

The Jewish Press in Australia.

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The Jewish Press in Australia, especially in its production of small magazines and journals, is to a considerable extent a reflex of the demography of the Jewish community. As the community developed and changed so its interest in publishing developed for the press was an important element in shaping the community's structure and attitudes to its own leadership and the broader community. Louise Hoffman puts it succinctly in discussing the role of the *Westralian Judean* in the Perth Jewish community. 'In Western Australia the Jewish Press played an important role in influencing the direction of the community, assuming responsibility for the community's behaviour and its relationship with the wider society. It acted as an agent of social control to maintain conformity to the established leadership's ideals'.¹ What applied in the west of the continent applied elsewhere, hence the interest shown by many researchers in the Australian Jewish press.² As migrants came in waves in response to currents in Europe so the pattern of Jewish publication changed. As the sources from which Jewish migrants came changed, so changed the languages in which publication took place. It is therefore a precondition of a sensible discussion of the Jewish Press in Australia that it incorporates a brief analysis of the

¹L. Hoffman, 'A Review of the Jewish Press in Western Australia', *Royal Western Australian Historical Society Journal*, VIII, ii (1978), 91.

²There have been several attempts to describe the growth and development of the Australian Jewish press but it is really a topic worthy of a thesis or monograph rather than an article. A basic bibliography is given on p. x of M. Dacy, *Periodical Publications from the Australian Jewish Community*, (Monograph 2, Sydney University Archive of Australian Judaica), 1986. Most of the articles listed contain numerous errors and a definitive account is needed. This brief survey does not pretend to be that account.

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settlement of Jews in Australia.³ It is also essential to limit the scope of the discussion to an examination of types of materials published, with only occasional diversions into an analysis of particular works: a broader discussion would inevitably be too long.

In general it should be observed that proportionate to its size among Jewish communities in the English speaking world, the Australian Jewish community has been in the forefront of Jewish periodical publication. A recent survey of its output produced for the Archive of Australian Judaica in the university library by our archivist, Marianne Dacy, runs to 161 pages and the second edition will list 378 journals and 26 yearbooks:⁴ and a bibliography of Australian books of Jewish interest runs to 569 pages⁵ and shows a substantial range of topics.

The Jewish community in Australia was born with the first white settlement for there were at least six Jews in the first fleet. The number of Jews in the colony gradually increased with every convict transport until the end of transportation in the 1840s. At the 1828 census there were 100 Jews in the colony. As Fredman has remarked,⁶ it is extraordinary how quickly an organised Jewish community appeared in some of the provincial towns as well as in Sydney and what substantial resources a small group, at no stage more than 0.5% of the population,⁷ could find to erect synagogues and maintain their activities. In Sydney the Jewish settlers, convicts and emancipists, formed their first *minyan*⁸ in 1817, indicating the start of an organised religious spirit. They established a Jewish burial society and campaigned for a Jewish section in the

³I have drawn for the structure of these comments on my introduction to Dacy, i-ii. The historical background for this introduction was published in the *Jewish Spectator*.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Serge Liberman and Joy Young, ed., *A Bibliography of Australian Judaica*, (Mandelbaum Trust), Sydney, 1987.

⁶Lionel E. Fredman, 'The Rise and Decline of Provincial Jewry', in W. D. Rubinstein, *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, Sydney, p. 56.

⁷Fredman, p. 51.

⁸Group of ten men for meeting together for prayer. See the *Report of the Committee of the Sydney Synagogue*, Sydney, 1845, p. 1.

cemetery.⁹ The first free Jewish settlers arrived in 1821 and by 1841 there were 1,083 free Jewish settlers in the country. It was the arrival of these free settlers that triggered the slow development of Jewish community organisation. In 1828 a Jewish burial ground was established in Hobart and in 1832 attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to do the same in Launceston. Jewish communal life began with the establishment of the first congregation in Sydney in 1831 in rented premises in George Street, followed by a move to Bridge Street and the establishment of the Sydney Jewish Philanthropic Society. In 1844 a synagogue was consecrated in York Street. From the 1840s Jewish settlers were to be found in most of the growing country towns. The town of Maitland was declared in 1829 and by the 1840s the first Jewish burials and services were being held. The oldest synagogue in the Commonwealth is that of Hobart where there was once a flourishing community which is now reduced to less than one hundred persons. The first Jewish congregation in Hobart was in 1842 and the foundations of the synagogue were laid in 1843.

The Census of 1841 showed that at that time the majority of Jews in Australia were in New South Wales¹⁰ and it is not surprising that the first attempt at publishing a Jewish newspaper took place in this city. Perhaps this is the place to make a general comment about the early press in Australia. A good many periodicals were produced in Australia during the nineteenth century. Many were begun with a confident assumption of success but few received adequate support. A long publication run was quite out of the ordinary and only half went beyond their first year. At first, Australian periodicals were modelled on successful overseas publications in England and America or were even printed there. Anglo-American proprietors had good facilities for production and distribution and extended their markets overseas, seeking and finding a steady income from the developing Australian colonies. British immigrants, especially, sought after familiar scenes and subjects

⁹See Suzanne Rutland's comprehensive study of Jews in Australia, *Edge of the Diaspora, Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, Sydney, 1988, p. 22.

¹⁰See Israel Porush, *The House of Israel*, Melbourne, 1970, p. 334 Table 1. The table shows that there were 856 Jews in NSW and 57 in Victoria out of a total Jewish population of 1,183.

from the country many of them still referred to as 'home'.¹¹

The Australian Jewish press was no exception to these common phenomena. The natural concern of the community has been to develop a literary medium that would inform the community of the activities of its members, mediate information of concern to Australian Jews and bring news from England at first and then from the various mother countries of the Jewish Diaspora which contributed settlers to this country. Naturally, as we see from the beginning, the Jewish press served to provide a vehicle for individual expressions of opinion. Perhaps the isolation of Australia intensifies these needs, accounting for the nineteen attempts¹² at publishing community newspapers either on the state or national level.

On the day of the Jewish New Year in 1841 (September) the first issue of *The Voice of Jacob*, an English Jewish newspaper, appeared, and was soon exported to Sydney. In effect this was one of the first Jewish English language newspapers in the world. In England it was preceded by two others¹³ and in the USA by one paper.¹⁴ *The Voice of Jacob* can be regarded as the forerunner of Jewish periodical publishing in Australia since it carried regular correspondence from George Moss, an Australian contributor, which gave the scattered Australian Jewish community some local news. The paper must have had some sort of sale for on 27th May 1842 George Moss began to publish an Australian edition of this newspaper which he named *The Voice of Jacob or the Hebrew Monthly Miscellany*, Sydney edition for private circulation. It was printed at the 'Australian Office' in Bridge Street, Sydney. The editor noted that he had no Hebrew type. He maintained the format

¹¹Cp. Lurline Stuart, *Nineteenth Century English Periodicals*, Sydney, 1979, p. 1.

¹²The Union listing includes some titles published in New Zealand but which were also marketed in Australia.

¹³These were *The Hebrew Messenger*, a monthly first published in January 1823, and the *Hebrew Review and Magazine of Rabbinical Literature*, also a monthly, which ran from 1834-1837.

¹⁴This was *The Jew*, published in New York in March 1823. Cp. the article 'Press' in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. This encyclopaedia article does no justice to Australian publications and those it mentions are often listed in error.

of the English *Voice of Jacob* as he wanted to provide for those persons who wished to bind the new 'colonial edition' with the predecessor. In fact the majority of the articles of the local edition were culled from the English edition with very few local contributions. In the first number we note a description of the laying of the foundation stone of the York Street synagogue, and there was a detailed breakdown of the statistics about the Jews of Australia drawn from the census of 1841. The second issue is dated 24th June 1842 and the third and final number was issued on 5th September 1842. The editorial in the final issue deplored the lack of support which he had received and observed that he was obliged to give away a large number of copies at considerable expense. Signalling his intent to publish no longer, he wrote 'The compiler would be guilty of neglect and injustice towards his domestic and social relations if he risked his means or wasted his zeal and enthusiasm to any greater extent than he has done, without an efficient support from his brethren'. In retrospect we must observe that the lack of support is hardly a matter of surprise. The failure of newspapers with a larger public indicates quite simply that the community had too small a base to support a weekly publication of this type.

Synagogue publications—newsletters, reports, guides to the community and synagogue magazines—are an important genre in Australia and they contain much information about the local communities that they serve. The first such publication to appear in Australia was the *Report of the Committee of the Sydney Synagogue* to which is appended the message that it was 'Presented to the General Meeting Held on 28th September 1845', that is one year after the opening of the York Street synagogue. This sixteen page report contains a wealth of information about the early Australian Jewish community. The first six pages are devoted to describing the progress of the Australian Jewish community to date and the attempt to write the sketch history was clearly hampered by the lack of or inaccessibility of records, for the writers stated, 'Your Committee have now laid before you a rough and imperfect sketch of the rise and progress of the Hebrew religion in this Colony, but, from the want of authentic records, they have collected the best information they could obtain from private sources and it now only remains to furnish some statistical information which is annexed to this report'. In their report the committee recommended the

formation of a Hebrew library¹⁵ and such was the community interest in the printed word that we find such a library in existence by 1846 with a holding of 419 books including Jewish and secular works. A printed catalogue was available with an index arranged sometimes by author and sometimes by title, showing size and binding of the books as well as the date and place of publication. It is probably the work of the same George Moss¹⁶ who edited the *Hebrew Miscellany* and should be noted as one of the early products of the Australian Jewish press.

The position began to change for the better with the remarkable surge in the Jewish population in the gold rush years of the 1850s. Census figures show that between 1851 and 1861 the community almost tripled in size growing to some 5,486 persons. Some Jews dug for gold, seized with the idea of the mass of making their fortune with a rich strike. Most others were engaged in secondary industries such as peddling or transporting goods from place to place or store-keeping. It seems to have been at this time that a number of Yiddish and Hebrew words passed into Australian slang on the goldfields. Between 1830 and 1880 the majority of Jewish immigrants had come from the United Kingdom or Germany but from 1880 immigration from Russia began to grow. The persecutions in the Ukraine and Lithuania caused a number of Jews to choose Australia as their future home instead of the USA. At first the new settlers were easily absorbed into the multicultural society but by the 1890s there began to be seen some considerable discord between the older settlers and the newcomers who numbered more than 50% of the total Jewish community. The cause of the conflict was the contrast between the foreign (i.e. European) vibrant Judaism of the newcomers and the anglicised and more staid Judaism of the older established settlers. This cleavage was a major factor in the development of Australian Zionism. Jewish migration temporarily came to a halt during World War I, but immediately after the war there was another influx of European Jews who had been displaced by the war especially in Poland and who sought to escape the rising tide of anti-Semitism. After the introduction of

¹⁵Report, 6-8.

¹⁶P. J. Marks, *The Jewish Press of Australia Past and Present* (Paper to the Jewish Literary and Debating Society, Sydney, 1913), repr. in Dacy, *Periodical Publications*.

restrictive immigration quotas by the Americans in 1922 the number of immigrants from Poland increased and Yiddish became an important community language. In 1924 restricted visas were introduced and financial restrictions were tightened in 1930. Between 1925 and 1930 there was a substantial influx of migrants from Palestine with an effect on internal community politics. All of these movements were reflected in the Jewish press.

It was during the second period of rapid expansion but before the inflow of Russian migrants began that the second newspaper, the eight page weekly *The Australian Israelite*, was published and survived for the comparatively long period of four years from 1871–1875. Its publisher was the proprietor and editor of the *Tamworth News*, Solomon Joseph. The new tabloid paper, priced at sixpence per issue, was Melbourne based and printed yet it also contained some news from Sydney as well as material drawn from 'back home' in England. After two years, in 1873, it began to suffer from lack of subscribers and attempts were made to form a limited company to take over the publication. The project lapsed when only 466 shares of the proposed 2,000 share issue were taken up. In May 1875 with the issue of volume 4 no. 44 publication stopped. It is probable that attempts were made to establish another newspaper a month or so after the cessation of publication as there was some consternation at the lack of a community journal. However, the first issue of the *Jewish Herald* in 1879 describes itself as the sole news sheet of the Jewish community throughout the Australian colonies, indicating clearly that there was no news sheet published between the death of the *Australian Israelite* and its own founding. Despite the lack of a newspaper other forms of publication were taking place.

In 1873 several Jewish schoolboys connected with the Sabbath school in Adelaide established a short-lived magazine the title of which is uncertain. No copy of this magazine has yet been sighted by our archive and we are forced to rely on secondary sources for information. Marks speaks of the *Jewish School Fellow* in Adelaide whereas Goldhar speaks of *The Jewish Schoolboy*. It is understood that it survived but a few weeks.

Two years later a monthly journal called *The Dialectic, Jewish Monthly* was issued in Melbourne. The sixteen page, medium

octavo size magazine was printed in Fitzroy. An editorial announcement in the first issue indicated that its primary purpose was to give 'to the Essays, Lectures, speeches, etc., delivered at the Melbourne Jewish literary and debating society a local habitation and a name'. It went beyond this purpose carrying general news of the Jewish community and reports of meetings. Two extant sets of the journal support the view of Marks that *The Dialectic* survived from May 1875–November 1875 during which time seven issues were published.

Throughout the nineteenth century newspapers and broadsheets came and went, some short-lived and others with longer lives.¹⁷ Most were published in New South Wales or Victoria which always had the largest concentration of Jewish settlers. Some declared their bias at their birth, such as *The Australasian Hebrew* which proclaimed itself to be 'Orthodox with a tendency to liberality' and others adopted stances to issues, especially in relation to the development of Zionism, which made them the focus of community attention.¹⁸ *The Jewish Herald*, a substantial newspaper, began its publication in 1875. The vicissitudes of this paper give us an insight into the way the longer-lived Jewish newspapers survived by amalgamations and changes of editors. It is instructive to trace the career of the paper until its demise in 1968 for its closure was a *cause célèbre* in the Jewish community. *The Jewish Herald*, which described itself as being devoted to the interests of Judaism in the Australian colonies, was first established in Melbourne in December 1879 as a monthly. It was edited by two Anglo-Jews, which kept its orientation towards England. From 1873–1919 a Sydney edition was published and throughout this period it began to be influenced increasingly by the eastern European migrants. When the *Jewish Herald* changed its name to the *Australian Jewish Herald* (between 1920 and 1933) it appeared fortnightly. In 1933 it amalgamated with a Yiddish newspaper, the *Australier Leben*, which had been established in 1931 by a Russian Jew, and it was edited by Pinchas

¹⁷A very brief survey is to be found in 'Australian Jewish Newspapers' in 'The Beginnings of Australian Jewry, An Occasional Series vii', *The Great Synagogue Journal*, Vol. 43 no. 2, December 1986, p.16. For complete details of publication and contemporary library holdings cp. Dacy, op. cit.

¹⁸Cf. Suzanne Rutland, *Seventy Five Years, The History of A Jewish Newspaper*, The Australian Jewish Historical Society, Sydney, 1970.

Goldhar, an important Yiddish writer, until it changed hands in 1933. In that year it merged with the *Australian Jewish Herald* to reappear as the *Jewish Weekly News*, which maintained the Yiddish connection by publishing a Yiddish supplement, *Di Yiddische Voch* (the Jewish week). The merger survived for two years when an Anglo Jewish group bought the rights to the name and resumed publication of the *Australian Jewish Herald*. The *Jewish Weekly News* became the *Australian Jewish News*, which also had a Yiddish supplement, *Die Australischer Yiddisher Naies*, to cater for the influx of Yiddish speaking migrants. The new series of the *Herald* had an editorial committee which included Rabbi Israel Brodie, later to become the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Rabbi Jacob Danglow, a conservative opponent of Jewish nationalistic movements and a staunch leader of the Anglo-Jewish faction, and Sir Archie Michaelis. Newman Rosenthal, who was later to teach at the University of Melbourne, was the editor. In 1936, the editorial Board launched a Yiddish supplement to the paper, but it was unsuccessful for the paper was reaching an Anglo-Jewish readership and the supplement survived for but seven weeks. In 1949, following the second influx of Yiddish speaking migrants in the post-war migration, a new Yiddish supplement was launched and this was continued until the closure of the paper.

The circumstances of the closure are noteworthy. Between 1944–1948 the Australian Jewish community had faced a traumatic schism. The majority of the community were staunchly Zionist and were whole-heartedly behind the effort to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Sir Isaac Isaacs and his supporter Rabbi Danglow took public stances against the community and a public debate flared, with Julius Stone serving as the public spokesman of the Zionist majority.¹⁹ When the state of Israel was established in 1948 the public controversy came to an end and the community closed ranks though Isaacs published a few more pieces in the *Australian Jewish Forum*, a journal dedicated to the Freeland League, which looked to establish a Jewish settlement in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. In 1968 the *Australian Jewish Herald* began to publish a series of anti-Israel articles from the Sydney Jewish publicist Mark Braham. The views expressed by Braham were no longer tolerated

¹⁹The debate has been fully described. For a full account see Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*.

by a community which had been riven by the Isaacs/Stone controversy and had seen Israel fight three wars for survival within a space of twenty years. The Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies protested to the editor of the *Herald* requesting an undertaking that the *Herald* would no longer offer the freedom of its columns to Braham's views. The Board of Deputies made it clear that should the *Herald* not comply with this request the community would withdraw its advertising. Though the paper had a circulation of 12,500 it may not have been very profitable and it certainly could not survive the loss of advertising income.²⁰ The editor, David Lederman, shut the paper down, though he claimed that his action resulted from his unwillingness to submit to censorship rather than for economic reasons.²¹

The Hebrew Standard of Australia, first published in 1895 in Sydney, was also embroiled in communal controversy from the 1920s through to the 1940s, again in the matter of the Zionist or rather anti-Zionist stance of its editor, Alfred Harris, who was worried about the possibility that an active Zionist movement in Australia indicated community disloyalty to the Crown.²² Because of the community reactions to Harris's attitudes attempts were made to establish rival newspapers in the 1920s. The first of these was the Sydney based *Australian Jewish Chronicle* which was taken over by Zionist activists. However, the economic effects of the depression caused its closure in 1931. A second rival paper was the *Sydney Jewish News* which was an offshoot of the Melbourne *Australian Jewish News*. The *Hebrew Standard* continued until in 1952 the Harris family was forced to sell the paper and it was renamed *The Jewish Times*, which in turn acquired the *Sydney Jewish News*. Renamed *The Australian Jewish Times*, the

²⁰See Graham Cavanagh, 'A Birthday that Will Never Be Celebrated', *The Australian*, 3 August 1968. Advertising was cut by 60% in a three month period resulting in a loss of about \$10,000. Lederman claimed that the Board of Deputies organised an advertising boycott.

²¹Sam Lipski, *Australian Jewish Times*, 22 October 1987, suggests that though the *Herald* was a better paper than its rival the *Jewish News* it sold far fewer copies and that the ostensible reason for closure, the boycott against Mark Braham, was not the real reason.

²²See Rutland, *Seventy Five Years*, p. 52, for a fuller discussion of the attitudes of Harris and details of the succession of editors of the paper after he sold it.

paper was acquired by the late Louis Klein in 1969 and continued publication as a vibrant and active weekly. Currently it incorporates the international edition of the *Jerusalem Post Weekly*. In 1987 *The Australian Jewish Times* merged with the *Australian Jewish News*, owned by the Pratt group, and now has a national distribution.

Before World War II it seemed to be very likely that the Jewish community would disintegrate. It enjoyed full religious, political and social equality and the emphasis on the Britishness of Australia caused a levelling in the whole community. The Jews of Australia showed a strong tendency to intermarry and it has been suggested that the intermarriage rate reached 30% of the Jewish male population. World War II changed that situation. Immediately before the war there was a rapid increase in migration from Europe after the rise of Hitler and, despite some restrictions on the number of permitted migrants, at least 7,000 Jews came to Australia between 1934–1940. The impact of these newcomers was felt in the development of new synagogues, landsmanschaften, Hebrew speaking groups and the like.

The establishment of new synagogues in Sydney and Melbourne and the increase in the numbers of members of established congregations in all States in the two inter-war migration peaks saw the growth in the publication of synagogue journals and newsletters. Some were monthlies, some were quarterlies. Among these were the *Great Synagogue Journal*, *The Liberal Jewish Digest* and *South Australian Jewry*. We might typify the effects on the synagogues as a whole, as publishers, by considering what has happened within the Great Synagogue, Sydney. While not considering itself as a publisher in any formal sense the Great Synagogue has a long record of using the printed word as a vehicle for communicating with its congregants. Its journal has now been published since 1944 and publishes both congregational news and articles of wider Jewish interest. Tracts and leaflets on a range of religious and educational topics appear from time to time, especially including materials published for the congregants at the High Holyday services to guide them in the conduct and content of the services. Some of the materials appearing under the synagogue's imprint have had a wider community appeal and may fall under the category of public relations materials. These include the annual Jewish calendar and synagogue diary (which now has a rival in the

community calendar), a guide to Jewish activities in Sydney with the not immodest title of *A Guide to Jewish Sydney*, and a booklet on basic Judaism. The A. M. Rosenblum Jewish museum at the synagogue issues exhibition catalogues and has occasionally ventured into the publication of books. We note, for example, Lysbeth Cohen's book on the Biblical Tabernacle issued for an exhibition on the subject in which our own Department of Museum Studies was involved. The synagogue has a close connection with the *Journal and Proceedings of the Australian Jewish Historical Society* which is based in the synagogue and its archive and has been published since 1939.

The synagogue publications are especially important outside Sydney and Melbourne. Once, the states with smaller Jewish populations produced a variety of periodicals, some of them of literary merit. Western Australian Jewry had an exceptional record of producing small magazines, largely because of the influence of the migrants, firstly from Russia and then from Palestine, who left their ships at the first port of call in the Antipodes and clustered in Perth. The first Jewish periodical publication in Western Australia was the *Annual Report of the Perth Hebrew Congregation*, published in 1897.²³ Though the report, like its annual successors, was ostensibly a review of the year's events in the synagogue, it gave an indication of the nature of the community organisation, personnel, problems, interests, and concerns of the community. On 8 October 1913 the Perth community launched the first conventional periodical, the monthly *The Communal Opinion*, which survived for twelve months under the editorship of its founders, the brothers Zeffert. (Unfortunately only one surviving issue of this journal is known to us and a copy is in our own archive in Fisher library.)²⁴ Closure may have been because Maurice Zeffert enlisted in the Australian armed forces in 1914. His demobilisation was marked by the appearance of the *Jewish Observer*, 1920, also under his editorship, but the hopes of its founders failed to be realised and it too lapsed after nineteen months. Hoffman draws attention to the valuable service the journal rendered to the Palestinian immigrants to Western Australia who were penalised by some of the state laws

²³See Hoffman, 84-96. Details of its run and printers are given in the article.

²⁴Hoffman, p. 87, records her difficulty in trying to find a copy of the journal.

then in operation. On 1 November 1924 the highly successful *The Westralian Judean* was founded. It closed after twelve months of losses on 1 September 1925 and began to appear again in 1929 when it started an unbroken run of thirty years. It was not only a community magazine but a vehicle for the many budding young writers who entered the country in that period and it contains many fine short stories and similar literary contributions. It was followed in Perth by *The Maccabean Bulletin*, 1944 to 1946, appearing in duplicated typescript and directed at ex-servicemen. This grew into *The Maccabean*, which had a fourteen year run, and then *The Australian Jewish Outlook*, a monthly which survived but a little over one year, May 1947–September 1948. This periodical was founded with the express intention of providing a voice for the anti-Zionist group in Western Australia. Its founder and editor, Harold Boas, admitted that he misjudged their number and significance but apparently had no regrets at flying in the face of community feeling.²⁵ The journal had so little support in Perth that it had to transfer its operations to Melbourne and the majority of its sales was to the anti-Zionist few in the eastern States. Nevertheless it was unable to stay in business.

Today, the States with smaller Jewish communities have lost any independent press that they may have had; they are represented either by synagogue journals which serve the whole community rather than their own parochial interests or else by community roof organisation journals. Among such are the weekly *Maccabean*, West Australia, and *Shalom*, Queensland, a monthly, *Hamerkaz*, Australian Capital Territory, *South Australian Jewry*, and the Tasmanian *Jewish Times*.

We might say that the synagogue publications give the lie to the frequent suggestion within the Australian Jewish community that it is immature and parochial, a Diaspora outpost. The listings of the synagogue press alone tell rather a different story. It is a vigorous synagogue press, with some thirty-two newsletters, magazines or journals of longer standing as well as the recent periodical publications (some six in number) of the *Yeshivot* (Rabbinical Schools) and *Kollelim* (Communities of scholars).

²⁵See the full discussion in Hoffman, pp. 92-3.

Since the publication of *The Dialectic* (Jewish monthly, Melbourne 1875) no less than forty eight periodicals have been launched with an overt cultural purpose. Some, such as the *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*,²⁶ have had a specialised but culturally important role. The majority, journals such as *Unity* or *The New Citizen*, appeared in the post-war period and represent the literary aspirations of migrant, European Jews who transferred cultural leanings and social predilections from the old world. In the 1960s and 1970s one saw the reappearance of the same cultural influences, refreshed and reinvigorated by post-war Anglo-Jewish migration, in such journals as *Contact* in Melbourne (which ran for three issues) and *The Bridge* in New South Wales. *The Bridge* was established in 1962 when the then Israel Consul in Sydney, the late Shammai Zvi Laor, sat down with Joachim Schneeweiss, one of the community's leaders, and the author, and discussed ways to establish and finance a literary magazine. In 1963 the Australian Jewish Quarterly Foundation was established (it is still technically in existence though moribund) and in 1964, under the editorship of Hyam Brezniak, the Foundation began to publish *The Bridge*, a reasonably substantial quarterly which had links with the *Jewish Quarterly* in England. The editorial panel and content of *The Bridge* reflects the influence of the cross currents in the Jewish migration pattern. Hyam Brezniak, a man of remarkable literary and artistic talents, was of Polish origin and he arrived in Melbourne in the pre-war migration. He was heavily involved in left wing activities and worked with a group which founded the left leaning Jewish magazine *Unity*, which represented the literary and political aspirations of an inter-community group of social democrat and anti-Fascist writers. His editorship of *The Bridge* was the cause of a series of outbursts by Frank Knopfelmacher, who was convinced that Brezniak had transferred the political outlook of the *Unity* team to *The Bridge*.²⁷ Joachim Schneeweiss represented the

²⁶Volume 1 appeared in 1939.

²⁷In fact some of the key workers in the *Unity* group did work in *The Bridge* team, principally in financial support and distribution roles. At no stage did the policy of *The Bridge* adopt a doctrinaire stance. It dealt with contemporary issues after discussion between the editors. The editors took a strong anti-Russian stance when it was clear that anti-Semitism was rife in Russia and one or two of the *Unity/Bridge* associates who were members of the Communist party were alienated by this stance on principle.

cosmopolitan, culturally rich, German pre-war immigrant group acculturated to but not dominated by Australia. The author represented the continuing post-war migration from England, and others represented European cosmopolitanism or the Yiddish speaking, socialist oriented Polish migration. The printer, who was both friend and committee member, was Walter Stone, an important figure in the Australian literary scene, a 'father' to many small magazines and an active contributor to the journal. His close and friendly cooperation with the editorial team was the sole reason it was able to carry on for so long. In the end the lack of professional office editorial staff proved to be too great a burden. Shortly before it ceased publication financial responsibility and the distribution of the journal was taken over by Louis Klein, the owner and publisher of the *Australian Jewish Times*, but this professional expertise was too late to offset the problems of a group of busy editors finding the material to keep the journal alive²⁸ when they were unable to pay contributors. The Australian Jewish Quarterly Foundation has published a number of pamphlets and one book, the trilingual collection of poetry *In the Midst of the Night, in the Midst of Jerusalem* by Yossi Gamzu, which appeared in 1977.

There are two replacements for *The Bridge*. The *Melbourne Chronicle* is bilingual and is published by the *Kadimah* cultural centre in Melbourne, which was once a part of the Bundist Yiddish immigrant establishment. Within the last month we have seen the announcement of the appearance of a quarterly journal called *Generation*. Edited by Alan Charak and Mark Joel, it describes itself as 'a journal of Australian Jewish life, thought and community'. The first number has not yet been sighted but according to reports numbers among its contributors an impressive array of both the older and the younger Jewish community leaders.

Yiddish writers, writing both as novelists and journalists in Australia, have been major contributors to the development of the Australian Jewish press. When we examine the time scale for the development of publication in Yiddish in Australia it is clear that one must be cautious in evaluating the role of post-war migration from Europe in the development of the Australian Yiddish press.

²⁸The editors often wrote material themselves under assumed names. See n. 32.

Clearly, the impetus to write in Yiddish did not stem directly from post World War II migration as is sometimes suggested, though this migration played a major part in stimulating the publication of Yiddish novels. Of the twenty Yiddish periodicals which have been published in Australia, ten began their publication before World War II. The first Yiddish book to be published, in 1937, was a periodical, the *Australish Yidisher Almanack* (Australian Jewish Almanac), a very valuable collection of survey articles of Australian Jewish life and history.²⁹ With the exception of the bilingual *Melbourne Chronicle*, virtually the only surviving Yiddish publications today are supplements to the newspapers or other periodicals. Yet the production of novels shows a slightly different pattern. Throughout the 1940s and on into the 1970s a number of Yiddish authors, displaced from Europe, wrote belletristic works,³⁰ plays and novels, often autobiographical, about their experiences in Europe and as new settlers in Australia: altogether forty-seven titles are recorded.³¹ Typical of the writers who worked as journalist and novelist is Pinchas Goldhar who wrote for the *First Jewish Almanac* and published his first longer work *Derzeilungen fun Australia (Tales From Australia)* in 1939. He was also the first Yiddish writer to have his work translated into one of the Australian quality literary magazines. The background to much of his writing was the contrast between the vibrant Jewish life of his home town and the hostility met by the newcomers on arrival in Australia: a regular theme was the Anglo-Jewish snobbery of Melbourne's Jewish 'establishment'.

Goldhar wrote mostly in Yiddish and it is for his writings in this language and his contribution to Australian literature in this language that he is most respected, but some of his later essays in

²⁹Nos. 2 and 3 appeared in 1942 and 1947 under the aegis of the *Kadimah* organisation in Melbourne.

³⁰For an incomplete listing see M. Dacy, *Archive of Australian Judaica, Holdings to 1988*, ed. Alison, Crown and Radford (Monograph 5, Sydney University Archive of Australian Judaica), 1988, 18-19. Other titles are to be noted in Liberman and Young, *Bibliography*.

³¹Note that many of the writers who published in Australia were also being published in the USA and Israel. Thus the Yiddish titles listed in Australia represent only what was published here and are but a fraction of what was actually written in the country. See Liberman and Young, *Bibliography*, for details.

the *Australian Jewish Forum* are in English. Some of his earlier work has been translated: in particular, his story *Cafe in Carlton*, (Southern Stories, 1945) was rated the best story of the year by literary critics. A second story, *The Funeral*, was published twice in translation in two years, in the annual anthology *Coast to Coast*, 1944 and in *Meanjin*, 1945.³²

The recurring theme of his essays and short stories is the tensions and trials of migrants trying to adjust themselves to a new life, as he put it, 'eating the hard bread of an immigrant'.³³ He considered that the Jewish life of Europe could not easily survive the transfer to alien shores. However, he argued, on the basis of his extensive studies of Australian literature, that a new Yiddish literature could be created in Australia and that, by writing this new literature in Yiddish, Australian Jewry could be at one with creative Jewish communities the world over.

Many of the Yiddish novels of the post-war years were published privately by authors, through private subscription or through well-wishers in the communities.³⁴ The role of the York Press in Melbourne needs especial mention. The York Press was the publisher of the *Australish Yidisher Almanack* and was the principal (though not the only) Yiddish printer in Australia.³⁵ Yiddish works of all kinds came from this press. It also gave its imprimatur to many items which circulated in Australia in the information and propaganda war which preceded the establishment

³²Note that some of Goldhar's stories were translated in *The Bridge* by Hyam Brezniak and Alan Crown working together under the joint pen-name of R. Z. Schreiber. These were reprinted in Hyam Brezniak's *Pinchas Goldhar (1901-1947): an Assessment*, Wentworth Press, 1968. Recent unauthorised reprints of translations of Goldhar's stories attribute the translations to the mythical Schreiber.

³³An interesting study of the link between the themes of the Jewish immigrant writers and those in Australian literature as a whole is to be seen in the anthology, L. Rorabacher, ed., *Two Ways Meet: Stories of Migrants in Australia*, Melbourne, 1963.

³⁴E.g. The Herz Bergner Book Committee, the Hayim and Geigel Memorial Fund, Melbourne, the Friend fun der Yidisher Literatur organisation. For the works they published see Liberman and Young, *A Bibliography*, 37-43.

³⁵In addition to the York Press one must note the Oyfboy Publishing Co., E. H. Gibbs, and the *Jewish News* Press.

of the State of Israel. The York Press may well have been the catalyst in stimulating the revival of Yiddish in the Melbourne Jewish community.

Among the authors published by York Press was Herz Bergner (the younger brother of Melekh Ravitch). His career is illustrative of his contemporary Yiddish writers. Bergner migrated from Poland to Melbourne in 1938. He immediately resumed a literary career begun in Poland, where he had published a book of short stories, *Shtibn un Gasn (Houses and Streets)* in 1935, with a continued output of short stories in Yiddish published in periodicals in Israel, the USA and Australia. His first novel, *Dos Naye Hoyz (The New House)*, Melbourne 1941, fuses his Polish background with Australian scenes. His second novel, *Tzvishn Himmel un Vaser*, 1947, published in translation as *Between Sea and Sky* a year previously, was awarded the gold medal of the Australian Literary Society for the best book of the year. The story of a boat load of refugees, mostly Jewish, at sea after the Nazi invasion of Greece, was described as a literary *tour de force*, and put Bergner into the first rank of Australian authors. His largest novel, almost a sociological work, *A Shtut in Poiln*, Melbourne, 1950, was a literary monument to Polish Jewry. In 1955 he published another collection of short stories, *Dos Hoiz Fun Jacob Isaacs*, which presents the theme of Jewish alienation in the Australian environment, a theme which he was to take up at greater length in his *Licht un Shotn*, 1960, republished by Georgian House as *Light and Shadow*, 1963. This novel highlighted the problems of integration into an alien environment and the consequences for different members of the family.

Bergner's later short stories, especially his *Vu der Emet Shteyt ayn (Where the Truth Lies)*, 1966, and *Mdarf zein a Mentsch (Be Human)*, 1971, published posthumously, continued to focus on Jewish migrant life in post-war Australia, especially the life of the Yiddish speakers.

Political broadsheets and pamphlets have been an important feature of the printed output of Australian Jewry. The close involvement of the Jewish community in both local and Middle Eastern politics and policy making has meant that the community in all its centres has had to maintain a flow of information both to

inform its own members of current situations and developments and to help influence public opinion. Different interest groups such as the Jewish Boards of Deputies, the State Zionist Councils and the Zionist Federation have all published broadsheets for specific occasions or with a more general interest. Zionist publications tend to be concentrated in the period between 1929 (when the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand was established) and the years immediately after the establishment of the State of Israel. The 1940s and 1950s saw what might be termed the decades of the pamphlets as the Jewish community and its supporting groups in the Anglican Church³⁶ kept the public well informed as to the feelings of the Jewish community about Middle Eastern affairs and the role it wished Australia to play. The 1970s–1980s marked the rise of eight journals devoted to Australia-Israel cultural affairs and news briefing.³⁷ Today almost the whole of the organisational information flow is channelled through the group known as Australia Israel Publications or the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs. Both of these organisations produce news sheets, the first the influential fortnightly *Australia-Israel Review* and the second the occasional newsletter *AIIA Survey*, which is to be supplemented by a new journal called *Currents: Journal of Contemporary Jewish Affairs*. The first issue of this journal focusses on the future of Australian Jewry, and the second issue is to be entitled *Educational Issues in Australian Jewish Life*. It will carry about twelve articles per issue.³⁸

The younger generation, especially students at the University of Sydney, was especially active in the development of Australian attitudes towards the Zionist movement during the war years. During the 1940s the Zionist youth groups began to provide news sheets for their members, usually in roneoed form. Despite their unpromising appearance some of these were of considerable significance in moulding opinions among young people who, in turn, became the current crop of ageing leaders of the community. We are fortunate that our library in the Archive of Judaica has a

³⁶See in particular the work of Bishop Venn Pilcher.

³⁷For details see Dacey, *Periodical Publications*, p.113.

³⁸These details are provided by the Australian Institute for Jewish Affairs, Melbourne, in a letter to the author.

specialised and nearly complete collection of these ephemeral items.³⁹ All in all the Zionist youth movements have published at least thirty-eight periodicals with some length of run, many of them between 1942–1950.

In 1948 a Union of Jewish Students was founded at Sydney University and its members included many who were to become prominent citizens in the future. The early literary efforts of the union were targeted at the wider community first in the form of letters to the press but then in a series of broadsheets, none of which is known to have survived. In the next three decades, as the tertiary education system expanded and the Jewish student population grew, the Jewish student press expanded. Each year a new crop of students, innocent of the activities or the literary aspirations of its predecessors, would establish a new magazine with a different title. Some attempt to provide continuity began with the establishment of the Hillel Foundation in New South Wales which undertook the publication of a combined student magazine, *The Hillelite*, at first under the editorship of the author and then jointly with Graeme Cohen, co-Hillel director.⁴⁰ For a couple of years the independent student magazines in New South Wales were incorporated into this or into the *Hillel Graduate's Forum* which incorporated the *Jewish Students' Forum, Graduate Supplement*, though at the national level, the Australasian Union of Jewish students continued to publish its own journal. The lapse of the *Hillelite* was followed by another active round of producing new titles and to date there are fifty six known titles.⁴¹ All these journals had runs of a year or less.

Political activism, as indicated, also included work in attempting to influence the various Australian governments to formulate policies which were regarded as desirable or to change policies which were regarded as undesirable. One organisation which arose to meet the specific needs of its day was the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, which came into

³⁹ Almost all the specialised collection was created by George (Yehudah) Feher, to whom the Archive is indebted.

⁴⁰ The *Hillelite* appeared sporadically for a period of about three years.

⁴¹ The listing will be provided in the revised edition of Dacy, *Periodical Publications*.

being in the immediate post-war period. Though its main sphere of activity was in Melbourne the *Unity* group in Sydney transformed itself into the Sydney branch of the council. Unfortunately many members of the Council were either perceived as being communists or indeed were avowed communists, including such writers as Judah Waten and Hyam Brezniak, and in Victoria the Council was perceived as a threat to the Jewish community at this period when the Cold War was beginning and Communism was a whipping post for Australian politicians. Nevertheless, six journals and eight pamphlets published by the Council appeared in the years between 1950 and 1964 by which time the Australian Jewish community had subdued (but not lost) its interest in the issue of the migration of Nazi war criminals to Australia and it was no longer the sole target for racist attacks on post-war migrants as Australia began its slow progress towards its current multi-culturalist ideology. Among these publications were *The Jewish Advocate*, edited by Ernest Platz, *The Jewish Council News, Sydney* (but printed in Melbourne which was the principal centre of activity of the council).

Despite this remarkable record of publication there has never been a specialised commercial Judaica publisher in Australia (if we exclude the news presses). As indicated, organisations, institutions or even individuals have been their own publishers, and some have been remarkably successful. As the community has matured and started to come of age, the last years have been marked by a steady flow of scholarly Jewish publications (such books as Suzanne Rutland's *Edge of the Diaspora* or such collections of essays as W. Rubinstein, ed., *Jews in the Sixth Continent*) but all of these have been published by the international commercial presses or their Australian subsidiaries. The Mandelbaum Trust at the University of Sydney has been a specialised publisher on a small scale and lately we have seen the appearance of *Menorah*, the first Australian scholarly journal of general Judaica. Perhaps the next logical step in this saga of publication will be the establishment of an active commercial Judaica publishing house.