



CHAPTER EIGHT

A PREWAR REFUGEE AT THE HELM

When Maurice Allen formally stepped down as president of the Board on 28 March 1975, Sidney Muller was pressed to stand for the presidency and was elected. In March 1976 he wrote in his inaugural annual presidential report: 'When I was propelled into office in March in the shadow of Maurice Allen's early retirement from the presidency due to illness, I was just out of hospital after a serious accident and ill-prepared for some of the tasks ahead.' Indeed his presidency was not an easy progression, marred particularly in its last year by continuous criticisms by some deputies.

Sidney Muller was the first pre-World War II refugee to become president, and also the first president who had not been involved since the very early years of the Board but who had risen to leadership through the ranks of the Jewish fraternal service organisation, B'nai B'rith, of which he became NSW chairman from 1964 to 1967 and later president of District 21 Grand Lodge of Australia and New Zealand from 1967 to 1970. He joined the Board of Deputies in 1970 as the first ever B'nai B'rith representative.¹

Born Siegfried Mueller in Berlin on 27 April 1920, he was the only child of Franziska Bodinger and of Max Mueller, both parents originating in Eastern Galicia, the father in Buczacz, the mother in Strusow.² After schooling in Berlin to the age of sixteen, Siegfried had started an apprenticeship in optics, but was then dismissed on racial grounds. He then took up an electrical apprenticeship which lasted until his arrest with his father, as Polish Jews, on 26 October 1938. While Siegfried was released as stateless and given forty-eight hours to leave the country, his father was sent over the Polish frontier to Zbaczyn. His father eventually had to go back to Buczacz and perished there in late 1942, while Siegfried was able to smuggle himself across the German-Belgian border to find refuge in Antwerp. His mother joined him there. In Belgium Siegfried received a single landing permit for Australia in August 1939 and took a ship to Australia from London just before the outbreak of war, arriving in Sydney on 4 October 1939, where he later changed his name to Sidney Muller, following the pattern set by other refugee immigrants.

While his mother survived the war in hiding in Brussels thanks to Belgian righteous gentiles and was able to eventually join him in Sydney after the war, Sidney Muller was the only president of the Board to lose a close relative in the Holocaust. By chance on arrival he boarded with Beate and Hans Prerauer, later better known as Betty and Hilary Pryer, and became a member of the newly formed Temple Emanuel in Woollahra which catered to German Jewish refugees and in 1952 also became a member of B'nai B'rith Lodge Sir John Monash which had been started by Hilary and Betty Pryer. On 15 May 1941, Lag B'Omer, Sidney Muller and Ruth-Ursel Ehrlich, a German Jewish refugee nurse from Erfurt, were married in the Einfeld Lounge of the Maccabean Hall by Rabbi Max Schenk. The Temple Emanuel in Woollahra had not yet been built. They had two sons, Frank and Leslie. For several years Sidney Muller had to work for lower than basic wages as several employers

systematically defrauded new settlers. Eventually he studied for his local electrician's ticket and then for his contractor's ticket and set up as an electrical contractor in the Maroubra area in 1945.



Sidney Muller with Labor parliamentarian and future NSW Premier, Neville Wran

In 1975 Sidney Muller was a man of goodwill and some length of communal experience in the running of B'nai B'rith in which he had played a leading role, not only in Australia, but also internationally. In his first year as president the other office-bearers were Harry S. Goldstein and Louis Klein as vice-presidents, the honorary treasurer was Dr Hanns H. Wachtell, and Robert Goot was honorary secretary, a post he had held since March 1972, with Maurice Allen as immediate past-president. That year both Allen and Klein died in late July, and in March 1976 there were so many changes that in Muller's second year as president an almost entirely new slate of office-bearers and executive members was elected, with the exception of the still very young Robert Goot as the longest serving office-bearer. Wachtell was defeated by Severyn Pejsachowicz when he sought re-election as treasurer, and Harry Goldstein, though still active as a life member, gave up the vice-presidency. The new vice-presidents were Robert Goot, still under thirty, and Justin Jones, and the new honorary secretary was Irving Wallach, then still active as a leader in the Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS). In interviews in 1981 Sidney Muller took credit for having brought in and promoted those young office-bearers as well as executive members, Ben Apfelbaum and George Farkas who chaired the new and short-lived Planning Committee. Robert Goot was still in charge of the NSW Campaign for Soviet Jewry as well as the Overseas Jewry portfolio which also included, for the first time in several years, Ellis Jacobs in charge of a sub-

committee on Jews in Arab Lands. The more experienced committee chairmen included Hannelore Kandy who held Foreign Affairs in 1975 and who in 1976 took over Education from Rabbi Mattis Kantor, and also Joe Newhouse who ran Community Relations. Justin Jones was chairman of the important Public Relations Committee, after taking this over in March 1975 from Lawrence Einfeld. In 1976 Associate Professor Graham de Vahl Davis, only child of the late Gerald de Vahl Davis, also joined the executive for the first time, without portfolio, but half-way through the Board year, took leave of absence to go on sabbatical leave overseas.

A number of new issues dominated the three years of Sidney Muller's presidency. The new Board constitution which had been mooted at the time of James Spigelman's chairmanship of the Constitution and Standing Orders Committee, had never been completed, and soon after his election, Sidney Muller commissioned Robert Goot to prepare a new constitution embodying a more democratic Board structure by providing for the number of general franchise deputies to be equal in number at all times to deputies representing constituent organisations, by increasing their number when constituents increased. Old paternalistic provisions of the original constitution relating to the Board's supervision of the election of a constituent body's deputies were entirely removed, and the constitution marked a new democratic approach to Jewish community affairs. The old constitution had still spoken of Palestine as the Jewish homeland. Those references were changed. In order to stop the adoption of this new constitution from swamping other Board business, three special meetings for this purpose were held on 30 September, 21 October and on 25 November 1975.³ The new constitution took effect on 1 March 1976.⁴

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN NSW GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

In 1975 the old issue of religious education in NSW government schools, which had lain dormant for eight years was revived by the now Liberal state government under Sir Eric Willis as Minister for Education. He formed a committee to consider religious education in these schools, which comprised representatives from the Education Department, the Teachers' Federation, the Churches and a representative of the Jewish community who was nominated by the Board of Deputies. This was Lionel Link, then Director of the NSW Board of Jewish Education. This committee was given the following terms of reference:

1. the place of religion in education in government schools in NSW.
2. the Public Instruction Act - its background and consequence, with particular reference to general religious instruction in schools.
3. the present position of religion in education in government schools.
4. recommendations for future action.⁵

Interested parties were invited to present written submissions and the Jewish community prepared a submission on which three executive members of the Board, plus three executive members of the NSW Board of Jewish Education, had worked. The Jewish community was of the opinion that what was presented under the innocuous nomenclature of General Religious and Moral Education, which was

already taught in some primary schools, was in fact religious education that “was substantially Christian in spirit, content and presentation and did not take account of the sensibilities of non-Christian groups”.⁶ To require government school teachers to teach such a subject, and to require pupils to study such a subject, was an infringement of the basic human rights of the teacher, the pupil and the parent.⁷

The Jewish community was anxious to continue the legal right, obtained in 1880 through the Public Instruction Act, to enter public schools and to be able to teach Jewish subjects through the so-called Right of Entry classes administered by the NSW Board of Jewish Education at set times when Jewish teachers taught Jewish religious topics while other denominations sent their teachers or ministers of religion to teach their own pupils. They therefore asked that the status quo be maintained, but that the State, through its agencies, help this system by affording conditions and facilities in each school to allow the visiting religious educator to operate in the most efficient manner. A plea was also given for the possibility of assisting religious groups to equip their teachers for this form of religious education. In other words, a plea for assistance with teacher training.⁸ The plea seems to have been successful as the status quo for Right of Entry classes was preserved and assistance for training of Jewish Studies teachers was given through the Teachers’ Guild and later the University of Sydney within a few years.

In 1975 Sidney Muller undertook to correct an imbalance in the field of Jewish education financing by setting up a Council for Jewish Education in Schools through which funds could be channelled to all Jewish educational institutions, both full-time and part-time. He charged John Einfeld to prepare the constitutional underpinnings for such a body. When this took more time than the more impatient younger executive members were prepared to tolerate, they sought to appoint another person to the task. Muller soon quashed the move. Eventually the Council for Jewish Education in Schools, vested in the ECAJ and administered by the Board, was set up to most people’s satisfaction.⁹ It meant that all the day schools as well as the NSW Board of Jewish Education could benefit from tax-deductible donations through the Council.

THE ISSUE OF JEWISH ETHNICITY

In December 1975 the Jewish Radio Hour was inaugurated for a trial period on 2EA, Sydney’s ethnic radio station. The initiative for this had originally come from the Jewish Folk Centre, a constituent of the Board and more particularly Severyn Pejsachowicz, who had been a long-term deputy representing the Folk Centre and who became in March 1976 the honorary treasurer of the Board for the first of two terms. Severyn was the coordinator of the Jewish Hour for several years and with Mrs Aliza Siderowitz one of the main Yiddish broadcasters. Margaret Gutman, daughter of Zygmunt Nebenzahl, later to become executive director of the Board, was in charge of English language broadcasting in the Jewish Hour, which soon became a popular listening attraction and a way of quickly informing the community of forthcoming events as well as giving them worldwide news of Jewish interest.¹⁰ Pejsachowicz had been involved with Ethnic Radio from the beginning and had applied for a Jewish Hour to be included in June 1975. But some sectors of the

Sydney Jewish community were adamantly opposed to the Jewish Hour on radio, partly because it was positing Jews as ethnics and partly because the early broadcasts in Hebrew and in Yiddish did not seem to them proper for a community which largely also spoke English. The president of Temple Emanuel, Morris Newman, and its minister, Rabbi Rudolf Brasch, wrote letters expressing their dismay at this development, and at the Board's support for the Jewish Hour.

Though the Board was not directly involved in procuring the Jewish Radio Hour, it soon became an enthusiastic supporter. Shortly after the Jewish Radio Hour was inaugurated in December 1975, some doubt was thrown over the survival of ethnic radio when the Labor government was defeated at the polls in December 1975 and the incoming Liberal government disbanded the Department of the Media which had previously administered the Ethnic Radio project.¹¹ But the popularity of ethnic radio with all ethnic communities assured the survival of the project, and on 6 July 1976 the Jewish Hour became a permanent fixture for two hours weekly, later becoming three hours. On 14 November 1977 Severyn Pejsachowicz was appointed to the Ethnic Broadcasting Advisory Committee of the Liberal government.

At the same time the issue of whether the Board of Deputies should join the Ethnic Communities Council came up repeatedly. Some communal figures thought that the Jewish community was not an ethnic but solely a religious entity and took pride in the fact that at important state events when religious leaders were invited, the leader of the rabbinate for the time being was usually invited together with the Anglican and Catholic Archbishops and the Moderator of the Methodist church and the head of the Presbyterian church. There was some fear that, if the Jewish roof body took the view that Jews were an ethnic entity, the recognition as an important religious group would cease.

In November 1975 Walter Lippmann MBE, a stalwart in Jewish social issues and long-time president of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in Victoria, and then also chairman of the Ethnic Communities' Council in Victoria, came to the plenum meeting to address the meeting on the topic 'Is the Jewish community an Ethnic Group?'¹² Lippmann advocated that the Jewish community should be considered as an ethnic group as well as a religion and should associate itself with the Ethnic Communities Council. In the vigorous discussion from the floor which followed his presentation, despite a variety of opinions presented, a majority of speakers had agreed with him.¹³ Unfortunately, the arguments for and against the issue were never recorded and we are left only with the knowledge of a great disparity of opinions.

The Board executive continued to debate the issue for over a year though the precise arguments for and against were not recorded. But there was a belief in the executive:

1. that it would be in the interests of the Jewish community to join the Council;
2. that to encourage the plenum to vote on the matter could be divisive to the community.
3. that there was considerable difference of opinion within the community as to whether or not the Jewish community constitutes an ethnic group.¹⁴

At the 28 September 1976 executive meeting Associate Professor Graham de Vahl Davis moved and Hannelore Kandy seconded a motion:

That this Executive should recommend that as the Board of Deputies represents a cross-section of all viewpoints held within the Jewish community it does not deem it appropriate to affiliate itself with the Ethnic Communities Council. However, it recognises that constituent bodies have a right to join the Council and to assist in the formulation of this opinion, it is prepared to hold a symposium or debate to consider this matter.

This was carried. In October Professor Sol Encel was approached to prepare a position paper on the issue of the Jewish community joining the Ethnic Communities Council and he agreed to do so. In the meantime two constituents of the Board joined the Ethnic Communities Council and were the sole representatives of the Jewish community on it. One was the Jewish Folk Centre and the other the Sephardi Synagogue. Again Severyn Pejsachowicz had been a pioneer and had been part of the very first general meeting organised by the foundation committee for an Ethnic Communities Council on 27 July 1975. When Robert Klarnet joined the Board, Pejsachowicz took him along to some meetings. Subsequently Pejsachowicz was elected for some years to the executive of the Ethnic Communities Council. Unfortunately their meetings clashed with the live broadcasts of one of the Jewish Radio Hours, which was his first priority, and so he dropped out of this executive.¹⁵

No further reference was made in the Board minutes for the period covered by this chapter to the issue of the Ethnic Communities Council. Rabbi Raymond Apple, initially opposed to the idea of the Jewish community being an ethnic group, was won over by Walter Lippmann's arguments and acknowledged the change in an article in the *Great Synagogue Journal*. Eventually the Sydney Jewish Community as an entity became part of the Ethnic Communities Council as described in the next chapter.

In late February 1977 Sidney Muller noted in his 1977 presidential report that at its most recent meeting the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW had condemned the publication in the *Hellenic Herald* of 5 January 1977 of a vulgar and vicious antisemitic attack on the Jewish community. In its reprimand the Council stated that 'it recognises as an historical fact that antisemitism is one of the more detestable forms of racial discrimination. It deplores unjustified and racist attacks upon any group of individuals by the media or by any other means. It urges the NSW government to enact legislation as a matter of urgency, outlawing such discrimination and prosecuting group defamation'.¹⁶ Such advocacy of the Jewish cause when Jews were being defamed certainly comforted the community.

Another issue which preoccupied the Board in 1976 and 1977 was a decision to mark the elevation of the Honourable Sydney D. Einfeld on 15 June 1976 in the NSW Labor Government as Minister for Consumer Affairs and Cooperative Building Societies by presenting him with a portrait of himself. The noted Jewish Australian portrait painter, Judy Cassab, was commissioned to do the portrait and other communal bodies were approached to contribute to its cost.¹⁷ While most deputies welcomed this manner of honouring Einfeld, a minority stated that the money would

have been better spent on a piece of medical equipment donated to a major hospital in Sydney D. Einfeld's name. Presentation of the portrait took place on Tuesday 17 May 1977 at a Board plenum in the presence of three other State Ministers, colleagues of Sydney Einfeld, and various other Labor dignitaries.¹⁸

THE CAMPAIGN FOR SOVIET JEWRY

The Campaign for Soviet Jewry continued apace with Robert Goot at the helm continuously both in NSW and on the ECAJ for the whole Australian campaign. Protests were organised on various issues and the Board's monthly Information Bulletin continued to keep deputies informed of all developments. In June 1976 it was particularly pleasing for all those who had demonstrated so vigorously for their release to have Valery and Galina Panov now freed and living in Israel, visit Australia to dance as soloists with Ballet Victoria.¹⁹ At a reception held in their honour in Sydney they were presented with an album containing press clippings and photos of the campaign carried out on their behalf in Sydney in 1973.



Robert Goot addressing a meeting, with Valery and Galina Panov in the foreground and Sidney Muller in the background. A translator is standing to the left.

Other actions initiated by that committee were the campaign to write New Year cards to Soviet Jews by Australian Jews and a leaflet campaign at the time of the visit with the Bolshoi Ballet of Maya Plisetskaya, the Soviet prima ballerina who did not identify with her Jewish background. For some years the Campaign to Rescue Soviet Jewry had been one of the major activities of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. It seems that in this respect NSW was now well ahead of Victoria in the boldness of its initiatives for the Campaign and in the unrelenting actions it took. Not only adults, but also students and even school children of the community, were

made aware of the issues and constantly urged to participate in the campaign. Robert Goot visited schools and spoke on the subject constantly. When the ECAJ had been in Melbourne in 1970-72 and in 1974-76, the Victorian ECAJ president, Nathan Jacobson, impressed by Goot's activism, left the Campaign to Rescue Soviet Jewry portfolio in NSW. This was repeated a decade later when Isi Leibler, the next Victorian ECAJ president, left the same portfolio in New South Wales with Diane Shteinman.

In March 1976 Robert Goot had wanted to divest himself of the portfolio of chairman of the Soviet Jewry Campaign, but had been dissuaded from doing so. But he gave notice that he would give up later that year and did so in November 1976 after five and a half years in that position. He believed that chairmen of committees should change regularly, and he also was about to become engaged to be married and committed to finish his Law studies.²⁰ However, for the time being, he kept up his responsibility as Soviet Jewry Committee chairman for the ECAJ. He was succeeded in the Overseas Jewry Committee by Ellis Jacobs who already carried responsibility for the other half of that portfolio of Jews in Arab Lands. This was at a time when the fate of the Jews left in Syria gave rise to serious concerns. Eventually Ian Lacey was invited by Robert Goot specifically to succeed him in the Campaign for the Rescue of Soviet Jewry.

In 1977 the 7th June was internationally declared as Syrian Jewry Solidarity Day. In preparation for this occasion the Board issued a media release which resulted in Ellis Jacobs being interviewed on Radio 2GB on the issue of Syrian Jewry and their plight as quasi-hostages of the Syrian Baathist government, unable to leave and finding it hard to subsist. Jacobs particularly commended AUJS and all Jewish university students for making this issue known on their campuses.²¹

With the visit of Professor Alexander Voronel to Australia in October 1977 a scheme was evolved for various Australian Jewish communities to adopt certain Russian Jewish dissidents as their special objects of concern. The visit of the Berioska Dance Company to Sydney in July 1977 also led to a massive protest rally on the opening night. Again AUJS participated and Irving Wallach organised the rally. Without sighting Russian archives, it is not possible to assess the impact which protests in Australia, or elsewhere, had on the eventual relaxation of the oppression of the dissidents, but protests were stimulated by the frequent visits at this time of Russian dance companies to Australia.

A JEWISH BOOK CLUB

In 1976 another initiative was launched under the aegis of the Board.²² This was the Jewish Book Club administered by Rose Faen, who ran the House of Books Jewish bookshop on the enclosed veranda of her home at 23 Wandella Road, Roseville, for about twenty years. Originally started by Eva Faine as a facility for the Sunday school teachers and parents of the newly built North Shore Synagogue, it was taken over by Rose Faen (no relation) when Dr Solly Faine and his wife moved to Melbourne in 1960. Rose Faen made the House of Books the leading Jewish academic and literary bookshop in Sydney. For the Jewish Book Club, the list of books proposed changed every month and included a wide selection ranging from books on the Talmud and Jewish history, to anthologies on religious festivals,

best seller novels, spy thrillers, satires and even a book called *Erotica Judaica*. From the perspective of thirty years later the prices were remarkably modest - \$11.65 for Georges Bergman and Rabbi John Levi's *Australian Genesis* which nowadays is a rare book and can cost up to \$120, if found. The Jewish Book Club was a splendid idea, but little of it is recalled apart from the Information Bulletins which listed it. It lasted until August 1979 when Rose Faen became gravely ill and had to sell her bookshop.

Another innovation was the Communal Calendar which was launched in the June 1976 Board of Deputies Information Bulletin and covered June and July 1976, listing all communal events which organisations submitted.²³ The Calendar was initially published every two months in the Information Bulletin, but later became separate sheets which were more convenient, even listing school holiday dates of the various Jewish schools. It has lasted to the present. Apart from listing events due to take place within the community, it sought to discourage the staging of rival events at the time of major fundraising drives for UIA or JCA.

In 1976 the Board established an inquiry into various aspects of kashrut in Sydney following numerous complaints about prices of kosher meat and other kosher food products. The inquiry was to cover 'retailing, including catering, and the administration of kashrut, with a view to assisting, encouraging and promoting the observance of kashrut within the Jewish community of NSW'²⁴ and followed directly on an invitation to Rabbi Moshe Gutnick, Director of the Kashrut Administration Committee to address the plenum meeting of 21 September 1976 on the topic of Kashrut. The first chairman of the Committee of Inquiry was Dr Willie Wise, later followed by Dr Lionel Singer, a former congregational rabbi. The results of the inquiry will be discussed in another chapter, but this mention illustrates the variety of topics concerning NSW Jewry dealt with by the Board during the period of Sidney Muller's presidency.

Yet at that time one former honorary officer, Bernard Levy, having been defeated in March 1976 in elections for the executive, ceased attending the Board for several months and, when challenged to show cause why his seat should not be declared vacant, asserted that he was not attending because the Board was not accomplishing anything.

PUBLIC RELATIONS - NEW DEVELOPMENTS

An issue which remained at the forefront of Board concerns was the matter of Public Relations. Lawrence Einfeld, younger brother of Sydney and of John, had been chairman of the Public Relations committee from early 1967 when he took over from the gravely ill Victor Smith. He remained chairman for eight years until March 1975 when Justin Jones took over. Under his portfolio came many issues of small neo-Nazi or Far Right groups appearing, but also more and more New Left organisations which targeted both Jews and Zionism for attack in their publications.

Lawrence Einfeld was the youngest of the seven children of the Reverend and Mrs Marcus Einfeld, a long time cantor and minister of the Great Synagogue.²⁵ Lawrence was born in Sydney on 7 December 1920 and educated at Sydney Boys' High School. In May 1939 he joined the First Australian Infantry Battalion, aged





eighteen. Later he served at Headquarters of Eastern Command, but in 1943 he was discharged as medically unfit. He worked as a publisher of trade magazines under the name of Page Publishing. When he sold his own firm he went to work for another firm also publishing trade magazines.

He married Peggy Rose Goulston, one of two daughters of John Goulston and his wife Golda, who had been active on the Board of the Great Synagogue and who rose to be Grandmaster of the Masonic Order in Australia. They married on 7 March 1946 in the Great Synagogue in Sydney and had two daughters, Jann Golda and Adrienne. Lawrence Einfeld died on 21 December 1988 in Sydney. In July 1972, at a special conference on Jewish public relations held in Melbourne which was convened to discuss the establishment of a 'social bureau in charge of a competent professional officer', Lawrence Einfeld said: 'The community must realise that it is unrealistic and unfair to base its protection on even the most dedicated honorary workers'.²⁶ At that conference it was decided that a budget must be found to appoint a professional public relations person to do this work, but no urgency was felt until the shock of the Yom Kippur War and the torrents of anti-Israel propaganda it provoked caused the community to act.



Ron Robertson was the first full-time professional public relations director of the Board, appointed in late 1973 and taking up his duties in January 1974, under the presidency of Maurice Allen.²⁷ Despite his Scottish sounding name he was a Jew.

At a Board plenum meeting on 18 June 1974 held exceptionally in the Victor Smith Memorial Hall of the North Shore Synagogue in Lindfield to bring the Board closer to the community, but which had an attendance of only twenty-eight deputies in lieu of the usual fifty to sixty, Ron Robertson was invited to deliver a brief report in the absence of the Public Relations committee chairman. He mentioned, 'the spreading of factual information through the Board's Information Bulletin to members of the Jewish community in order to better equip them to speak outside the community when matters pertaining to Israel and Judaism are raised.'²⁸ In Information Bulletins from July 1974 onward there was Public Relations information each month on a topic of interest regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict such as the claim that 'nations harbouring and supplying sustenance to Palestinian terrorist movements are powerless to control the terrorist activities and therefore not responsible for their actions'²⁹ and information about the antisemitic cult, 'the Children of G-d'.³⁰ Later in the year Robertson again made a verbal report to the plenum in the absence of P.R. committee chairman, Justin Jones.

Some time in July 1975 Ron Robertson resigned and went back to running his own public relations and advertising business in Double Bay. Robert Klarnet, then twenty-eight years old, a Jewish journalist and public relations man, was then appointed as the second full-time public relations executive director to the Board, starting his duties on Monday 22 September 1975.³¹ Strangely enough neither the departure of Ron Robertson, nor the appointment of Klarnet were announced for another six months. Only in the annual report of the Public Relations chairman dated 19 March 1976 was it announced that Robertson had left the Board's employ to go into business for himself and that Robert Klarnet was already proving himself to be a valuable asset to the community.³²



Robert Alexander Klarnet was born on 24 August 1947 in Stettin, Poland, the son of Polish Jews who had spent 1941-1946 in Alma Ata, Kazakstan, where their first child was born. When Robert was just over a year old the family emigrated to Australia, arriving in November 1948. After a childhood spent in the Western suburbs of Sydney, Robert Klarnet matriculated from Vaucluse Boys' High, worked as a proof-reader for John Fairfax and Sons, then went to Europe where he worked for the Jewish Chronicle under the editorship of William Frankel for eighteen months, and in various public relations positions. He returned to Australia in late 1974.³³ He was to work as public relations director for the Board for seven years before resigning to go overseas with his wife Judith in April 1983. On his return to Sydney in October 1983 he took up a position as director of information with the Zionist Federation of Australia, first under the presidency of Dr Albert Silver, and then under Mark Leibler of Melbourne. In August 1987 Mark Leibler replaced Klarnet with Helene Teichman. In January 1989 Klarnet returned to work for the Board again.³⁴ It is difficult to assess the full benefits the community and the Board gained from employing professional public relations directors, but undoubtedly a higher standard of publications resulted. Their contacts in various parts of the media also played a part in keeping up the good name of the community and of the Board. And their advice to presidents and office-holders was usually most useful and valued.



Ron Robertson's period with the Board coincided with the anti-Israel resolutions pressed by the Australian Union of Students (AUS) anti-Israel resolutions. At the time AUS had become dominated by students of the so-called New Left affiliation who, with the winding down of the war in Vietnam, found a new cause in the plight of the Palestinians and a new enemy to pursue in Israel and in Zionism. At the annual conference of AUS in January 1974 a series of resolutions were tabled calling for the expulsion of the National Union of Israeli Students from the Asian Students Association, which would have delegitimised Israeli students in all world fora. This was part of the Arab lobby's efforts to equate Zionism with racism instead of the legitimate national liberation movement of the Jewish people. The AUJS resolutions were due to be voted upon by students on every campus in turn. Up to then Jewish students throughout Australia had taken very little active part in campus politics.³⁵

THE ANTI-ISRAEL RESOLUTIONS ON AUSTRALIAN CAMPUSES

In the early 1970s the Board encouraged a number of Jewish youth groups to become constituents of the Board on greatly reduced fees. This was followed by Jewish student societies from most university campuses and technical colleges, eg Sydney University Jewish Union of Students (SUJUS), Macquarie University Jewish Union of Students (MUJUS) and others. Later these coalesced under the name Australasian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS), an organisation which was able to react to the anti-Israel resolutions. The reaction to these politically motivated attacks, which bore little relationship to the concerns of the bulk of Australian university students, was to increase awareness among Jewish students and motivate them to fight back on every campus by providing well argued answers to the slurs on Israel and counter-attacking against AUS, and show it up as a politically motivated

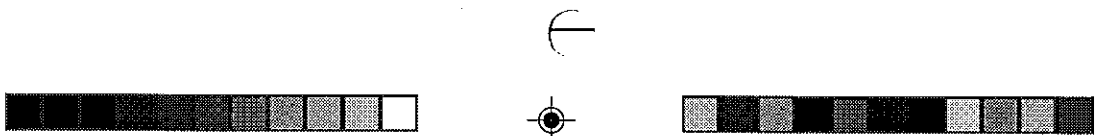
organisation which did not have the interests of ordinary Australian students at heart. Indeed, the AUS anti-Israel resolutions campaign actually energised the previously fairly inactive Jewish student bodies to coalesce and train their members for the debates at which the anti-Israel resolutions were presented. It was an awakening, politicising and energising experience for a whole age-cohort of Australian Jewish students in 1974 and 1975. Sidney Muller was sympathetic to these concerns, as Maurice Allen had been, and both provided moral support and some funds to a Students Coordinating Committee, led by David Beirman, and also the help and advice of the public relations executive director for leaflets to be printed and some funds for travel between campuses.

In 1975 AUS invited the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to send two representatives of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) as a preliminary to opening a PLO Information Office. Eddie Zaneiri and a companion arrived to tour various Australian campuses and to speak there under the aegis of AUS.³⁶ Zaneiri, although presented as a student leader, was a seasoned political campaigner in his thirties, and much more experienced than the Jewish law student, Peter Wise, who faced him in a televised public debate and could scarcely speak. During the same visit there was also the unedifying televised spectacle of a rough mass encounter with body-wrestling and fisticuffs at Macquarie University between Palestinian supporters and Jewish students. Distressing as it seemed to the Jewish community at the time, the AUS anti-Israel resolutions campaign served to educate and bring to the forefront a new group of young Jewish leaders such as Michael Marx, Steven Lewis, Peter Wise, David Beirman, Geoff Gordon, Steven Gottlieb, George Kahan, Amanda Jones Gordon, Betty Tutman Hynek and Phillip Hynek in Sydney, and Michael Danby and Joe Gersh in Melbourne. Many of these students later became deputies in Sydney and Melbourne, two becoming presidents of their respective Boards, and two vice-presidents, so far. A few years later, in 1982, the AUS anti-Israel campaign had to be fought again and led, albeit indirectly, to the demise of AUS and to the rise of a new Australian students roof organisation, the National Union of Students NUS).³⁷

ACTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Another aspect of the Board concerning youth in that period, was the weekly Youth Diary which was featured in the Clubs and Societies Page of the *Australian Jewish Times*. It was collated and paid for by the Board. It featured all events in the community organised by and for young people, and was to last over a decade until it disappeared and later reappeared in other guises under new rubrics in the local Jewish press.

In 1974 another new initiative for Australian Jewish youth was the yearly winter Counterpoint programme which each year brought a few dynamic North American and later Israeli educators, some of whom were rabbis or professional youth leaders, for intensive religious retreat experiences held either at Shalom College or at country youth hostels, for age cohorts 14-15 years and 16-17 years in turn, ten days at a time. With Rabbi Irwin Witty from Montreal, Canada, as the Counterpoint leader for the first two years, these were highly successful experiences. In some



years the Counterpoint programme was held jointly for youngsters of the same age-cohort from Sydney and Melbourne, day schools in each city cooperating. While the Counterpoint programmes had no direct link to the Board, but were coordinated by Moriah and by Masada Colleges in Sydney, and by the NSW Board of Jewish Education, the Board cooperated by inviting the visiting educators as speakers to the plenum and by publicising Counterpoint. The youth movement Bnei Akiva was also involved and supplied its youth leaders as personnel.³⁸ Counterpoint has continued to be a highly successful part of the schools' informal Jewish education programme, but in the 1980s the team changed from Yeshiva University to Israeli institutions which are organised in conjunction with the Zionist Federation.

JOACHIM SCHNEEWEISS RISES TO LEADERSHIP

In November 1976 the Executive Council of Australian Jewry came back to Sydney for a two-year term. The ECAJ president in Melbourne had been Nathan Jacobson and now the Sydney president was Dr Joachim Schneeweiss, M.B.B.S, FRCOP (London), physician and cardiologist, who had been active on the Board since its early years when he had been a very young man, both as a deputy and as Education committee chairman in 1968. For many years Schneeweiss had contributed a column to the *Sydney Jewish News* under a pseudonym, and he was also active on the Zionist Federation of Australia. In 1969-70 Schneeweiss became a Board vice-president, being acting president for two months in December 1969 to February 1970, and then as executive member without portfolio in 1971-1976 while also an ECAJ councillor in 1973-74. As Education committee chairman Schneeweiss had initiated the Committee of Enquiry Into Jewish Education in NSW.

Joachim Schneeweiss had arrived in Sydney on 23 June 1939 with his parents, Jacob Josef Schneeweiss and Brucha Brand, both born in Dolina, Galicia, and his older sister and younger brother, from Hannover, Germany, where he was born on 3 June 1927, via some months in the Netherlands whence he and his younger brother, Ismar had single-handedly smuggled themselves in late 1938.³⁹ There is an anecdote, retold in a school essay by his eldest son, of how the eleven-year old Joachim responded in German to a group of older men riding in a forest in the north-east corner of Holland who had accosted a group of children asking them who they were. Joachim responded 'We are a group of Jewish children from Germany, no longer wanted in Germany' and the leader of the men, who turned out to be the exiled former Kaiser Wilhelm II, had said 'I am sorry to hear that Jews are no longer wanted in Germany' and rode on. As G. J. Schneeweiss commented 'At eleven Dad was already the spokesman for the group'. Indeed, this was characteristic of Joachim Schneeweiss, who in Germany had attended a school founded by Samson Raphael Hirsch which emphasised both religious knowledge and an academic education.⁴⁰

In Sydney Schneeweiss attended Randwick Boys' Intermediate High School and later Sydney High, and then studied medicine at the University of Sydney, founding the then Sydney University Jewish Students Union (SUJSU) in 1945-46 as a third year medical student. As an adolescent he was also active in Habonim and then in the Zionist Youth League. In 1950-51 he was co-convenor with Dr Moss Cass, later a Labor MHR and Minister for the Environment in the Whitlam

government, of the Australian Zionist Youth Council (AZYC). His communal career was interrupted for some years when he studied for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians in London from 1957 to 1961, and met and married there Sybil Valerie Jackson on 12 June 1960. On his return to Sydney as a cardiologist he resumed his involvement with the NSW Jewish community.⁴¹ Dr Schneeweiss and his wife had three sons. He was extremely well read and possibly the most erudite of all NSW Jewish communal activists to date. His natural eloquence and the depth of his knowledge on many issues made him in demand as a speaker. He was to serve two terms, 1976-1978 and 1981-1982 as president of the ECAJ. The second term was to be marred by a bitter dispute with Isi Leibler, his Melbourne counterpart, which caused his premature resignation in October 1982.

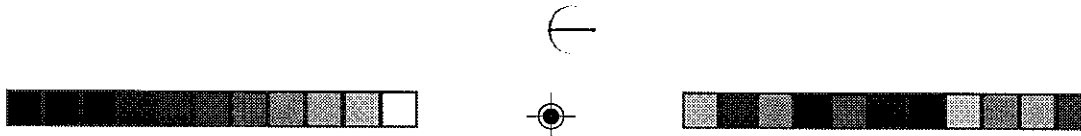
In 1976, as previously, most members of the Board executive also became members of the ECAJ executive, Robert Goot becoming honorary secretary of the ECAJ and other NSW ECAJ counsellors being Harry S. Goldstein, Sydney A. Field, Gerald Falk, Gordon Hertzberg, Justin Jones, Arnold Newhouse and Dr Albert Silver. As president of the NSW Board, Sidney Muller was senior ECAJ vice-president.

SOME EX-SERVICEMEN ON THE BOARD

Sydney Field was one of the ex-servicemen who had become active in the Jewish community in the 1950s, becoming a deputy for the Montefiore Home in 1961 and then in August 1969 for the Great Synagogue. Soon afterwards he was elected Press and Publications chairman and in March 1970 he defeated Sam Vandersluis as honorary treasurer, a post to which he was re-elected each year until March 1975 when he did not stand.⁴² In 1979 he joined the Board of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, and became its president in July 1981 until 1987.⁴³



Sydney Alan Field, second from left with (left to right) Paul Cullen, Ross Bonthorne Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney, Sydney David Einfeld, 1986



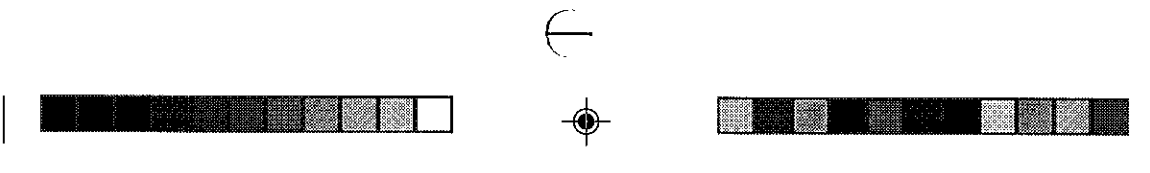
Sydney Alan Field was born in Leeds, England on 23 March 1919 and came to Australia with his parents Katie Rojinsky and Sam Field and his younger brother Gerald. It was the depth of the Great Depression and after two and a half years at Waverley Public School, he left school at thirteen and a half to work as a telegram boy.⁴⁴ 'While working for AWA Ltd. he studied accountancy at night and at the age of 19 was the youngest qualified accountant in NSW as well as having gained second place in the State examinations. By the age of 21 he was a qualified company secretary and cost accountant. Field held various administrative and consultancy positions in industry before retiring from business at the age of fifty'.⁴⁵

He joined the army at the outbreak of World War II, becoming an artillery gunner at a gun emplacement in Little Bay, Malabar. He also married in 1942, but his bride, Jean Kaplan, soon became gravely ill and he was seconded out of the army to look after her. She died on 1 July 1945. A few years later he met his second wife, Rosalie Green, daughter of Judah Green of Goulburn and niece of Simon, Israel, and Solomon Green who were at the helm of the Great Synagogue and the Montefiore Home in the 1940s and 1950s. They married at the Great Synagogue on 26 June 1949. There was no issue from either marriage. Syd Field was a hardworking, energetic man, enthusiastic, always smiling. He also played a major part in the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce. He died on 16 November 1989 aged seventy.⁴⁶ In June 1987 in the Queen's Birthday Honours list, he was awarded an AM for services to the community.

Another very active deputy who never held an executive portfolio, but who was on the PR committee and also an ECAJ counsellor from November 1974 to November 1978 was Gordon Hertzberg whose professional life was spent as a supplier of prime cost items to the building industry. Hertzberg was also one of the World War II ex-servicemen. He joined the RAAF at the beginning of hostilities but due to less than perfect vision, was then switched to the AIF in which he served on the islands of the Pacific until the end of the war.



Gordon Lionel Hertzberg was born in Sydney on 1 December 1918, one of five sons and one daughter of Annie Abrahams and Louis Hertzberg. He married Flora Levitus on 10 January 1950, and they always lived in the southern suburbs of Sydney. They had a son, Dr Mark Hertzberg, and a daughter. Like many ex-servicemen, Gordon Hertzberg was determined to fight antisemitism wherever it reared its ugly head.⁴⁷ He was also active in NAJEX. In 1977 when Brian Nebenzahl undertook to prepare a New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies Community Diary and Resource Book for 1978 (5748-49) on the model of the one first published by the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies in 1976, which was also to be a fundraising project through selling advertising space, the only other deputy who actively went about getting advertisers was Gordon Hertzberg.⁴⁸

Lou Rose was another notable deputy of the same generation who came to the Board via leadership of the Jewish sporting movement, Maccabi. Brother to Julian Rose, he was born on 13 February 1915 in Newtown, Sydney, the son of Jacob and Sonia Resnick, who both came to Australia from Odessa, Russia. He became a commercial artist, engaged in publicity and advertising. During World War II he was accredited to the RAAF, preparing secret camouflage activities in the Australian north and on Pacific Islands north of Australia. He married Phyllis Bear



on 24 December 1939 in what was the first wedding under the aegis of Temple Emanuel, but held in the Maccabean Hall. In the 1950s he was one of the founders of the North Shore Temple Emanuel and served as its president for eleven years. He joined the Board in the 1960s and was active in designing and fostering its publications and was an originator of the idea of the Information Bulletin. He was also called upon when banners or lettering was needed. From the mid-1930s he was active in Jewish sport in athletics and by late 1947 was the Sports Carnival manager at the fifteenth Maccabi Sports Carnival in Sydney.⁴⁹ He continued as either the manager of the NSW Carnival team, or as Carnival manager, while also continuing as a contestant in the men's gymnastic team and in badminton.⁵⁰ On Sunday 30 December 1973 a plaque dedicated to the memory of the eleven Israeli athletes murdered at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich was unveiled at the National Jewish Memorial Centre in Canberra in front of 137 Carnival officials and competitors who had flown specially to Canberra from the forty-first Carnival held in Sydney. The plaque had been designed and sculpted by Lou Rose.⁵¹ Eventually Lou Rose became the head of Maccabi in Australia, though he has now retired. In 1973 he was awarded the title 'Yakir Maccabi' by Israel Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, and in 1977 an MBE for services to the Jewish community and to sport.

WOMEN ON THE EXECUTIVE



During Muller's presidency two women deputies also came to the fore. One was Mrs Hannelore Kandy nee Feintuch, an accountant, who was first a deputy for the NSW Board of Jewish Education and later a general franchise deputy. She followed her husband, Robert Kandy, a solicitor who was also a deputy for many years and their son, Michael Kandy, was youth chairman in 1978. Hannelore Kandy was elected to the executive as Foreign Affairs committee chairman in 1975, the first woman member of the executive since the death of Dr Lotte Fink who had held the same portfolio. The only women who had been on the executive since then were Vera Cohen and Margaret Davis MLC, who had been in charge of social events. Hannelore Kandy's duties included preparing the overseas news section of the monthly Information Bulletin and organising the Holocaust Memorial Service every April. This was particularly meaningful as she had been born in Eberswalde, Germany, and had come to Australia with her parents in 1939 as a young adult. Other relatives had perished in the Holocaust. In 1976 when Robert Goot took over Overseas Jewry, Hannelore Kandy changed over to Education and was an active Education chairman. The last illness of her husband caused her to step down from the executive in 1977, but she has remained a deputy till now. Robert Kandy died in 1977.⁵²

Joy Balkind became a deputy representing the Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) in 1972 and has remained in that position until the present. She was born in Sydney in the 1920s, a child of Zorach and Esther Balkind, from Libau and from Russia who met and married in Brisbane. Her brothers, Marcus and Dick Balkind, had also been active in the NSW Jewish community. A Bachelor of Science from Sydney University, Joy Balkind has been very active in NSW WIZO where she held several executive positions.⁵³ From 1976 she was elected a member

of the PR committee of the Board and subsequently also served as chairman of the Membership and Publications committee which published the Board Diary and Resource Book, and later became honorary secretary. She was also the first woman to be a NSW ECAJ counsellor, serving for four years in the 1980s.

Two other deputies require mention in that era, Julius Nadel who had served in the Israel War of Independence and had previously survived World War II in Russia, was active in NAJEX and on the NSW Jewish War Memorial. He was always at the forefront of all security considerations for the Board and the community. Unfortunately, his emotional style of argument caused him to be overlooked for the executive, although his patent goodwill and sincerity and his readiness to stand up and be counted on many unpopular issues made him a valuable member of the plenum, though mostly in opposition.

When Hannelore Kandy left the Education portfolio in March 1977, Sidney Muller recruited a young lecturer in mathematics at the NSW Institute of Technology to take her place. This was Graeme Cohen who had already been active in Hillel and was also on the board of Shalom College. Graeme Cohen served in 1977 and 1978 before leaving for overseas to complete his doctorate.

THE BOARD ACHIEVES PUBLIC RECOGNITION

During the three years of Sidney Muller's presidency events like the Communal Seder and the Israel Independence Day cocktail reception to the notables in the general and the Jewish community took place as usual, jointly with the State Zionist Council of NSW and with the ECAJ when it was in Sydney. But in 1976 a remarkable innovation took place, in that for the first time the Premier of NSW, Sir Eric Willis, was guest of honour and made the toast to the State of Israel, and the leader of the State Opposition, Neville Wran was also present.⁵⁴ This was repeated the following year when the Honourable Neville Wran was Premier and has continued until the present, whether Labor or the Liberals were in power.⁵⁵ It marked both an acceptance of the particular celebrations of ethno-religious communities in Australia and the fact that in a political sense the organised Jewish community in NSW had achieved public recognition and acceptance.

The fact that the political leader of the state found it possible and perhaps necessary to be present at, and to partake of, such a celebration as the Yom Ha'atzmaut reception in full view and with the knowledge of leaders of the trade unions, of industry and of the banking industry and the media, meant that now the NSW Jewish community had achieved a high level of acceptability in the body politic and that despite the ever renewed attempts of small antisemitic groups to whip up hatred against the community, there was a solid demonstration that Jews, as an organised community, were part of the fabric of Australian society. This was a contrast to what had been given to Jews at the time of emancipation during the French Revolution 'to the Jews as individuals everything, to the Jews as a group nothing', when the very fact of emancipation had required the quashing of Jewish group identity.

Australia was now a society which did not feel threatened by the group identities of its ethnic citizens. Just as the Irish celebrated Saint Patrick's Day and the Scots Robert Burns' birthday, the Jews could celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut with

the approval of most of their fellow citizens. Conversely the Jewish community, through the Board, participated eagerly when it was able to show support for the democratic appurtenances of the State. In 1974 when the NSW Parliament was about to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of parliamentary functions in NSW, the Board took up the suggestion made by Sir Asher Joel, who was a member of the Parliamentary Organising Committee for the celebration, that a mace be presented to the NSW Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Jewish citizens of NSW. The then president, Maurice Allen, took great pride in presenting a mace on the floor of the House at the Legislative Assembly, one of the few non-parliamentary guests present on the occasion.⁵⁶

In a sense, 1976 to 78 marked a zenith of acceptance of the NSW and Australian Jewish community. Alderman Leo Port had two terms as Lord Mayor of Sydney and Sir Zelman Cowen was made Governor-General in 1977, succeeding Sir John Kerr. The appointment of Sir Zelman Cowen was seen by the general public and the press as inaugurating a time of national healing after the controversies which had convulsed the nation with Sir John Kerr. That a Jewish Governor-General should be seen as capable of healing a national wound was in itself remarkable. The great banquet held in the main hall of the Sydney Town Hall to celebrate the centenary of the consecration of the Great Synagogue on 22 March 1978 in the presence of the Jewish Governor-General, the Jewish Lord Mayor and of Rabbi Dr Immanuel Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, felt as though the heavens were smiling on this community and its achievements. Unfortunately, Leo Port was to die in harness a few months later on 26 August 1978 and the Sydney Jewish community then mourned.

Another passing of significance for the community was that of Hyman W. (Bill) Wolfensohn who had been a foundation member of the Board and who became, from June 1949 till mid-August 1954, chairman of the Public Relations committee. He died on 5 December 1975 and the Board marked his death with a small memorial session.⁵⁷ Some of Bill Wolfensohn's contemporaries thought that he had been ahead of his time in his thinking on Board public relations and in business methods.

In September 1976 Professor Sol Encel approached the Board with a request for financial assistance to print a second edition of *The NSW Jewish Community: A Survey* first published in 1972. The first edition had been printed in only a limited number of copies, and stocks had been exhausted early. Now the second edition used data from the 1971 census and brought all issues up to date.⁵⁸ The Board approved the proposal and after an application to the JCA, a decision to print two hundred copies was made.⁵⁹ The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in New York also helped financially.

STAFF

In the late 1970s the Board's paid staff consisted of the executive director of public relations, Robert Klarnet, the general secretary Barbara Benjamin and two to three other secretaries. One was Joyce Gordon who had started at the Board as Joyce Morgan and before that had worked for the Congregational Advisory Council. She was a mine of information on Board office procedures and a most devoted and

competent employee. She was to stay until the late 1980s. The other secretary was Teefa Abram, a Singapore-born Sephardi, who had joined the Board after being secretary to the Commission of enquiry Into Jewish Education. For some years she worked part-time and in the early 1990s left the Board and went to work for the Sydney Jewish Centre on Ageing. In 1976 Judi Redelman retired to start a family. A previously employed additional typist had not been replaced when she had left because by 1976, the Board was again feeling financially strained despite the immense relief of being part of the Jewish Communal Appeal. The project of the Community Resource Book and Diary was launched in 1977 for the 1978 year, but it took a number of years for it to generate good funding. The allocations from the JCA were not sufficient for all the projects the Board aimed to do. At the beginning of 1976 there was an accumulated deficit of \$7,500. This placed the Board in a very embarrassing situation and in order to meet its general running expenses, the individual subscriber membership fees were increased from \$5 to \$10 per annum.

In 1976-77 there was again an emphasis on increasing subscriptions to the Board. Moreover, Muller often urged all deputies to become donors to JCA. Evidently not all were.

THE END OF THE MULLER PRESIDENCY

It also becomes evident from mid-1976 that the new cohorts of the executive became restive. No details were revealed but there was mention of 'the worst meeting ever' of the plenum in May 1976, and various elaborate schemes only revealed through motions proposed and then withdrawn for improving meetings. It seems that Sidney Muller was too permissive a chairman and did not know the rules of debate and that some thought him incompetent. However, Irving Wallach who was honorary secretary in 1976-77 thought him 'a reformer who wanted to revitalise the Board' and 'refreshing in contrast to the previous group of leaders'. But others, particularly the group of ex-servicemen, resented Muller's rapid rise to the Board presidency after only a few years' involvement with the Board.

In August 1976 Associate Professor Graham de Vahl Davis, newly elected to the executive, successfully put the case for two executive meetings per month, one executive meeting replacing the honorary officers' meeting. This was meant to shorten the late night single executive meeting per month. This suggestion was adopted, but only until the end of the year when de Vahl Davis went on sabbatical and an honorary officers' meeting was reinstated.

At the beginning of 1977, a motion was proposed by Gordon Hertzberg and seconded by Robert Goot, which sought to provide for the appointment of an independent chairman of plenum meetings for the ensuing twelve months. This motion went into several altered forms over the next few months, seeking to make the chairman someone who was not either an honorary officer or an executive member, though possibly an ECAJ counsellor. The sole duty of the chairman was to preside over meetings of the plenum. This motion was obviously aimed at demoting the incumbent president, Sidney Muller, and would in effect be a diminution of the prestige of the Board presidency.⁶⁰ After being discussed at plenum meetings in April, May and September in various guises, the matter was finally defeated when

Muller made it clear that he would not stand again for another term in 1978. He was an intelligent and sensitive man and his shortcomings as chairman had been made abundantly clear to him. From June to September 1977 he was overseas at various major Jewish conferences at the request of Joachim Schneeweiss, and Robert Goot was acting-president.

At the September plenum Gerald Falk moved and Harry Goldstein seconded a motion placing on record the gratitude of the executive and all deputies for the dedication of its vice-president, Robert Goot, during his term as acting president over the last three months. This was carried with acclamation.⁶¹ It was clear that Robert Goot would be the next president. Indeed, the dedication, intelligence and energy he had shown in his portfolio of the Soviet Jewry Campaign, later known as Overseas Jewry Committee, and everything he undertook for the Board made him, at barely thirty years of age, the rightful heir to the helm of the community.

In 1977 Gerald Falk for some months tried to have passed a motion giving the right to ECAJ counsellors to propose and second resolutions on the Board and to vote for the resolutions they proposed or seconded. The real import of the proposal was never made clear, but after being minutely altered from month to month, it was finally defeated at the at the October plenum.⁶² It is interesting to note that single motions to alter the Board's constitution, unless part of a general scheme to bring the constitution up to date, always failed to achieve the required two-thirds majority of the votes.

Two other new matters came up to the Board in the last months of 1977. One was a dispute between the Western Suburbs Synagogue and its former minister, Reverend Fisher, which had led to imputations and disparaging statements from both sides. The Board provided arbitration of this dispute and the matter was quietly resolved on terms not to be disclosed. From the context, it is clear that Robert Goot played a crucial part in resolving this dispute. The reason for the dispute was never revealed.⁶³

The other matter was a resolution by Robert Goot, seconded by Michael Kandy, expressing the Board's disquiet at reports of severe abridgment of freedoms and rights in South Africa and calling upon the ECAJ at its forthcoming conference to consider this grave matter consistent with Jewry's historical concern for the rights of man. Despite an attempt to water this down, the resolution was carried. This was the first time that any resolution commenting on the political situation in southern Africa was ever carried. Previous attempts many years before to pass such resolutions had always been discouraged by the executive for fear of putting the Jewish communities in South Africa or in Southern Rhodesia in an awkward situation or even in jeopardy. The passing of this resolution showed a new spirit towards problems of oppressive regimes even where there were sizeable Jewish communities which could be endangered.⁶⁴

In August 1977 Justin Jones asked for leave of absence as chairman of the Public Relations committee until the end of the year, but he did not return to this position. Gerald Falk took over in September and carried on the next year. The activities of the Public Relations committee during the Muller presidency, apart from combating of the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist slurs, consisted in being vigilant in a large number of smaller matters. For instance, causing the C.T.C. cruise line to

withdraw antisemitic literature from the libraries of its Soviet cruise ships; perusal of 'Wavelengths' school broadcasts Social Studies material from the NSW Department of Education which was shown to have a definite Christian bias; protests against the distribution of antisemitic literature such as 'Plan Hidden in the Protocols' by a major book and newspaper distributor such as Gordon and Gotch; and perusal of the ethnic press in a large number of languages. All this activity required much effort and dedication, but the Public Relations committee always attracted far more volunteers than could ever be elected. Antisemitic groups like the Australian League of Rights, the Nationalist Socialist Party of Australia, the Truth and Liberty Mission, an evangelical Christian group, were also monitored and their literature read.

With the advent of ethnic broadcasting in 1975, attempts were also made to monitor broadcasts for antisemitic slurs. On the one occasion during 1977 when this type of slur was found in a Slovenian broadcast, prompt action brought a swift and positive response from the management of 2EA, the ethnic broadcasting station.⁶⁵

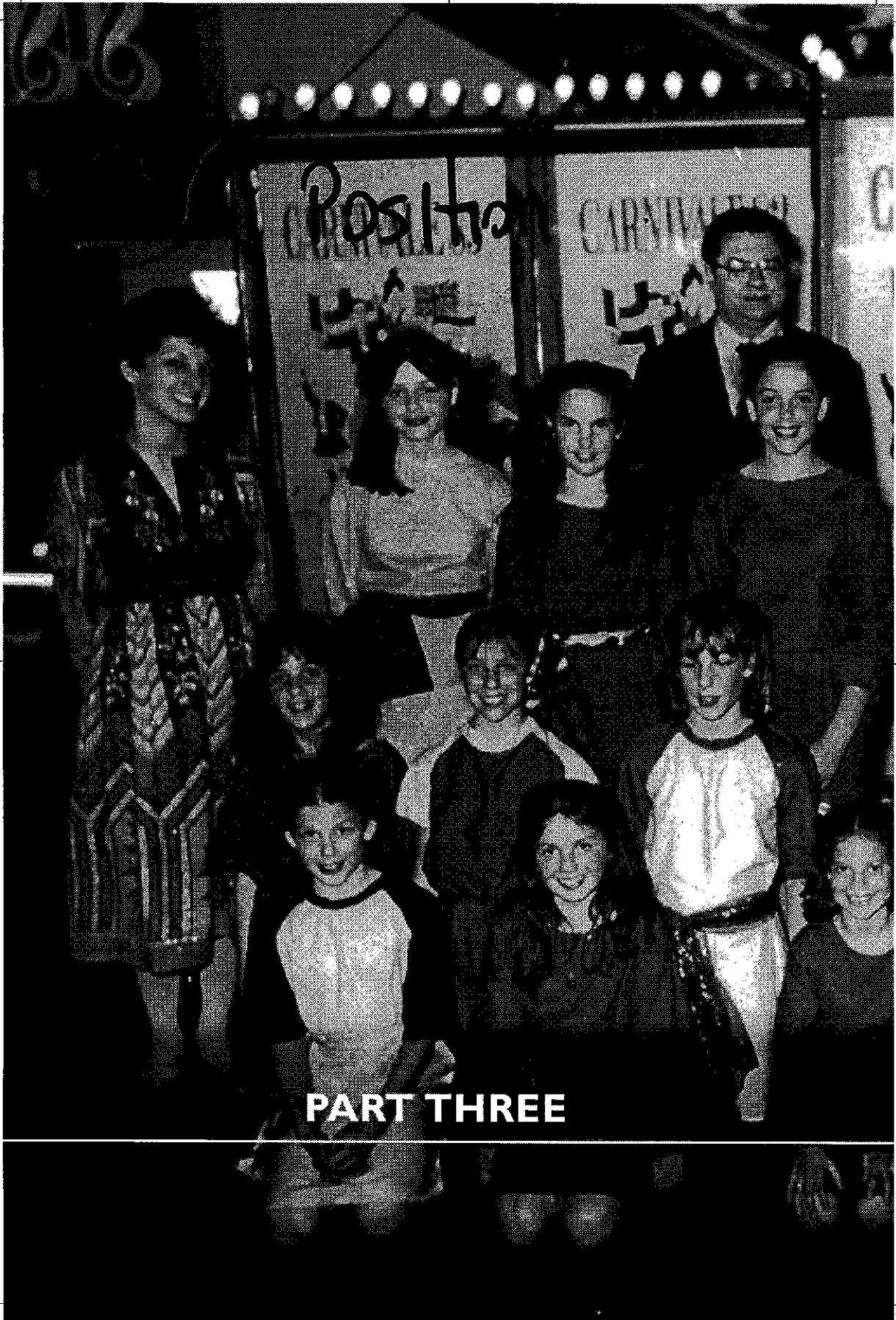
Under the Whitlam government, immigration from Arab countries to Australia increased markedly, particularly as then, for the first time, Arab Muslim immigration was the main component. The civil war in Lebanon from 1975 onward also caused a rise in immigration of Lebanese Arabs to Australia. This in turn brought about a proliferation of Arabic language newspapers in NSW, but very little from the Arabs in English. Most anti-Israel propaganda in English was still disseminated through extreme-left publications and by university campus weeklies.

In November 1976 the Australian Jewish community finally saw the publication of an Israel-oriented fortnightly magazine, *Australia-Israel Review*, originally edited by Sam Lipski in Melbourne. This high standard magazine has lasted to date and its value in disseminating news on Israel and the Middle East to politicians, opinion leaders, academics, and Jewish subscribers has been inestimable. It has certainly helped in clarifying issues and in information on the Israeli-Arab issue. In some ways it helped the Public Relations committee's work.

On Tuesday 21 March 1978 Sidney Muller stepped down as president of the Board at the Annual General Meeting and Robert Goot was elected president. Justin Jones did not stand again for the executive and Severyn Pejsachowicz stepped down as honorary treasurer for health reasons. Sidney Muller died in Sydney on 3 October 1987.

In the eleven years from 1967 to the beginning of 1978, considered in this part of its history, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, in its role as spokesman for the NSW Jewish community, became more assertive of its religious and cultural rights as a community and was no longer afraid to be visible in the Australian spectrum. Articles about Jewish schools, Jewish cuisine, Jewish leaders and even about successful postwar immigrant businessmen started to appear and no longer flustered anxious community members, but filled them with pride at such recognition.

The representational base of the deputies also increased to cover immigrants from every country of origin, in lieu of the previous smaller group of immigrants and the Anglo-Australians of 1945-1967. By 1976 there was a group of recent immigrants from the USSR and they formed themselves into a Society of Engineers, and also joined the Board. But all developments were gradual and there were few sudden changes. No revolution, but evolution.



PART THREE



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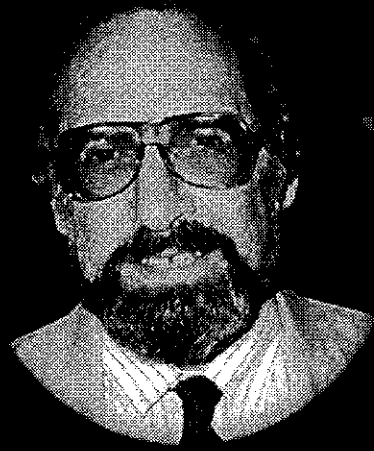
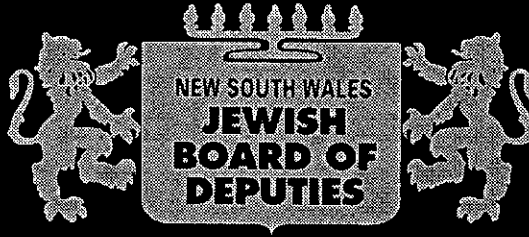
Position

A NEW GENERATION

Suzanne D. Rutland



40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY



New South Wales Jewry comes of age

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 1985

