; the Australian Jewish Historical Society (1978); and the National Community Centre in Canberra (1968). The National Council of Jewish Women also joined in 1969 as a trustee, not a beneficiary organisation.³³

The year 1967 brought other changes. In February 1960 the King David School opened its doors at 134 Old South Head Road, Bellevue Hill, in the grounds of Hillel Kindergarten, having been founded under the aegis of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies in 1959, following a crisis in Moriah College in 1958.³⁴ King David School had as its first chairman, Max Freilich, and as its deputy-chairman from early 1961, John Isidore Einfeld, who then became de facto executive chairman and led the school to its peak of achievement. Both men had been active on the executive of the Board. On 17 May 1963 the school moved to Beth Zion, 17 Albert Street, Edgecliff, a building made available by the NSW State Zionist Council, and it remained there until December 1967.³⁵



John Einfeld with Paul Cullen and Gerald Y. Falk



Lacking a directly affiliated pre-school kindergarten, the school grew but slowly and faced financial problems in the days before state aid to non-government schools. The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies frequently came to the aid of the school when it faced dire financial problems itself, but no doubt its leadership felt responsible for the school's continued progress.³⁶ By 1967 the school reached its peak enrolment of 83 pupils and community leaders were beginning to worry about its survival. John Einfeld and the leaders of Moriah College engaged in negotiations throughout 1967 and in December 1967 announced the amalgamation of King David School with Moriah College.³⁷ The name King David School was kept for the infant school division of Moriah College, which purchased a property at Strickland Street, Rose Bay, to house this part of the school. The property at 17 Albert Street, Edgecliff, reverted to the State Zionist Council of NSW and was later sold to a Catholic educational body. The amalgamation of King David School with Moriah College meant that the Board divested itself of its responsibility for the school, but John Einfeld went on to the executive of Moriah College and later served as its president for several terms in the 1970s.

Until 1967 executive members of the Board were elected for three year terms, and it often happened that after the first year some executive members found they had to spend increasingly long times on trips overseas, at a time when travel by ship made overseas voyages lengthier than nowadays. There were also withdrawals from executive positions for reasons of increased professional commitments or changes in family circumstances. Due to lack of provision for by-elections of executive members, some positions were left vacant for up to fifteen months at a time. The great esteem in which the early presidents were held militated against any overt agitation to change this state of affairs. Thus, it made for a salutary change when annual elections for executive positions were held, since office-bearers could predict better their movements for one year at a time.

Gerald Falk also instituted a formal Annual General Meeting and Annual Report by the president and by chairmen of committees, which Horace Newman had spurned, believing that his achievements spoke for themselves.³⁸ The first AGM was held on Sunday morning, 25 February 1968, at the NSW Jewish War Memorial Centre, 146 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst. As well as these reports, the Annual Report listed the attendance records of all deputies, executive members, general franchise deputies and deputies representing constituent bodies, but not those of honorary life members.³⁹

In view of the fact that only a few years earlier three plenum meetings had to be cancelled in one year due to lack of a quorum, this innovation was a most useful one as it made communal voters aware of who was, and who was not, taking seriously the role of deputy. Leave given for overseas travel was always noted.⁴⁰

Gerald Falk, always mindful of the benefits of official accolade from the outside community, also instituted official calls by the Board's executive on the Governor of NSW, then Sir Roden Cutler VC, and on the Premier of NSW, then the Honourable Robert Askin, respectively in April and in March 1967. Indeed, one of the gradual indicators of change in the status of the Sydney Jewish community between 1945 and 1967 was in the inclusion of the Board's president on the invitation lists of major local non-Jewish community institutions, such as universities and

Government House garden parties. Reciprocally, the annual cocktail party given by the Board, jointly with the NSW State Zionist Council, became the showcase of the status of the NSW Jewish community with politicians, church dignitaries, industry leaders, journalists and other ethnic communities' leaders.

A result of the anxieties felt by Sydney Jewry during the Six Day War was an increase of 564 family unit subscribers to the Board, a total of over 2,000 families.⁴¹ This increase was not permanent as demonstrated over the next few years, but it signalled a growing acceptance of the Board as the titular governing body of the community.⁴² Never again would a Board plenum need to be cancelled due to lack of a quorum. Also, due to the communal cooperation which arose as a result of the Six Day War, the NSW Council of B'nai B'rith, the fraternal lodge and charitable organisation which, at that time, was still a core organisation mainly for Jews of German, Austrian and Czechoslovakian origins, applied for affiliation to the Board for the first time, and was accepted. This would result in the next decades in two presidents, a vice-president, and one treasurer for the Board from the ranks of B'nai B'rith leadership.

The situation of Israel prior to the outbreak of the Six Day War caused a certain amount of sympathy from the general community which resulted in a majority of favourable press reports.⁴³ All the same, certain antisemitic publications kept up their usual vituperations and the Public Relations committee, under Lawrence Einfeld, was kept busy.⁴⁴ At the same time requests for the Board's panel of speakers to lecture outside organisations increased. Evidently, interest in factual information about Israel had risen, but also the level of anti-Israel and antisemitic printed attacks by university weeklies.⁴⁵ Members of the PR committee diligently followed this up with refutations, but these were amateur efforts.

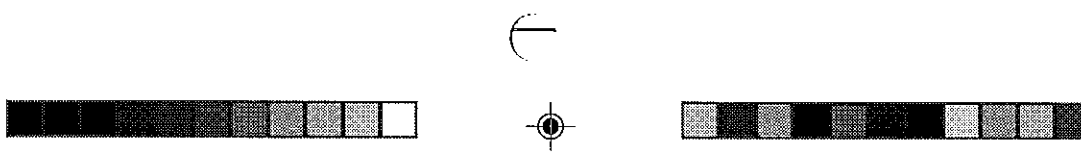
The reaction of the USSR government, soon followed by the governments of the other Warsaw-Pact countries, to Israel's victory in the Six Day War, in part to extinguish the enthusiasm of their own populations for Israel's swift victory, led to concern for the remaining Jews in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, as well as for the Jews in the Soviet Union. On 10 September 1967 a one-day 'mini-conference' was held in Sydney with two delegates from Melbourne and one from Brisbane, on the fate of the Jews who lived behind the Iron Curtain. It was felt that despite Isi Leibler's pioneer booklets on the fate of Soviet Jewry, the Australian Jewish Community as a whole was not sufficiently aware of the facts. The Executive of the Board endorsed the principle that the Board should support this cause. A small committee was to be set up to obtain all the facts and to inform the community through the Jewish press.⁴⁶ The immediate cause of concern had been the recent murder in Prague of Charles Jordan, representative of the US Joint Distribution Committee, a worldwide Jewish charitable organisation which had NGO status on world bodies.⁴⁷ Against the opposition of Lawrence Einfeld, the executive voted 9 to 3 to hold a protest demonstration in front of the Czechoslovakian Consulate in Sydney on 20 September 1967. It also voted for the establishment of a sub-committee from among the members of the Overseas Jewry committee chaired by Dr Hanns H Wachtell.⁴⁸

This was the first step in the establishment of the NSW Soviet Jewry Campaign which was to galvanise Sydney Jewry for over two decades until the actual fall of

the Soviet regime. While this may have started earlier in Victoria, principally due to the activities of Isi Leibler, NSW became equally active and later even provided some leaders for the Australian campaign. Sydney Jewish youth was immediately involved through the work of Leon Bryl, then Youth Activities chairman. Marcus Einfeld, then a young barrister, also became involved immediately, but the first shot in the campaign was publicly fired by Gerald Falk at a United Zionist Revisionist Organisation (UZRO henceforth), a right-wing party group, when he proposed a resolution deploring the treatment of Jews in the Soviet Union, the humiliations and the discriminating oppression to which they were subjected, and the hypocritical equation by the Soviet Union of activities of the State of Israel with those of the German Nazi regime during World War II. This was seconded by Gordon Hertzberg, a lifelong Labor supporter, and passed unanimously.⁴⁹



Marcus Einfeld, chairman of the Campaign for Soviet Jewry



The position of the Jews in the Soviet Union worsened after 1967. Inspired by the news of the Six Day War some Jews wished to emigrate. Already from the early 1960s onward some Jews in Moscow had started to assemble on certain Jewish festivals as a reaction to the suppression of Jewish culture and to demand the right to emigrate. This led to dismissal from their jobs, particularly if they were in professional positions and to the rise in self-awareness of Soviet Jews, some of whom started to study Hebrew and to practise the Jewish religion again. The more active Jews became dissidents, later also known as 'refuseniks' because their desire to emigrate was refused. Anatoly Sharansky, Ida Nudel, Professor Alexander Lerner and Professor Victor Brailovsky were among the best known of the refuseniks, all imprisoned in Siberia for some years for wanting to opt out of the Soviet State.

Nor was the treatment of Jews in Arab countries forgotten. Prodded by Aaron Aaron, the leader of Sephardi Jewry in NSW, the Board also started to act on behalf of Jews in Arab countries whose previously unfavourable situation had deteriorated in the wake of Israel's victory in the Six Day War, particularly in Syria. Lawrence Einfeld released material on their situation to the daily and the Sunday press in the hope of bringing this to the notice of the Australian public.⁵⁰ The Sephardi community was very anxious and threatened to act independently if the Board and the ECAJ would not act decisively by channelling their protests to the Australian government.⁵¹ The Sephardi community threatened to disaffiliate from the Board and briefly did so. But they were persuaded to return to the fold. As part of its response, the ECAJ initiated, and the Board disseminated through its affiliated bodies, a prayer to be said at the Passover seder in every home, which dedicated the 'Matzah of Hope' on behalf of oppressed Jewry in all countries, in particular Arab countries and Soviet-controlled countries. In subsequent years this prayer in Hebrew and in English was published every year in the Jewish press and became a part of the Seder ritual in those Australian Jewish homes which were conscious of their brethren overseas.⁵²

In addition, Gerald Falk took Reuben Aaron, younger brother of Aaron Aaron, and also a Sephardi leader, to the ECAJ Board of Management meeting in Melbourne on 27 March 1968 to persuade the ECAJ to take further positive action. A memorandum was sent to the Federal Ministries of External Affairs and to Immigration, asking their officials 'to make visas readily available to Jewish persons nominated for migration to Australia'.⁵³ It is not known what effect this had on immigration of Jews from Arab countries, if any, but there was in the early years after 1967 a trickle of new Jewish immigrants from Poland to Australia, due to anti-Jewish measures in Poland in 1968.⁵⁴

Despite the elation felt throughout the community at the more secure frontiers won by Israel, new concerns soon pre-occupied the Public Relations committee of the Board with the rise of an active New Left movement throughout the world, vociferously opposed to the State of Israel. Where previously antisemitic and anti-Zionist groups from the Right side of politics had concerned the Public Relations committee, now the New Left became an equal concern, particularly with its activities on university campuses.⁵⁵

The extreme Right, however, became very active in its publications with antisemitic articles, particularly in *Australian International News Review* (AINR for short), *Truth and Liberty* and *On the Beam*, as well as with publications printed in

English and posted from West Germany.⁵⁶ The community became indignant that the sole NSW distributor of a brand of kosher wine, then grown and widely used in Australia, advertised their other wines in *AINR*. The community-wide debate over this issue no doubt helped to popularise imported kosher wines.⁵⁷ It was also discovered that a very popular Sydney theatre restaurant which advertised in the *Australian Jewish Times*, had an owner who was closely involved with *AINR* and that another major Australian theatrical agency was proposing to import the grossly antisemitic Oberammergau Passion Play to Australia. In all these cases the Public Relations committee of the Board carefully investigated the facts and then worked to try to counteract the antisemitic promotions. The PR committee consisted not only of deputies with specific PR interests, but also succeeded in co-opting rabbis, journalists and leading personalities of the community.⁵⁸

In 1967 the Australian Nazi Party was also revived by Arthur Smith under the name Australian Nationalist Party, and Smith was busy addressing groups in an attempt to bolster his fairly modest membership. Lawrence Einfeld was anxious to keep quiet the fact that Smith was occupying a rostrum every Sunday at the Domain, for he feared demonstrations by hot-heads in the Jewish community.⁵⁹





Eventually, a number of Jews came to heckle Arthur Smith, resulting in an affray and the arrest of six Jewish persons in the Domain. ANP supporters had worn Nazi-type uniforms and this had enraged not only Jewish spectators, but also RSL groups which then still included many World War II veterans who had fought the Nazis.⁶⁰

A deputation to the then Premier, Robert Askin, to be led by S. D. Einfeld, was decided on, and a press statement released which included the following:

The provocation of the appearance of members of the National Socialist Party in full Nazi uniform, and others wearing swastika armbands denouncing and declaiming (sic) the democratic rights of the citizens of Australia and in particular, inciting hatred of the Jewish faith, has caused grave disquiet and mental stress, particularly among those members of the Jewish community who have themselves survived the horrors of the concentration camps, or those whose mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters were brutally murdered.

Whilst recognising that free speech is an important keynote of the Australian democratic way of life, the leaders of the Board of Deputies are seeking an early consultation with the Premier of NSW with the aim that this type of provocation will not be allowed to continue.⁶¹


A special fund was established to strengthen PR and anti-defamation work, including the proposed defence of the persons charged as a result of the Domain incident. It was ironical that the Jews who had protested against the wearing of Nazi uniforms in Sydney were the defendants in the court case and the pro-Nazi provocateurs were considered victims. The same week, antisemitic pamphlets were being distributed in front of the Sydney theatre where the film 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner', about an inter-racial romance culminating in marriage, was being shown. Eventually,




most of the defendants were discharged without conviction, but one, a Holocaust survivor who had lost all his family and who had also been a child partisan in Bielorussia, and who would show no contrition in the Court, was remanded for sentence at a later date. It was presumed that he would receive a fine. The Board executive found his behaviour unacceptable and felt that he should pay this fine himself, though they paid the costs of the defence.

This was not the only extraneous problem with which the Board had to deal at that time. The problem of the teaching of the Christian religion in NSW schools within the Social Studies Curriculum for primary schools had arisen already in 1962 when it was brought to the notice of the Board by Max D. Friedman. Over the next few years legal opinions were obtained from leading barristers to ascertain whether this syllabus was in accordance with religious freedom in Australian law. Other groups such as the Humanist Society were approached to ascertain whether their objections to the syllabus were congruent with the attitudes of the Jewish community to explore a joint challenge to what became known as the NSW Education Department Religious Syllabus. Action in this matter moved but slowly and Board Education chairmen came and went and one, Edgar S. Newman, died, while the matter was still under consideration.

In 1967 and 1968 action in this matter accelerated, but new developments in the field of NSW Jewish education eventually took the heat out of the matter. These will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.






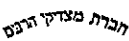






After the first year of his presidency, Gerald Falk could look back with great satisfaction at the achievements of his new team which, despite the turmoil of the backwash of the Six Day War, or perhaps because of the challenges created by these events, had successfully helped create the JCA, had achieved greater participation in the Board by more subscribers, and responded well in all areas from greater youth participation in the executive, to responsible Public Relations, and a democratisation of Board structures and forms.



Jca NEED 1% OF YOUR INCOME

For the following Organisations that gave up their Appeal Periods during the Israeli emergency

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH WELFARE SOCIETY  need \$60,000	ISABELLA LAZARUS CHILDREN'S HOME  need \$18,000	KING DAVID SCHOOL  need \$31,000	MORIAH WAR MEMORIAL COLLEGE  need \$40,000	N.S.W. JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES  need \$8,000
N.S.W. BOARD OF JEWISH EDUCATION  need \$40,000	N.S.W. JEWISH WAR MEMORIAL  need \$42,000	SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE JEWISH HOME  need \$22,000	WOLPER JEWISH HOSPITAL  need \$13,000	 Supported by the HILLEL FOUNDATION of N.S.W.

This guide represents 1% of your income

CONTRIBUTION	WEEKLY	INCOME P.A.
5 cents per organisation per week	50 cents	\$2,500
6 cents per organisation for week	60 cents	\$3,000
7 cents per organisation per week	70 cents	\$3,500
8 cents per organisation per week	80 cents	\$4,000
9 cents per organisation per week	90 cents	\$4,500
10 cents per organisation per week	\$1.00	\$5,000
12 cents per organisation per week	\$1.20	\$6,000
15 cents per organisation per week	\$1.50	\$7,500
20 cents per organisation per week	\$2.00	\$10,000
25 cents per organisation per week	\$2.50	\$12,500
30 cents per organisation per week	\$3.00	\$15,000
50 cents per organisation per week	\$5.00	\$20,000
75 cents per organisation per week	\$7.50	\$25,000
\$1.00 per organisation per week	\$10.00	over \$25,000

FULLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE

NSW JEWISH
JOINT COMMUNAL APPEAL

140-146, DARLINGHURST ROAD
 DARLINGHURST, N.S.W., 2010

Phone **31 6257**

JCA poster, 1967.

HARRY S. GOLDSTEIN, M.A.
— 'MR. COMMUNITY'

REPORT OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

into

JEWISH EDUCATION IN NEW SOUTH WALES



DETAIL

DEATH OF HORACE H. NEWMAN

Former President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and of the Jewish Association of Australia, Mr. Horace H. Newman, died in hospital last Friday at the age of 78 years.



**N.S.W. Jewry
demonstrates
its solidarity
with Soviet Jewry**