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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with representations, memory and commemoration surrounding the experiences of the 170,000 Displaced Persons (DPs) who arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1952 as part of a scheme subsidized by the International Refugee Organisation under the remit of the United Nations. The post-war refugees were presented internationally as 'Displaced Persons', 'refugees', 'political refugees' and then, in an effort to solve the population crisis, potential 'workers' and 'migrants'. Once in Australia, the vanguard of the mass European (non-British) migration programs, they were disparaged as 'Balts' and officially described as 'New Australians'. Many DPs, however, thought of themselves as part of a 'diaspora' with an 'exile mission'. From the 1950s to the 1970s the DPs were depicted by concerned social scientists and social welfare groups as 'people with problems'. They have been most recently represented as an unproblematic founding group of 'multicultural' Australia. Along with these representations by international and national bodies, this history interrogates representations of memory constructed and presented by individual DPs.
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This thesis is dedicated to Chris, Anna and Sascha Persian, with love
Inscription

Through the ages people in danger have resorted to flight; they have escaped, departed, become uprooted, expatriated themselves, left home, walked out, and emigrated from their homelands; they made their getaways, jumped and crossed borders or were evacuated from an oncoming enemy, were ostracized, banished, exiled, expelled, deported, transported. Doing so they formed an exodus composed of refugee waves, vintages, groups and batches, who by voting with their feet became displaced persons, refugees, fugitives, outcasts, stateless, deportees, expellees, expatriates, appealing to a close-by country for asylum, refuge, sanctuary, shelter, and refugee status. Homeless and clinging to their few belongings they become subjects of internment, harassment, deprivation and charity; and having been screened, scrutinized, classified and processed by local and international organisations, they were accepted or rejected, and repatriated either by consent or by force, or granted eligibility to remain where they were or to resettle in another country. After their resettlement their backgrounds were more often than not ignored and thus they became bracketed with voluntary migrants, immigrants, colonists, settlers, newcomers, new citizens, and new chums – or remained to most people strangers, aliens, foreigners, intruders. – Egon Kunz, 1980.¹

Introduction

This thesis is a cultural history of the 170,000 'Displaced Persons' (DPs) – predominantly Central and Eastern Europeans – who arrived in Australia as International Refugee Organisation (IRO)-sponsored refugees between 1947 and 1952. The DPs who arrived in Australia were a heterogenous group politically, culturally and socially. This history particularly focuses on how representations of the DPs have been constructed and presented, in order to interrogate the DPs as a historical signifier of cultural (and particularly migration and settlement) practices. These representations, both contemporary and current, include the international categorizations of this heterogenous group as 'Displaced Persons', 'refugees', 'political refugees', 'workers', and 'migrants'. In Australia, the DPs were further categorised as 'New Australians'. Meanwhile, some DP groups represented themselves as part of a 'diaspora' with an 'exile mission'. From the 1950s to the 1970s the DPs were depicted by concerned social scientists and social welfare groups as 'people with problems'. They have been most recently represented as an unproblematic founding group of 'multicultural' Australia. Along with these representations by international and national bodies, this history examines self-representations of individual DPs.

2 This term is used throughout the thesis for reasons of clarity, even as necessary attention is brought to the shifting meanings of the term in the immediate postwar years.
Displaced Persons

The term ‘Displaced Persons’ was created by the Allies during the Second World War to categorise refugees who were displaced as a result of the conflict. After the war, there was a core of one million DPs who refused to return to Eastern Europe. These DPs were also joined periodically by ‘refugees’ escaping to the West as the Soviet Union increased its power over Central Europe. The IRO (1946-1952), which was set up by the United Nations, administered the DP camps in Europe, and funded migration to any country willing to accept the DPs. In this period, the DPs were represented by international bodies, and by some DP groups, as ‘workers’ and ‘migrants’.

Australia’s ‘Populate or Perish’ slogan expressed the aim of its post-war immigration program. When enough British migrants were not forthcoming, the government agreed to take select DPs. Initially, Australia’s first shipments were made up exclusively of the so-called ‘beautiful Balts’ from Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia - blonde, blue-eyed migrants who would easily fit into a White Australian demographic. Australia gradually included all of the nationalities accepted by the IRO, who were predominantly from countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However, Jews were initially excluded, and it is estimated that only 500 Jewish DPs were ultimately included in the IRO Program. Moreover, while
Australia was one of the only countries to reluctantly accept family groups, there were quite stringent health, age and dependant requirements for workers and their families.

Upon arrival, the men were categorized as 'labourers' and the women as 'domestics'. They were sent to reception camps to be processed, and to learn English and about the 'Australian Way of Life'. They were then assigned to placements for a compulsory two-year work contract, with little attempt to match up qualifications or prior experience with job vacancies, and no attempt to keep family groups together. The DPs were sent as unskilled labour, essentially indentured labour, to heavy industry, public utilities including projects such as the Snowy Mountains Scheme, agricultural work, and domestic and hospital work. Australia then re-branded the DP 'workers', 'migrants' and 'Baits' as 'New Australians', useful as pliable labour and a source of population growth.

Due to issues involving the assimilation process, DPs were subsequently represented by various social scientists as 'people with problems', and this representation influenced the end to (overt) assimilation policies in Australia. Recently the DPs have been represented in yet another way – as the vanguard of the successful mass European migration programs to Australia during the 1950s and 60s which changed the demography of Australia and contributed to the shift in culture away from assimilation and towards a form of multiculturalism.
International Historiography

Post-war histories of the DPs focused particularly on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA: 1943-1946) and the IRO, and in light of the apparent success of DP resettlement in the context of the Cold War. These include Jacques Vernant's UN-commissioned *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (1953), which was a sociological analysis of the refugee 'problem'.\(^3\) Similarly, a history of the IRO was commissioned from Louise W. Holborn, entitled *The International Refugee Organisation: a specialized agency of the United Nations, its history and its work, 1946-1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956). This study was comprehensive but ultimately contained little in the way of analysis or critique. In contrast, political scientist Walter Dushnyck and sociologist William J. Gibbons published in 1947 a study critiquing UNRRA, setting out the complicity of Soviet officials in deciding UNRRA eligibility, and arguing that 'on the moral plane UNRRA fell short of the mark in the great task of relieving human suffering'.\(^4\)

More recent work, under the umbrella of refugee history, has been carried out by historians such as Michael R. Marrus and Kim Salomon. In his 1985 book *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century,*

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Marrus pointed out that with the politicization of the refugee process (allowing an individual with reasonable expectations of persecution to claim eligibility), the IRO foreshadowed the definition of refugees adopted in 1950 by the UN High Commission on Refugees. He also argued that the DPs were predominantly following the 'traditional path of European migration from East to West'. In his work *Refugees in the Cold War: Toward a New International Refugee Regime in the Early Postwar Era* (1991), Salomon raised questions as to the misleading nature of the identification of the DPs; he concluded that the eligibility process under UNRRA was 'chaotic' and that decisions made by the IRO, while legalistic, were 'basically emotional and impulsive'.

Mark Wyman's *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-51* (1998) is perhaps the definitive general history of the DPs, particularly as it brought the DP story to the post-Cold War period. Based on UNRRA sources and some oral histories, Wyman was able to follow generations of DPs in settlement countries, and the return of some of the DPs (and/or their children) in the 1990s to Eastern Europe. Wyman argued that many of the DPs were 'stateless only according to diplomatic labels: these refugees revealed a tenacious attachment to their ethnic identity'. By the time the

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Cold War dichotomy solidified, the DPs were becoming a ‘collective anachronism’, ‘misfits’, and this led to the IRO’s resettlement scheme.  

Historian G. Daniel Cohen’s work (2000-) has focused on the shifting categorizations inherent in western (UNNRA and IRO) definitions of ‘refugee’, highlighting political persecution, anti-fascism, and subsequently, anticommunism. Cohen has argued that representations of the DPs as a ‘cohesive people’, an ‘abstract refugee nation’, were constructed by the IRO. These DPs were then herded into manual labour as not only an economic necessity, but as a symbol of the moral virtue inherent in post-war reconstruction.

Cohen also, in a groundbreaking study of transnational DP memory (2006), identified a lack of collective identity and historical agency as the reason why DP memory ‘almost entirely disappeared from the radar of public memory’ between the 1950s and the 1990s. According to Cohen, this ‘DP lull’ was ‘only one aspect of the broader disappearance of displaced persons from the scope of public memory’. Cohen pointed to a revival, or resurrection, of ‘DP memory’ since the end of the Cold War. He described this as a ‘rescue from historical forgetting’, led by academics interested in migration, labour recruitment and political asylum, and first

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and second-generation displaced persons, either as émigré historians or community keepers of memory. A primary example of this sort of history is the historiography of settlement countries such as Canada and the United States which now includes studies of the DPs as minority nationality groups (unfortunately usually in isolation from the larger DP experience), within a framework of immigration history. Other examples are the oral history projects being carried out by historians in various countries, including the Soviet Union, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Another important strand of memory studies is the examination of commemoration - the documentation of the 'processes of collective remembering' by way of museums, memorials, and national sites of memory. Cohen has noted, for example, that 'the multifaceted reappropriation of the DP past indicates that even in the case of transnational migrants, commemoration rarely transgresses, if at all, the boundaries of national remembrance'. This follows Wyman's finding that the DPs do not identify as a group: 'when DPs get together they almost always do so within a national ethnic festival or gathering. There seems no organizational equivalent of the multitude of war veterans' and

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10 These works will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4: Memory and Identity.
concentration camp veterans' groups'. Wyman argued for a 'fundamental fact' of the displaced persons experience:

They were not, and are not, proud of their classification as DPs ... While they frequently gather across the US and Canada as Lithuanians, or Poles, or Hungarians, I found only one camp's members who had ever had a later reunion as DPs: a student group who had attended the University of Graz. Their American camp director had somehow kept them in contact over the years and encouraged the reunions.14

A further complicating factor in DP commemoration is that a narrative of DP arrival in settlement countries has become, to various degrees, enmeshed within settlement ('host') country national commemorations.15

The Australian Context

One of the first studies of the DPs in Australia, in a 1952 paper entitled 'The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia', was carried out by 'trans-cultural' psychiatrist H. B. M. Murphy. Murphy traveled in an IRO ship to Australia with 900 displaced persons and also interviewed DPs after their arrival in Australia. Murphy emphasized two major themes within his more general critique of the assimilation process. Firstly, he argued that DP trauma resulted from the particular emphases of the DP program and government policy, and, secondly, he noted the splintering of

13 Wyman, DPs, p. 207.
15 See, for example, Sveta Roberman, 'Commemorative Activities of the Great War and the Empowerment of Elderly Immigrant Soviet Jewish Veterans in Israel', Anthropological Quarterly, 80, No. 4 (Fall 2007), pp. 1035-1064.
displaced persons into national groups focusing on nationalist and anti-communist politics.\textsuperscript{16}

Following similar lines, Jean Martin's ground-breaking sociological study entitled *Refugee Settlers: A Study of Displaced Persons in Australia* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1965) was based on research analysing assimilation among a group of DPs in 1953 and a follow-up survey carried out a decade later. Also critical of the assimilation process, Martin has been credited with being one of the first academics to introduce a notion of 'integration', or even 'multiculturalism', rather than assimilation, into Australian cultural discourse. A fellow sociologist, James Jupp, writing a year later, further described the DP scheme as a 'coldly calculated drive ... to draft workers into Australia', and similarly argued against a system of 'forcible naturalisation'.\textsuperscript{17}

Egon F. Kunz was himself a DP and is thus an example of Cohen's 'émigré historians' rescuing the DPs from a 'historical forgetting'. Kunz published in 1988 his comprehensive history of the DP scheme, *Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians*. He used national and international archival documents and statistical sources to thoroughly detail aspects of the DPs, particularly their origins, integration and occupational achievements. Kunz described the different 'vintages' of the various DPs,


examining country of origin, political leanings, class, gender, education, occupation, and motivations for leaving their home country in very specific historical contexts. This valuable information uniquely explains the heterogeneous origins and disparity of experience of this mass group of displaced persons.

While Kunz's work is the most comprehensive history of the DP program in Australia available, he neglects to examine and empathise with the wide range of DP experience and confines himself to the fairly narrow themes of 'status', 'occupational achievements' and 'success'. Themes of trauma, family, gender, migration, ethnic identity and cultural transmission were ignored in order for Kunz to state his main thesis, encapsulated in a bitter warning he quoted from a Latvian DP:

Never again repeat the disgraceful act of burdening a migrant with two years contract of hard labour instead of giving him a helping hand to establish himself. Some kind of rehabilitation Program as it existed for Returned Soldiers should have been found for professional migrants to adjust themselves.¹₈

No further national studies of the DP phenomena have been carried out. There have, however, been further studies on aspects of the DP experience. *Gentlemen of the Flashing Blade* by Bianka Vidonja Balazategui, for example, focuses on a small group of DPs – those who

worked in the sugar industry of Far North Queensland. Balazategui set out the experiences of these DPs using archival material and oral history interviews. Regional histories such as these are obviously of importance, and it is surprising that there has not been more work by historians on a regional level.

Andrew Markus’ 1984 article ‘Labour and Immigration 1946-9: The Displaced Persons Program’ examined the DPs in light of their role as refugee labourers. Markus usefully outlined the political history of the scheme, including government propaganda and press reaction. He revealed that Calwell and Chifley’s agreement with the IRO was never approved by Cabinet, and that the reason for broadening the categories of acceptable DPs was simply that the selection teams were unable to fill quotas as the supply of ‘Baltic’ DPs shrank. Markus also noted that the first investigation into the scheme by the new Liberal government in 1950 was a reactive investigation into crime levels among the DPs, not with the problems the DPs themselves may be facing, as refugees.

In his 1988 book, Migrant Hands in a Distant Land: Australia’s post-war immigration, historian Jock Collins focused on issues of migrant experience, class, politics, gender and policy. Collins accorded the DPs a

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primary place as the first group of mass non-British migrants. Following sociologists such as Jean Martin and George Zubrzycki, he wrote sympathetically of their experiences as refugees whose immigration experience was ‘filled with fear, trauma and tragedy’. Collins argued that in government policy immediately after the Second World War, ‘“planning” was more rhetoric than reality’ and resulted in a two-tier immigration program, whereby DPs and migrants from non-English speaking countries occupied an inferior position in the labour market and Australian society.²¹

In a major critique of the DP program, and in particular addressing the problematic national character and war-time experiences of some DP groups, Mark Aarons’ *Sanctuary: Nazi Fugitives in Australia*, published in 1989, argued that Nazi war criminals and collaborators slipped through the security screening system to migrate to Australia as displaced persons.²² Aarons started investigating these claims in the late 1970s and initiated a major series of radio documentaries on the subject, resulting in a government inquiry. In 1988 the government passed the *War Crimes Amendment Act*, which enabled prosecution of accused Nazi criminals. Historian Suzanne Rutland has subsequently written on this aspect of the

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DP scheme in Australia, as has David Cesarani in the United Kingdom, and various writers in the United States and Canada.\textsuperscript{23}

In the Australian context, the rise in popularity of social and oral histories, particularly within the framework of celebratory multiculturalism with its focus on migration history and ethnicity, provided a forum in which to initiate nationality-specific histories and community histories. In most cases, this has meant government or institution-initiated museums and oral history projects focusing on reception centre communities or nationality groups. This literature is often merely a collection of anecdotes rather than any meaningful analysis of issues relating to displaced persons. At their best, however, these are social and regional histories of importance. Meanwhile, memoirs and semi-autobiographical accounts by displaced persons and their children began to proliferate in the 1990s.

Added to the somewhat raw information provided by DP memoir and the social and oral histories available, there have been two major themes attracting the attention of Australian academics: government policy debate and cultural transmission. Ann-Mari Jordens, a former Department of Immigration employee, entered the debate about government policy with

her influential book *Alien to Citizen: Settling Migrants in Australia, 1945-75*, published in association with the National Australian Archives in 1997. Although an important work in relation to the Department of Immigration's influence on citizenship in Australia, Jordens' overwhelmingly positive account of official practice regarding the DPs tends towards bias at some points. Jordens naively stated that the 70,000 female DPs were 'like all refugees ... selected on humanitarian grounds'. She also reported that one of the tasks of the few social workers provided by the government was to assist the DPs to 'cope with the legacies of past trauma' and that none 'found lack of interpreters a problem'. This contradicts Kunz, who stated that the inexperienced Department was 'unable to recognize the psychological and sociological aspects of migration'. Kunz's argument seems validated by Jordens' later admission that during the 1950s, as a result of an inability to cope with 'the combined stress of migration and the psychological legacy of wartime horrors', many DPs 'walked the streets of Australian cities, homeless'.

Indirectly refuting Jordens, Klaus Neumann's comprehensive, archive-based study on Australia's refugee history (2004) followed the machinations of the government's decision to accept the DPs. He noted the Australian government's objections to international refugee relief

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26 Jordens, *Alien to Citizen*, pp. 73-74.
efforts, including the inception of the IRO and acceptance of the 1951 Convention articles, on the basis of Australia’s right to legislate in regard to migration. He explained that while Australia did take a large amount of DPs, this ‘was almost totally divorced from humanitarian motives, and thus from the needs of individual refugees’.  

In their ground-breaking and wide-ranging study of post-war migration, published in 1984, Janis Wilton and Richard Bosworth commented that the rural reception centres and two-year work contracts were seen by the government as ‘a sort of physical and intellectual sheep dip’. In addition, at least some of the political intention of English language classes was to ‘salve those Australian souls fearful of too many garish and polyphonic foreigners’. The Good Neighbour movement, which ‘oscillated uneasily between patronizing pretty migrant girls doing pretty migrant dances and preaching hard-line assimilationism’, was dismissed as a ‘mixture of cloying friendliness, hortatory counsel, and determined assimilationism’.  

Wilton and Bosworth quoted a displaced person regarding these ‘naïve and unattractive elements’:

> Australians probably get the impression that European migrants are quaint and charming people wearing funny costumes, singing exotic songs and performing their national dances; the migrants, on the other hand, get the false impression that Australians are childish people who are ‘intrigued’ by their old-fashioned costumes,

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songs and dances – long forgotten in their own countries in Europe.  

Wilton and Bosworth described the opening ‘spectacle’ of the 1982 Commonwealth Games, involving seventeen ethnic dance groups (including some DP nationalities) in a ‘swaying multicultural mass’ to the expatriate song ‘I Still Call Australia Home’, as an ‘embarrassing enactment of Al Grassby’s much flaunted image of the Family of a Nation’. They argued that migration is ‘a story more often of travail than of triumph, of confusion and chance rather than of planning. Many migrants pay more than they gain.’ Rather than the ‘spectre of assimilationism’ leading to the national ideal of a ‘commonly accepted way of life’ inherent in the celebration of multiculturalism, they pointed to a story of diversity:

Sometimes, defying all the unifiers, migrants cling to what is small and beautiful – their village or neighbourhood, their culture, their dialect, their self-respect, their selves.

Historian Brian Murphy, writing in 1993, noted that the government policy of assimilation aimed to be inclusive by not distinguishing, in fact or perception, ‘new’ Australians from the ‘old’. This resulted in only slight official intervention, and was limited to what could be seen as benefiting the whole community. Murphy accused the Department of Immigration of practicing ‘protectionist psychology’ by:

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Laying the onus of adjustment on the immigrant who was to ensure that the native-born be undisturbed and not have to witness any suggestion that there were alternatives to established behaviour patterns.\textsuperscript{31}

Multiculturalism, on the other hand, which Murphy noted was 'political property' and not brought about by community consensus, seemed to criticize Australian society and imply that 'one of Australia's virtues is that the newcomer can immediately set about the task of filling the void that is the Australian identity'.\textsuperscript{32}

Gwenda Tavan's work (1997) has also addressed the notions of assimilation, multiculturalism, and the hazy concepts of Australian citizenship and identity. Tavan has noted:

[The] assumption that assimilation involved a process of creating somebodies out of nobodies indicated a view of immigrants as people devoid of history or subjectivity, whose identity could be created in accordance with the needs and desires of the Australian community.\textsuperscript{33}

These 'needs and desires' were hard to pin down, and Tavan asserted that assimilation was a 'transitional doctrine' which facilitated the 'surprising ease and rapidity' of the 'shift from a 'British-white',

\textsuperscript{31} Brian Murphy, \textit{The Other Australia: Experiences of Migration} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 135, 140.
\textsuperscript{32} Murphy, \textit{The Other Australia}, pp. 202, 209.
monocultural definition of the nation to one conceptualized in pluralistic and multicultural terms'.

Anna Haebich, meanwhile, in her 2008 book *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia 1950-1970*, identified assimilation as a form of propaganda aimed at the Australian community and critics abroad. Under the new slogan of the ‘Australian Way of Life’, ‘culture’ quietly replaced ‘race’ as the unifying characteristic of White Australia. Similarly, Henriette von Holleuffer described (in 2005) this propaganda as the making of Australia’s new ‘corporate identity’, including Calwell’s ‘marketing’ of a new ‘corporate design’ of white, assimilable migrants. She noted that in the United States, the DPs’ ‘public image centred on political belief and less on the ethnic or religious background’.

The role of government policy in creating national identity will continue to be discussed by historians, and is one of the key themes to emerge from any discussion of displaced persons, as they were the vanguard of mass non-British migration to this country. However John Lack and Jacqueline

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34 Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’, p. 89.
Templeton, paraphrasing John Hirst, identified a weakness in this 'national identity' debate when they noted that 'amidst all the ferment', it was rare 'to be shown an actual migrant'.

Stella Lees and June Senyard included a review of Australian cultural and literary perceptions of displaced persons and other migrants in their (1987) book *The 1950s ... how Australia became a modern society, and everyone got a house and car*. They noted that the government did not systematically confront the difficulties of mass migration but instead supplied the rhetoric influencing how displaced persons were to be viewed by the Australian public. Government publicity and the Australian media invariably showed the DPs and later migrants as 'grateful and unassuming', and news stories portrayed a 'fairy-tale quality' to the migrants' presence in Australia. Other writers and commentators, including historians Russel Ward and Donald Horne, 'often went beyond the bounds of reality to package a fantasy'. This fantasy focused on two themes: the superficial aspects of immigration, such as traditional dances and food, and the rags-to-riches story of the immigrant 'striking it rich and climbing to the top in Australian business'. Lees and Senyard noted that this was not a common story among migrants to Australia, and that:

> The immigrants' gaiety and colour had enlivened Australian dullness; this may well have deserved attention, but it was hardly the storming of the Bastille.

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While the importance of learning English was debated by these writers, most agreed with Horne’s assumption that the issue of assimilation would eventually solve itself, as ‘assimilation is best made in bed’. Meanwhile, Australia’s novelists had ‘discovered’ the European immigrant as passionate, sensitive, delicate, creative and politically aware.  

The other side of cultural transmission, focusing upon the migrants themselves, including DPs, was taken up by historian Glenda Sluga in her 1988 monograph Bonegilla: ‘A Place of No Hope’. This history of the largest reception camp, Bonegilla, relied on both archival information and oral history interviews, and engaged with the symbol that is ‘Bonegilla’, both for migrant ex-residents and the broader Australian community. Sluga quoted a poem by second-generation DP Peter Skrzynecki, about the migrant camp at Parkes:

Except for what memory recalls
there is nothing to commemorate our arrival –
no plaques, no names carved on trees,
nothing officially recorded
of parents and children that lived beside
the dome-shaped, khaki coloured hills
and the red-dust road that ran between Parkes and Sydney.  

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39 Lees and Senyard, The 1950s, pp. 112-114, 116.
Sluga described this search for order out of chaos as a ‘migrant dreaming’, or popular history, which is ‘created out of and against the existence of an official version in which it is granted no status or social meaning’. In contrast perhaps to this ‘shared understanding’, the immigration museum being developed at the reception camp site could be seen as ‘co-opting a version of the past into a bureaucratic framework’ and ‘entrenching it historically within an official conceptualization of that history’. 41

As Sluga’s study encompassed the various vintages of migrant groups accommodated at Bonegilla from 1947-1971, there was an opening for a similar but particular examination of the mass group of DPs, many of whom did not pass through Bonegilla. The issues of cultural transmission, ‘migrant dreaming’ and an examination of the bureaucratization of commemoration had not yet been examined in relation to the discrete group of displaced persons.

Continuing the themes of cultural transmission and ‘migrant dreaming’, academic Kateryna Olijnyk Longley, herself a child DP, examined (1997) ‘life stories from lost worlds’ in relation to her family’s oral history. Although stories told by the DPs ‘were simply not welcome in Australia’, Longley believed that the telling of these stories is a ‘way of forcing attention on the bodily experience of suffering, which is obscured by historical narrative’s

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41 Sluga, Bonegilla, pp. 133, 136, 137.
smooth stylizing gestures’. A ‘re-narration of the past’ assists in rendering it ‘bearable, speakable and containable as a basis for building the future’. 42

Longley thus introduced oral history as an important part of any study examining representations, memory and commemoration. This view was also argued by Catherine Panich in her book Sanctuary?: Remembering Postwar Immigration (1988). Although not a book concentrating exclusively on DPs, Panich did include a history and some DP oral history interviews, and lamented the lack of historical interest in this particular group:

Films such as Silver City and Displaced Persons have been a step towards generating an awareness of this era. Museums are recognizing that a presentation of our history is incomplete without an acknowledgement of the contributions of the postwar immigrant. Ironically, just as that generation of immigrants is becoming scarcer, historians are beginning to realise what may be lost without swift action to record their experiences and impressions. 43

Even after the recent revival of DP memory as recognized by Daniel Cohen, there are gaps in the Australian historiography of displaced persons. Historian Klaus Neumann has recently (2010) written a polemical article about the lack of historical scholarship, and general ‘remembering’,

with regard to immigration and refugee history in Australia, and particularly
as it informs policy debate:

One only has to count the number of books written about the
history of immigration in the past fifty years, and compare it to the
number of books written about World War I and World War II ... Or
count the number of articles about immigration and refugee topics
published in *Australian Historical Studies*. Or count the number of
PhD theses written about Australia’s response to refugees and
asylum seekers. Or the space accorded to immigration and refugee
issues in general histories of postwar Australia.\(^4\)

Neumann has called for informed historical perspectives (foregrounding
the ‘complexity of the past’) of, among other subjects, Australia’s
involvement with displaced persons and the IRO and repeated, six times,
‘We need to know more’.\(^5\)

This thesis builds on all these previous works in a number of ways. The
first aim has been to uncover a range of DP experiences while presenting
a history of DPs in Australia, as much of the literature repeats errors of
fact. These errors include confusion over whether the scheme was
humanitarian in intent, whether Jewish DPs entered via the IRO scheme,
whether previous qualifications were taken into account by the Australian
government, and numerous false assertions that the DPs exchanged two


years of their labour for free passage and/or accommodation.\footnote{See, for example, Jordens, \textit{From Alien to Citizen}, pp. 36, 61; Susan Marsen, \textit{A History of Woodville} (Woodville, SA: Corporation of the City of Woodville, 1977), p. 248; Salomon, \textit{Refugees in the Cold War}, p. 188; John Petersen, ‘Though This be Madness: Heritage Methods for Working in Culturally Diverse Communities', \textit{Public History Review}, 17 (2010), p. 42.} This thesis also sheds light on policy changes from assimilation to a reliance on the social sciences’ description of migrants as ‘people with problems’, and then to multiculturalism. Further, this thesis builds on themes introduced by Sluga and Cohen by providing a cultural history; examining representations, memory and commemoration in relation to the heterogenous group of displaced persons in Australia. A guiding concept has been that of historian Georges Duby, who has argued that representations have the power to modify the reality they appear to mirror.\footnote{Georges Duby, paraphrased in Peter Burke, \textit{What is Cultural History}? (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2004), p. 62.}

**Thesis Outline**

The chronological structure of this thesis shadows the changing policies of assimilation, integration and multiculture in Australia. Chapter One: The Politics of International Categorisation(s) discusses the international post-war creation of the group ‘Displaced Persons’ through to representations of the DPs as ‘workers’ and ‘migrants’. Chapter Two: Australian Selection and (Re)Presentations: ‘New Australians’ examines the politics behind the Australian government’s recruitment and selection processes, as well as
the lived experiences of the DPs under the contract scheme. Assimilation policies added a further level of complication to such lived experiences, as some DPs clung to a self-identification as part of a 'diaspora' with an 'exile mission'. Chapter Three: Analysis: ‘People with Problems’ sets out the way in which the DPs were represented by social scientists and social welfare groups as 'people with problems', and how this led to policy changes including 'multiculturalism'.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the memory and transmission involved in 'individual and family lives' and follows Sluga's 'migrant dreaming' and Longley's emphasis on 'life stories from lost worlds'. This second part incorporates the 32 oral history interviews I carried out under the aegis of the Ethics Committee at the University of Sydney, as well as other oral history interviews held in Australia. Chapter Four: ‘DP Memory’ discusses autobiographical novels and memoirs; ‘migrant’, ‘ethnic’ and ‘multicultural’ literature; ‘ethnic’ and ‘multicultural’ histories; and oral histories. Chapter Five: ‘DP Commemoration’ examines commemorations within museums and archives, and surrounding the ship voyages, migrant reception and holding camps, and the contract scheme.

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The 170,700 displaced persons who arrived in Australia between 1949 and 1952 were the vanguard of mass non-British migration to this country. The ways in which their experiences have been perceived, remembered and commemorated in Australia speak largely of dominant international and national narratives, and personal biases. This thesis will attempt to 'map the gap' by not only critiquing these popular perceptions and cultural imaginings, but by also including themes which have been either left out or narrowly examined in the historiography. In this way, while predominantly a critique of DP representations, this thesis also incorporates an element of the DPs 'speaking for themselves and becoming witnesses to their own history'.

This thesis also presents a specific study of 'the vast structure of recollection' in an Australian context called for by historians such as Paula Hamilton, who has argued that there must be:

Much more engagement by historians in the public negotiations over memory, and detailed studies that help us to understand ... the specificity of collective remembering in this country.

Similarly, and with a particular focus on immigration and multicultural studies, Sara Wills has noted a challenge to 'Australian historians to produce histories based as much on the fact of migrancy as the myth of

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49 Richards, 'Hearing Voices', p. 1.
nation’, and in doing so, to provide ‘scope for the remembrance of loss, disinheritance and the lack of a sense of belonging’.\textsuperscript{51}

This thesis addresses such concerns by asking: How have the DPs been represented, both internationally and in Australia? Whose interests have been constituted by the articulation of these representations? Why have these representations resonated with particular groups? How can historians and other cultural workers represent the DPs more authentically?

This chapter lays out the early refugee process that created 'Displaced Persons' and provides background for understanding the kinds of experiences behind the category that shaped so much of Australia's post-war immigration history. The 'Displaced Persons' who arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1951 were a heterogenous grouping politically, culturally and socially. Many were never part of the original post-war cohort of 'Displaced Persons' and only officially became 'refugees' in 1948 in the context of the Cold War, when they became 'political refugees'. The DPs were then sold as potential 'workers' and/or 'migrants' available to make up the post-war labour shortfall and assist in national economic regeneration. This chapter will describe the historical origin of the terms 'Displaced Persons', 'refugees', 'political exiles' and 'migrants'; terms which were, and continue to be, relevant and problematic to the DPs' group identity.

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Note 52: F. J. Massey, national general secretary of the YMCA, cited in ' Millions Homeless and Without Hope in Shattered Europe', The Mercury (Hobart, Tas), 3 June 1946.
'Displaced Persons'

The term 'Displaced Persons', or 'DPs', has become the generic name for those groups of people resettled by the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) following the Second World War, including those technically classified as 'Displaced Persons', and the later 'refugees' from Soviet-occupied countries. Use of the term 'Displaced Persons' in international parlance began in 1944 when the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), commanded by the United States' General Dwight D. Eisenhower, attempted to categorise those refugees anticipated to be displaced as a result of the war. According to the SHAEF Plan for the Allied invasion of Western Europe (Operation Overlord): 'Displaced Persons would be separate from those 'refugees' displaced within their own country. 'Displaced Persons' were to be specifically those outside their national boundaries and either 'desirous' but 'unable to return to their home ... without assistance' or who were to be returned to 'enemy or ex-enemy territory'.


Evacuees, war or political fugitives, political prisoners, forced or voluntary workers, Todt workers [forced labourers], and former members of forces under German command, deportees, intruded persons, extruded persons, civilian internees, ex-prisoners of war, and stateless persons.54
On emergent understanding then, before the end of the Second World War, 'Displaced Persons' were those persons who found themselves outside their own country, predominantly in Germany and Austria. The grouping included concentration camp inmates (whose only identification was a number branded or tattooed on their arm), voluntary and forced (slave) labourers (children and adults, carrying a Third Reich identity card designating them as OST, a person from the east, and known as ostarbeiters, eastern workers), (non-German) soldiers in military units withdrawing westwards, and civilian evacuees fleeing west from the oncoming Russian Army (known as 'westwarders').55 These groups were made up predominantly of Jewish and non-Jewish Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, Belarussians, 'Balts' (Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians), Hungarians, Yugoslavs and nationals of Romania, Bulgaria and Albania. Displaced ethnic Germans were the only group outside its state borders not included in the Allied's official category of Displaced Person; they were collectively excluded from the group of 'deserving' victims.56
Notwithstanding the exclusion of ethnic Germans, the numbers of officially
categorised Displaced Persons were staggering. By August 1944 there
were 7.6 million foreign civilian labourers and prisoners of war working in
Germany itself, comprising around 29% of the Reich's industrial labour
force and 20% of the total labour force.\(^{57}\) It has been estimated that
towards the end of the war approximately 13.5 million foreigners worked in
the German economy, and at least 12 million were forced labourers.
Around 11 million survived the war. There were also several hundred
thousand foreigners who had been imported into German-controlled
territories and more than a million forced labourers in the Todt
Organisation (a Third Reich civil and military engineering group),
constructing coastal fortifications throughout Northern Europe and
Southern France.\(^{58}\) In addition, it has been estimated that in May 1945 up
to 10% of the 7.8 million troops wearing German uniforms were non-
German.\(^{59}\) In all, there were approximately 12 million classifiable
Displaced Persons in and around Europe at the conclusion of the war in
May 1945.\(^{60}\)


\(^{58}\) Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, p. 81.


Representations of the DPs in the immediate post-war period were uniformly negative. To the post-war Germans, the DPs were known as *schlechte Ausländern* (bad or dirty foreigners), and 'held in the greatest contempt'. To Allied military authorities, they were 'a nuisance': 'kriegies' (*Kriegsgefangenen*) (POWs), 'goddam DP' and 'lousy Poles'.

Jewish DPs (and it was soon ordered that all Jewish survivors were to be categorized as DPs), who made up 20% of the immediate post-war refugee population, were described by US General George S Patton Jr. in 1945 as 'lower than animals'. They were all, however, the responsibility of the Allied authorities.

After SHAEF ceased functioning in July 1945, the Displaced Persons came under the care of American, British and French military authorities.

Two international organisations were involved on the periphery: the Office of the League of Nations High Commissioner, a merger incorporating the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees Coming from Germany and the Nansen International Office, and which provided legal protection and

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material aid to refugees from 1938 to 1946; and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR), which had been set up as a result of the Evian Conference in 1938 to assist Jewish migration from Germany and Austria, and then in 1943 to care for all refugees.64 One of the major achievements of the IGCR was the preparation of a travel document for stateless persons, effectively a passport for refugees, in 1946. The main international body, however, was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which was initiated in late 1943 so that 'preparation and arrangements shall be made for the return of prisoners and exiles to their homes'.65

UNRRA was a successor of sorts to earlier refugee relief organisations, such as the American Relief Administration (1919-1923) and various Offices under the auspices of the League of Nations. However, rather than relying on charitable and philanthropic bodies, it established an American-led internationalization of relief operations.66 In November 1943, the 44 nation signatories of UNRRA agreed not only to care for the DPs, but also to relieve war victims at the request of national governments. UNRRA would provide basic necessities, with a goal towards rehabilitation. At all

times, UNRRA operated under military jurisdiction and was largely dependent on military supplies. Their 'first and most urgent' task, however, was to organize the DPs.⁶⁷ UNRRA's ideological basis for this task was not only to 'bind up the world's wounds' but also to propagate an American-led 'new growth of confidence [in international administration] which is indispensable for the future system of general security'.⁶⁸

The main aim of UNRRA in this period, in relation to the DPs, was to assist in refugee repatriation. However, some rehabilitation and material support was required until an eventual return home became possible. In effect, this meant providing all DPs with food and clothing rations initially sourced within Germany and supplemented by Red Cross parcels, and housing millions of homeless DPs in around 900 (mostly nationality-specific) camps across Germany, Austria and Italy, which were often former concentration camps.⁶⁹ In this way, as historian Daniel Cohen has described, UNRRA 'functioned as an alternative welfare state for stateless people'.⁷⁰ According to the British Army, this 'gigantic' task involved:

Controlling and transporting ... men, women and children; the setting up or adaptation of camps for them; disinfectations and organization of hygiene and sanitation measures ... feeding, watering, and clothing; checking and documentation; the provision

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⁶⁹ Dinnerstein, America and the Survivors of the Holocaust, p. 17.
⁷⁰ Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics', p. 439.
of medical attention and supplies, the control of disease, and in the case of those who were not to be speedily repatriated, the initiation of rehabilitation, education and entertainment.\textsuperscript{71}

DPs also received special benefits in a post-war Germany. Many were employed by the Allied military authorities, and all received rations of American cigarettes to use as black market currency, as well as being outside German jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{72} This reliance on welfare resulted in a new characterisation, that of the ‘professional DP ... sitting pretty under the protection of UNRRA’.\textsuperscript{73}

The repatriation attempts were successful in part: for many, ‘there was great enthusiasm about going home’.\textsuperscript{74} The Allied military authorities repatriated about 7 million within less than six months after the end of the war, and UNRRA repatriated another million over the following 18 months.\textsuperscript{75} However, UNRRA soon came up against problematic DPs who either had nowhere to return to, or refused repatriation, citing ‘persecution’: all Jews, who were formally classified as ‘stateless’, and those (old and new) Soviet citizens who refused to return to communist

\textsuperscript{71} War Office 205/139 Public Record Office, Notes on ‘G’ Activities of 21 Army Group during Post-Surrender Period, cited in Carol Mather, \textit{Aftermath of War: Everyone Must Go Home} (London: Brassey’s (UK), 1992), p. 16.
\textsuperscript{73} Hulme, \textit{The Wild Place}, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{75} Neumann, \textit{Refuge Australia}, p. 30.
rule in their homelands.\textsuperscript{76} Others were initially repatriated and then returned to the DP camps – these were classed as uncatalogued refugees, that is, no longer official DPs, 'free-livers' outside the DP camp system.\textsuperscript{77}

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\textsuperscript{76} Cohen, 'The Politics of Recognition', p. 136.

\textsuperscript{77} Hulme, The Wild Place, p. 116.

Soviet Citizen ‘Displaced Persons’

The Yalta Agreement of 1945 had promised the return of Soviet citizens to their pre-August 1939 homes (DPs from areas incorporated into the Soviet Union since September 1939 were not to be repatriated nor treated as Soviet citizens ‘unless they affirmatively claim Soviet citizenship’). As many Soviet citizens had no wish to return home, repatriation was at times forcibly carried out by Allied military authorities ‘regardless of [the DPs’] personal wishes’.79 Ukrainian writer, and DP, Ivan Bahryany explained in 1947 in an English-language article in the Ukrainian Weekly, why so many ‘Soviet citizens’ refused to repatriate:

I am a Ukrainian, 35 years old, born in the region of Poltava of laboring parents and now I am living with no fixed residence, in constant want, wandering like a homeless cur around Europe — hiding from the repatriation committees of the USSR, who want to send me "home". I do not want to go "home". There are hundreds of thousands of us who do not want to. They can come for us with loaded rifles, but we will put up a desperate resistance — for we prefer to die in a foreign land rather than go back to that "home". I put that word in quotation marks, for it is filled for with horror, for it shows the unparalleled cynicism of the Soviet propaganda directed against us: the Bolsheviks have made for 100 nationalities one "Soviet home" and by that term they are building the terrible "prison of peoples," the so-called USSR.80

This feeling of 'horror' in response to the USSR was exacerbated by the Soviet persecution of returnees. The Soviets labeled the DPs

79 Foreign Office 1052/260, Directive from SHAEF to 21 Army Group, 14 June 1945, cited in Mather, Aftermath of War, p. 19; Dushnyck and Gibbons, Refugees are People, p. 51.
'contaminated' by the West, 'an undemocratic/criminal/undesirable/element', 'idlers', 'Nazis', 'war criminals' and 'fascists', following Stalin's pronouncement that 'there will be no deserters in the Red Army'. There was a general assumption in Soviet lands that all returnees, particularly POWs (but even forced labourers), had been collaborators of the Nazi regime and this led to 'complicated, often crippled fates' for those forced to return. Historian Tony Judt has estimated that one in five Soviet returnees were either shot or deported to the Gulag. Others were turned back at the border by state officials, while many DPs received letters from family members warning them not to travel home. Soviet officials suggested that loyalty to homelands had been softened by the safe and comfortable camp environment, where 'they do not work hard and they are set in a special atmosphere which is not normal'. The Soviets alleged that the DPs were being 'nourished' in the camps as 'tools of aggression for foreign powers'. The forced repatriations by Allied military authorities ceased around the end of 1945 as it became apparent that large numbers

84 Reinisch, 'We Shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation', p. 468.
85 Cited in Dushnyk and Gibbons, Refugees are People, p. 49.
of Soviet repatriates were being met with violence, deported to Gulags or executed as soon as they crossed the border.\textsuperscript{86}

As a result, many DPs concocted false background stories, and an entire underground industry grew up providing false identity papers for 'Poles from the Urals' (that is, Soviet citizens attempting to pass as citizens of pre-1939 Poland).\textsuperscript{87} A British officer noted the difficulties of identification and classification for Allied military authorities, and UNRRA:

Was [the 'DP'] a Jugoslav? Then he might be a Serbian Chetnik who had fought against Tito, but professed undying love for England. Or he might be a Tito Partisan, captured by the Germans but now escaped and trying to make his way back to Jugoslavia. Or again he might be a member of Pavelich's infamous Ustachi, who would no doubt attempt to conceal his identity. Was he a Russian? Then he could be a runaway Cossack, or an escaped Red Army prisoner, or a Latvian who left Latvia before it became part of the Soviet Union, or a displaced Soviet citizen who just did not want to go back home.\textsuperscript{88}

The underground industry for false documents consisted of individual entrepreneurs as well as emigrant institutions such as the Tolstoy Foundation. DP employees of UNRRA were also involved.\textsuperscript{89} This occurred

\textsuperscript{86} See also NLA, MS 8128, Unpublished manuscript by H. G. Brooks (Department of Immigration), 'Displaced Persons Volume 1', p. 12.
\textsuperscript{88} War Office 170/4461, Public Records Office, HQ 36 Infantry Brigade, War Diary, cited in Mather, \textit{Aftermath of War}, p. 79.
concurrently with the practice of Nazi collaborators hiding their identity, or changing certain biographical details, in order to be classified as DPs.\textsuperscript{90}

Historian Anne Kuhlmann-Smirnov notes that to many DPs who had lived in the Soviet Union these practices were not new or unique, as under Communism many had been forced to conceal their past or manipulate and reinterpret certain phases of their lives.\textsuperscript{91} Creating reliable ‘file-selves’ was thus familiar, and of cardinal importance, in the ‘general identity chaos’ of post-war Europe.\textsuperscript{92}

Meanwhile, the erstwhile Soviet citizens were joined by Jews and ‘border-hoppers’ fleeing the East. More than 160,000 Jews left Poland between 1945 and 1947 due to the very real danger of pogrom actions, while in 1947 the majority of those leaving the Soviet bloc were Romanian Jews fleeing via Hungary and Austria.\textsuperscript{93} Border-hoppers, usually young, single males from Czechoslovakia and Hungary, were attempting to escape the encroaching Iron Curtain - ‘Communism-in-the-making’ - in what has been termed the phenomenon of ‘the Voting Feet’.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{91} Kuhlmann-Smirnov, \textit{The Resettlement of Soviet-Russian Displaced Persons and the Politics of ‘Fidelity’}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{94} Sandor Berger, \textit{An Appendix to An Appendix of Prose, A Supplement to A Supplement of ‘I Protest’: The Letters and Articles of Sandor Berger. Australia, 1964-1968} (Sydney: Sandor
By this time, the hundreds of DP camps were regarded as 'sociological and psychological cauldrons' as the heterogenous groupings of DPs battled on ethnic, religious and political grounds.\footnote{Lubomyr Luciuk, \textit{Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 143.} Jewish DPs, in particular, were forced to isolate themselves from the majority DP camps, characterized by an American reporter as 'camps for collaborators'.\footnote{Cited in Suzanne D. Rutland, 'Sanctuary for Whom? Jewish Victims and Nazi Perpetrators in Post-War Australian Migrant Camps', Conference Paper, \textit{Beyond Camps and Forced Labour}, The Second International Multidisciplinary Conference at the Imperial War Museum, London, 11-13 January 2006 (unpublished), p. 12.} The DPs had to cope with the administration of their lives by UNRRA and the occupation authorities, which frequently included transfers from camp to camp, as well as deal with local Austrian or German officials.\footnote{Luciuk, \textit{Searching for Place}, p. 143; Anna D Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, \textit{The Exile Mission: The Political Polish Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939-1956} (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), p. 77.} Jacques Vernant, writing for the United Nations, described the system in 1951:

> The great majority of refugees lived for years in camps where a paternal administration drew up the menu, fixed meals and curfew times, chose the cinema films, allocated accommodation, repaired footwear, washed linen and provided toothpaste, cigarettes and chocolate according to carefully worked out scales.\footnote{Jacques Vernant, \textit{The Refugee in the Post-War World}, p. 162.}

In this context, a specific DP collective identity, or community, failed to emerge in post-war Europe; instead, a sense of 'reactive' diaspora and

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\footnote{Vernant, \textit{The Refugee in the Post-War World}, p. 162.}
exile mission was established. The DP camps, or 'DP Municipalities', encouraged by UNRRA to have a form of self-sufficiency, were usually nationality specific and attempted to keep a (homogenous) national sensibility alive through schools, cultural activities, and national celebrations and commemoration days. Polish DPs, for example:

Renamed entire camps and streets within them to reflect their historical roots. The refugees cared for cemeteries and built monuments commemorating their wartime suffering on German and Austrian soil, staged celebrations of national anniversaries, and taught children about Poland’s past in a system of Polish language schools of different levels. They also collected documentation of their activities and experiences in exile and protected it by, for example, shipping it to the American and British archives.

Some nationality-specific camps were more organized than others, and the 'Baltic' camps led the way in setting up and running technical schools, universities, publishing houses, radio stations, sports programs, choirs, orchestras, theatre and folk-dance groups, scouts and art exhibitions. Historian Marian J. Rubchak has described the camps as 'a matrix for cultural preservation, and even further development, in a relatively isolated

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The camps became a training ground for community leaders and modeled a community building process to be used after resettlement. As well as a reconstruction of nationality, then, the DP camps could also be said to have provided a founding place of diaspora (in some cases): a construction of national sentiment in diaspora.

The most obvious example of an emergent identity is that of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, the state of Israel, which historian Dan Diner has argued ‘had its beginnings [in the Jewish DP camps] in southern Germany’. These emergent nation-building and/or diasporic identities occurred simultaneously with the ongoing excision of the DPs from both the polity and historical memory of Germany and the expanded Soviet Union. Some DP groups were thus fighting not only for national and cultural preservation (or, arguably, creation), but also their own identity, purpose and agency as ‘nationalists’ and ‘exiles’ rather than ‘refugees’.

For UNRRA and UNRRA workers, however, a lack of agency on the part of the DPs was assumed. Historian Peter Gatrell has noted that the

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dominant attitude of relief workers seems to have been one of ‘personal adventure and self-fulfillment’, together with an individualized and collective agency (and developing professionalism) involved in overcoming ‘the arduous and sometimes hazardous nature’ of their work. They were usually reluctant to ascribe much agency to the DPs themselves, and there was little attempt to consult with the DPs about their future.\textsuperscript{109}

DPs were described by sociologists and psychologists working with the international bodies as ‘apathetic’ and ‘cantankerous’.\textsuperscript{110} In one report commissioned by the Welfare Division of UNRRA, a summary of ‘the psychology of Displaced Persons’ used descriptors such as ‘[rude], [crude] behaviour, aggressiveness and touchiness’, ‘apathy’, ‘phantasy-ridden’ and ‘unreal’ thinking, ‘jealousy’, ‘recklessness’ ‘deep despondencies’, ‘hypochondrial complaining’ and ‘mental misery’.\textsuperscript{111} Peter Gatrell has argued that this sort of pathologising of the DPs also infantilized them, and justified all forms of external intervention.\textsuperscript{112} Indeed, the UNRRA report


\textsuperscript{112} Gatrell, ‘Introduction’, pp. 421-422.
suggested that the 'tools of repair' were 'simple enough' – food, clothing, material help and 'administrative guidance'.  

UNRRA tried tactics such as reducing rations and frequently relocating the DPs, as well as allowing Soviet representatives undue influence, in an attempt to force the DPs home. In 1946, complaints by Polish DPs included:

Insufficient food, barely enough to allow them to exist; constant transfers from one camp to another; lack of adequate housing facilities; a ban on Polish schools and the publication of newspapers and magazines in the Polish language; denial of freedom of movement to the Polish clergy; refusal to grant the status of DPs to new Polish refugees, who escaped from Poland. Finally the Poles were harassed by constant screenings and re-screenings. Members of a family were broken apart and sent to different camps. The sole judge as to who is qualified to receive DP status seem to have been pro-Soviet UNRRA officials and the representative of the Warsaw regime.

In May 1946 the Camp Director at Fritzlar plaintively begged his charges:

Are you not 'home-sick'? I can tell you that you will inevitably be home-sick some day and that you will irresistibly want to go home, to see again the country where you were born, to which you belong, to meet your friends, your relatives, to smell the odour of your native land.


\[\text{115 Dushnyk and Gibbons, Refugees are People, pp. 29-30; see also Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, The Exile Mission, p. 67.}\]

\[\text{116 Paul Jokelson, cited in Reinisch, 'We Shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation', p. 472.}\]
DPs showed some agency by resisting these entreaties, and refusing repatriation. In an extensive repatriation poll carried out in May 1946, for example, of the DPs in the US Zone, 89% rejected repatriation, and 9% refused to participate. Those who refused repatriation expressed, in 'a more or less violent form, disagreements and dissatisfaction with the Soviet regime'. Ukrainians kept insisting on referring to themselves as 'stateless'. Some refugees also embarked on spontaneous unauthorised journeys around Europe.

When even bribing the DPs to go home with a sixty-day ration of food didn't work - 'Operation Carrot' - it became apparent that UNRRA's primary aim of repatriation was 'sheer wasted effort' and that the DPs had become, in the words of Daniel Cohen, a problematic 'collective anachronism', an irritating remnant of the Second World War in a Europe which was quickly forming Cold War sides.

It was argued by the Polish-American Congress (an umbrella organization of Polish-Americans and Polish-American organizations formed in the United States in 1944), and others, that the United States, and by extension the United Nations, had a moral responsibility to solve the DP problem, as 'their plight is attributable to the Yalta agreement to which

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119 Dushnyck and Gibbons, Refugees are People, p. 54; Hulme, The Wild Place, p. 113; Cohen, 'The West and the Displaced', p. 7; Wyman, DPs, p. 177.
America was party'.\textsuperscript{120} For the Communist nations, DPs who refused repatriation were 'enemies and traitors, not only of their own countries, but of all the United Nations'.\textsuperscript{121} Meanwhile, UNRRA had no authority to keep caring for the Jews, border-hoppers and Soviet citizens who refused repatriation, and no authority to initiate resettlement. The IGCR initiated small emigrations to Belgium, France, the Netherlands, France, and the French General Residency in Tunisia, for the recruitment of DP labour, as well as exploring emigration possibilities in South America and Canada. However, the IGCR did not possess an operational budget and could not embark upon mass resettlement schemes.\textsuperscript{122}

In this context, political debates between the three countries (the United States, the United Kingdom and France) administering the DP camps in occupied Germany and Austria, and the countries of origin of the majority of renegade DPs (the Soviet Republics of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, as well as Poland and Yugoslavia) took place throughout 1946. The first meeting was that of the Third Committee of the United Nations Assembly (January-February), which had oversight for social, humanitarian and cultural matters. In April, the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) officially replaced UNRRA as a temporary agency of the UN.

\textsuperscript{120} Charles Rozmarek (PAC), December 1946, cited in McGinley, 'Embattled Polonia', p. 5.
\textsuperscript{121} Cohen, 'The Politics of Recognition', p. 131.
The second meeting was a Special Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons (run by the UN Economic and Social Council) which met in London between April and June, and convened in September. The Rapporteur, Mr R. Bousquet, described the DP issue as 'a problem which is poignant from the humanitarian point of view, delicate from the technical point of view, and from the political point of view extremely difficult'.\textsuperscript{123} This Special Committee resolved protection for:

3 (b) those persons who have been displaced, as a direct or indirect result of the second World War, from their countries of nationality or residence, prior to (a specified date), or who were outside of their countries of nationality or residence on that date, and who definitely, in complete freedom and after receiving full knowledge of the facts, including adequate information from the governments of their countries of nationality or residence, are unwilling to return to those countries and are further unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of the governments of those countries.\textsuperscript{124}

This definition now included those Soviet citizens who had refused repatriation, thus enlarging the category of 'displaced persons' under the responsibility of the United Nations.

The third meeting was at the UN General Assembly where the draft constitution of the International Refugee Organisation (IRO), specifying the IRO’s field of operations and promising to ‘find new homes elsewhere’

\textsuperscript{123} The National Archives, FO 371/57712, Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1978, Report of the Special Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons (1 June 1946), http://www.tlemea.com/postwareurope, viewed 23 November 2010.

\textsuperscript{124} The National Archives, FO 371/57705-0007, Foreign Office: Political Departments: General Correspondence from 1906-1972, Definition of term ‘refugee’ and ‘displaced person’ (9 April 1946), http://www.tlemea.com/postwareurope, viewed 23 November 2010.
for unrepatriable DPs, was adopted by a vote of 30 to 5 with 18 abstentions on 15 December 1946.\textsuperscript{125} The ultimate responsibility for the UN was now to resettle the burgeoning group of eligible ‘displaced persons’, most of whom by this time were unrepatriable Soviet citizens or those who refused to return to their now Soviet-occupied homelands.

The IRO (1946-1952) was formally charged with resettling the DPs and in the meantime, maintaining and protecting them in the same camp system set up by UNRRA (1943-1946).\textsuperscript{126} The IRO became responsible for 1.5 million DPs and ‘bona fide’ refugees, including older generations of League of Nations and pre-war refugees; victims of the Falangist, Nazi, Fascist and quisling regimes or of political, racial or religious persecution; those who, outside their homelands, were unable or unwilling to seek the protection of the governments of their homelands; and unaccompanied children under 17, outside of their homelands, who were war orphans, or whose parents had disappeared.\textsuperscript{127} Those ineligible for IRO protection included war criminals, quislings, traitors, anybody who had participated in the persecution of civilians of an allied nation or voluntarily assisted enemy forces in their operations against the UN, common criminals,


\textsuperscript{126} NLA, MS 8128, Unpublished manuscript by H. G. Brooks (Department of Immigration), ‘Displaced Persons Volume 1’, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{127} Holborn, \textit{The International Refugee Organisation}, p. 203.
persons of German ethnic origin and persons enjoying the financial assistance and protection of their country of nationality.\textsuperscript{128}

All these processes established the IRO as a politicised international bureaucracy, whose major preoccupation was the categorization of DP eligibility. One of its main tasks was issuing Identity Cards verifying the holder as a ‘genuine refugee or displaced person’ able to access emigration channels.\textsuperscript{129} This work followed on from UNRRA’s screening practices, and in fact the IRO launched a massive review of individual cases already evaluated under UNRRA due to widespread ‘discrepancies and incoherence’.\textsuperscript{130} The IRO Identity Cards certified a politically blameless past, safeguarded the holder from repatriation, guaranteed continued maintenance and enabled possible resettlement.\textsuperscript{131} Obtaining the necessary ‘refugee status’ involved a complicated bureaucratic structure including a ‘Test of Eligibility’ by Eligibility Officers in which individuals were interviewed using information from government sources, private agencies, cross-examination and witnesses. There was also a Review Board for appeals, based in Geneva.

The screening process, while necessary, was not particularly stringent, even ‘superficial and in the eyes of some, ‘corrupt’. The Eligibility Manual

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{128} Kovacs and Cropley, \textit{Immigrants and Society}, p. 87.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Holborn, \textit{The International Refugee Organisation}, p. 206.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Cohen, ‘The West and the Displaced’, pp. 90, 94.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Kunz, \textit{Displaced Persons}, p. 31.
\end{itemize}
'made clear that the IRO was not particularly enthusiastic about screening for war criminals', and that a certain amount of untruthfulness was expected. Historian David Cesarani has noted that in December 1946 over half of Baltic 'DPs' in the British zone were suspected of having either voluntarily fought in the German Army (including SS divisions implicated in war crimes) or voluntarily moving to Germany to work there during the war. In the US zone, it was suspected that 40% of the 'Balts' (Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians) had engaged in military collaboration with the Germans. Cesarani alleges that UNRRA and IRO screening was 'so weak that, in reality, it was useful only for public relations purposes'.

Even though 'Displaced Person' remained the official IRO term for all groups under its mandate, and eventuated as the historical signifier of the disparate groups in Europe, a subtle change had taken place regarding both terminology and eligibility for refugee status. A DP could become a 'refugee' if, on refusing repatriation, he or she demonstrated a 'valid objection' to such repatriation.

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133 Cesarani, Justice Delayed, pp. 40, 52, 4.
135 NLA, MS 8128, Unpublished manuscript by H. G. Brooks (Department of Immigration), 'Displaced Persons Volume 1', pp 3-4.
'Political Refugees'

After June 1948, in the context of increasing anti-Soviet/communist sentiment (major events included communist governments in Romania in 1945, Hungary in 1947, and Czechoslovakia in 1948), the IRO's eligibility focus changed from 'genuine' victims of Nazism to anticommunist 'dissidents'. In this way, and with the stroke of a pen, all Soviet citizen DPs and other unrepatriables became 'refugees' from communism, and indeed by the end of the 1940s the two categories of 'displaced persons' and 'refugees' merged into the official appellations 'political refugees' and 'stateless refugees'.

The IRO concentrated on an evaluation of individual 'dissidence', paving the way for a broader notion of refugees, one which privileged the individual over the state. The ideal-type refugee was now assumed to have 'genuine' (democratic) political creeds as well as 'genuine' reasons to fear persecution. These individual refugees were represented as embodying loss and despair, apparently finding themselves (in opposition to diaspora politics) 'alone in the world'. This post-war change to individual rather than group eligibility (except in the case of Jews, who

were classed as eligible because they were Jews), with an emphasis on ‘proof’ and ‘persecution,’ led to an attempt by the United Nations to codify an international legal framework for refugees, incorporating a language of protection and individual human rights. The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defined a refugee as a person who:

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence ... is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

The Convention embodied the historical, geopolitical specificity of the DP experience as it applied only to people who became refugees as a result of events that occurred prior to 1 January 1951, and was obviously aimed at the DPs as Western-perceived victims of Communist state persecution. Signatories even had the option of limiting their obligations to European refugees. Academic Gil Loescher, an expert on international refugee policy, has noted that ‘the definition had the added advantage that it would

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serve ideological purposes by stigmatizing the fledgling Communist regimes as persecutors'.

From being members of ethnic, religious and political groups, the refugees were now under pressure to present themselves to the IRO as individual ‘asylum seekers’. Daniel Cohen has identified a ‘new theatricality’ imposed by the IRO under this system, where the incentive of refugee status encouraged an overemphasized ‘presentation of self’, such as the open expression of fear. In this way, ‘storytelling’ became of primary importance in order to fit the Western vision and definition of individual political persecution. This ‘Cold War myopia’ privileged the ‘political persecutee’, a ‘true’ refugee, over the ‘false’ ‘economic migrant’. In this way, the DPs were further homogenized, as they were reduced to a question of their Cold War identities.

It can be argued that the IRO’s pressure on individuals to present themselves as ‘political refugees’ obviated any of the age-old economic motives those from Eastern Europe may have had for refusing repatriation.

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and aspiring to resettlement in the West. In an UNRRA poll of May 1946, 10% of the DPs gave economic reasons as the primary motivation for their flights, even though economic reasons were not sufficient for refugee protection. It seems that in many cases political and economic motivations conveniently overlapped, as noted by this UNRRA worker: ‘It was not the fear of political reprisals that kept most peasants and workers from returning to Poland, but rather it was a fear of conditions they would find when they got there’. This neat intertwining of motivations is apparent in an UNRRA case record in which a Polish peasant explained why he found himself a DP: ‘At my house now, no cow, no pig, only a picture of Stalin on the wall’. According to one IRO officer, motives of adventure and a tradition of economic migration applied to ‘most’ of the DPs; others estimated that only 25% of the DPs in August 1948 were ‘genuine refugees’ as set out by the IRO. In such cases, IRO policy was to reject only the few who were ‘naïve enough to admit that they are economic migrants’.

Regardless of the real (rather than performed) motivations or means of escape of the various types of DPs, now re-branded ‘political refugees’, by 1948 it was clear that it was up to the IRO to solve the problem of how to resettle these ‘Last Million’ of internationally recognized DPs, made up of

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146 Marrus, The Unwanted, p. 352.
636,000 DPs under the care of UNRRA, 60,000 from camps under military rule, and 16,000 who had been under the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, as well as around 900,000 refugees who made their way to the West from the encroaching Soviet bloc in the years to 1951.\textsuperscript{149} The solution came as the IRO re-branded the DPs as 'workers' and 'migrants'. As one UNRRA relief worker observed in 1947: 'Fortunately, the present manpower shortage in Western countries has revolutionized the outlook for DPs'.\textsuperscript{150} The emphasis for DPs now was on exchanging their IRO identity card to obtain an IRO passport.\textsuperscript{151}

'Workers' and 'Migrants'

From 1948, the IRO funded migration to any country willing to accept the DPs. Some countries, including Turkey and the new state of Israel, accepted DPs from a particular cultural background (Muslim DPs from Yugoslavia and Jewish DPs, respectively), and the United States accepted a small number as 'compassionate cases'.\textsuperscript{152} However, most interested countries were looking for workers to regenerate post-war economies. The first European schemes involved recruitments by Britain, the Netherlands and Belgium of 'bright-eyed [and] healthy' single persons or childless married couples as short-term workers to fill industry

\textsuperscript{149} Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', pp. 188-189.
\textsuperscript{150} Wilson, \textit{Aftermath}, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{151} Berger, \textit{An Appendix to An Appendix of Prose}, p. 307.
\textsuperscript{152} Hulme, \textit{The Wild Place}, p. 115.
shortages in coal mining and textile manufacturing. In Britain a limited scheme was initiated for young Baltic women (the 'Balt Cygnets') to be used as maids or sanatorium attendants for the first three months of their stay. Then, around 100,000 non-Jewish DPs (including tens of thousands of suspect Baltic and Ukrainian former Waffen-SS soldiers, who remained outside IRO screening processes, and, later, volksdeutsch) were renamed 'European Voluntary Workers' and defined primarily as labour migrants. Canada and Argentina were the first countries outside Europe to take advantage of the labour potential, with Canada similarly recruiting workers (but not their families) for two year 'apprenticeships' in specific industries, including lumbering, mining, agriculture and domestic service. It was up to the breadwinners to subsequently sponsor their families. As noted by Canadian historian John W. Holmes: 'Any DPs who would be permitted to come ... would be selected like good beef cattle with a preference for strong young men who could do manual labour and would not be encumbered by aging relatives'. In 1948 the United States finally passed legislation, the Displaced Persons Act, in order to sidestep earlier migration quota restrictions to ultimately admit 400,000 DPs under a

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154 Diana Kay and Robert Miles, Refugees or Migrant Workers? European Volunteer Workers in Britain 1946-1951 (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 7-8; Cesarani, Justice Delayed, pp. 4, 5, 50, 77.
sponsorship system whereby the (private or organizational) sponsor had to guarantee housing and employment.

By 1948, then, the eligibility of DPs as both 'Displaced Persons' and 'refugees' had morphed into the 'selection, control and regimentation' of both the IRO and the international community on 'muscle-gathering missions'. The DPs, who had earlier presented themselves to the IRO as Cold War 'political refugees', were now coerced into presenting themselves to fit recruiters' needs. For Canadian immigration authorities, intellectuals turned into lumberjacks, workers and farmers; for the United States, they became farmers and mechanics.

As well as an emphasis on manual work skills, there was a strong 'racial' component in the international community's selections. The United Nations reported that 'without openly declaring their unwillingness to accept Jewish immigrants, the various recruiting missions invariably reject all the Jewish candidates'. It has also been argued that non-Jewish, particularly 'Baltic' (Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian), DPs were specifically recruited for British work schemes to stem the immigration of non-white Africans and Asians, due to the racially-based belief that European DPs

were ‘of good human stock’. There was a hierarchy of race (and class) in the selection process, with middle-class Balts seen as the ‘elite of the refugee problem’. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg recruited single workers with no dependents, Balts preferred. In the United States, almost a quarter of all visas were reserved for Balts.

Historian Laura Hilton has argued that some DP groups were complicit in such representations. Their construction(s) of cultural nationalism(s) served in this instance as a mechanism of self-portrayal, a cultivated ‘purposefully created’ external image, particularly towards countries of potential settlement. Poles and ‘Balts’ depicted themselves as ‘strong, handsome, hardworking, God-fearing lovers of democracy’. In one publication produced in a DP camp, Latvians ‘somewhat eerily emphasized that 60% of the population had fair hair and blue eyes’, and that they were physically healthy. They also successfully emphasized their anti-communism, while minimizing their formerly pro-Nazi stance. Some DPs sent letters to the governments of potential resettlement countries, assuring them of their ‘race’s’ assimilability.

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163 See, for example, NAA, A434, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 1949/3/487, Daumont, Harry Leslie – Admission under D.P. Scheme – View on Assimilation
In effect, then, the IRO, admittedly 'hat in hand', presided over and administered a 'labour-recruitment program on an international scale'. The Soviets alleged that 'a real slave trade' was flourishing, with the IRO the 'main purveyor of cheap labour for the capitalist countries', and even *The Times* (London) was inclined to agree: 'There is a whiff of the slave market in the invitations to DPs to enter most countries'. Some IRO leaders attacked this 'skimming of the cream' and 'embargo on brains' as ruinous, a denial of the organisation's humanitarian aims. However, to the recruiting countries the refugees were 'immense pools of manpower representing every known skill', and the IRO was soon dubbed by the press the 'largest travel agency in human history'.

Although the IRO was intermittently uncomfortable with facilitating the recruitment of mass labour, there was also a perception that labour would

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165 NAA, Series A446, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, IRO, 1962/67355, International Refugee Organisation 1947-1977, Slave Labour of Displaced Persons in the Capitalistic Countries by V Irinin. See also allegations of a 'slave market' by Poland's representative to the United Nations, United Nations, General Assembly, Third Committee, Meeting 228, 8 November 1946.


have a moralizing and rehabilitative effect on the DPs, negating the 'evil and anti-social consequences of continued idleness'.

Allied employment policies attempted to turn DPs from 'slaves of the Nazi regime' to 'labourers suitable for democracies', while DP 'apathy' was contrasted with state and agency 'action' in a 'grand vision of reconstruction and replacement'.

The actual process of the IRO pipe-line involved individual DPs applying for immigration to the IRO, which selected successful applicants through a process of medical, professional and biographical reviews. The recruiting countries then often made their own selections out of these successful applicants, entailing a second review process. The United States, the last hope for many DPs, required not only sponsors and medical clearance, but birth and marriage certificates, good-conduct statements from the police, work-testing records and a 'non-begging certificate' from the German authorities proving that the DP had not begged whilst in Germany. Those rejected by recruiting countries as

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171 Hulme, The Wild Place, p. 175.
'sub-standard' included the ill, the infirm, the old, and those who stayed to care for them, as well as intellectuals (the ‘forgotten men’), those with too many dependants, single mothers and criminals (often black marketeers). The Polish Union of America, a member of the Polish American Congress, reported in 1948 after a fact-finding mission in the DP camps:

People who are young, healthy, single and have job training leave to settle in the free world ... The old people, the sick, those burdened with families, and those without job training stay behind, because countries admitting immigrants treat the DP masses in a purely selfish, human-market-like way, instead of with a humanitarian and social attitude. The ratio of the young and healthy to the old and unable to work gets worse almost by the hour ... Those who need help include people who are blind, deaf, mentally ill, terminally ill – especially those with TB – handicapped, and old people who can't work. These people lost their health in concentration camps, as political prisoners or fighting for Freedom and Independence, or in POW camps ... or, as civilian labourers forced to work in Germany.

Left to fend for themselves, this ‘minus’ or ‘hard core’ had ‘passed through the sieves of nations’. They were the ‘most truly forgotten human flotsam of the war’: ‘despair was the footnote’. In 1949 there were 20,000 seriously handicapped persons, 30,000 of their dependents, and

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172 NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 200/1/5, Medical – Displaced Persons, Policy and Procedure in regard to Migrants and Applicants, for Landing Permits, Letter from the Australian Military Mission, Köln, to the Director General of Health, Canberra, dated 28 December 1949; see also NAA, MP579/1, Department of Labour and National Service – Central Office, 702/42/1, Resettlement of Specialists under care of IRO; Economic and Social Council of UNO, cited in ‘UNO Appeals on Refugees’, The Sydney Morning Herald, 11 March 1949, p. 3.


174 Marrus, The Unwanted, p. 352.

175 L Eitinger, ‘Mental Diseases Among Refugees in Norway After World War II’ in Charles Zwingmann and Maria Pfister-Ammende, eds., Uprooting and After ... (Berlin: Springer-VERlag, 1973), p. 193; Luciuk, Searching for Place, p. 139; Kay and Miles, Refugees or Migrant Workers?, p. 64; Hulme, The Wild Place, p. 144.
approximately 100,000 others with limited opportunities for resettlement.\textsuperscript{176} The IRO initiated and administered retraining schemes in an attempt to resettle these DPs, but with minimal success. Some were accepted by Norway in 'good-will' transports.\textsuperscript{177} The rest were somehow to integrate into the Germany economy. The last operative camp, a Jewish DP camp near Munich still housing 177,000 people, was dissolved in February 1957; all of the others had closed by 1952.\textsuperscript{178} 1959-60 was ascribed World Refugee Year in order to highlight those hard-core DPs who still had not found a home.\textsuperscript{179}

Despite the failure of the 'hard core', and the latent issues of nationalisms and agency, the IRO scheme was largely viewed as a political and humanitarian success. The immediate post-war 'Displaced Persons' had been successfully re-categorised and joined by 'refugees' and 'political refugees'. The thorny issue of repatriation to the Soviet Union had been tackled head-on with the formation of the International Refugee Organisation, and more than one million DPs, now renamed 'workers' and 'migrants', were re-settled by the end of 1951. This vision of success was nowhere more apparent than in Australia, where DPs were re-branded as 'migrant workers', who were to rapidly become 'New Australians'.

\textsuperscript{176} Markus, 'Labour and Immigration 1946-9, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{177} Eitinger, 'Mental Diseases Among Refugees in Norway After World War II', p. 203.
\textsuperscript{178} Köngiseder and Wetzel, 'Displaced Persons, 1945-1950', p. 9; Stone, 'Introduction', p. 3; Datla, 'Displacement Camps: Sites of Ethnic Renewal and Nationalism'.
\textsuperscript{179} Gatrell, 'Introduction', p. 419.
following chapter will examine the Australian selection and (re-)presentations of DPs in the post-war period.
Chapter Two

Australian Selection and (Re)Presentations –

‘New Australians’

There had been some doubt about the quality of these DPs who had the blood of a number of races in their veins. Many were red-headed and blue-eyed. There was also a number of natural platinum blondes of both sexes. The men were handsome and the women beautiful. It was not hard to sell immigration to the Australian people once the press published photographs of that group. – Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration, 1945.  

Australia’s involvement in the IRO resettlement scheme led to the arrival of around 170,000 DPs in Australia. This chapter will discuss the political machinations surrounding this first mass non-British migration program to Australia, with a focus on the racial, age, gender and political policies of the Australian government. The Australian government was overt in selecting DPs who were optimally male, young and fit, to comply with the government’s population and labour aims, and who were also ‘racially’ acceptable to a White Australia. To some extent the contents of the first part of this chapter are well known (if neglected), and are described here in order to provide background for the Australian government’s representations of the DPs. After a stringent selection process in which the DPs were specifically recruited in order to cause the least offence to

the Australian public, 'displaced persons' and 'political refugees' were intentionally re-branded as (white, assimilable) 'workers' and 'migrants', and ultimately (assimilated) 'New Australians'.

**The Politics Behind a Labor Government's Acceptance of Non-British Labour**

The shock of war in the Pacific fostered an ambitious government imperative to increase population in Australia, which led to a dramatically new immigration scheme. In December 1942 Ben Chifley was appointed Minster for Postwar Reconstruction; in 1943 the government received a memo from Britain recognizing the need for increased migration to Australia for defence and national development, and suggesting that Australia look to Europe if there was a shortfall in migrants from the United Kingdom.\(^\text{181}\) In late 1943 an interdepartmental committee was established to investigate and report specifically on immigration; a year later a sub-committee recommended that the 'Commonwealth should be prepared to accept any white aliens who can be assimilated and contribute satisfactorily to economic development and against whom there are no objections' (my emphasis).\(^\text{182}\) It warned that 'Australia's need for

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\(^\text{181}\) Murphy, *The Other Australia*, p. 88; see also Zubrzycki, 'Arthur Calwell and the Origin of Post-War Immigration', p. 7.

population is so great that it cannot afford to be too exclusive as to categories to be regarded as eligible for admission'.

Bolstered by the unifying experience of war, the idea that the Labor government could and should plan a radical new immigration program became an essential element of post-war 'reconstruction', particularly after the white paper Full Employment in Australia (May 1945) advocated entering a new phase of industrialization which would take the country beyond a reliance on rural exports to Britain. Support for such a large-scale immigration program was bipartisan, and was also backed by influential demographers including W. D. Borrie and Charles Price at the Australian National University. A new Department of Immigration was established and in July 1945, Labor politician Arthur Calwell (already Minister for Information) volunteered to become the first Minister for Immigration. (Sir) Tasman Heyes was subsequently appointed Secretary of the fledgling Department (1945-1961).

Calwell was a visionary who sought to remake Australia in America's (demographic) image; he ultimately became the architect of Australia's post-war mass migration program. He set out his views in a personal

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185 Wilton and Bosworth, Old Worlds and New Australia, p. 21.
manifesto published in 1945, *How Many Australians Tomorrow?*, which argued that Australia's population 'is our number one problem'. While admitting that immigration from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe was a 'controversial question', Calwell suggested 'we must be realistic'.

Calwell's ostensible plan was to increase the population by 1% births and 1% net migration, with the public aim of 90% British migration in order to populate a strictly regulated White Australia. British migrants were however too few in the immediate post-war period, as there was little access to shipping and British citizens were in any case needed for post-war reconstruction in England. The one million white American migrants optimistically invited into Australia, as well as ideal-type Scandinavian migrants, also failed to materialize.

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The Australian government was well aware of the 'last million' DPs languishing in Europe. Australia was a founding member of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, and a signatory and financial contributor to UNRRA. However, the Labor government was wary of non-British immigration and, indeed, Australia had no refugee policy outside its ordinary migration requirements before its reluctant acceptance of 15,000 Jewish refugees was announced at Evian Conference in 1938.\textsuperscript{191} The government had gone as far as deporting 5,000 Asians and Pacific Islanders who had sought refuge in Australia during the war, some of whom had married Australian citizens.\textsuperscript{192} Indeed, Australia's rejection of a plea by UNRRA in early 1947 to resettle 30,000 DPs was entirely in character. To the Australian public, the government made it very clear that being a signatory of the IRO did not involve 'commitments to take refugees into the country, our freedom in this regard being unimpaired'.\textsuperscript{193}

Machinations in the upper echelons of government told a different story. In late 1945 Calwell commissioned the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee (CIAC), chaired by Labor MP Les Haylen and consisting of parliamentary representatives and delegates from employer and employee bodies, including the Australian Council of Trade Unions. After visiting

\textsuperscript{191} Charles Price, 'Immigration Policies and Refugees in Australia', IMR, 15, No. 1, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{193} NAA, Series A2700, Cabinet Office, Curtin, Forde and Chifley Ministries - folders of Cabinet minutes and agenda, Australian Participation in the International Refugee Organisation and Post-UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) Relief, 695D, Cabinet Agendum No 6950; see also J. B. Chifley and H. V. Evatt, cited in Neumann, Refuge Australia, p. 80.
Paris for an International Labour Office Conference and investigating immigration prospects in North-Western Europe, CIAC recommended that DPs should be recruited and actively assisted to migrate to Australia. The committee advocated not only an extensive overseas publicity campaign to attract potential migrants, but also a national publicity campaign to condition Australians for the arrival of non-British migrants, assuring them that the new citizens would regenerate the local economy rather than take jobs, and educating the public out of its parochial and ‘isolationist’ attitude.

In 1946, the Australian delegation to the UN, led by (Sir) Paul Hasluck, received instructions to secure representation on any body established to handle refugees, as Australia was ‘interested from migration angle particularly’. This interest was to be kept secret. Thus, Australia even abstained in the General Assembly vote of 15 December 1946 which conditionally approved the establishment of the IRO. However, by April 1947 Australia had made proposals to join the IRO (and Calwell later argued that membership of the IRO conferred a ‘definite responsibility for contributing to the situation of the displaced persons problem’).

197 Suzanne Rutland, ‘Subtle Exclusions: Postwar Jewish Emigration to Australia and the impact of the IRO Scheme’, The Journal of Holocaust Education, 10, No. 1 (Summer 2001), p. 54; A.
Chifley and Calwell seemed to be following a policy of never raising migration issues in the Labor Caucus. Historian Andrew Markus has argued that Cabinet was ‘misled (in all likelihood deliberately) and then kept uninformed’ by Chifley and Calwell with regard to the question of Australia joining the IRO. The relevant Cabinet submission reads:

Australia has no direct interest from a purely migration point of view because:

(a) Australia cannot take non-British migrants for some time.
(b) Australia could arrange the selection of any desired migrants without participation in the IRO.
(c) Australia is opposed to the principle of large scale settlement of refugees.

However, within a month of Cabinet ratification, on 2 June 1947, Calwell had instructed an immigration official to prepare a report on the DPs available for migration. It seems that by mid-1947, Chifley and Calwell were inclined to re-examine the prospects among the massive DP population. Markus argued that this was a 'closely guarded secret perhaps shared only by Calwell, Chifley and Evatt'. Even correspondence from Australian representatives in London and the Hague in April and May

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201 Markus, 'Labour and Immigration 1946-9', pp. 77-78.
202 Price, Australia and Refugees, p. 18; Neumann, Refuge Australia, p. 29.
1947, urging that DP migration was a ‘golden opportunity’ and warning that ‘the best will be taken within twelve months’, was not presented to Cabinet.\(^{203}\)

In this atmosphere of ‘secrecy and subterfuge’, Chifley authorized Calwell to travel to Europe to seek international assistance to obtain shipping and to approach the recently formed IRO about the possibility of recruiting migrants in European refugee camps.\(^{204}\) When Calwell met with representatives of the Preparatory Commission of the IRO (PCIRO), he was informed that there were ‘high-quality’ refugees available for resettlement and that shipping would be provided by the IRO at a cost of around $US340 per person.\(^{205}\) The Australian government would only be required to pay £10 per head as an ex gratia payment because of the greater distance to Australia compared to ships going to American destinations and elsewhere.\(^{206}\) Not only were the potential migrants cheap, but they could be recruited using almost any selection criteria Calwell stipulated. Calwell telegrammed Chifley:

> Other countries are keen competitors for best migrant types and unless we act quickly we may lose our opportunity of security migrants on selection basis. I am sending 2 officers to make preliminary selection in DP camps of those classes of workers who


can best assist our manpower shortages. We would select types specially suitable for rural work, nursing and domestic work in hospitals, labour for our reconstruction programme and developmental projects. Selection will be on general suitability for work to be performed, after IRO and British security have satisfied our medical and security requirements ... Consider this by far most speedy and economical method of security best types of migrants required for Australia's economic rehabilitation from non-British sources in shortest possible time ...  

Subsequent events suggested that although the 'best migrant types' according to Calwell's selection criteria soon became relatively scarce, apart from these there were more than enough DPs available to meet general requirements. As one immigration official pointed out, the PCIRO representatives were selling to a very eager buyer, as Calwell had sensed a 'Target of Opportunity'.

Rather than being motivated by humanitarian considerations, Calwell was more interested in the DPs' contribution to Australia's 'population, specifically workforce' deficit. Haylen, speaking to Parliament in October 1947, argued: 'We have accepted the viewpoint that [the DPs] are necessary to fill the 200,000 jobs, good, bad and indifferent, that ... are available'. This was confirmed by Calwell in 1971:

Primarily what I was interested in was the defence of Australia and its development, so that the people who had made this country and

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207 Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 35.
209 NLA, MS 8128, Unpublished manuscript by H G Brooks, 'Displaced Persons Volume 1: 1947'.
210 Neumann, Refuge Australia, p 32.
the descendants of those could be assured that they could live in peace and security. I was interested in – it would be wrong to say I was primarily interested in seeing that we gave a haven to oppressed peoples anywhere because we could have given a haven to all the displaced and distressed people in the world. We had an opportunity because of the desire of the Americans to remove displaced persons, that is people who were born in the Baltic states – Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians – we wanted to help them to get a new country and the Americans [IRO] were paying for it all and so it didn’t cost us that very much ...  

Calwell’s pragmatic plan received swift approval from Chifley: ‘Thanks for your telegram ... I agree with action suggested ... and approve you proceeding to Geneva to sign agreement’. This agreement, a radical departure in Australian immigration, was signed with the PCIRO on 21 July 1947.

**DP Recruitment / Selection**

In the agreement signed with the PCIRO in July 1947, Australia initially agreed to resettle 4,000 DPs in 1947 and then 12,000 DPs per year over three years ‘provided the Australian government can select the DPs individually and provided the IRO can provide shipping’ (my emphasis). The success of the program led to the numbers being raised in November 1947 to 20,000 per year, and then in July 1948 Calwell announced that

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Australia would accept a total of up to 200,000 DPs. The availability of shipping was the limiting factor in Australia not ultimately receiving the 200,000.\textsuperscript{215}

The new Immigration Department sent its own officers and medical staff to the DP camps to work with IRO camp officers selecting DPs for migration to Australia under a two-year directed labour contract. DPs were actively recruited by the Australian teams. Australia was to be sold as a welcoming, exciting destination, with migrant workers being ‘invited to share our life in the best country in the world’.\textsuperscript{216} A preliminary advisory committee recommended: ‘We can capture their imagination by full employment and vast ventures needing men and women for the development of the country’.\textsuperscript{217}

The IRO stated that Australia’s information Department was ‘the most active of any with which we have come in contact’.\textsuperscript{218} Pamphlets were distributed, (English-language) films were shown (including The Overlanders, a bush adventure starring Chips Rafferty), photographs were displayed, lectures were given, plays were broadcast (for example, ‘A Tale

\textsuperscript{215} Holborn, The International Refugee Organisation, p. 394.
\textsuperscript{216} A. Calwell, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) / House of Representatives, 3 October 1947, p. 483.
\textsuperscript{217} Report of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Committee: Presented 27\textsuperscript{th} February 1946, Canberra, 1946, cited in Lack and Templeton, Bold Experiment, pp. 21-22.
\textsuperscript{218} NAA A438, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 1949/7/926, Publicity – Displaced Persons, Michael J. de Sherbinin, Public Information Officer of IRO, Geneva, cited in Letter from Hugh J. Murphy, Immigration Publicity Officer to The Secretary, Department of Immigration, 16 March 1949.
of Two Christmases': one European, the next Australian), and, in time, recommendations from DPs already in Australia were commissioned and publicized.219

Australian officers were competing with other settlement countries, and selecting from among the pool of DPs already deemed eligible by the IRO


and provided with an IRO Identity Card. However, Australian selection requirements were stringent as regards race, age and gender.

The primary controversy surrounding Calwell and Chifley's unilateral decision to allow, and indeed enthusiastically recruit, non-British migration was the issue of 'race'. Specifically, the issue was upholding White Australian immigration policies, and to be seen to be upholding these restrictive policies, to prevent domestic 'political repercussions'. Further, White Australia was becoming an anachronism in the context of a new international discourse of racial equality and universal human rights promoted by the United Nations. The Australian government had to tread a thin line between (populist) national and (liberal) international condemnation. They attempted to do this by only allowing what were deemed 'assimilable' 'racial' and cultural types into Australia. In other words, if Australia couldn't attract enough British migrants, then 'white' migrants who could potentially assimilate would be an option taken by the

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221 NAA, Series A439, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 1951/11/225, December 1950, Responses to Wilfred Thomas, Letter from Nutt to T H E Heyes, Secretary, Department of Immigration dated January 1951.


225 Haebich, Spinning the Dream, p. 11; see also Glenda Sluga, 'Altered States and Subjectivities', Melbourne Historical Journal, 37 (2009), p. 3.
government to fulfil its economic and population aims, as well as neatly fitting into an ostensibly humanitarian international program. 226

The commentary on a newsreel shown after the arrival of a pre-IRO ship, Misr, in 1947, containing 624 migrants from 26 different countries, including Jewish refugees and family ‘reunites’, highlights the racist mindset in Australia at the time:

With thousands of nationals awaiting entrance – English, Nordic, Scandinavians and Americans, who can offer this country ideas and culture – it’s little wonder that this project has been the centre of a bitter controversy. Let us hope that the immigration of the future will be planned deliberately and intelligently, with ever more opportunities to the people of our own stock ... English, Nordic types and Americans. 227

For the Australian selection teams in Europe, ‘race’ was the most important category and, mirroring the prejudices of other settlement countries, the DPs were graded on a quasi-official hierarchy, with ‘Balts’ (Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians) at the top and ‘Jews’ at the bottom. As Glenda Sluga has noted, Eastern Europeans had not yet been definitively ‘racially’ categorized, and it was therefore easier to blur the lines of their identity. 228

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Representations of race were important not only in the selections of DPs, but also in the presentation of the DP scheme to the Australian public. Egon Kunz has posited that one factor in the government's earlier rejection of DPs may have been because the impression held was that the DPs were predominantly Jewish.229 This was a widespread belief. Sections of the press, as reported by an Australian immigration official, commented that “‘Displaced Persons’ is certainly the Palestine Jew designation for Jews in Europe”.230 The government had no intention of accepting large numbers of Jewish refugees as it feared provoking an anti-Semitic reaction in Australia.231 Thomas W. White, Australia's delegate at the 1938 Evian conference, had famously declared: ‘as we have no real racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one by encouraging any scheme of large-scale foreign migration’.232 During the 1940s the Jewish (Evian) refugees had been pilloried by certain sections of the media as (stereotypically) benefiting from wartime shortages through the black market and taking advantage of Australian ex-

229 Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 17.
230 NLA, MS 8128, Unpublished manuscript by H G Brooks, 'Displaced Persons Volume 1: 1947'.
231 NAA, CP815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.134, Immigration – Displaced Persons – General, 'Publicity Needs in Australia for IRO and the Displaced Person Migrants' by Hugh J. Murphy, Immigration Publicity Officer.
servicemen, as well as setting up enclaves in areas such as King's Cross, Sydney.233

Immediately after the war, Calwell introduced a humanitarian program which permitted 2,000 Jewish refugees to migrate to Australia under a family reunion program.234 Even before they arrived, parliamentary and media pressure began, of which the Misr commentary above is but one example. Federal Liberal MP Henry Gullett was particularly vocal, arguing that 'the arrival of additional Jews is nothing less than the beginning of a national tragedy', and complaining 'we are not compelled to be a dumping ground for people whom Europe has not been able to absorb for 2000 years'.235 In January 1947 Calwell responded to this pressure by pragmatically announcing:

The Government feels that it has gone as far as it can reasonably be expected to go, for the present, in granting landing permits to persons of these classes on purely humanitarian grounds ... It is intended that in future the approval of applications will depend more on the intending migrants' ability to contribute to Australia's economic welfare.236

236 NAA A434, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 1947/3/4805, Statement of 23 January 1947 [by Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration] on arrivals in Australia during 1946 (Refugees and Displaced Persons), including Jewish.
During this time, the government (quietly) permitted voluntary societies such as the Australian Jewish Welfare Society [assisted by international bodies the Hebrew Immigrant Association (HIAS) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JOINT)] and other charitable groups to bring in refugees, predominantly Jewish DPs, through the usual migration channels, provided that they guaranteed accommodation, and jobs or maintenance. Jewish refugee migration was proportionately quite large compared to other countries of settlement, with around 15,000 Jewish refugees settling in Australia between 1946 and 1952 (the second highest number after Israel of Jewish refugees on a pro rata population basis). However, due to domestic political pressure, the Australian government did not want to be seen to be encouraging Jewish migration. The IRO subsidy to HIAS and JOINT, which had been advancing fares for Jewish refugees migrating to Australia, was soon disallowed. Immigration officials were explicitly ordered (confidentially) to make sure that Jews were not to make up more than 25% of passengers on ships and airplanes into Australia. This quota was later increased to 50% but limited in total number to 3,000 per year. In October 1949 the so-called ‗Iron Curtain Embargo‘, which excluded all privately sponsored migration from Iron Curtain countries, was proposed as an effective means of reducing Jewish migration, justified on security grounds. Amendments were later made to the Embargo to specifically exclude those who were

237 Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, p. 405; Rutland and Encel, ‗No room at the inn‘, p. 517.
238 Rutland, ‗Subtle Exclusions‘, p. 62.
identified as 'Jewish', and Jewish migrants were able to be closely monitored because alien application forms required the applicant to 'state also whether Jewish or not'. Clearly, Jews were not officially welcome.

There were (necessarily feeble) protests from the IRO in response to Australia's strict selection process, and also from Jewish organisations and within the DP camps themselves, but to no avail. Australian representatives argued that Australia had had some trouble with Jews, and that 'Balts' were preferred 'because they are people who are easily assimilated'. In Australia, after protestations from the Executive Council of Australian Jewry that 'not a single Jew' was included in the first IRO shipments, Calwell assured the Council that in the overall IRO migration scheme, 15-16% of DPs selected would be Jewish, this figure reflecting the percentage of Jews among the DP population. This did not eventuate - the ultimate figure was approximately 2.3%, or up to about 500 Jews. Of this small percentage, some were allowed only on condition that they agreed to sign a special contract, solely for Jews: 'I understand that I have been recruited for labouring work in remote areas in Australia

239 Rutland, 'Sanctuary for Whom?', p. 128; Rutland, Edge of the Diaspora, p. 407; NAA, Series A446, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, IRO, 1962/67355, International Refugee Organisation 1947-1977, Application for Permit to Enter Australia.
240 Markus, 'Labour and Immigration 1946-9', p. 80; Rutland and Encel, 'No room at the inn', p. 513.
241 Rutland, 'Subtle Exclusions', pp. 56-57.
for two years' (my emphasis), as opposed to the usual geographically unspecific labour contract.\textsuperscript{242}

As well as prejudice against Jews, all DPs were hierarchically ranked by nationality for 'assimilation' purposes. For Leader of the Opposition Robert Menzies, speaking in 1948, 'the real test is assimilability. Let us be quite plain about the matter'.\textsuperscript{243} A memo from the Head of Australian Military Mission in Germany in June 1947 encapsulates the advice regarding the 'very good types' available in the DP camps at that time: 'Balts' were the 'best material', Poles would need to be carefully selected to obtain 'assimilable types', while 'Yugoslavs' would 'no doubt be worth some consideration'.\textsuperscript{244}

The agreement signed by Calwell included the IRO proviso that the DPs would be selected 'without discrimination as to race and religion' or marital status.\textsuperscript{245} Calwell publicly declared: 'Our policy has no race prejudice. All we ask of DPs is that they be of good faith, good character and willing to work'.\textsuperscript{246} However, Australian Helen Ferber, who worked as a public information officer for the Displaced Persons Headquarters of UNRRA in

\textsuperscript{243} Haebich, \textit{Spinning the Dream}, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{244} Berlin Dispatch No. 46/47, 26.6.1947, to Defence Department, Melbourne & External Affairs, Canberra, written by Brigadier White, Head of Australian Military Mission, Germany, in Zabukovec, \textit{The Second Landing}, pp 250-251.
\textsuperscript{245} NAA, Series CP 815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.114, Immigration - Displaced Persons - General, IRO [International Refugee Organisation] Agreement, 1947-1948, (PC)IRO Agreement with Australia dated 21 July 1947, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{246} Markus, 'Labour and Immigration 1946-9', p. 80.
Paris from March 1947, in conversation with Calwell in July 1947, recorded that Calwell said Australia wanted 'Latvians': 'It came out in later conversation that he had seen some nice blond Latvians at Bremen, and well, they were blond and Chifley liked them blond'. Calwell stated publicly that 'the Baltic people will have preference over other nationals' as he assured Australians that 'while in Europe, I was impressed by the bearing, the physique and the general industry of the Balts'. Also impressed was Eric Bejesen, a former UNRRA worker who wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1948: 'Of the hodge-podge of displaced persons in Europe today, the Balts are, I consider, by far the best workers'.

The Australian medical officers working in Europe seemed overly concerned with noting 'racial' characteristics. One noted that 'Baltic' men are often blonde and tanned and would on appearance do justice to a Manly Surf Team'. He thought, however, that some with a 'less than average intellectual standard', particularly Ukrainian women, would be only 'good hewers of wood and drawers of water':

If we have any belief in eugenics and the principles of breeding we must encourage breeding among the people who will produce good stock, not those with a low I. Q. who will do nothing more than

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249 Sydney Morning Herald, 7 July 1948.
overburden us with social misfits and further tax the mental institutions of the State.\(^{250}\)

Another medical officer wrote in 1949: 'We are still getting a fair quota of Balts and they are probably the best too. I am seeing quite a lot of Ukrainians now also – they seem pretty dumb, but I dare say that they will make good workers ...'\(^{251}\)

It was immediately clear to observers that the Australian officials 'moved cautiously among the camp inhabitants, picking blue-eyed, blond DPs less likely to offend native-born Australians'.\(^{252}\) They were instructed by Calwell to 'hand-pick' a 'choice sample' for the first shipments: young, single, healthy, educated 'ideal types', preferably male, fair-haired, fair-skinned and with blue eyes.\(^{253}\) The 'clear ethnic picking order' was deliberate, as this telegram from an immigration official in Germany in September 1947 makes apparent:

First ship departing Germany 30\(^{th}\) October 1947 ... Single Balts under 40 years of age only included. IRO urging cross section all displaced persons second ship but am holding out for single Balts

\(^{250}\) NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 200/1/5, Medical – Displaced Persons. Policy and Procedure in regard to Migrants and Applicants, for Landing Permits, Letter M. Stewart, Senior Medical Officer, Australian Military Mission, to Head, Australian Military Mission, 18 June 1946.

\(^{251}\) NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 200/1/5, Medical – Displaced Persons. Policy and Procedure in regard to Migrants and Applicants, for Landing Permits, Extract from Letter from Dr Cameron, Australian MO with the Selection Committee in Germany, to Dr Walker, Bonegilla, 1949.

\(^{252}\) Wyman, DPs, p. 191.

and possibly Ukrainians. Desirable signal your ideas racial categories.\(^{254}\)

Selection officer George Kiddie, an ex-RAAF serviceman who became one of the first migration officers, later recalled:

"Our instructions were to take displaced persons from the Baltic states only for the first ship. That is Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. We tried to pick good, decent-looking people, appearance very much so. We've got to make sure they look very impressive, we've got to pick people that look attractive to the Australian population. We tried to make the first ship particularly impressive.\(^{255}\)"

As a result, early selections were made only from young, single Baltic, Ukrainian, Yugoslavian and Czech DPs, "based on personal appearance and favourable impressions."\(^{256}\) A surgeon employed by the IRO, Dr Ergas, described a group he accompanied to Australia in 1948 on the ship General Black:

"Most of this group consisted of young men and women with very few children. They were well dressed, carried additional clothes, made a fine appearance, and looked bright and intelligent. Most of them were from the Baltic countries. The majority spoke English and German. The women in general were very good looking. Some had beautiful, dark, long hair; others were platinum blonde with blue eyes, light complexion and very tall. The men were fine looking too. Many of these displaced persons had college and university degrees. All the immigrants had to pass a thorough physical examination by two Australian physicians before they were granted permission to make the long journey to Australia. Anyone found with a lung or heart disease, or any other serious ailment, was rejected. It was indeed a very select group of young

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people. They all appeared to be energetic, ambitious, and full of life. These first rigorously selected DPs acted as the scheme’s ‘Trojan horse’, as strict racial selection criteria was soon relaxed in the race to populate Australia cheaply. Individual national groups were progressively permitted: Slovenes, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, Czechs, single Poles, Hungarians, White Russians, Poles with families, Albanians, Romanians, Bulgarians, and then in May 1949, ostensibly all IRO-categorised Displaced Persons. These DPs also included Poles, Yugoslavs and White Russian refugees who found themselves in East Africa, Greece, Lebanon, Egypt and the Philippines. Approximately 5,000 German and Austrian-born wives of DPs were also permitted to migrate to Australia, as according to German law they had assumed the nationality of their husbands upon marriage.

Relaxation of ‘racial’ criteria did not, however, extend to Jews. In April 1948 Brigadier F. G. Galleghan, head of the Australian Military Mission in Berlin (from 1948), suggested that Poles be recruited as other groups were diminishing. This suggestion was approved by Heyes, with the confidential proviso that ‘Polish Jews should not be recruited unless they are exceptionally good cases and then in limited numbers’. In July 1948,

257 Neumann, Refuge Australia, p. 32.  
258 Neumann, Refuge Australia, p. 33; Adam Wells (Executive Producer), ‘Immigration Nation’ (SBS TV: 2011).  
260 Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 45.
when Hungarians were admitted into the scheme, the same stipulation was made.\textsuperscript{261} Official feeling seemed to be, as expressed by one Australian immigration official: ‘We have never wanted these people and we still don’t want them.’\textsuperscript{262} Policy on the matter was made clear in an instruction to Berlin in June 1949: ‘The term refers to race and not to religion and the fact that some DPs who are Jewish by race have become Christian by religion is not relevant.’\textsuperscript{263} Interestingly, ‘race’ was also more important than ‘religion’ in the case of a few Russian and Romanian Muslims who were part of the DP cohort in Australia.\textsuperscript{264} As a member of the Australian selection team commented: ‘Hitler could not have done better.’\textsuperscript{265}

In all, 170,700 DPs arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1952 with the main national groups: Polish (63,393), ‘Baltic’ (34,656), Yugoslav (23,543), Ukrainian (14,464), Hungarian (11,919) and Czechoslovak (9,142).

\textsuperscript{261} Rutland, ‘Subtle Exclusions’, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{262} Rutland, ‘Sanctuary for Whom?’, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{264} Bruce Pennay, ‘Selling Immigration’, \textit{Context}, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Sydney, June 2007, p 6.
\textsuperscript{265} Cited in Rutland, ‘Subtle Exclusions’, p. 58.
### Nationalities of Displaced Persons Arriving in Australia under the Mass Resettlement Scheme Showing Years of Arrival

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Table reproduced from Egon F. Kunz, *Displaced Persons.*

In Australia, as in other settlement countries, the issue of race tied in neatly with that of politics. The preferred racial type of the anti-communist and/or pro-German 'Baltic' DP also happened to be the preferred political type. This led to a laxity in the political screening process, whereby Nazi collaborators and fascist sympathizers, as well as members of right-wing groups such as the Serbian Chetniks or Croatian Ustashi, were able to

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266 Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, p. 43, Table 4.1, Source: Department of Immigration unpublished statistics.
migrate to Australia under the same conditions of 'Cold War myopia' operating in other western countries.267

The Australian selection teams were inexperienced in European languages and geo-politics, as indeed was the Australian government. Helen Ferber recorded upon meeting Calwell's party in July 1947:

Nobody knew anything about the DPs and nobody had planned for them to meet anyone that knew anything about DPs. They just goggled when I started to explain to them some of the problems and pitfalls. Talk about innocents abroad!268

A member of the Australian selection team in Germany similarly wrote to a friend:

The Australian mission is a complete shambles run by incompetent idiots. There is no rhyme or reason in the way a selection officer gets his job. The majority of them haven't got an inkling of the political background of Europe ... They have no prior briefing as to their duties and ... many are the wrong types to be in a job like this.269

The selection teams were thus dependent on interpreters and 'cursory' or flawed intelligence from IRO and foreign sources.270 Selection officer George Kiddie later recalled that sometimes they worked with a 'double

interpreter – one for that into German, one into English'. Regarding identity documents, he noted: 'Whether they were all genuine or not, I don’t know, but they all looked pretty crumpled and so on, as if they’d been keeping those very carefully'. Kiddie added that for the first ship, The General Heinzelman: ‘There were no [security] rejections to us in the American zone. Although I think one or two came a bit later when the Heinzelman was en route to Australia. We were too busy in Germany, [with] other things to worry about [rather than] what happened at this end.'

The teams operated with minimal instruction from Canberra on the issue of politics in the selection process. While given criteria listing the nationalities acceptable to Australia and the restrictions on Jews, there was no formal policy for the exclusion of Nazi collaborators from Eastern Europe and no information provided about the various institutions of collaboration.

Although George Kiddle later noted that selection officers for the first shipment were ‘particularly diligent in weeding out ex-members of the SS’ on the basis of SS tattoos or evidence of a tattoo scar (which it should be


noted did not apply to every SS recruit), Australian officers received no specific instructions on how to handle DPs presenting with such marks. Historian Suzanne Rutland has pointed out that Australia’s stringent medical criteria tended to favour Nazi collaborators, as their physical health compared favourably to that of their victims, such as concentration camp and forced labour survivors.

It seems that in most cases Australian officials simply assumed that the IRO had screened all DPs effectively, and throughout the IRO scheme relied on US and British officials for intelligence information. George Kiddie later described performing around 138 interviews one morning – ‘so it was pretty perfunctory, wasn’t it’, he admitted. IRO sources were generally unreliable, with Nazi collaborators infiltrating the screening process at every level. Evidence has emerged that in some cases British officials actively concealed intelligence from Australia in order to allow anti-communist war criminals to migrate under the IRO scheme. Further, any evidence as to war crimes presented by the communist states was simply ignored, as was any subsequent information reported in Australia. When the Jewish Council brought concerns about the

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277 Aarons, Sanctuary, pp. 35, 46; Cesarani, Justice Delayed, p. 182.
278 M. M. Alagich, ‘Croations’, p. 337; ‘False Reports of Nazis Here’, Sunday Telegraph, 1 April 1951.
presence of alleged Nazi collaborators within the DP scheme, Calwell is reported to have joked: 'When these Baltic women get into bed with Australians they'll forget all that'. Calwell further ignored his own security service, dismissing their evidence regarding the SS origins of some DPs as a 'farrago of nonsense'; publicly he threatened that if lobbying succeeded in stopping Balts from migrating under the DP scheme, then Jews would also be stopped from arriving as DPs. 279

It has been estimated that approximately 500 suspected war criminals entered Australia during these years. 280 Suzanne Rutland has noted:

It would be wrong to suggest that Australian immigration officers deliberately admitted Nazis to Australia. What is closer to the truth is that they only wanted DPs who would not undermine the government's migration policy. 281

In other words, the Australian government's emphasis on ideal 'racial', age and gender types were far more important to a parochial White Australia suffering from a labour shortage than political affiliation or, indeed, historical experience; and any involvement in war-time atrocities was less important than a general perception of DP assimilability, and ability to labour. 282

280 Aarons, Sanctuary, p. xxx.
When signing the IRO Agreement, Calwell specified that all DPs had to enter into a one-year indenture contract with the Australian Government under a Certificate of Exemption (from the dictation test) with no permanent residency or citizenship rights. As there was an acute housing shortage in Australia, these DP labourers would be initially accommodated in government hostels and camps. The initial 'one year' and subsequent 'up to two years' of the contract was soon interpreted unilaterally as, and later specifically substituted into, two years. This indenture scheme was similar to the one operated by the United Kingdom, in that it provided for government-directed mass labour, except that once in Australia the DPs were expected to settle permanently.

The indenture scheme, and the housing shortage, obviously influenced selection processes, as the Australian selection teams were primarily interested in recruiting young, strong, healthy, male labourers - Calwell's idealised 'horny-handed sons of toil'. The average age of the first shipload of 'beautiful Balts' was 23 years. Such an age and gender-specific policy was enabled by initial regulations that family groups with dependants (particularly aged dependants) and single men or married

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5 Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 41.
5 Kay and Miles, Refugees or Migrant Workers?, p. 2.
couples with children over the age of 45, or single women or childless married couples over the age of 40, were not permitted. The Australia government plan was to import a workforce, not give succour to refugee dependants. As the head of the Australian Mission in Germany noted:

The great need in our country is for workers to help build up our great industrial potential, to develop agriculture so that we can help to feed the world, and to provide houses for the increasing population ... we don't wish to separate families but we don't want to have old and disabled people in Australia not being properly cared for.

Selection teams were thus instructed to recruit 60 or 70 workers per every 100 migrants. The government directed the selection teams that:

[N]o group shall be eligible for selection where it comprises more persons than a man, wife and two children under 14 years of age ... [N]o group shall be accepted if it contains more than 3 dependants. As among dependants, wives and children are preferred ... [N]ot more than one aged dependant is to be included in any family unit.

The DPs also had to be healthy, both physically and mentally, as Calwell wanted ‘the best that is in the field’. Medical officers were warned to look out for ‘impersonation methods’, including 'switching of x-rays and

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289 A438, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 1949/7/926, Publicity – Displaced Persons, Script of Interview broadcast over United Nation Radio on 10th October 1949.
290 Operating Instruction No. 71 of 19/06/50, cited in Neumann, *Refuge Australia*, pp. 32-33.
291 NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 200/1/5, Medical – Displaced Persons. Policy and Procedure in regard to Migrants and Applicants, for Landing Permits, Letter from Calwell to Dr Andrew, Australian Military Mission, dated 2 September 1949.
personal substitution’, as well as ‘bribes and threats’.292 Doctors were instructed to reject those presenting with minor complaints such as varicose veins and tinea, as the DPs may be able to ‘utilise these disabilities to claim unfitness for work in particular localities or particular jobs’.293 Rejected DPs were deemed 'sub-standard'. Medical tests also vetted for sexually transmitted diseases, while officers were instructed that ‘women of child-bearing age should be capable of bearing children’.294 The ‘virility’ of the young DPs was a selling point in the ‘Populate or Perish’ argument.295

Chairman of the United States Displaced Persons Commission, Ugo Carusi, complained in 1948: ‘Australia is really picking them ... getting the best of them. Australians know what they want. They go around and find them, then just take them.’296 Psychologist Eduard Bakis noted: ‘Australia apparently prefers young unmarried people with strong muscle and less

295 Prime Minister Ben Chifley, cited in the Advertiser, 5 May 1949.
perceivable brains'. Academic Jacques Vernant, completing a survey on behalf of the UN High Commission for Refugees, recorded:

At a certain moment in 1950 ... the IRO medical officer in one of the zones of Germany reported that the [Australian selection] criteria had been so tightened up that 'nearly all the DPs presented were rejected. Every case of blood pressure a little below normal, every slightly abnormal radioscope reading, a myopia rectifiable by wearing glasses, is becoming a reason for rejection.'

By late 1948 these strict policies became unworkable as "'bodies' had to be found" to fill ships and the principle of 'net gain' became attractive.

Heyes justified this decision in a letter to the Immigration Publicity Officer in 1949:

Realising the reluctance of the heads of family units to travel to Australia in advance of their families and the fact that many more Displaced Persons would come to this country under the Displaced Persons Scheme if they were accompanied by their families, it has been decided to accept family units for settlement in Australia and Holding Centres have been established in order to provide accommodation for these family groups.

An internal memorandum in External Affairs pointed out that the liberalization of strict family criteria usually brought to Australia DPs who at the worst represented a liability in the short term, for example children, but who were 'in fact a very desirable addition to this country's population from

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297 Eduard Bakis, 'D.P. Apathy', in Murphy, ed., Flight and Resettlement, p. 78.
299 Rutland, 'Sanctuary for Whom?', p. 23; Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 47; Neumann, Refuge Australia, p 33.
300 NAA, Series CP 815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.134, Immigration – DPs – General, Letter from T H E Heyes, Secretary, Department of Immigration to Immigration Publicity Officer, Department of Information dated 29 April 1949.
the long-term view'.\textsuperscript{301} In other words, as well as 'good and willing workers', Australia needed 'prospective breeders'.\textsuperscript{302} Thus, larger family groups were now permitted to enter Australia, as well as 'widows, deserted wives and unmarried mothers with children', provided that the children were of 'European ethnic origin' (that is, not Jewish).\textsuperscript{303} The unmarried mothers were to be publicized in Australia as 'widows'.\textsuperscript{304} After several years of pressure both from within Australia and from the IRO, some sick parents or close relatives labeled as 'sub-standard' medically (part of the DP 'hard-core') were also accepted.\textsuperscript{305} Even in the last year of the scheme, humanitarian motivations were not behind decisions of the selection teams. Billy Snedden, then Minister for Immigration, noted in 1978:

They were privileged to come – those with the greatest skill and those who looked the best, and those who didn't have terrible burdens to carry like crippled children or aged parents. We really were applying compassionate standards with a heavy hand.\textsuperscript{306}

\textsuperscript{301} Markus, 'Labour and Immigration 1946-9', p. 82.
\textsuperscript{302} NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 200/1/5, Medical – Displaced Persons. Policy and Procedure in regard to Migrants and Applicants, for Landing Permits, Letter M. Stewart, Senior Medical Officer, Australian Military Mission, to Head, Australian Military Mission, 18 June 1946.
\textsuperscript{303} NAA, Series CP 815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.134, Immigration – DPs – General. Letter from T H E Heyes, Secretary, Department of Immigration to Immigration Publicity Officer, Department of Information, Report on Visit to Australia by IRO Representative dated January 1949.
\textsuperscript{304} Bryan, 'Recalcitrant Women?', pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{305} NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 200/1/5, Medical – Displaced Persons. Policy and Procedure in regard to Migrants and Applicants, for Landing Permits, Letter from H. G. Andrew, Senior Medical Officer, Australian Military Mission, to Director General of Health, Canberra, dated 28 December 1949.
\textsuperscript{306} Cited on plaque at Bonegilla site, visited July 2006.
‘Migrant Workers’ / ‘New Australians’ in White Australia

Australia resettled 170,000 Displaced Persons from Central and Eastern Europe between 1947 and 1952. This amounted to just over 2% of the country’s population. By the end of 1951, one in about every 45 people was a former DP. As we have seen, the Australian Government selected DPs according to strict race, age, gender and health hierarchies. The international rush to use DPs as labour had seen those classified as ‘displaced persons’ and ‘political refugees’ re-branded as ‘workers’ and ‘migrants’. This part of the chapter will examine the way in which the Australian Government set about re-branding the white, politically-sanitized DPs further as ‘New Australians’ to fit in with assimilation outcomes, at the same time as DPs were being treated as indentured labour and DP families were being split apart.

The first task of the Australian Government was to sell the defence and labour benefits of the scheme (‘Populate or Perish’), while alleviating the fears of the local population. Calwell, visiting the DP camp at Bonegilla in 1949, noted of the children that these were ‘the little boys and girls whose courage and valour might in the future be needed with that of the children of native-born Australians to preserve this country if ever it is attacked’. Celebrating sheer numbers of migrants became an important media

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opportunity, as when Calwell spent £1000 diverting the *Fairsea* to Fremantle so that he could be seen to kiss the 50,000th DP to arrive in Australia.\(^{309}\) This 50,000th DP had been specially selected in Germany by the Australian mission, which was instructed to identify ‘an attractive female child under 10 accompanying parents who are suitable subject for publicity’. The Australian mission selected a deliberately inoffensive seven year old: Maira Kalnins, a blonde Latvian accompanying her five year old brother, mother, and engineer father.\(^{310}\)

As for alleviating the concerns of native-born Australians, Calwell did this in two ways: by convincing unions that the DPs would ‘make jobs not take them’ and by assuring the public that the DPs could be successfully absorbed into White Australia.\(^{311}\) Far from being ‘communists’, ‘fascists’ or ‘anti-labourites’, the DPs were painted as ‘blameless victims of war’. This correlated with what many Australians knew of the DPs due to relief efforts coordinated by, for example, the Red Cross and the Guide International Service.\(^{312}\) Calwell stated: ‘Many have breadwinners killed and have a desire to make a fresh start in a new country where they will be remote from the bitterness, tragedy and harshness of their experience during the

\(^{309}\) *Sydney Sun*, 17 August 1949, in NAA, Series A434 (A434/1), 1949/3/16409, Reception – Arrival of Fifty-Thousandth Displaced Person [Kalnins, Maira; Richard; Zenta; Inaru].

\(^{310}\) NAA, Series A434 (A434/1), Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 1949/3/16409, Reception – Arrival of Fifty-Thousandth Displaced Person [Kalnins, Maira; Richard; Zenta; Inaru], Letter from Heyes to the Defence Secretariat dated 26 July 1949; Publicity Photograph and Statement by the Minister of Immigration dated 15 August 1949.


last few years of war. Welcoming the first shipload of DPs, Calwell was reported to have enthused: ‘Whatever your memories might be of tragedies in the past, we hope your future in Australia will be only pleasant experiences for you’. While busy pointing out the ‘humanitarian, as well as national, importance’ of the scheme, in early 1949 an Australian Immigration Publicity Officer stated:

It was never our intention to find acceptance for the displaced persons through an appeal to the charity and sympathy of the Australian people. An acceptance born of these sentiments can turn easily to ... contempt. The line we took was one of frank reporting of facts. We pulled no punches and we made no apologies. We stated frankly the terms of the agreement under which the displaced persons entered Australia (for two years under Commonwealth direction) ... Such a frank line appealed to the Australian people.

This admission came around the time of a Gallop poll showing that twice as many people as in 1947 were now in favour of admitting DPs, as long as they were ‘healthy’ specimens of the ‘right type’.


315 NAA, Series CP 815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, Immigration, 021.14, IRO [International Refugee Organisation] Agreement, 1947-1948, Press Statement by the Minister for Immigration, the Honourable Arthur Calwell; NAA, Series CP 815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.134, Immigration – DPs – General, Publicity Needs in Australia for IRO and the Displaced Person Migrants.

316 NAA J25, Department of Immigration, Queensland Branch, Case files, annual single number series with or without ‘Q’ [Queensland] or ‘QB’ [Queensland Brisbane] or ‘CLF’ [Client Files] prefix, 1949/1493, Displaced Persons – Policy General (including Accommodation at Chermside Military Camp, contains details about aliens and refugees treatment in Queensland), 1947-54.
Arthur Calwell, as Minister for Information (from 1939) as well as the inaugural Minister for Immigration, was in an ideal position to ‘condition’ the local population to equate migration with a ‘healthy economy’. According to Calwell, ‘the new life blood which will make Australia’s national heart beat with the strong and measured pulse of prosperity and security has now begun to flow’, and this message needed to be disseminated to the populace.

The Department of Information produced propaganda materials including leaflets, newsreels and films which were sent to media organizations, union and employer groups, banks and churches across Australia. Advantage was taken of national celebrations such as the Commonwealth Jubilee Year in 1951 when the Jubilee Train was used to distribute 15,000 copies of the leaflet *Why Migration is Vital to You*, and films such as *Mike and Stefani* (1951) and *No Strangers Here* (1950).

*Mike and Stefani* used DP actors to tell the story of a middle-class DP family of four – Mycola (Mike), an engineer, his wife Stefani, their

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319 Murphy, *The Other Australia*, p 137; Haebich, *Spinning the Dream*, p 125.
daughter, and Mycola’s younger brother, Ladu. The film portrayed the refugee status of the DPs while also highlighting the stringent screening process employed by Australian officials. Ironically, *Mike and Stefani* was a little too realistic: as well as drawing some criticism for the harsh treatment of DPs during the screening process, its negative depiction of Germany conflicted with Australia’s plan to allow German migration in 1952. It was withdrawn shortly after release. *No Strangers Here* showed a DP family’s attempt to settle in to a small country town in Australia. Other films included *Marie* (1950), a ‘romance’ between DP Marie and the Australian sailor who rescued her; and *Double Trouble* (1951), a slapstick of Australians in a foreign country. These films were designed to arouse the sympathy of the Australian public to the plight of the DPs – encouraging tolerance - while simultaneously highlighting the innocent, compliant nature of the migrants, who were ‘grateful and innocuous’. However, as historian Anna Haebich has pointed out, these films were rarely shown publicly because they were found to be too dull for the cinema.320

Alongside CIAC, the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council (CIPC) was established in 1949 to advise the government on the economic aspects of the migration scheme. CIPC involved 12 members, 13

associate members, and more than 50 consultants. \(^{321}\) The subsequent Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, continued emphasizing the theme of ‘migrant’ contributions to Australia’s economic success, with his optimistic slogan ‘Australia Unlimited’. The government constantly reiterated the significant contribution migrants were making to the development of Australia as a modern, industrial nation. \(^{322}\)

As well as justifying the intake on economic terms, the main aim of the government’s publicity machine seems to have been to quell the expected ‘White Australia’ prejudice against the DPs, even as those prejudices operated in the selection of the DPs. As noted earlier, Calwell had instructed the Australian selection teams in Europe to select easily assimilable DPs, those who could be presented as ‘magnificent human material’. \(^{323}\) He later enthused that press photographs of the early shiploads of ‘Balts’, ‘blonde-haired and blue-eyed’, made it easy to ‘sell immigration to the Australian people’. \(^{324}\) Albury’s *Border Morning Mail* (the newspaper servicing the area around the largest migrant reception centre at Bonegilla) concurred with Calwell’s appraisal of the first shipment,

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\(^{321}\) Kovacs, ‘Immigration and Assimilation’, p. 91.

\(^{322}\) Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’, p. 83.


\(^{324}\) Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not*, p. 103; see, for example, photograph and caption, *The Argus*, 22 April 1949, p. 3; see also NAA J25, Department of Immigration, Queensland Branch, Case files, annual single number series with or without ‘Q’ [Queensland] or ‘QB’ [Queensland Brisbane] or ‘CLF’ [Client Files] prefix, 1949/1493, Displaced Persons – Policy General (including Accommodation at Chermside Military Camp, contains details about aliens and refugees treatment in Queensland), 1947-54, Press Statement by the Minister for Immigration, The Honourable Arthur A. Calwell, undated (October 1947).
reporting that the women had ‘surprisingly good complexions and figures’, with ‘splendidly formed teeth’; they were ‘particularly good types’.325

Newspapers also portrayed the DPs as harmless exotics, as described by historians Stella Lees and June Senyard:

Every week the Sun News Pictorial carried at least one item about an immigrant, and for variation a family reunion, a beauty contest or a wedding might be given special treatment with a photograph to touch the heart. The stories had a fairy-tale quality ... Who could object to the little girl in Estonian national dress, the harassed mother of nine, the strong and earnest young man, or the anxiety of those awaiting the latest bride ship?326

Gwen Meredith, the writer of Blue Hills, a popular radio serial, was approached by the Department of Immigration to remind ‘listeners of the importance of immigration to Australia and the obligation upon all Australians to adopt a spirit of tolerance and understanding in their everyday contact with newcomers to this country’.327 As Egon Kunz noted:

The DPs were to be depicted as intelligent, educated, clean-cut and appreciative, not at all the feared foreigner who threatened to lower Australian trade union, health, housing or mateship standards. These intelligent, accommodating people were to be seen as cheerfully accepting the worst jobs, arriving in endless shiploads to man public utilities, break labour bottle-necks, and generally help the war-tired economy recover. After a week of hard and lowly toil, they were encouraged to dress up at weekends in national costume and enrich their new homeland’s culture by performing dances as an expression of their gratitude for being permitted to settle in Australia.328

326 Lees and Senyard, The 1950s, p. 108.
328 Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 144.
An example of this sort of depiction is a publicity shot of a happy group of women talking cheerfully over wash tubs in the laundry at the migrant reception camp at Bonegilla; in a picture taken by a DP, two women grimly scrub in the communal laundries.\textsuperscript{329}

\textsuperscript{329} Jerzy Zubrzycki, cited in Byrnes and McDonald, Film Australia, 'Film Australia’s Immigration'; Bruce Pennay, 'Framing Block 19 Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze', p. 10.
Sharing a joke in a washroom at Bonegilla in 1949 (Department of Immigration publicity photograph).\(^{330}\)

DP photograph.\(^{331}\)

Single women were portrayed as marriageable (and thus assimilable). The *Australian Women's Weekly* optimistically announced that there was no need for them to change their unpronounceable surnames, as they might not have them for long.\(^{332}\) One young DP wrote to friends in Europe: 'When reading the various articles on us, one gets the impression that we are the most beautiful and best people in the world. They write about what we eat, how we swim and other such stuff and nonsense.'\(^{333}\) Australian writers set about 'preaching acceptance', with descriptions of the DPs which were 'more fulsome than accurate'. In a study of Australian literature during the 1950s, Lees and Senyard found that 'immigration was the most exciting thing to happen to Australia in decades.'\(^{334}\)

In the most important step towards a new representation of the DPs, Calwell coined the term 'New Australians' in December 1947. This was an attempt to replace the derogatory terms 'reffo' (mostly directed towards Jewish refugees) and 'Balt' (directed towards non-Jewish DPs in general). As one DP complained: 'To call Latvians, Estonians and other immigrants 'Balts' is most insulting'.\(^{335}\) Calwell's response was to:

> Appeal to Australians to outlaw these expressions. These people have come from Europe to join their destiny with ours in the development of a country they have willingly adopted ... They were

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\(^{331}\) Albury Library Museum, Bonegilla Collection, Karicauska, kindly provided by Bruce Pennay.


\(^{333}\) Cited in Hulme, *The Wild Place*, pp. 188-189.


\(^{335}\) *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 17 June 1949.
innocent victims of war, displaced from their homes and homelands, and now, as Australia is the land of resettlement for them, they are no longer displaced persons. They are newcomers, new settlers, or, preferably, new Australians.  

As a result the terms 'Balts', 'displaced persons' and 'DPs' were banned from official communications. Delegates at the First Citizenship Convention in 1950 'decided that the term 'New Australian' should be taken to include all immigrants, irrespective of their racial origin'. This decision was, however, amended in 1952 so that British migrants could be referred to as 'British migrants' rather than 'New Australians' in official communications. 'New Australians' was the designator for newly-arrived non-British migrants. DPs were encouraged to abandon their 'dubious nationalities' in order to become 'New Australians' (homogenous non-British migrants) in a neat binding of 'parochial suspicion and patronizing egalitarianism'. In this context, some migrants referred to 'naturalisation' as 'neutralisation'.

The transformation from DPs into 'New Australians' was to be enacted via a 'high speed assimilation' program under the slogan 'Learning to be Australians'. Some commentators have argued that Australia's
assimilation objectives during the 1940s and 1950s were more correctly 'integration' objectives, with the migrant being permitted to retain some aspects of his or her native culture. However, the aspects likely to be 'permitted' were folk dancing and choral displays rather than any meaningful interaction between cultures.

The term 'New Australian' is itself indicative of the assimilation goal of the post-war immigration program, which left no room for national or ethnic expression. The government's policy of assimilation ostensibly aimed to ensure social cohesion and was accompanied by a celebratory citizenship process for 'New Australians' after five years' residency in Australia (in 1949 a separate Australian citizenship was instituted for those who were not previously British citizens). The DPs were expected, in the words of a Department of Immigration spokesman: 'To become part of the nation, to cast away for ever their European background and become Australians in the strongest sense of the word.' Immigration Minister, Harold Holt, spelled out the official line in 1952:

> Australia, in accepting a balanced intake of other European people as well as British can still build a truly British nation on this side of the world. I feel that if the central tradition of a nation is strong this tradition will impose itself on [the various] groups of immigrants.

Assimilation was also meant to be seen by the average Australian as deterring unassimilable groups from forming a potential nucleus in times of

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341 Bryan, 'Recalcitrant Women?', p. 32.  
343 Wilton and Bosworth, Old Worlds and New Australians, p. 7.
war (as, say, the fears of German enclaves during both world wars) or a strike-breaking force in industrial strife.\textsuperscript{344} To prevent foreign-language enclaves, the Department of Immigration directly supervised the Foreign Language Press.\textsuperscript{345}

The Australian government regarded assimilation as a relatively straightforward process, with the onus on the DPs to adjust to an apparently self-explanatory ‘Australian Way of Life’ (a new phrase which encompassed labour, owning (or striving to own) a house and car, and, of course, learning to speak English).\textsuperscript{346} According to the Department of Immigration, in a pamphlet entitled ‘Australia: Your New Homeland’:

\begin{quote}
Perhaps the most important thing is to learn to speak the language of Australians. They are inclined to stare at persons whose speech is different. Speaking in your own language in public will make you conspicuous, and make Australians regard you as a stranger ... [try] to avoid using your hands when speaking because if you do this you will be conspicuous.\textsuperscript{347}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{344} Murphy, ‘The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia’, p. 196.
The government's re-branding efforts continued in a flurry of propaganda to both the DPs and the general public. In 1948 the Department of Immigration set up a monthly newsletter for the DPs called *Tomorrow's Australians*, whose name was soon changed to the *New Australian* (1949-1973). The aim of the newsletter, according to Calwell, was to assist in 'Australianising' the DPs. It contained news items and 'Easy English'

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348 Reproduced in Panich, *Sanctuary*. 

language lessons.\textsuperscript{349} A supplementary newsletter, the \textit{Good Neighbour} (1950-1969), was also produced and aimed at native Australians, encouraging them to welcome and assist migrants. These two newsletters were an ‘energetic attempt by the Australian immigration authorities to explain each group to the other and to bring them closer together’.\textsuperscript{350} The government was obviously very interested in shoring up community support for the DP scheme and its assimilation objective. (Sir) Richard Boyer, chairman of the ABC (1945-1961) and influential member of the Good Neighbour Movement, later explained: ‘It was rightly felt that the new policy would succeed or fail precisely to the extent to which the Australian community itself would welcome and assist the newcomers in social and industrial life’.\textsuperscript{351}

The Good Neighbour Movement came into existence as a result of the first bipartisan Australian Citizenship Convention held in January 1950, a meeting with the aim of ‘laying upon the shoulders of the Australian people an obligation to welcome the newcomers as an act of national service’.\textsuperscript{352} In the words of Ralph Taylor, President of the New Settlers’ League,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{349} Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’, p. 78.
\item \textsuperscript{350} Murphy, \textit{Flight and Resettlement}, p. xxii.
\item \textsuperscript{351} Richard Boyer, ‘The Australian Good Neighbour Movement – Past and Present’ in \textit{Australian Citizenship Convention} (Sydney: Conpress Printing, 1957), p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{352} Canada had a similar scheme – the Canadian Citizenship Council which was morally and financially supported by the Citizenship Branch of the Federal Government. It attempted to arouse interest in the new arrivals, seeking for ways by which they could attain ‘an equal footing’ with old Canadians, incorporating National Conferences on Citizenship. Haebich, \textit{Spinning the Dream}, p. 136; Kovacs, ‘Immigration and Assimilation’, p. 48.
\end{itemize}
Orange Branch: ‘Whether we like them or not, they are here to stay and we have to do the best we can for them’. 353

The Movement was essentially a coordinated Australia-wide network of existing non-governmental welfare organizations, including the RSL, CWA, Rotary, churches and the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Christian Association (by 1954 there were 120 associated organizations), organized into Good Neighbour Councils and charged with encouraging goodwill at a community level. 354 The Movement’s member organizations were seen as ‘brokers of the Australian “way”’, using a ‘handshake and cup of tea’ approach in welcoming migrants. 355 Every year until 1970, the Good Neighbour Councils sent representatives to meet at the Australian Citizenship Conventions, described as taxpayer-funded ‘gabfests’ by critics, in which resolutions would be viewed and responded to by government representatives. 356 One such recommendation was that of encouraging migrants to change their names, ‘such as spelling [them] phonetically to make them easier for Australians to pronounce’. 357 The main political aim of the Conventions was to provide positive proof of the broad consensus supporting the mass immigration scheme. 358

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356 Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’, p. 79.
357 Bryan, ‘Recalcitrant Women?”, p. 38.
358 Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’, p. 79.
While members of the Good Neighbour Movement displayed what has been described as 'sentiments of civility within their bounds of experience', a number of criticisms have been leveled at the Movement.\textsuperscript{359} Instead of appealing to the wider Australian public, there was an element of preaching to the converted about the celebratory nature of its public functions.\textsuperscript{360} Further, the Movement was never meant to include non-British migrant participation, beyond 'migrant' involvement in occasional cultural exhibitions for Australian consumption.\textsuperscript{361}

The Good Neighbour Movement certainly possessed a naivety and arrogance in its dealings with the DPs (and later migrants). Good Neighbour officer J. T. Massey stated in 1951 that the task of assimilation was to 'create somebodies out of nobodies', while Boyer asserted:

> Our experience in migration so far is that the newcomers, while cherishing the culture of their homeland, are eager, sometimes pathetically eager, to find in the Australian way of life a set of values, a new centre of pride and patriotism around which a life of dignity may be built; and the task of such interpretation is basic to the Good Neighbour movement.\textsuperscript{362}

Gwenda Tavan has argued that by presenting the DPs as 'pathetic' people 'devoid of history or subjectivity', the cultural displays permitted to the DPs, such as folk dancing, tended to shore up the middle-class members of the Good Neighbour Movement, whose 'appreciation' of such displays

\textsuperscript{359} John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: Private Sentiment and Political Culture in Menzies' Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press Ltd, 2000), p. 163.
\textsuperscript{360} Murphy, *Flight and Resettlement*, p. xxi.
\textsuperscript{361} Tavan, 'Good Neighbours', p. 79.
\textsuperscript{362} Tavan, 'Good Neighbours', p. 81; Boyer, 'The Australian Good Neighbour Movement', p. 9.
confirmed their status as elites within the wider community. One such cultural display was the government-initiated Exhibition of Migrant Arts and Crafts, originating in Albury and touring Eastern Australia in 1951, to give Australians ‘a better appreciation of the craftsmanship and culture, the ability and the patience of these admirable people’.

Comments from visitors included, according to one observer:

‘What marvellous work! What artistic taste! How clever these people are! Doesn’t this make you feel utterly incompetent?’, and then to crown it all, to make a point of telling the Director that Australia is fortunate to gain such people.

Instead of engaging with the real problems faced by the DPs, the end point of the work of the Good Neighbour Movement was the citizenship ceremony, when the ‘migrants’ would become ‘real’ Australians as well as New Australians. ‘Migrant’ success stories, which were widely publicized, had identical plots, all leading towards a wealthy and assimilated ‘New Australian’. If citizenship failed to produce ‘real’ Australians, the children of the DPs could be expected to become fully assimilated.

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363 Tavan, ‘Good Neighbours’, pp. 81, 84; Ann Tündern-Smith, Bonegilla’s Beginnings (Wagga Wagga, 2007), p. 125; NAA CP815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.134 Attachment, Immigration – Displaced Persons – General, Exhibition of Arts and Crafts.
364 NAA CP815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.134 Attachment, Immigration – Displaced Persons – General, Exhibition of Arts and Crafts.
365 Murphy, The Other Australia, p. 143.
Australia’s program of re-branding the DPs as ‘New Australians’ was a marketing exercise with the primary aims of convincing ‘native’ Australians that the migrants were necessary for a post-war reconstruction of ‘Australia United’, and to allay fears that the DPs would form ethnic enclaves and act as strike-breakers. The real problems faced by the DPs were buried under an avalanche of celebratory propaganda. The next section of this chapter will examine the lived experiences of the DPs in the early years of migration and settlement, in order to show more fully the self-serving conceit of the ‘worker’, ‘migrant’, and ‘New Australian’ labels.

‘Migrant’ ‘Workers’

The DPs were admitted to the country on a Certificate of Exemption (from the dictation test) rather than permanent residency, so that they could be deported if found undesirable. The endorsement on their Alien Registration Certificate read:

The bearer of this certificate has been admitted to the Commonwealth under exemption subject to that person remaining in an approved occupation and locality for a period of two years from the date of his arrival.\(^{367}\)

\(^{367}\) NAA J25, Department of Immigration, Queensland Branch, Case files, annual single number series with or without ‘Q’ [Queensland] or ‘QB’ [Queensland Brisbane] or ‘CLF’ [Client Files] prefix,1949/1493, Displaced Persons – Policy General (including Accommodation at Chermside Military Camp, contains details about aliens and refugees treatment in Queensland), 1947-54, Memorandum from T. H. E. Heyes, Secretary, Department of Immigration, to the Commonwealth Migration Officer (Brisbane), 16 January 1948.
The DPs were then sent to reception camps before being assigned to placements for the two-year work contract. The contract applied to all men and women aged between 16 and 50, from which only pregnant women and mothers with young children were exempt. Upon arrival, the men were categorized as 'labourers' and the women as 'domestics', with little attempt to match up qualifications or prior experience with job vacancies, and no attempt to keep family groups together. The DPs were sent as unskilled labour to heavy industry, public utilities including projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Program, agricultural work, and domestic and hospital work. For their two-year placements, they lived in such varied accommodation as workers' hostels, tents and concrete barracks.

Upon arrival of the first DP ship in 1947, Calwell outlined the planned accommodation and reception program for the new migrants:

To accommodate these displaced persons until they are settled in employment, a former military camp at Bonegilla, near Wodonga, has been fitted out as a reception and training center. At this camp the migrants will be given a further course of instruction [adding to the shipboard lessons available to the DPs] in utilitarian English, Australian social conditions and other subjects which will assist their easy absorption into the community ... The decision to accommodate these migrants on arrival in a well organized reception and training center is an entirely new departure from

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368 NAA, Series D678, Department of Social Services, SA, Correspondence Files, A282, Procedure – U and SB Branch DPs R & T Centres from Department of Social Services, SA, Instruction from the Department of Immigration and Letter from Registrar to Assistant Director, Unemployment and Sickness Benefit, 22 November 1949.
previous immigration plans. It is, in fact, revolutionary, and is the first experiment of its kind to be undertaken in this country.\footnote{369}

Rather than being 'well organized', however, this was a last minute decision which caused a mad rush of senior members of the Department of Immigration trucking sheets and blankets to Bonegilla and working late into the night making up beds for the DPs who were due to arrive the next day.\footnote{370} The decision to use army camps to house the DPs was justified by the post-war housing crisis, however the decision also served to keep the new migrants away from urban population centers, restricting contact with the general population for at least the first few weeks.\footnote{371} DPs were then to be sent predominantly to non-metropolitan areas to work. It seemed that the government was anxious to keep the DPs out of sight for as long as possible.

The largest camp was Bonegilla, situated outside Wodonga, on the New South Wales and Victorian border. Its central location, equidistant to Adelaide and Brisbane, meant that it served as a labour distribution point to several states. The other major camps were Bathurst in New South Wales, Woodside in South Australia, and Northam in Western Australia, while Greta, near Newcastle, served primarily to channel refugees to Queensland. Other camps used were Rushworth and Benalla (Vic),

\footnote{370}{Price, \textit{Australia and Refugees}, p. 20.}
\footnote{371}{Kunz, \textit{Displaced Persons}, p. 139.}
Cowra, Parkes and Uranquinty (NSW), Stuart (Qld), Brighton (Tas), and Graylands (WA).

Australian novelist T.A.G. Hungerford, who worked at a migrant camp in Canberra, characterized the camps as ‘real hellholes ... quite rough joints’.\(^372\) Haylen admitted that DPs ‘are housed under conditions which the average Australian would not willingly accept. They live in camps, military camps for the most part, which are adequate to shelter them from the wind and storm but not much more’.\(^373\) In the words of one Polish DP, J. Birman, the DP was ‘considered to be a “strange animal”, to be sent to the bush to work while the Australians stayed in the cities’.\(^374\) As historian Bruce Pennay has noted, however, offering such basic accommodation and plain food was a win for publicists, who assured Australians that the migrants were not living in luxury. DP reception and settlement processes were efficient, effective and cheap.\(^375\)

The experience which stood out for many DPs was the first meeting with the camp commanders who all delivered a similar type of ‘inspirational address’ to new arrivals regarding ‘camp discipline and hygiene, the way

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of Australian life, the Australian people, the advantages offered by the
Government and above all the freedom of democracy in the country which
they have accepted for their future'.\textsuperscript{376} In Australia, the DPs were a
homogenous mass of unskilled labour. The DPs were to be ‘migrants’,
‘workers’ and ‘New Australians’.

The standard four weeks of reception, orientation and work placement
included further medical examinations including x-rays, clothing allocation
and orientation lectures in ‘utilitarian English and the Australian way of
life’.\textsuperscript{377} At first, the period of indentured labour was vague, ‘for at least a
year’, was then made two years, then reduced to eighteen months, and
then raised again to two years.\textsuperscript{378}

The contract of indentured labour was commonly supposed by the DPs
(and the Australian press) to be a simple exchange of labour for the
passage money paid by the Australian government. This belief was based
on information given to prospective DP migrants in Europe: ‘Selection will
be carried out by Australian Selection Officers and those persons

\textsuperscript{376} NAA, Series CP 815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files,
021.134, Immigration – DPs – General, Report on Visit to Australia by IRO Representative dated
January 1949.

\textsuperscript{377} NAA, Series PP6/1, Department of Immigration, Western Australian Branch, Correspondence
Files, 1948/H/2935, Accommodation and Placement in Employment of Family Units Arriving
under the Displaced Persons (DP) Scheme Procedure, Circular from T H E Heyes, Department of
Immigration circa October 1948.

\textsuperscript{378} NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 179/9/3,
Displaced Persons Employment Opportunities Policy Part 1 (1947-1948), Memorandum for
Officers of the Commonwealth Employment Service, undated; NAA, A445, Department of
Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 179/9/5, Displaced Persons Employment
Policy Part 3, Letter from S. J. Dempsey, Department of Immigration to The Acting Secretary,
dated 3 January 1951.
accepted will receive free passages to Australia'. In fact, by March 1950
Australia had contributed to IRO expenditure £2,862,000, including the
£10 passage contribution for each DP, while the IRO had spent
£25,000,000 forwarding the DPs to Australia.

This defining feature of the DP scheme was based completely on the
whim of Calwell, who later admitted: 'This was my idea. I thought it was
fair because we provided accommodation at Bonegilla, a former army
camp, later at Bathurst and then all around Australia'. There was some
political opposition to indentured labour, particularly from Labor MP Kim
Beazley, who objected to a 'tied labour' scheme, and Nationalist MP
Thomas White, who argued: 'It is surprising that Europeans ... should be
brought into the country on that basis, when, in our own territory of New
Guinea, we have abolished the system of indentured labour'. Calwell,
however, thought that the advantages to the DPs were 'two years of

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379 NAA, A438, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 1949/7/926,
Publicity – Displaced Persons, Details of the Scheme Under Which Displaced Persons May
Emigrate to Australia.
380 Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 178.
381 Calwell, Be Just and Fear Not, p. 104.
382 Polish ex-servicemen, who were granted free passage from the United Kingdom to Australia
by the British government, were also put to work until they qualified for naturalisation (usually
after 12 months). Kim Beazley, cited in Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) / House of
Representatives, 3 October 1947, p. 482; Thomas White, cited in Parliamentary Debates
(Hansard) / House of Representatives, 15 October 1947, p. 767; NAA J25, Department of
Immigration, Queensland Branch, Case files, annual single number series with or without ‘Q’
[Queensland] or ‘QB’ [Queensland Brisbane] or ‘CLF’ [Client Files] prefix, 1949/1493, Displaced
Persons – Policy General (including Accommodation at Chermside Military Camp, contains
details about aliens and refugees treatment in Queensland), 1947-54, Letter from J. Cliffe,
Commonwealth Migration Officer, to The Regional Director of Employment (Brisbane), dated 26
July 1949.
guaranteed employment and two years of guaranteed accommodation'.\textsuperscript{383} The Australian government gained ‘two years of guaranteed’ pliable, and vulnerable, labour. In this way, the government could rely on trade union support for the scheme as the DPs were removed from direct competition with Australian workers.

Even though an agreement had been made with trade unions that DPs must join the appropriate union as a condition of employment, and were thus eligible to vote in union elections, Calwell apparently guaranteed the business community that the DPs would not become involved in trade disputes. He assured working Australians that ‘migrants would not be used to worsen prevailing working conditions, nor would they be used in any industrial trouble in the industries in which they were employed’.\textsuperscript{384} If any dispute erupted, the DPs would be removed to their camps until the dispute was settled.\textsuperscript{385}

The DPs were under the authority and protection of the Department of Immigration while under the work contract, and were sent where the government saw a need. The new Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) acted as the Department’s agent in each reception and training camp, placing DPs in jobs and arranging for their transfer between camp

\textsuperscript{383} Kunz, \textit{Displaced Persons}, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{384} Murphy, ‘The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia’, p. 198; Collins, \textit{Migrant Hands in a Distant Land}, p. 142; \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 7 April 1948; Calwell, \textit{Be Just and Fear Not}, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{385} Bryan, ‘Recalcitrant Women?’, p. 41.
and place of employment. The Department of Labour and National Service, within a framework laid down by the Department of Immigration, codified the policy and procedural guidelines to be followed, in January 1948, which stated that DPs:

- Should not be placed in circumstances which would lead to their depriving Australians of accommodation;
- Should only be placed where there is accommodation available;
- Should not be placed in employment for which suitable Australian workers are available or under circumstances leading to the displacement of Australian workers;
- Should only be placed under conditions under which they will receive award rates of pay.\(^{386}\)

More than half of DPs were directed to essential industries, many working on government construction projects, while 12% were allocated to public services such as the railways. In 1950 DPs made up a quarter of the workforce in iron and steel works, increasing production by 23%; 30% of the workforce in cement works, increasing production by 29%; 10% of the workforce in the timber industry, increasing production by 7%; and 15% of the workforce in the brick and tile industry, increasing production by 7%.\(^{387}\)

By 1950, DPs formed 10% of BHP employees at Port Kembla and Newcastle, and 20% by 1952.\(^{388}\) Female DPs were used primarily as unskilled labour in the manufacturing industries, and were also sent to work at the Department of Immigration, country hospitals and domestic situations (to assist families with three or more children or doctor's

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\(^{386}\) Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, pp. 141-142.
\(^{387}\) Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, p. 169.
\(^{388}\) Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures*, p. 46.
Most of the advantages of this system – administrative, economic and political – were gained by the government. The disadvantages to the DPs were numerous.

**Worst Jobs**

Integral to the DP labour scheme was the requirement that DPs ‘should not be placed in employment for which suitable Australian workers are available or under circumstances leading to the displacement of Australian workers’. DPs were not to be free market workers, but government-directed ‘language-deficient unskilled labourers’, in Australia to ‘do the donkey work in the programme of expansion’.

A memo from the Federated Iron Workers Union, the Miners Federal Council and the Building Workers Industrial Union to BHP set out a common policy: ‘Displaced persons will be engaged on those jobs which are least attractive to Australian workers ... In other words, they [BHP] will

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391 NAA, A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 179/9/3, Displaced Persons Employment Opportunities Policy Part 1 (1947-1948), Considerations to Govern the Employment of Displaced Persons During the Two Years after their Arrival in Australia, undated.
give the Australians 'the pickings'.

Similarly, a letter from the Australian Sugar Producers Association gleefully asserted: ‘Not to try those Balts as cane cutters would rather be looking a gift horse in the mouth’. There were instances of not only men, but of ‘cultured European girls of seventeen or eighteen sent to cook for cane cutting gangs in North Queensland’. Social worker Hazel Dobson alerted the government to the fact that in the cane cutting gangs, ‘at least four women are pregnant ... the work is very arduous and in the frailer type of woman, could result in the loss of the child’. The CES’s informal response in handwritten notes on the report chillingly stated: ‘The CES did not knowingly send pregnant women and can’t be responsible for pregnancy. Miss Dobson does not appreciate the problem we had to get enough labour in May.’

Young girls were sent to work at mental hospitals, while in South Australia some work sites on the railways were so bad that if DPs requested release from employment in the desert after six months, staff were to reassign such DPs. In 1948 it was announced that DPs working in the sugar industry would be released after completing two seasons in the

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industry, rather than two calendar years. Such compassion was an exception to the rule, and indeed this announcement was repealed in early 1951.³⁹⁹

Propaganda from the Soviet Union regarding the fate of the DPs was reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1949:

Moscow Radio said yesterday that Australia was using displaced persons as slave labour. It added ... Work and a good life were promised them, but they are coerced by intimidation. Not one of them knew they were doomed to slavery and a hideous life and that they would be separated from their wives and children. Australia’s welcome was a prison. The white slaves from Europe were dispersed among employers and were used for the heaviest manual labour. They are bereft of all human rights.⁴⁰⁰

Such propaganda, as well as the leaking of the BHP memo above, prompted the *Sydney Morning Herald* to ask: ‘What becomes of freedom and equality when DPs are directed to the sort of work that Australians reject?’⁴⁰¹ Similarly, Australian novelist, T. A. G. Hungerford, noted a ‘drab fabric of disenfranchisement’ blanketing the indentured labourers.⁴⁰²

Calwell’s response to such criticism was shrill and unequivocal:

They have a choice in the displaced persons camps in Germany ... These people were brought to this country at no expense to themselves and are being given the privilege of living in one of the best democracies in the world. It is not too much to ask them ... to

³⁹⁹ NAA A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 179/9/5, Displaced Persons Employment Policy Part 3, Letter from S. J. Dempsey, Department of Immigration to The Acting Secretary, 3 January 1951.

⁴⁰⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald* 20 June 1949.


give this country something in return for the benefits it is conferring upon them. They cannot expect to walk in here and pick and choose the jobs they like.\textsuperscript{403}

Calwell was met years later by a DP who told him 'We were your slaves'. Calwell argued: 'It wasn't quite like that, you know'. Later commentators such as academic Donald Horne, writing in 1971, would find Calwell's defenses indefensible:

DPs were bought very cheaply. Most of them were penniless. They had little or no other choice. They were transported to Australia for [almost] nothing, housed in old army huts, even tents, and put to work on construction projects, mainly in the country areas. For two years they were bound to manual labour. After that, it was up to them. From an economic viewpoint they were a godsend.\textsuperscript{404}

As well as being allocated the worst jobs, the system was inherently inflexible. The only control DPs had over the terms of their contract was the opportunity to request a change of employment, predominantly due to geographical distance from family or friends, or urban areas, which provided more affordable housing and professional and social opportunities. Others wanted better working conditions, or shift work so that they could continue to study. Any request had to be agreed by a District Employment Officer (DEO), and there are numerous examples of the variability of responses, depending on the personality of the DEO and the English skills of the petitioner.\textsuperscript{405}

\textsuperscript{403} Australia. House of Representatives, Debates, 28 April 1948, vol 196, p 1135, in Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{405} NLA, Oral TRC 5900/69, Walter Lebedew interviewed by Rob Linn for the Sport Oral History Project, 2008; Barry York, Michael Cigler: A Czech-Australian Story, from displacement to
The contract obviously curtailed civil liberties, and its implementation was authoritarian and paternalistic. There was strict insistence on the contract, which on occasion gave the impression that it was thought of as a two year sentence meted out to people deserving punishment. Indeed, a directive from the Minister for Immigration stated that ‘recalcitrant women from the Repatriation Hospital (in Brisbane) were to be placed in mental hospitals’ as punishment to the individual (for recalcitrance) and as a deterrent to others.

**Family Separation**

The Australian government not only ignored the psychological needs of the refugees, seeing their settlement mainly in crude materialistic terms of housing, food and jobs, but also enforced family separations during the two year indenture period. This was even though ‘the undesirability of splitting family units [was] well known’. In some cases in the early years of the scheme, families were left behind in Europe until a working husband

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407 Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, p. 177.
410 NAA, SP446/1, Migrant Workers’ Accommodation Division, Central Office, Department of Labour and National Service, Correspondence Files, 100/5/5, Hostels – Employment of DPs – Pregnant Women, Letter from J. E. Walsh, Regional Administrative Officer, Perth WA, DLNS to the Director, Migrant Workers’ Accommodation Division, Alexandria, 17 November 1949.
was able to arrange suitable accommodation in Australia. This of course was not easy while working under government direction.

Once families were permitted to enter Australia, it was CES policy that husbands and wives were to be placed in separate employment if necessary. CES officers were instructed: 'Even at the cost of separation, displaced persons must be placed quickly from the Reception and Training Centres: they cannot be left in avoidable idleness and be allowed to bank up'.\(^{411}\) In practice, this could mean sending a husband and wife to work in different states.\(^{412}\) Further, dependents were separated in so-called 'holding' camps until the breadwinner could find suitable accommodation for them, which was made harder by the fact that breadwinners had to pay two lots of accommodation fees – for themselves near their workplace and for their dependants, who could be living in a holding center in another state (the average stay in holding centres was ten months). This situation was complicated by the fact that there were some DPs who refused to pay for their dependents.

Policies surrounding holding centres were not clearly communicated to the DPs before they arrived in Australia. In an article headed 'Married


Migrants are unhappy living hundreds of miles apart – migrants are in despair', a journalist described his observation in 1950 of DP men who lived and worked in Sydney while their wives and families were held at Greta and Cowra holding camps: 'In the hostels, after work, I watched the men. None smiled. Yet I had seen many of them when they arrived from Bathurst from the IRO ships, eager, cheerful, full of great expectations for the future.'

This practice of separating families caused the most complaints by DPs and its effects provided most of the work for the new social workers hired by the Department of Immigration. Anxious husbands were concerned about the potential for their wives to have affairs with the men who were maintenance workers at the holding centers, and jealousy was rife. Indeed, church leaders condemned official policy as causing widespread separation and divorce. One local community was moved to help, organizing transport once a month for the men working at State Rivers in Victoria to travel to the holding camp two hours' drive away. They acted because they 'felt that it was pretty barbaric that on arrival in a new country they were immediately separated; the feeling was that they should be kept together'. After June 1950, due to adverse publicity and an

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413 Ivan Orlov, 'Married Migrants are unhappy living hundreds of miles apart – migrants are in despair', Sun, Sydney, 27 January 1950, p 13.
414 Murphy, 'The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia', p. 185.
improvement in housing, fewer families were separated, and the separation was generally of a shorter duration.416

Professional Disadvantage

While doggedly pursuing a policy of selecting fit, healthy and young labourers, the government falsely asserted in its DP recruitment leaflet dated November 1949:

**OCCUPATIONAL RESTRICTIONS:** Basically such do not exist in Australia. Any DP trained for a particular vocation has the assurance that he will be able to work in a corresponding field. This regulation also applies specifically to **medical practitioners**.417

The government was, however, forthright in its publicity to the Australian public, with Dr J. S. Smythe, leader of the Australian medical mission to Germany, asserting in 1947: ‘Australia was interested only in industrial and agricultural workers’.418

Of all adult male DPs, 6% were university graduates, 4% were university students and 11% were high school graduates, with the better educated usually from the Baltic States, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.419 However, from the beginning, the government was ‘remarkably consistent’ about ignoring any professional qualifications the DPs possessed as they re-

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branded professionals and peasants as 'labourers' and 'domestics'. DPs were viewed and presented as 'technologically illiterate'. Officially, the first ship *The General Heintzelman* carried only labourers, farmers, domestics, waitresses, housemaids and typists, while actually carrying office workers, doctors, accountants, policemen, soldiers, scientists, bank officers and teachers.

Ann-Mari Jordens has asserted that the Department was 'unable to assess' the skills of the DPs, and that is why they were all allocated to labouring jobs. This was not the case. The Department of Immigration was not interested in compiling a central database of potential employability, even though this information was freely available in the Selection Papers they held. Their staff never handed over these papers to the Department of Labour and National Service, which allocated the DPs among employers. A similar fate met the IRO's *Professional Medical Register*, which an Australian official told the IRO was 'of not much value in Australia'.

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The government preferred to send DPs to employers *en masse* rather than evaluate an individual's potential employability. The official explanation for this lack of skills-directed employment, with an eye to the government's agreement with the trade unions, was that the public would view the DPs negatively as competing with Australian workers for high positions. When employers did request DPs with particular qualifications and skills, the Department either refused permission or gave it grudgingly, and had to go about retrospectively extracting qualifications and employment details from individual DPs using a form letter.\(^{425}\) In all, even after the public service and the private sector began clamouring for professional DP labour in mid-1949, only around 400 DPs were employed as professionals, and 350 as semi-professionals, during their indenture period.\(^{426}\)

In hand with the government's willful ignorance of any professional skills the DPs possessed was the professional bodies' refusal to accord professional status to those DPs who sought such acknowledgement. The Musicians' Union, for example, insisted that DPs be naturalized before they entered orchestras.\(^{427}\) Medical boards, dental boards, veterinary boards and lawyers' institutes all refused to register DP professionals, not

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\(^{425}\) NAA, SP193/1, Department of Labour and National Service, Central Office, Policy, Procedure and Property Files, T35522, DPs with Professional or Technical Qualifications, Regional Director Form Letter.


\(^{427}\) 'Adelaide Plans to Help Migrants', *The Advertiser*, 25 January 1950, cited in NAA, AP262/1, Department of Labour and National Service, Branch Office/Regional Administration, South Australia, Correspondence Records Extracted from Central Registry, 3000/1/8, Immigration DPs Policy & Procedures, Hostels – Press Reports.
only during the indenture contract but ever afterwards, in some cases. As the Department noted in 1949: 'In many cases, of course, DPs, in view of their lack of Australian qualifications, eg. by reason of State legislation, may be employed only as professional assistants'. Calwell later remarked: 'Frustration and unfriendliness have been their common experience at the hands of the Australian professions'. In contrast, practically all tradesmen were able to obtain official recognition.

There are many examples of the 'talent and laboriously acquired academic qualifications' of DPs going to waste. One story publicized at the time was that of Latvian singer, Apalonia Sapalis, who was placed as a kitchen hand even though a Melbourne opera company expressed interest in employing her. Calwell's response is telling:

*Australia has a right to expect that these people – no matter what their skills or attributes – will give their services for a period of up to two years in some branch of the Australian economy in which labour is scarce ... When this particular young woman had fulfilled her obligations ... she would be free to exercise her talents ... DP girls are performing more immediate important work functions in Australian society by working as domestics in hospitals than they could ever perform with any grand opera company.*

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428 NAA, SP193/1, Department of Labour and National Service, Central Office, Policy Procedure, T35522, DPs with Professional or Technical Qualifications, W. Funnell, Director to the Regional Director, Employment Division, Sydney, Circular CES 25, 'Displaced Persons with Professional and Technical Qualifications', 1 November 1949.


430 Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', p. 324.

431 Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, pp. 179, 144; see also NAA J25, Department of Immigration, Queensland Branch, Case files, annual single number series with or without 'Q' [Queensland] or 'QB' [Queensland Brisbane] or 'CLF' [Client Files] prefix, 1949/1493, Displaced Persons – Policy General (including Accommodation at Chermside Military Camp, contains details about aliens
This loss of professional status hit some DPs hard. Hungarian DP András Dezséry wrote to the Adelaide Advertiser in 1950 campaigning for the recognition of European university degrees: 'It is not easy to induce our people to settle down here when inwardly something hurts them'. Professional DPs who migrated under private sponsorship, rather than under the IRO agreement, tended to do better. For DPs under contract, even a guarantee of maintenance was not enough to release them from the work contract in order to attend university. T. A. G. Hungerford noted the irony:

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\text{It was the price they paid for freedom – some of them, for life. If in two years hands that curled round picks and shovels forgot the feel of scalpels and bows, it would be unfortunate but not fatal. They were assured of continued work as labourers in a country shorter of doctors than of manual labourers.}
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Non-Compliance and Emigration

There were some DPs who refused to comply with the terms of the contract and all it involved. Some simply 'started not to follow the rules', finding their own work or leaving employment 'without permission', while
others refused to work at all. An unofficial estimate of 5% had to be ‘reminded of their contract’ by being stranded in a reception camp without a work permit or unemployment benefits after refusing particular employment. By 1951, more than 100 DPs each week were illegally leaving their allocated jobs, with up to 5,000 in New South Wales alone having broken their contract. Five DPs who were sentenced to six month’s jail pending deportation after refusal to work complained: ‘This is not democracy. It is Russia.’

Others, including the ‘better educated’, used ‘tricks and evasions’, particularly false medical certificates of incapacity, in order to effect a transfer from hard manual work or to resist relocation. Some absconded and couldn’t be traced. However, Calwell determined that he was ‘not going to allow a magnificent scheme to be wrecked by a few fools and agitators’. He began the ‘steamroller of deportation’ as an example to

436 Murphy, ‘The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia’, p. 182.
439 NAA J25, Department of Immigration, Queensland Branch, Case files, annual single number series with or without ‘Q’ [Queensland] or ‘QB’ [Queensland Brisbane] or ‘CLF’ [Client Files] prefix, 1949/1493, Displaced Persons – Policy General (including Accommodation at Chermside Military Camp, contains details about aliens and refugees treatment in Queensland), 1947-54, Memorandum to The Secretary, Department of Immigration, dated 23 February 1949; Murphy, ‘The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia’, p. 183.
others, deporting DPs (approximately 42 by 1951) for reasons including ‘refusal to work’.\textsuperscript{441} One such deportee was Eugene Suschinsky, an acrobat who had an ‘unsatisfactory employment history’ and was an absconder, deported on the basis that: ‘he had continued to accept stage engagements and has not been in approved work for the past three months’.\textsuperscript{442}

However, the publicity given to these deportations misfired when an increasing number of dissatisfied DPs began demanding deportation as a means of escaping from their contract and obtaining an inexpensive return trip to Europe.\textsuperscript{443} Polish DP Jewsygnij Blagi stated categorically: ‘I don’t intend to work. I am a political migrant.’ He told the authorities that he wanted to protest to US President Truman that he had been brought to Australia under false pretences.\textsuperscript{444} Another Polish DP, Stanislaw...


\textsuperscript{443} NAA, A437, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, Class 6 (Aliens Registration) 1949/6/381, Social Worker’s Report, Bonegilla Reception & Training Centre, Victoria (1949-1952), Letter from F. Tice, Social Worker, to Senior Social Worker, Department of Immigration, 28 May 1952.

Pawlowski, gave various reasons for wishing to be deported, as reported by Heyes:

At two interviews he stated that he wished to return to Europe ... [because] he had eye trouble which he considered incurable in Australia and which was augmented by Australian climatic conditions, that he did not consider Australia a good place in which to begin a new life and that under no circumstances would he ever live in a tent, that he had a de facto wife and two children starving in Europe to whom he wished to return.\(^{445}\)

Another DP, Rudolf Hrellica, not only refused to work and stated a wish to be sent back to Europe, but also attempted to influence other DPs into not submitting to the labour contract.\(^{446}\) Thus, from the beginning of 1949, CES officers were prohibited from 'threatening' DPs with deportation.\(^{447}\)

Just as some DPs refused to comply with the indentured labour contract, there were others who resisted camp conditions, and the government's family separation policy. At Cowra camp, about 30 female DPs wrote to politicians, demonstrated, ran up a black flag of mutiny, and some went on a 24-hour hunger strike over the quality of food available at the camp, particularly for children. At Parkes, the Director and the camp 'police chief' were beaten by the husbands of some of the women.\(^{448}\) Some women 'squatted' at their husband's work camps with children in tow.\(^{449}\) In


\(^{447}\) Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, p. 178.


\(^{449}\) Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties*, p. 160.
Tasmania, wives and children were forcibly removed from such work
 camps, with some women threatening suicide during this process.\textsuperscript{450}

For those refugees still in Europe, Australia was not looking like the best
option. By 1951, while many DPs chose to go to the United States and
Canada, refugees choosing Australia fell drastically. According to an
American observer, this sudden fall in recruitment was the direct result of
unfavourable reports sent by DPs in Australia to the recruitment centers in
Europe. Historian Lesleyanne Hawthorne reported that in 1951, groups of
DPs met ships coming from Europe shouting: 'It's no good! Go back home
again!'\textsuperscript{451} In addition to this shortfall of new recruits, DPs who had finished
their indenture contract began to emigrate to Canada and the United
States. By 1958, for example, approximately 2,000 Lithuanians, or 20% of
the Lithuanian DPs in Australia, had left for the United States.\textsuperscript{452} As one
DP doctor wrote to \textit{The Age} in 1950: 'Who would take the blame if there
should be only one among the foreign doctors in Australia who could give
something to mankind or science and was prevented from doing so?
Could he be blamed if, being disappointed, he left Australia?'\textsuperscript{453}

\textsuperscript{450} Tarvydas, \textit{From Amber Coast to Apple Isle}, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{451} Kunz, \textit{Displaced Persons}, p. 180; Lesleyanne Hawthorne, \textit{Making It In Australia} (Caulfield
\textsuperscript{452} Erika Boas, "Leading Dual Lives": Lithuanian Displaced Persons in Tasmania", BA Honours
\textsuperscript{453} Age, 18 August 1950.
Indentured Labour and Assimilation

There was never an obvious link between the indentured labour scheme and the government's stated goal of assimilation, beyond the camp accommodation and emphasis on rural work being perceived as 'a sort of physical and intellectual sheep dip' into Australian [rural] culture.454 When in March 1949 Calwell announced that he would consider early release from the contract of those who showed that 'they were fitting smoothly into the Australian way of life', the announcement was promptly forgotten and never acted upon.455 Of course, it would have been hard for any DP to have shown that they were 'fitting smoothly into Australian life', as the indentured labour scheme effectively quarantined the DPs from the rest of the Australian population for a period of time.456 Contemporary commentators called the labour contract an 'apprenticeship', which not only worked off the apparent debt of assisted passage but also earned the DP the right of equal citizenship.457

The DPs were required to join unions and were eligible to vote in union elections, to allay the fears of trade unionists that the DPs could become

454 Wilton and Bosworth, Old Worlds and New Australia, p. 9.
456 Lack and Templeton, Bold Experiment, p. 10.
457 Murphy, Imagining the Fifties, p. 159.
strike-breakers. However, there is little evidence that the unions took much interest in migrants, and the trade union movement did little to provide an entry into Australian society for most migrants. Even though right-wing unions were interested in using the perceived anti-communism of the DPs to help fight communist unions, very few official positions in trade unions were held by migrants.\textsuperscript{458}

Language difficulty was the most pressing initial problem DPs encountered at work. The government refused to communicate and to encourage employer communication with DPs in languages other than English, using the reasoning that this would be ‘impractical’. This policy extended even to the few social workers (25 by 1954) who were required to work with DPs without interpreters.\textsuperscript{459} Although language classes were offered to DPs, both in reception camps and in outside continuation classes, the instruction provided by the government was not sufficient. These initial lessons - 'focused on survival' - were to be supplemented by continuation classes and radio-broadcast classes, as well as real-life learning.\textsuperscript{460} The Adult Migration Education Scheme, which was funded and coordinated by the Department of Immigration, used groundbreaking ‘situational English’ techniques in its lessons, which were available in the

\textsuperscript{458} Collins, \textit{Migrant Hands in a Distant Land}, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{459} Jordens, \textit{Alien to Citizen}, p. 123; NAA, Series D678, Department of Social Services, SA, Correspondence Files, A282, Procedure – U and SB Branch DPs R & T Centres from Department of Social Services, South Australia, Letter from the Director of Woodside Camp to the Commonwealth Migration Officer dated 16 June 1950; Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', p. 350.
\textsuperscript{460} Pennay, \textit{Calwell's Beautiful Baits}, p. 8.
camps and at schools around employment areas. However, most of the teachers had no training or experience in teaching English as a second language. The classes were not compulsory and were poorly attended, as it was difficult for those on shiftwork or after a long day at work, or for women with children, to make the effort to attend, while for those working in isolated areas it was impossible.\footnote{461} Out of 340,000 non-English speaking migrants (including DPs) in November 1951, only 10,938 were attending continuation classes.\footnote{462} Colonel Henry Guinn, Director of Greta camp, argued in 1953: ‘Some of the adults will never learn the language, but it is the children we look to. They will make the best migrants.’\footnote{463}

As a result of a lack of English skills, industrial accidents were commonplace, and ‘far in excess of average’.\footnote{464} In other cases, employers were able to misuse the DPs. For example, one mill owner ordered ‘spell time’ when the employer was sick or there was something broken in the mill. For these DP workers, no work meant no pay.\footnote{465} It seems that behind the rhetoric of assimilation, the DPs were seen primarily as pliable manual

\footnote{461}{NAA J25, Department of Immigration, Queensland Branch. Case files, annual single number series with or without ‘Q’ [Queensland] or ‘QB’ [Queensland Brisbane] or ‘CLF’ [Client Files] prefix, 1949/1493, Displaced Persons – Policy General (including Accommodation at Chermside Military Camp, contains details about aliens and refugees treatment in Queensland), 1947-54, C. J. Fitzgerald, ‘Our Migrants Are Being Neglected’, Brisbane Mail, 2 July 1948.}


\footnote{463}{Colonel Henry Guinn, cited in Pennay, The Young at Bonegilla, p. 2.}

\footnote{464}{‘Accidents to New Australians’, Canberra Times, 10 November 1950, p. 4.}

\footnote{465}{NAA, Series K403, Department of Immigration, Western Australian Branch, Correspondence Files, W59/35 Part 1, Assimilation: Welfare Work, Social Welfare – General, Letter from D. Djordievich to M. Dyson, Department of Immigration dated 17 December 1949.}
labour, and thus communication about rights and conditions was regarded as unimportant. 466

Ironically, of course, these attitudes tended to work against assimilation, particularly during the two year period of indentured labour. The language barrier made DPs uncomfortable to talk to their Australian workmates and neighbours, and there was little opportunity for improvement. DPs in Australia thus quickly formed community groups which were nationality specific. By 1952, there were available in Australia 67 newspapers printed in 22 DP languages, two newspapers containing material in several languages, and periodicals available from abroad, particularly the United States. 467 By 1953, there were 38 nationality specific groups in Sydney alone, with every DP nationality represented at least once. By 1970, there were hundreds of clubs nation-wide. DP organizations in this period included churches, social clubs (including choirs, theatre and dance groups, discussion groups, libraries and sports groups), and nationalist organizations, the cultural foci for the reconstruction of a diasporic 'imagined community'. 468 A Sydney journalist, writing in 1954, observed the following features:

The stronger national groups in Sydney already have established themselves in clubs or societies. They are usually unlicensed clubs, often run in conjunction with a café ... They specialize in musical

466 Wilton and Bosworth, Old Worlds and New Australia, p. 95.
467 Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', p. 320.
evenings, dances, socials, chess tournaments, and ear-bashing sessions about national, racial and political problems 12,000 miles away.469

Some of these DPs were intent on fighting what seemed to Australians to be 'anachronistic battles'.470 In December 1949 an English teacher, J. Gray, complained about an 'apparent tendency to Fascism among certain groups of students', claiming that a Serbian DP, a block supervisor at Bonegilla, was 'using his position of influence to disseminate fascist propaganda among other recently arrived migrants'. This man turned out to be a former senior official in the Serbian Nazi puppet government, knowledge of whom the Department of Immigration ignored.471

In 1949 there were various Department of Immigration inquiries into an alleged 'fascist atmosphere' in some of the camps, and in a letter to the Sydney Jewish News in 1951, it was alleged:

Fascist journals are freely circulated in Australia. Reputable New Australians are being threatened and systematically denounced by organized neo-fascist groups. Australian citizens who protest against the mass migration of war criminals are accused of communist sympathies.472

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470 Lyn Richards, 'Displaced Politics: Refugee Migrants in the Australian Political Context' (Paper No. 45), La Trobe Sociology Papers, Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences (Bundoora, Vic: La Trobe University, May 1978), p. 1.
471 Rutland, 'Sanctuary for Whom?', pp. 15-16.
The Australian government, rather than being concerned by fascist activity, in fact used the anti-communism of alleged Nazi war criminals to the nation's advantage, requesting certain DPs to assist ASIO in the context of Cold War paranoia.473

Anti-communist nationalist groups also attempted to influence the thinking of other DPs, and Australians. Ukrainian dance and choral groups, for example, saw themselves as occupying an 'ambassadorial' role, with one community leader explaining in 1950:

If our purpose is to acquaint the Australian people with the Ukrainian problem and to secure Australian sympathies for our liberation struggle, we must be attentive to the paths which lead to this goal. Australians are not interested in politics and react negatively to direct propaganda. But our costumes and dances might well arouse interest and draw attention to the pamphlet, *What Do You Know About Ukraine?*474

Organizations such as the Baltic Council of Australia, the Captive Nations Committee and the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, represented the 'highly nationalistic, often military-oriented and right-wing sections within the member communities'.475 These organizations issued anti-communist statements and reports on conditions and events in their homelands, organized petitions to Australian authorities and the UN, and publicly

473 Rutland, 'Sanctuary for Whom?', p. 17; Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', p. 289.
celebrated and commemorated the anniversaries of national triumphs and tragedies.\footnote{Richards, ‘Displaced Politics’, p. 13.} To the most insular of these groups, this sort of public relations with the aim of influencing Australian government and public opinion was labelled ‘external affairs’.\footnote{Michael Lawrinsky, quoted in Paul Babie, ‘Ukrainian Catholics in Australia: Past, Present and Future’, \textit{Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society}, 28 (2007), p. 41.}

Notwithstanding these early failures of assimilation, and the real difficulties encountered by the DPs, Calwell classed the indentured labour scheme a success for the DPs, reasoning:

\begin{quote}
After two years, 80 per cent remained with the same employers, both governmental and otherwise. They were quite happy to stay where they had first been placed. They bought their own houses, established their own families, and brought their relatives to Australia to live with them.\footnote{Calwell, \textit{Be Just and Fear Not}, p. 104.}
\end{quote}

The reality was that most DPs, regardless of education, class or gender, made up the bottom rung of a ‘dual labour market’, staying in unskilled and poorly paid jobs for the rest of their lives.\footnote{Andrew Jakubowicz, \textit{Text Commentary – Building an Industrial Nation}, A Multicultural History of Australia, http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/library/media/Timeline-Commentary/id/8.Post-war-reconstruction-, viewed 26 November 2010.}

The Australian government put more thought and effort into creating, controlling and marketing a pliable workforce than it did into matters of rehabilitation and assimilation, which was seen as largely inevitable, at
least over the ensuing generations. The feelings and disappointed hopes of the DPs were largely just not considered. In this way, ‘displaced persons’ and ‘political refugees’ became ‘migrants’, ‘workers’ and ‘New Australians’, to the detriment of many of the DPs. The next chapter will consider the various ways in which social scientists framed these ‘problems’ of DP migration, leading to national narratives of integration and multiculturalism.
"New Australian" is a collective definition for various people who are neither new nor Australian.

The title is free of charge and conferred upon you without any initiating ceremony. All you have to do is to become a countryman, i.e. a man without a country.

In the New Australian you will find in alphabetical order who is who by heredity or by naturalization. Owing to the shortage of space and length of court cases we have to concentrate more on group information than on individual slandering. For example:

A. The Assimilated. (Those who know Captain Cook's Christian name)
B. The Nored. (Those who wonder why was Captain Cook in such a hurry)
C. The Cosmopolitan. (Those who dream about Captain Cook's arch where the foundation members of the brave New World decide to start the job with an open-air cafe in Botany Bay.)
D. The Depressed. (Those who arrived with a light heart and a heavy accent; lost several times their heart but kept their accent.)
E. The Enthusiastic. (Those who order roast beef with gravy in the restaurant and say they love it.)

F. The Fool. Here the New Australian who is who was forced to a sudden but not happy end. It proved to be impossible to cope with the long queues which is waiting for inauguration. The fools who hope and think they can hang their old life on a coat hanger and the fools who are in despair and think they have to hang themselves on a coat hanger. Fools here, there, everywhere, so we got into a labyrinth and the Introduction got into a bankruptcy. There is nothing left but make our hat and pray for our research workers in the faraway bush capital cities that God may help them to sort out who is who.

and say I pay that one:

If they succeed, well give them a hand

In memory of the various projects on the assimilation of post-war migrants.
Chapter 3

Analysis: ‘People with Problems’\textsuperscript{480}

Surprisingly few people were involved in the academic and policy debates from which multiculturalism emerged during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s ... It is the values of individual actors, for or against multiculturalism, and the pattern of their appointments to the Department that provide the major clues as to how change was achieved. – Mark Lopez, political scientist, 2000.\textsuperscript{482}

A small politically involved minority ushered in multiculturalism in Australia.
– Sociologist James Jupp, 1991.\textsuperscript{483}

This chapter tells the story of how DPs came to be understood and represented by social scientists in Australia, and how these representations came to influence the framing of multiculturalism in Australia. It is a story of diagnosis and prognosis: DPs were analysed and then placed at the centre of a new conception of Australian society.


\textsuperscript{482} Mark Lopez, \textit{The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics}, 1945-1975 (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2000), pp. 9, 13. Prof. Jerzy Zubrzycki has described Lopez’s book as a ‘well documented source ... Lopez had full access to my personal records, records of my activities kept in this library [National Library of Australia]. He interviewed actors in that area on all sides of politics, left and right and centre ...’ NLA, TRC 5150, Polish-Australian Oral History Project, Prof. Jerzy Zubrzycki (b. 1920) interviewed by Dr Barry York, 31 May and 1 June 2004.

The chapter encompasses a discussion of the problems DPs faced in Australia, as these were identified principally by three social scientists, who defined the field of DP study: H. B. M. (Henry Brian Megget) Murphy (1915-1987), a pioneer so-called ‘transcultural’ psychiatrist; Jean (Isobel) Martin (nee Craig) (1923-1979), a sociologist; and Jerzy (George) B. Zubrzycki (1920-2009), sociologist. These three social scientists highlighted difficulties experienced by the DPs in Australia, and made these the basis of strong critiques of assimilation, which in turn influenced policy-makers to overturn assimilation in favour of multiculturalism.

Assimilation was, in the 1950s, a global aim with regard to migrants. In 1952 the United Nations commissioned a study to formulate recommendations to facilitate migrants’ ‘final assimilation’ into their homelands. Australia was one of the eight countries involved, and the Assimilation Division of the Department of Immigration documented Australia’s commitment to assimilation, including practices such as teaching English, encouraging naturalization, and the provision of the Good Neighbour movement. Australia was also an active contributor to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (1945-), which initially promoted migrant assimilation. Indeed, UNESCO initiated a 1949 study of ‘communities and social tensions’ in countries including Australia, focusing on the assimilation of new

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immigrants. Many social scientists who were prominent in post-war Australia, mainly demographers and psychologists writing on migration issues, such as W. D. Borrie, Charles A. Price, R. T. Appleyard, Ronald Taft and Alan Richardson, were broadly assimilationist.

While the international community, the Australian government and some social scientists were busy representing the DPs as ‘assimilable’ ‘migrant workers’, indeed ‘New Australians’, social scientists such as Murphy, Martin and Zubrzycki began to describe the DPs as ‘people with problems’. This way of representing the DPs followed the example of social scientists in Europe and North America, such as Estonian psychologist Edward Bakis (himself a DP) who labeled the DPs ‘neurotic’. These social scientists were themselves part of a movement towards a sociological social psychology (or social psychiatry), which increasingly focused on the role of social (structural) contexts for individual processes. Libuse Tyhurst, writing in the American Journal of Psychiatry in 1951 about a study of 48 DPs in Montreal, argued that

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486 Lopez, The Origins of Multiculturalism, pp. 51, 60; see also Macintyre, The Poor Relation, p. 56.
'social mobility is the central social dynamic' for the understanding of psychological and psychiatric reactions in DPs, namely hostility and helplessness. As historian Peter Gatrell has noted, mass displacement was increasingly seen and represented as a 'pathological condition of the modern world', a source of 'trauma' and a 'mountain of misery'.

These professionals were also influenced by a growing international toppling of racial eminence, which in turn was influenced by cultural relativism in the social sciences. 'Race-as-culture' gradually took over from a 'race-as-biology' ideology in the sphere of the United Nations after 1945; 'ethnicity and ethnocultural recognition' became 'the master political discourse through which to address questions of integration of migrants and minorities'. In other words, a growing interest internationally in 'ethnocultural recognition' meant that an emphasis was now placed on tolerating cultural differences rather than equalising the variables of 'race', 'politics' and/or structural 'economics'.

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493 Però and Solomos, 'Introduction', p. 4.
Martin, and others, worked within the general social scientific trend away from assimilation towards 'cultural integration', which referred to 'conformity within the framework of cultural pluralism'. The story of the DPs in Australia thus intersects with this shift in views of the significance of race, and the creeping influence of cultural pluralism on policy, via representations of the DPs (and later migrants) and their relationship to settlement countries. While there is evidence of the influence of these trends already in the late 1940s, especially in the work of Murphy, it is the DPs' iconic status in the history of migration and the growing empathetic representations of the DPs (seen particularly in Martin's work) that link the history of the DPs to the story of multiculturalism in the 1970s; the way in which DPs were represented led to a radical shift in the way in which Australia represented itself.

H. B. M. Murphy

One of the first social scientists to focus on the DPs was the pioneer 'transcultural' (or cross-cultural) psychiatrist, H. B. M. Murphy. In the post-war period, the idea of transcultural psychiatry was new; it reflected a growing interest in cultural relativism, and the overlap between psychology and sociology. Technically, it refers to a branch of psychiatry concerned with the cultural and ethnic context of mental disorders and psychiatric services. In the postwar period, this was a radical idea; Murphy was a

494 Alexander Weinstock, cited in Haebich, Spinning the Dream, p. 41.
founding member of the Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry at McGill University in 1955; he went on to found the World Psychiatric Association Section on Transcultural Psychiatry in 1970.\textsuperscript{495} After working as a (British) doctor in the IRO camps, Murphy had decided to study resettlement problems in Israel, Australia and Britain. During this time he began to set out psychological problems he saw as inherent in flight and resettlement.\textsuperscript{496} He traveled in an IRO ship to Australia with 900 DPs and also interviewed many DPs after their arrival in Australia.

Writing in 1952, Murphy described the DPs as suffering from ‘displacement neurosis’ and was critical of the Australian authorities for accepting DPs ‘with little regard to their individual need for asylum’.\textsuperscript{497} He argued that any initial positive reactions of the DPs to the two-year work program were the result of ‘a temporary euphoria’ and that ‘speedy mass assimilation’ of the type attempted by Australia in this case did and would result in ‘mental strain and mental breakdowns’.\textsuperscript{498} Murphy warned: ‘Excluding personal unhappiness, higher suicide rate and higher mental disease rate, which may be said to affect only the individual, the social dangers are three-fold: criminal, industrial and political’.\textsuperscript{499}

\textsuperscript{495} The term ‘ethnic’ when used in Australia (and in this thesis) refers to migrants or children of migrants whose original language is not English.
\textsuperscript{496} Ellen Corin and Gilles Bibeau, ‘H. B. M. Murphy (1915-1987): A Key Figure in Transcultural Psychiatry’, \textit{Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry}, 12, no. 3 (September 1988), p. 399.
\textsuperscript{497} Murphy, ‘The Assimilation of Refugee Migrants in Australia’, pp. 179-180.
\textsuperscript{499} H. B. M. Murphy, ‘Assimilating the Displaced Person’, \textit{Australian Quarterly}, 24, no. 1 (March 1952), p. 58.
To some extent this ‘diagnosis’ reflected Murphy’s specific psychiatric worldview, which relied on assumptions about place and a need for ‘home’. More importantly, it gave DPs an identity as psychologically vulnerable, and turned the tables on migration seen purely from the perspective of the receiving country.

Murphy’s concerns with regard to mental illness were taken up a decade later in a 1962 study by psychiatrists Jerzy Krupinski (a Polish DP initially settled in Britain) and Alan Stoller, who analysed all first admissions to hospitals and out-patient clinics in Victoria, and a further study published in 1973 (with Lesley Wallace) covering the entire DP populations of Victoria of 31,000. These studies argued that many former DPs suffered from psychological problems, particularly paranoid schizophrenia and depressive neurosis due to war-time experiences, stresses of migration and loss of social status. The incidence of schizophrenia among Australian-born men was 21.2 per 100,000 and 28.6 among women, the figures for men and women born in Eastern Europe (Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians, including Jews) were 121.9 and 159.9 respectively.\(^5^0\) These

studies also demonstrated that Baltic DPs had the highest prevalence of alcoholism among the DPs.\textsuperscript{501}

If we accept these figures, then even though Australian officers had attempted to select only those with a clean bill of mental health, many DPs either somehow passed the medical examinations (at least four) while suffering from a mental illness, or suffered a mental breakdown on the journey to Australia or after arriving in Australia.\textsuperscript{502} As one government-employed social worker noted, the perception was that the DPs had 'suffered mentally, physically and spiritually to a degree that the average Australian finds hard to understand'.\textsuperscript{503}

DPs found to be mentally ill upon arrival in Australia were immediately deported, as were others who showed signs of mental illness during the indentured labour period.\textsuperscript{504} The \textit{Herald} (Melbourne) reported in 1950 that 'several' DPs had been deported in recent months 'because medical reports had shown that they were not likely to settle down and make reasonably good citizens'.\textsuperscript{505} The Immigration Department did not keep separate statistics regarding deported refugees, but certainly some

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{501} Krupinski, Stoller and Wallace, 'Psychiatric Disorders in East European Refugees Now in Australia', p. 34.
\textsuperscript{502} Panich, \textit{Sanctuary?}, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{503} NAA, Series A445, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 276/1/6, Social Welfare Work in Migrant Workers Hostels, Social Workers' Section, undated.
\textsuperscript{504} NBAC, AWV 253, E. F. Kunz (personal papers), Folder 'Deportations'; NAA, Series D400, Department of Immigration, South Australian Branch, Correspondence Files, SA 1949/383, Displaced Persons, Letter from T. H. E. Heyes, Department of Immigration to Commonwealth Migration Officer, South Australia dated 13 January 1949.
\textsuperscript{505} The \textit{Herald} (Melbourne), 15 May 1950.
\end{footnotes}
mentally ill DPs, characterised as 'insane', were deported from Australia.\textsuperscript{506} Those whose symptoms only became apparent after some time in Australia were either left to fend for themselves, or were sent to mental hospitals.\textsuperscript{507} Between 1950 and 1951, 85 non-British migrants (most of whom could only have been DPs) were certified for admission to mental hospitals in New South Wales alone.\textsuperscript{508}

The government-funded mental hospitals had 'appalling standards', including little or no attempt to speak to the DPs in their own language, with hospital officials deciding that 'interpreters were not useful'.\textsuperscript{509} Dr P. C. Middleton, who had examined 'New Australian' DP Statys Bildusas, 28 years of age, before his suicide in 1949, complained: 'He could not speak English, and I could not understand what he was jabbering about.'\textsuperscript{510} As Murphy observed:

Practically the only way in which a DP immigrant is likely to obtain treatment for a mental complaint is by making a nuisance of himself. He will then be certified insane and receive some form of shock therapy which will relieve him of some of his capacity for worrying about life, but, since it is not augmented by any other therapy, will not remove his neurosis or turn him into a first-class citizen which the state is seeking.\textsuperscript{511}

\textsuperscript{506} Neumann, \textit{Refuge Australia}, p. 100; NBAC, AWV 253, E. F. Kunz (personal papers), 1970-1980, Folder 'Deportations'.
\textsuperscript{507} Jordens, \textit{Alien to Citizen}, pp. 73-74.
\textsuperscript{508} Morris, \textit{Uranquinty Remembers}, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{509} Jordens, \textit{Alien to Citizen}, p. 148; Murphy, 'The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia', p. 201.
\textsuperscript{510} 'Suicide of Ill Migrant: 'Examination hopeless', says doctor', \textit{Argus}, 10 December 1949.
\textsuperscript{511} Murphy, 'The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia', p. 202.
Usually those sent to mental hospitals lost all social welfare benefits and their dependants, if in a holding centre, had to pay full accommodation rates, which was a ‘considerable hardship’.512

Media representations of DPs as tragic Eastern Europeans (with reference to Russian novelist Feodor Dostoevski) and as somehow pathological seems a direct reference to Murphy’s representations, or were at least symptomatic of this new way of representing the DPs. The Sydney newspaper Truth, for example, observed in 1958 a group of young, single, Polish DPs who led ‘rootless, remote, uncommitted lives’ which had ‘a strong Dostievskian flavour’ and seemed to contribute to mental breakdown.513 Similarly, a 1957 article in Pix magazine described the tragic plight of ‘vagrant migrants ... a lost race of despondent, neurotic misfits’ who had ‘gambled their lives in a new world and lost. Maladjusted, beset by language problems, burdened by horrible memories they just can’t forget’.514

Murphy’s own assertion was that the mental health problem was real and that the high-speed assimilation program was to blame for some of this mental stress. His argument that the differences between the communities were just too great to allow the DPs to recover their mental health.

513 Truth, 10 August 1958.
514 Haebich, Spinning the Dream, p. 178.
effectively reveals too the traces of fixed assumptions about cultural
difference due to the stereotyping of both community identities:

The Australians have a tradition of self-sufficiency and
independence of social and communal activity with a very simple
and largely defensive social pattern so that their personal contacts
are few and their capacity for self-amusement great. The DPs, on
the other hand, have a recent history of complex, crowded,
communal life and of mental suffering which had made them very
dependent on affection and on communal support, with a neurotic
fear of being rejected.515

With little scope for investigating the individual effects of mental suffering,
or programs for the support of migrants, public debates were subsequently
held about the screening process for migrants and the cost of ‘treatment’
for mentally ill migrants. The federal (Liberal) government argued that
because the DPs had been subjected to medical examinations, the
government could not now argue pre-existing or concealed conditions.
The government also noted that the DPs were stateless, and that the
immigration program had contained a humanitarian element. These
arguments were made even though the Commonwealth was continuing to
deport those who arrived in Australia with symptoms of mental illness.516

The mentally ill DP was a figure that also appeared in the press in stories
about murders and suicides. One example is that reported in The Age in
1950. A young DP working in a Queensland road-repair gang had been

515 Murphy, 'The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia', p. 203.
516 Jan Gothard, 'A Burden on the State? The 'Unfit' Immigrant', in Eric Richards and Jacqueline
Templeton, eds., The Australian Immigrant in the Twentieth Century: Searching Neglected
Sources. Visible Immigrants: Five. (Canberra: Division of Historical Studies, Research School of
observed ‘brooding for weeks about his family, murdered by the Nazis’. One night he grabbed a knife from a table and stabbed his best friend in the back, then ran into the bush yelling, and committed suicide. According to the police, ‘his mind suddenly snapped’. 517

These kinds of representations led to pressure on the federal government to reassure the public. Due to fears that the crime rate would go up due to the ‘unbalanced and unpredictable’ DPs, the government was forced to reassure the public that even though DPs were ‘subject to psychological stresses due to [an] unfamiliar environment and loneliness’, ‘the incidence rate of crime amongst aliens is considerably less than the incidence rate for the whole population’. 518 In other words, the only people adversely affected by their mental health were the DPs themselves.

They also led to calls for new kinds of immigration policy, based on a model of cultural relativism. Murphy argued for assimilation to be replaced with a sort of humane integration. He noted:

The superficial unity of DPs in the [Australian] resettlement and reception camps does not survive one day of freedom from these restraining surroundings and is replaced by mutual distrust and sometimes hostility only slightly less extreme than that exhibited by their ancestors; hence there is no suggestion of a common organization arising from them, even on a horizontal class basis. 519

517 Age, 27 March 1950.
Murphy argued that the DPs had split into 'every possible regional or pseudo-ethnic group' which devoted 'much hot air' to 'sterile politics' rather than 'a consideration of Australian reality'. He argued that leadership of national organisations was often taken by extremists, citing as an example of extreme views a critique of his work made by a Polish DP that instead of studying assimilation he should be studying 'the preparation of exile groups for the maintenance of their country's culture and their eventual return'.

Murphy's critique of ethnic essentialism was backed up in a paradoxical way by a 1956 article by I. A. Listwan, a Sydney psychiatrist who claimed that the migrant camps were 'breeding grounds for hatred and violence' amongst antagonistic ethnic groups, and worked directly against the goals of assimilation. In this case, ethnic essentialism required alternative models of immigration and settlement. Similarly, sociologist James Jupp wrote in 1966:

> A great deal of energy may be used up by living in the past in an organized way, rather than by fitting into the surroundings. This becomes especially futile where, as in the case of nearly all East European ethnic parties, there is not the slightest hope of their aims ever materializing in the home country. Like all emigrant

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21 Haebich, Spinning the Dream, p. 172.
movements, Australian ethnic parties are inbred, factional and unrealistic.  

While critiquing ethnic essentialism, Murphy also attacked the pro-assimilation Good Neighbour Movement on the basis that more specific welfare services were necessary: 'its main effect is to excuse higher officials from the trouble of thinking what the differences in the two communities are and what steps need to be taken to overcome them'. Murphy further argued that there should not be 'too great a discrepancy between the vague principles put out by their prospective country of resettlement and the way in which they are actually treated by it'. In this regard, Murphy advocated for:

A switch of expenditure from language teaching to social welfare, the use of more university-trained social workers (if they can be found), more explanatory propaganda to both sides, more opportunities for the immigrant to contribute to Australian life, and reorientated national organizations.

In 1952, then, we have the outlining by Murphy of a general critique of speedy assimilation, and suggestions as to how to change policy so as to successfully integrate DPs into Australian society. Further studies in the following decades agreed with, and advanced, Murphy’s analysis. The

522 Jupp, Arrivals and Departures, p. 90.
523 Murphy, 'The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia', p. 190.
525 Murphy, 'The Assimilation of Refugee Immigrants in Australia', pp. 203-204.
most influential of these studies, and advocates of societal change, was the work of sociologist Jean Martin.

Jean I. Martin (Craig)

During the early 1940s Jean Martin studied (and completed an MA) under A. P. Elkin at the University of Sydney; ostensibly teaching anthropology, Elkin also introduced his students to the new sociological theory and research methods. Martin then moved from anthropology into the new discipline of sociology, studying at the University of Chicago in 1947 under influential sociologists. Chicago was not only the largest department of sociology in the world, but was also concerned largely with theoretical principles, including new dynamic concepts of identity and community, such as George Herbert Mead’s emphasis on the extent to which social life is the outcome of ongoing negotiations in which lives are actively constructed. After engaging with these exciting new ideas at Chicago, and a brief stint at the London School of Economics, Martin completed her PhD at the Australian National University in 1954. Her subject was Displaced Persons.527

526 The first chair in sociology in Australia was at the University of New South Wales in 1959.
Martin's ground-breaking 1965 sociological study entitled *Refugee Settlers: A Study of Displaced Persons in Australia* was based on this doctoral research analysing assimilation amongst a group of (38) DPs in 1953 and a follow-up survey carried out a decade later. Martin set out to make an 'exploratory, anthropological' study of the two hundred DPs who lived in what she called 'Burton' (a fictitious name), a town of approximately 19,000 in New South Wales. For sociologist Sheila Shaver, writing in 2009, Martin's subject choice was a 'natural experiment in group organisation among minority populations'. Martin lived in 'Burton' for six months, with the 'objective of making an exploratory, anthropological study of DPs in the process of adapting themselves to a particular community'. In other words, this was to be an anthropological study of assimilation; the study resulted in probing assimilation's 'complacent assumptions'.

Echoing depictions of the DPs as psychologically unstable, Martin found an 'insecure' group, describing them as:

Unusually anxious and suspicious, and sensitive to signs that they were not wanted or appreciated, but also demanding, unreliable,

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530 Shaver, 'A Public Sociology for the Mainstream', p. 6.
their incapacity to settle down, their jealousy of one another, and their improvidence.\textsuperscript{535}

Ironically, of course, the representation of the DPs as a group by social scientists as mentally ill, alcoholics, and ‘people with problems’ may have had some influence on this ‘group self hatred’.

Martin also found a problem with the phrase ‘New Australian’. One of the DPs, a Mr G, is quoted: ‘Out of various nations they made “Balts”, and out of ex-enemies and ex-allies they made “New Australians”’. Another DP observed: ‘We are only New Australians now. That is like being a DP, just nothing. If you went to America and said ‘I am a New Australian’, what would that mean?’ Martin noted that rather than the ‘ideological and emotional significance’ with which the Government attempted to invest the citizenship process, the DPs ‘looked upon naturalization principally as a matter of expediency and convenience’, particularly in relation to securing social security benefits.\textsuperscript{536}

When Martin re-examined the same group of DPs in 1962, she found that they were less ‘neurotically disturbed’ than in 1953 but were still ‘detached from their surroundings’ and had merged into the ‘lower strata of the community’. Martin quoted influential social psychologist Marie Jahoda that ‘there are many ways of suffering’ and explained:

\textsuperscript{535} Martin, \textit{Refugee Settlers}, p. 78. 
\textsuperscript{536} Martin, \textit{Refugee Settlers}, pp. 51, 73 74.
Some migrants express their suffering in a manner that plainly distinguishes them as misfits, while others – like the ‘status conscious’ people among my own subjects – seek to deal with their unresolved conflicts by means of a ritualistic conformity which meets with a good measure of social approval. In these latter cases, the very behaviour which proclaims the migrants ‘well assimilated’ is symptomatic of a disturbed and insecure personality.\textsuperscript{537}

According to Martin writing in 1965, then, both ‘misfits’ and the ‘well assimilated’ were disturbed and insecure; all DPs exhibited symptoms of pathology.

The other key figure in this trilogy of social scientific work on the DPs was Jerzy Zubrzycki, who also passed through the London School of Economics, but in a very different context from Martin. Zubrzycki was a Polish soldier who received an Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1945. After the war Zubrzycki completed an MSc (Econ) at the London School of Economics and then a PhD at the Free Polish University in London. His work focused on migration and population dynamics, while encompassing the ideals of social justice and individual responsibility. After publishing a study of Polish immigrants in England, Zubrzycki accepted a post as Research Fellow in Demography at the Australian National University.

Zubrzycki’s pioneering study of the work and living conditions of DP labourers in Victoria’s Latrobe Valley was written up in a 1964 book, \textit{Settlers of the Latrobe Valley: A sociological study of immigrants in the}

\textsuperscript{537}Martin, \textit{Refugee Settlers}, pp. 37, 40, 90.
brown coal industry in Australia. This work concurred with many of Martin’s observations.\footnote{Biographical material is located at NLA, MS 6690, Papers of Jerzy Zubrzycki (1920-2009), http://www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/6690.html, viewed 11 May 2010; and James Jupp, ‘An Advocate for Multiculturalism’, Age, 26 May 2009, http://www.theage.com.au/national/obituaries/an-advocate-for-multiculturalism-20090525-bktv.html, viewed 17 March 2010; Jan Pakulski, ‘Vale Jerzy Zubrzycki’, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, www.assa.edu.au/media/file.php?id=7, viewed 12 December 2010.} Writing from a position of empathy, Zubrzycki characterized the DPs more specifically as politically paranoid refugees from the Soviet Union, a group awash with rumours that ‘the material collected in interviews would be made accessible to the Soviet Union in Canberra’. Many were also worried for family members in the Soviet Union.\footnote{Zubrzycki, Settlers of the Latrobe Valley, p. 6, n. 7.} Zubrzycki also described some individuals as exhibiting specific adjustment problems, such as occupational and social adjustment difficulties. One Latvian DP described his workplace demotion as a ‘great come down’, while another Latvian DP was described as a ‘sorry, pathetic sight’:

His only hope was in wife and two children. In 1944 he was a partisan in the forests. He returned to find that the Russians had taken his family. Here, in Australia, he still thinks about them, and it is on these occasions that he drinks. He boasts of spending all his money on gambling and drink. He has lost all hope of returning to Europe to find his family. Here he reads cheap literature and leads a degenerate life.\footnote{Zubrzycki, Settlers of the Latrobe Valley, p. 87.}

These sorts of representations influenced other social scientists, such as sociologist James Jupp, whose 1966 book Arrivals and Departures set out a comprehensive list of migrant welfare problems and anti-assimilationist complaints.
Policy Discussions

After the success of the DP Scheme, with its boon to labour and seemingly easily assimilable 'white' migrants, mass non-British migration increased in the 1950s and 1960s. In the words of sociologist James Jupp, writing in 1998, the DP scheme opened up the possibility of non-British mass migrations 'by showing that Australians would not reject such migration if it presented no threat to working conditions or to the total domination of society by those of British or Irish origins'.

Formal migration agreements, often involving assisted passage, were made with Malta (1948); The Netherlands and Italy (1951); West Germany, Austria and Greece (1952); Spain (1958); Turkey (1968); and Yugoslavia (1970). Informal migration agreements were also made with countries including Greece. There were also intakes of refugees from Trieste in the mid-1950s, Hungarian and Czech refugees in 1956 and 1968 respectively, from Chile in 1973, from Vietnam in the late 1970s, and from Poland in the early 1980s. The DP legacy was not lost on Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who reportedly complained about having to accept 'hundreds of fucking Vietnamese Balts'.

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Approximately one million people migrated to Australia each decade in the six decades since 1950. For non-English speaking migrants during the 1950s and 1960s, problems with language and services were dominant concerns. Social scientists, as well as professionals such as teachers and social workers, led the way in recognising migrant difficulties, and in broaching solutions for such problems.

It has been argued that these predominantly Anglo-Australian 'elites' were behind the ideology of multiculturalism as both descriptor and policy. Jean Martin argued that ethnic communities themselves had only a minor role in the formation of multiculturalism, and sociologist James Jupp has agreed that there was no organized 'ethnic lobby' until at least the mid-1970s. Political scientist Mark Lopez, in his study on the origins of multiculturalism in Australia, has noted that 'there was no broad ethnic social movement advocating multiculturalism'; Nick Economou, also a political scientist, similarly argued in 1996 that there has never been an 'ethnic vote'. Likewise, professionals including teachers, social workers and health care workers contributed to a debate covering a 'wide spectrum of opinion ... not specifically directed towards supporting proto-

543 Lopez, The Origins of Multiculturalism, p. 78.
multiculturalism'.\textsuperscript{545} Progressives including academics, professionals and church leaders, characterised by Calwell as 'long hairs', for example, were arguing in the same period for an end to the restrictive immigration practices of White Australia.\textsuperscript{546} It was, then, the 'small number of social scientists, social workers and activists' who were 'responsible for versions of the ideology'.\textsuperscript{547}

Historian John Lack has commented that Lopez's argument 'seems bound to fuel suspicions that multiculturalism was foisted upon indifferent migrant communities and an unsuspecting nation'.\textsuperscript{548} Lopez's argument does take away, again, the agency of the DPs and other migrants. Anthropologist Ghassan Hage, in this regard, argues for the importance of the 'increased power, the resistance and the struggle of migrant Australians'.\textsuperscript{549} There is some evidence, for example, that individual DPs were heavily involved in the multicultural movement. Wadim (Bill) Jegorow AM MBE (died 2006), for example, a Russian DP, was an ALP member and prominent spokesman on ethnic matters who was influential in forming state ethnic communities' councils. He became:

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\textsuperscript{547} Lopez, \textit{The Origins of Multiculturalism}, pp. 80 - 81.


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Founding Chair of the Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales, and the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia, inaugural Deputy Chair of the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales and ... dogged promoter of ethnic services by state and local government.\textsuperscript{550}

Jegorow described the founding of the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW in 1975 as ‘an example of democratic mass action enabling representatives of ethnic communities to speak for themselves and make their own decisions for the first time in Australian history’.\textsuperscript{551} He apparently ‘often boasted how cabinet ministers would call him at home to discuss policy’.\textsuperscript{552} It does however seem that while ‘ethnic’ groups and individuals were heavily involved in multiculturalism ‘in practice’, as it were, the process of initiating, formulating and/or explaining ideology and practices, and influencing government policy directly, was the work of a small number of social scientists, including Martin and Zubrzycki, and other professionals.\textsuperscript{553}

While the ‘ethnic lobby’ as an instigator of multiculturalism seems largely to be a myth, Mark Lopez has pointed out that in Australia it was the persistence of migrant/ethnic welfare problems, as represented by the


\textsuperscript{552} David Ingram, ‘Can the Ethnic Lobby Save SBS?’, New Matilda (2 June 2009), http://newmatilda.com/2009/06/02/can-ethnic-lobby-save-sbs, viewed 20 October 2010.

\textsuperscript{553} See, for example, James Jupp’s reference to a ‘largely hidden’ ethnic constituency. Jupp, Immigration, p. 158.

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While the ‘ethnic lobby’ as an instigator of multiculturalism seems largely to be a myth, Mark Lopez has pointed out that in Australia it was the persistence of migrant/ethnic welfare problems, as represented by the
social scientists, which acted as a precondition for the rise of multicultural policy. A favourable political environment, which included decolonisation, shifts in Australia's trade links and alliances, the lack of a direct military threat to Australia, and changes in international migration patterns, including the growing departure rates of disillusioned migrants from Australia, was also an important factor in the government's acceptance of the concerns of social scientists.\(^{554}\)

Jean Martin, for instance, later described as a 'foundational scholar of Australian multiculturalism', advocated a government-sponsored form of cultural pluralism over some years.\(^{555}\) Martin, interested in social coherence, advocated inclusion rather than assimilation.\(^{556}\) In 1953, to an audience which included former Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell, she argued:

> It may be necessary to choose between a policy of rapid absorption, on the one hand, with the attendant disruption of immigrant family life and a high degree of individual isolation and, on the other hand, a slower rate of absorption, with the attendant

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\(^{556}\) Beilharz, 'Miss Craig Goes to Chicago', p. 6.
maintenance of immigrant group and family life and a lesser degree of personal disorganisation.⁵⁵⁷

Martin later asserted that assimilation was ‘framed and perpetuated ... to legitimate a policy that the state had to sell to the community’.⁵⁵⁸

Although the DPs were no longer the only mass non-British migrants, their legacy persisted in the thinking through of Australia’s specific migration and settlement policies. Martin continued her research into the DPs with a 1972 book, Community and Identity: Refugee Groups in Adelaide, which examined the formal group organisation in fourteen Eastern European (DP) minorities in Adelaide from 1948 to 1967. It was this study which developed Martin’s interest in ‘pluralism’ and established her as, in sociologist Peter Beilharz’s (2009) words: a ‘major force in defence of the emergent idea of multiculturalism’.⁵⁵⁹ Martin noted that contact between ethnic and Australian associations had declined by the late 1960s. For Australians the novelty eventually wore off, and for the ‘New Australians’, there was a growing suspicion that they were being patronised and exploited, particularly as token expenses were rarely offered to the visitors. DP efforts began going into what they saw as ‘potentially pluralist structures’ such as churches, sports groups and the Scouts.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁹ Beilharz, ‘Miss Craig Goes to Chicago’, p. 3.
⁵⁶⁰ Martin, Community and Identity, pp. 76-77; Kovacs and Cropley, Immigrants and Society, preface.
The government attempted to solve the representations of migrant 'problems' by establishing an Integration Section in the Department of Immigration in 1964 and providing an extended program of English language courses and grants to community agencies. These services provided benefits, mainly to recent migrants, but many felt that service provision for recent migrants did not go far enough to make Australia a more inclusive society. Jean Martin in particular argued that 'the actual policy changes' from assimilation to integration were less than clear. Integration in practice implied a 'two-stage' assimilation process, in recognition of the realisation that it took time for migrants to assimilate.\textsuperscript{561} Integration thus remained a variant of assimilation, while suggestions of cultural or ethnic pluralism were consistently rejected by governments in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, Martin argued in 1972 that Australia was in 'denial': 'While the Australians have been stubbornly looking in the one direction, a kind of pluralism has been quietly consolidating in the other'.\textsuperscript{562} Martin described Australia as a society that was not plural 'in the sense that our polity is based on ethnic segments, but in the more limited sense that ethnicity is a source of formal and informal groupings and of some cultural differentiation'. The post-war non-British migration scheme, beginning with the DPs, had changed Australia's cultural landscape. Martin's alternative to assimilation was a model she

\textsuperscript{561} Collins, \textit{Migrant Hands in a Distant Land}, p. 231.

\textsuperscript{562} Martin, \textit{Community and Identity}, p. 128.
described as 'robust pluralism', which has become known as 'cultural pluralism' or 'multiculturalism'.\textsuperscript{563} According to Shaver, Martin's model should be more correctly specified as 'ethnic structural pluralism', that is, a pluralism 'rooted in the actual structure [and agency] of ethnic community groups and networks'.\textsuperscript{564}

Martin was not unique amongst the social scientists with an interest in DPs in advocating cultural pluralism.\textsuperscript{565} Jerzy Zubrzycki, who met Martin in 1957, a year after his arrival in Australia, advocated in 1968 a broader model of 'cultural pluralism' which:

> Stands for the retention of ethnic identity and continued participation of individual settlers in minority group activities. [It] implies, therefore, a rejection not only of the attempts to promote an amalgam of cultures but also of any assumptions of Anglo-Saxon superiority and the necessary conformity to English-oriented cultural patterns.\textsuperscript{566}

These opinions began to gain influence with government during the late 1960s. There had always been close relations between social scientists at the Australian National University (particularly) and the Department of Immigration; W. D. Borrie and Charles Price had been involved in a 'close

\textsuperscript{563} Jean Martin, cited in J. Zubrzycki, 'Multicultural Australia', in Jupp, The Australian People, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{564} Shaver, 'A Public Sociology for the Mainstream', p. 7.

\textsuperscript{565} Other professionals had also advocated for a less stringent form of assimilation/integration. Psychiatric social worker J. Hamnet advised in 1965: 'There is a need for acceptance of culture gaps and conflicts, and acceptance for the emergent migrant elite'. Hamnet, 'Marginality and Mental Health', p. 26.

working relationship' with the fledgling Department since the late 1940s.\textsuperscript{567}

After the new Secretary of the Department of Immigration, Peter Heydon (1961-1971), read sociologist Jupp's *Arrivals and Departures* (1966), comprehensively listing migrant welfare problems and complaints concerning government policy, he invited Martin and Zubrzycki to regular informal meetings. Zubrzycki then began to contribute to weekly seminars attended by Departmental officers and politicians.\textsuperscript{568} Zubrzycki later recalled:

> I happened to be around back in the late sixties and seventies when a ferment began in our community, particularly in the intellectual community, academic community, as well as in the wider welfare community, if I can define it as such, about what was happening to ethnic minorities and whether they were being given their due status in Australia and whether their resources were duly used for the benefit of this country. I just happened to be one of the people that were moving in that direction, asking questions, presenting fruits of my research and my colleagues' research and participating in a series of meetings, formal and informal, that finally produced given outcomes.\textsuperscript{569}

The first real change to government policy in reaction to these representations of DPs (and, necessarily, later migrants) was the introduction of Grants-in-Aid to migrant welfare organisations in 1968. However, it was the Whitlam government (1972-1975) which revolutionised Australian society with its exposition of an official ideology of 'multiculturalism' (the term 'White Australia' had been dropped in 1965


\textsuperscript{569} NLA, Polish-Australian Oral History Project, TRC 5150, Prof. Jerzy Zubrzycki (b. 1920) interviewed by Dr Barry York, 31 May and 1 June 2004.
from the ALP's platform).\textsuperscript{570} The concept of 'multiculturalism', borrowed from Canada and also influential in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, was announced by Labor Immigration Minister Al Grassby in 1973 in a speech emphasising the immigrant nature of Australia.\textsuperscript{571} Grassby spoke of the 'many threads making up the national fabric', envisaging an ethnic pluralism whereby 'each ethnic group desiring it, is permitted to create its own commercial life and preserve its own cultural heritage indefinitely while taking part in the general life of the nation'.\textsuperscript{572} This notion of multiculturalism went beyond cultural pluralism in its concept of the 'family of the nation'.\textsuperscript{573} The Whitlam government, while remaining focused on the provision of services to non-English speaking groups, thus also defined multiculturalism by linking it to the issue of national identity. Australia, by recognising and celebrating diversity, was to become more inclusive. Grassby argued that 'social and cultural rights' were a domain of personal identity and activity irrelevant to national cohesion and bemoaned the fact that national images contained no space for 'the Maltese process worker, the Finnish carpenter, the Italian concrete layer, the Yugoslav miner or ... the Indian scientist'.\textsuperscript{574}

Both Martin and Zubrzycki became heavily involved in policy direction. Martin worked on the government's Immigration Survey of 1973, published

\textsuperscript{570} Tavan, 'Immigration: Control or Colour Bar?', p. 200. 
\textsuperscript{571} Però and Solomos, 'Introduction', p. 4. 
\textsuperscript{572} Al Grassby, cited in Murphy, The Other Australia, p. 198. 
\textsuperscript{573} Zbrzycki, 'Multicultural Australia', p. 130. 
as *A Decade of Migrant Settlement* (1976), which examined the absorption of migrants into the workforce and related issues such as the recognition of their qualifications, their accommodation, their fluency in English and their use of available English-language services. She also co-edited, with social worker David Cox, the (Henderson) Commission of Inquiry into Poverty's *The Welfare of Migrants* (1975). This Inquiry concluded that length of residence did not see an improvement in the position of skilled workers and that many migrants were found to be living in over-crowded conditions, beset by problems of poverty, poor health and expensive housing. Both Martin and Cox were at this time members of the Australian Population and Immigration Council's Social Studies Committee.\(^5\)

Martin’s influential book *The Migrant Presence: Australian Responses 1947-1977* (1978) was also written as a research report for the government, in this case for the National Population Inquiry (1975) under the chairmanship of demographer W. D. Borrie. *The Migrant Presence* examined the migrant as part of the assimilationist paradigm or ‘ideology of settlement’ through to the early 1960s; the academic emphasis, and government responses, to migrants as ‘problems’, or ‘people with

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problems'; and finally, the (potential) emergence of ethnic groups as interest groups within Australian society. Martin made the important point that 'the most fundamentally powerful effect is the ruling out of certain objects as aspects of public knowledge'; only selected aspects of the 'migrant presence' had been 'admitted' and defined as public knowledge. Her book ended with a stress on cultural identity. Martin believed that it would be beneficial to bring isolated migrant groups into a recognised relationship with Australian group life.⁵⁷⁶

Martin described the change in migrant roles under multiculturalism during the 1970s as one in which the term 'migrant' had been superseded by 'ethnic', which she saw as a dignified definition which 'conceives of culturally diverse groups as established, legitimate structures within Australian society'.⁵⁷⁷ This was a period in which 'migration as a concept, a policy or a programme, yielded to concern for the immigrants'. In other words, instead of migration being bound up solely with population and labour needs, with an assumption that migrants would assimilate, a concern for migrants as people with needs began to enter the official

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lexicon. However, a concern for migrant problems was always to be viewed under the rubric of the 'desirable goal of national cohesion'.

Even more influential, particularly after Martin's death, and later to be widely described as the 'father of multiculturalism', was Jerzy Zubrzycki. Immigration Minister Peter Heydon asked Zubrzycki to write a paper on 'major problems in our migration program' for the 1968 annual Citizenship Convention, 'more or less' inviting him to 'put a spanner in the works' of the stage-managed Conventions. Attempting to stop the movement of migrants back to their home countries was, according to Zubrzycki, the pragmatic 'beginning of what is now called multiculturalism'. Even though Zubrzycki's vision of multiculturalism 'fell flat' with the audience in 1968, Heydon was apparently delighted with his ideological contribution to 'where we're going'.

Zubrzycki acted on the Immigration Advisory Council and the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council during the 1970s. The Immigration Advisory Council's Committee on Social Patterns, chaired by Zubrzycki, for example, provided a blueprint for structural pluralism. The Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, chaired by Zubrzycki and including Jean Martin as

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a consultant, was responsible for policy formation with regards to general welfare, settlement and educational services, as well as being charged with the task of communicating with ethnic groups and ethnic media. Its submission to the federal government, *Australia as a Multicultural Society* (1977), extended the concept of multiculturalism to include the guideline of the equality of access to social resources on a par with social cohesion and cultural identity.

The conservative government of Malcolm Fraser (1975-1983) affirmed the new multicultural ideology with the influential 1978 Galbally Report, examining migrant services and programs. The Galbally Report expressed multiculturalism in four key principles: equal opportunity and access; the right to the maintenance of personal culture; the provision of ethno-specific services as needed and the promotion of client involvement and self-help. Under Fraser, ethnic broadcasting, through the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), began in 1978. The Good Neighbour Council was dissolved in 1979, while the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs

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and state Ethnic Affairs Commissions, funded by governments to provide a collective voice for ethnic groups, were established.

Zubrzycki travelled around Australia with Immigration Minister Ian Macphee (1979-1982) in order to explain the new policies of ‘multiculturalism’ to the public. As well as increasing services for non-English speaking migrants, Australia’s national identity linked with ‘Britishness’ was to give way to a new national identity linked with ‘internationalism’, as ethnic cultural diversity was seen by advocates of multiculturalism to ‘enrich’ Australian society, to be more just, and inherently better. Zubrzycki continued his interest in multicultural advocacy, chairing the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council from 1977 to 1981, and serving on the council of the Institute of Multicultural Affairs (1980-1986), the Ethnic Affairs Task Force in 1982, and the interim council for the National Museum of Australia (1980-1982). In recognition of his work, he was awarded in 1978 the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and in 1984 the Order of Australia (OA).

Multiculturalism as advocated in the Galbally Report has had a fairly smooth run in Australian politics. A political manifesto, the ‘National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia’, was proclaimed by the Hawke Labor

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585 Pakulski, ‘Vale Jerzy Zubrzycki’. 
government (1983-1991) in 1989, setting out initiatives in order ‘to build a better society, a genuinely multicultural society for future generations of Australia’. The ‘policy fundamentals of multiculturalism’ within a framework of ‘a shared national identity based on a core set of values’, in the words of Prime Minister John Howard (1996-2007), have been affirmed, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, and differing interpretations, by subsequent governments. Indeed, the 1988 Bicentennial invoked celebratory multicultural themes within a national narrative, as did the 2000 Sydney Olympics. While the Howard Liberal-National Government emphasised cohesion based on a consensus of Australian values, the Rudd Labor Government (2007-2010) stressed social inclusion based on full participation in society. Recently the word ‘multicultural’ has been resurrected by the Gillard Labor Government (2010-), which now has a Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, and an Australian Multicultural Advisory Council.

Critics have, however, noted that the multicultural ideal whereby retention of ethnic identity and heritage could be encouraged (or tolerated) was similar in practice to the earlier practices of assimilation and integration.

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587 John Howard, cited in Haebich, Spinning the Dream, p. 394.
with the old categorisation 'race' superseded by 'ethnicity'.\textsuperscript{589} For example, academic W. D. Borrie in 1953 argued:

[Children of New Australians] can form the best link in the merging process between Old and New Australians. Notice that this 
statement implies a two-way process — merging between, not imposition upon. Thus approached, our national culture can be enriched in the process.\textsuperscript{590}

'Multiculturalism' (while promoting facile ‘recognition’) continues to presume that non-English speakers will '[subscribe] to a series of shared over-arching' Anglo-Celtic values.\textsuperscript{591} In practice, both assimilation and multiculturalism have national unity and social cohesion as a primary goal.\textsuperscript{592}

In this chapter we have seen how three social scientists represented DPs as 'people with problems', and how these representations were associated with the government policy of rapid assimilation. In the context of this understanding of cultural processes and change, Australian sociologists Jean Martin and Jerzy Zubrzycki became vocal proponents of cultural pluralism. Their academic discussions with government led to an environment in which integration and then multiculturalism, including an

emphasis on the celebration of ‘multi-culture’ (a form of ethnocentrism) became part of public policy.

In effect, representations of DPs were crucial to the Australian version of the larger shifts from assimilation to forms of multiculturalism that were going on throughout the world in social science and policy thinking regarding migrants and their place in settlement countries. The next chapter examines how self-representations by the DPs have taken on (or tackled) these dominant themes, and how multiculturalism has allowed space for alternative and counter-narratives, memories and commemorations.
Chapter Four

DP Memory

First there was my country’s OCCUPATION
I decided on EMIGRATION
Waited for NOMINATION
Presented myself for IDENTIFICATION
Then REGISTRATION
IMMUNISATION
And medical EXAMINATION
Waited for TRANSPORTATION
At last EMBARKATION!
There was great EXPECTATION
In Australia – DISEMBARKATION
Searching for ACCOMMODATION
Patiently waited for job ALLOCATION
Survived DISCRIMINATION
Was injured and got COMPENSATION
Got English as a Second Language EDUCATION
Then there was ASSIMILATION, and
Finally NATURALISATION!
WOW!!!593

Are all our lives’ stories only to be told at our funerals? … When this generation dies, no one will remember our story. There is no written record. There is no book that tells the story as a whole. – ‘Veska’, Victoria Zabukovec (1993).594

DP Literature

The experiences of Displaced Persons have been retrospectively self-represented – 'remembered' - through mainstream media such as novels, memoirs, histories and, increasingly, oral testimony. The advent of multiculturalism has particularly encouraged forms of 'migrant' remembering. This chapter is concerned with the history of DP collective memory, such as it exists. Historian Wulf Kansteiner has described collective memory as 'a complex process of cultural production and consumption that acknowledges the persistence of cultural traditions as well as the ingenuity of memory makers and the subversive interests of memory consumers'.

Aiming to explore these written and spoken forms of self-representation, this chapter will discuss the broad range of DP stories which have influenced Australian culture, as well as affecting the second and third generations in their search for information and negotiation of identity. The first part of this chapter will discuss autobiographical novels, memoirs and histories, and the second part will examine the way in which oral history has revolutionized self-representation for DPs, and their children.

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Autobiographical Novels and Memoirs

DPs arrived in Australia with little documentary evidence of their lives in Europe. They also soon found that their stories were not encouraged in an Australian society intent on assimilation. DP narratives were either co-opted to fit into the government's publicists' and media's representations, ignored, or became part of a diasporic literature.

Sonia Mycak's comprehensive empirical study of DP literature has found that a lively literary life existed from the immediate post-war years in DP communities, with distinctive literary cultures, writers' clubs and associations, recitals and festivals, competitions, and the production of periodicals and books. Mycak also found that most of this literary output 'remain[ed] hidden within the many diverse ethnic communities'. Most DPs did not write in English, and did not draw from themes of life in Australia. In the Ukrainian community, for example, the perception was that the 'present geographical local of the community' was 'accidental and temporary', and that 'all experience connected with this location' was 'inauthentic and undeserving of serious treatment'.

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598 Pavlyshyn, 'Culture and the Émigré Consciousness', p. 65.
The few DPs who wrote in English were usually not writing for an Australian audience but for a diasporic audience overseas. Ukrainian Dmytro Chub (Nytczenko), for example, was very active in the Ukrainian community in Australia, particularly in the fields of literature and education, and published many books in Ukrainian and English while working at the State Electricity Commission in Melbourne. His novel So This Is Australia: The Adventures of a Ukrainian Migrant in Australia, contains 'strange reports and adventurous anecdotes' for the entertainment of a diasporic Ukrainian audience. This book was written in English specifically for the Canadian market. This sort of marketing is an ongoing practice. When Ukrainian DP Mr LD recently published Ukrainians in Australia and a biography of his father (both in Ukrainian only), he 'sent quite a few around to Canada and France, university, and then people, and most of it went to the library in Kiev ... to distribute it among the libraries in Ukraine'.

However, for those DPs interested in reaching out to an Australian audience, autobiographical novels and memoirs have been attempted in order to reposition both their individual life narratives, and their identities. Autobiography can work to give agency back to individual DPs, as a

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599 Dmytro Chub (Dmytro Nytczenko), So This Is Australia: The Adventures of a Ukrainian Migrant in Australia (Doncaster, Vic.: Bayda Books, 1980), pp. 7-8.
601 Interview with Mr LD, 4 February 2008.
representation of ‘a conscious awareness of the singularity of each life’. For readers, memoirs offer an ‘internal perspective’, tending ‘to own their ideological position’. As sociologist Steve Dubin has noted: ‘The authenticity of lived experience is a powerful credential to invoke, and it is virtually impossible to rebut without seeming arrogant or insensitive’. Ukrainian second-generation DP and academic Kateryna Longley has argued that these works are culturally threatening towards an assimilationist society precisely because ‘they are fascinatingly “other” and at the same time slight, highly individualised and “safe”, posing no apparent cultural threat ... They have slipped unnoticed into Australia’s line of historical vision’. Autobiographies and family histories thus provide ‘an ongoing and cumulative challenge to the authority of established forms of macro-history’. In other words, DP memoir provides another mode of representation, one which can be seen as benign and yet is subversive, precisely because its individualised representations stand in opposition to dominant representations.

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The first DP to write an autobiographical novel in English for an Australian audience was Czechoslovakian Vladimir Lezak Borin, whose 1959 novel is entitled *The Uprooted Survive: A Tale of Two Continents*. Borin had been a Czech partisan during the First World War, fighting in Hungary and Ukraine before joining the French Foreign Legion. Upon his return to Czechoslovakia he joined the Communist Party before being denounced as 'deviationist'. After the Nazi invasion in 1939, Borin fled to England where he was interned as an enemy alien before being permitted to join the Czech National Committee in London. When the war ended he was denied British citizenship after he condemned the Anglo-American response to the Soviet takeover of Central and Eastern Europe. After migrating to Australia, Borin continued his outspoken political and journalistic activities, working for schismatical elements in the Australian Labor Party ('the Groupers') and the nascent Democratic Labor Party (DLP), and publishing anti-communist pamphlets and a newsletter, *New Country*.606

Borin was also an outspoken advocate for DPs, carrying on correspondence with various government departments and ministers, including Prime Minister Holt, and writing for the press, regarding the lack of marriageable women for single DP men, and the absence of 'New

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Australians' in responsible governmental positions. Rather than considering Borin's complaints seriously, Holt privately, and patronisingly, labelled Borin as 'one of the more articulate of our European settlers', and Alexander Downer, Minister for Immigration, agreed that 'Mr Borin has quite a lot to say about a variety of subjects'. As one of Borin's associates noted, 'They are mocking at us'.

*The Uprooted Survive* followed a group of male Czechoslovakian DPs, including one Jew who changed his name and identity for migration purposes, in Europe and Australia. Borin scathingly characterised the Communist Party: 'Government by the People – for the People – damn the People!' The anti-communist DP in Europe was, however, 'nobody and nothing; just a human rag ...' The DPs had become 'puppets of destiny' rather than individuals with agency, and DP camps had become a 'soul-killing vacuum in the midway-to-nowhere'. Borin was also critical of circumstances in Australia, outlining problems the predominantly male Czech DPs faced including communist spies, prejudice from Australians, a lack of single women, alcoholism and mental illness, unemployment, homesickness and language difficulties. While recently (2001) described

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610 Borin, *The Uprooted Survive*, pp. 92, 100, 237.
as ‘no literary masterpiece’, a contemporary critic noted the novel was a ‘parable of more than ordinary interest’. A reviewer in Quadrant noted the ‘shrewd observation’ in this, ‘the first novel of the ‘new Australians’’.\footnote{11}

Borin’s autobiographical novel was almost unique in the assimilation era.\footnote{12} One would-be editor in the mid-1960s, interested in compiling an anthology of writings by European migrants, writing in English, had to ‘abandon – or, at least postpone’ this plan ‘due mainly to lack of sufficient worthwhile material’.\footnote{13} However, the advent of multiculturalism encouraged DPs (and other migrants) to craft their own representations of the(ir) pasts. In fact, DP writers were an important component in the rise of an ‘ethnic’ sensibility leading to wider acceptance of a multicultural ethos. By the mid-1970s there were 26 so-called ‘ethnic’ writers (that is, migrants or children of migrants whose original language is not English), including DPs, published in English in Australia, most of whom were second-generation migrants.\footnote{14} Many of these, and subsequently published, authors were active members of their communities and/or diasporic literary communities.

\footnote{11} Holt, ‘Nothing if not a Survivor’.
\footnote{13} Kurt Titze, cited in Berger, An Appendix to An Appendix of Prose, p. 17.
Hungarian DP András Dezséry, for example, founded a number of ethnic journals, anthologies and presses in the 1970s and 1980s, which focused on themes surrounding migration and settlement.\textsuperscript{615} Dezséry, who held a doctorate in public administration and political science, worked as a journalist, press secretary and editor in Hungary; during the war he trained as a cavalry officer and was sent to the front as a war correspondent. Once in Australia he worked in a rubber factory, and later recalled:

Employers used to come to Finsbury [hostel, in South Australia] and pick out who they wanted to work for them, like a slave market. I was tall and skinny so was never picked. Finally ... [I was picked] to be a rubber worker.\textsuperscript{616}

Dezséry also worked as a cleaning contractor, before establishing Dezséry Ethnic Publications in 1975. An advocate of migrants' rights and active in ethnic and community affairs, as well as the broader literary community, András Dezséry was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 1986.\textsuperscript{617} He argued in 1991 that migrant literature should be preserved in Australia 'not as exotic flowers of 'accented' literature, but as integral parts of the history and literature of multicultural Australia'.\textsuperscript{618}

\textsuperscript{615} Corkhill, \textit{The Immigrant Experience in Australian Literature}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{616} Migration Museum (South Australia), Gallery, Displaced Persons, Visitor Book, viewed December 2006.
Here, then, Dezséry was arguing for multiculturalism to be used as a tool for inclusion; for DP literature to become Australian literature.

The first bibliography of first-generation migrants to Australia who had published in English was completed in 1978 by Loló Houbein, while the first bibliography of works in languages other than English made up Alexandra Karakostas-Seda's Master of Arts thesis in 1988. Both of these books included the work of many DPs, whose writings were now represented along with other 'non-English speaking' migrants in the (national) context of their settlement in Australia. The two works were combined and updated, extending to second and third-generation migrants, in A Bibliography of Australian Multicultural Writers by Sneja Gunew, Loló Houbein, Alexandra Karakostas-Seda and Jan Mahyuddin in 1992. This project was an attempt to 'raise questions and encourage research and thinking around the issue of cultural difference'.

Such initiatives influenced the addition of 'migrant' literature to the Australian canon during and beyond the 1980s. Annette Robyn Corkhill, the author of one of the first 'immigration' anthologies, explained in 1985:

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619 Loló Houbein, Ethnic Writings in English from Australia: A Bibliography (Adelaide: Australian Literary Studies, Dept. of English Language and Literature, University of Adelaide, 1984); Alexandra Karakostas-Seda, Creative Writing in Languages other than English in Australia 1945-1987, (Clayton, Vic: Monash University Library, 1988).

620 Loló Houbein is a Dutch migrant, while Alexandra Karakostas-Seda is a more recent non-DP Czech migrant. Jan Mahyuddin is Australian born.

'Nowadays it is clear to many people that ethnic Australians are as Australian as those whose roots go back to the First Fleet. Hence, their literature is just as Australian and their cultures are just as valid'. DP writing, and migrant writing more generally, thus became co-opted into the new political vision of multiculturalism; they were representative of an ‘ethnic’ viewpoint under the rubric of a national narrative(s).

Quite a few first and second-generation DP authors have subsequently become notable ‘Australian’ authors. Jozef Stanislaw Lemiesz-Wawrzynkiewicz, for example, a Polish DP writing in Polish and English, was in 1987 elected a Life Fellow of the International Biographical Association. He was also a member of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (Vic.) and the Victorian Association of Multicultural Writers. Second-generation Polish/Ukrainian Peter Skrzynecki’s poetry (from 1970), dealing with themes of exile, dispossession, the search for identity and assimilation, has been set as coursework for the Higher School Certificate (NSW), as has the memoir of second-generation Romanian DP and philosopher Raimond Gaita (1998). Gaita’s parents both suffered from mental illness: his mother committed suicide after frequent hospitalizations, and his father had to be institutionalized. He also recalls a Lithuanian neighbour who was taken to a mental hospital because ‘he

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622 Corkhill, The Immigrant Experience in Australian Literature, p. 11.
lived between boulders, talked to himself and sometimes cooked food in his urine.  

Interestingly, some of these works have been translated for a European audience - into 'the voices of [their] parents'.

In 1993 Bulgarian DP Victoria Zabukovec's novel *The Second Landing* was published, after nine years of research. Zabukovec, who arrived alone in Australia in 1948, at seventeen years of age, worked variously as a hospital cleaner, factory worker, waitress and telephonist. After marrying and having three children, Zabukovec graduated from Adelaide University with a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education, enabling her to teach at a secondary school. In 1977 she became the founding Administrator of Ethnic Radio in Adelaide and in 1982 worked as the Project Officer for the future Migration Museum, at the History Trust of South Australia. She described being 'touched on the shoulder' when attending the funerals of fellow DPs, feeling 'duty-bound' to tell their story.

For her novel, a sweeping saga of the DPs' Europe and Australia, Zabukovec interviewed 35 DPs 'from almost every Eastern European nationality', and extensively researched in the South Australian State

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625 Peter Skrzynecki, 'Translated into Polish', *Old/New World* (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2007), pp. 292-293.


627 Interview with Victoria Zabukovec, 1 December 2007.
The novel’s protagonists are not at all complimentary about the DP Scheme, noting the ‘mental, physical and emotional shock’ they suffered; ‘our arrival here felt like a second prison sentence’. Zabukovec here includes a celebrated anecdote, which has been repeated in various guises elsewhere:

The story went that one of the migrant doctors – no-one seemed to have caught the name – had been questioned sternly by his three examiners about one of the reference books that the migrant doctor had referred to in his examination paper.

“How did you manage to get access to this reference book?” asked the chief examiner, rather miffed. “It’s only available in the specialists’ library, to which you have no access.”

There was a moment of deep silence, after which the migrant doctor answered in a quiet voice: “Gentlemen, I wrote that book.”

Zabukovec says: ‘The story became the stock-in-trade of all Europeans who had suffered a humiliation at the hands of certain individuals, in an otherwise cordial and compassionate host society’.  

Zabukovec also includes a further criticism of the DP scheme, having Veska argue, in a conversation with fellow DPs:

I read an article last weekend, that by June 1950, about 130,000 displaced persons were brought out to Australia. The cost to the Commonwealth Government was £41 sterling per person. This money was recouped by the government after only two to three months employment, out of income tax alone. The economist who wrote the article called the DP scheme ‘The best Australian

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628 Zabukovec, The Second Landing, Acknowledgement and Note of Thanks.
business investment since Federation'. So let's not get too emotional with gratitude.\(^{632}\)

The novel's heroine, Veska, is an obvious fictionalisation of Zabukovec herself. Veska is interested in writing a novel around her fellow DPs based on the 'hundreds of case histories' she has heard from friends, and prompted by a friend who remarks, 'rather wistfully', that:

Banjo Patterson had immortalised the legend of the mountain horsemen and mountain horses in his poem *The Man from Snowy River*, and [he] wondered if there would ever be a writer to immortalise the toil of the Europeans who built the vast network of tunnels, lakes and dams in the Snowy River country, that constitutes one of the world's greatest engineering projects today.

Veska's friend asks: 'Are all our lives' stories only to be told at our funerals? ... When this generation dies, no one will remember our story. There is no written record. There is no book that tells the story as a whole.' Zabukovec uses Veska and her friends to describe the difficulties of writing and publishing such a story:

'Someone who has been there and experienced it all ought to write about it', said Veska. 'Look for that story in thirty to forty years time', said Stanko, 'when those who had been there have retired. If by then someone has acquired a sufficient command of the English language and has what it takes, someone may write that story.'

'Then you would have to find a publisher, first of all willing to read and then eventually publish a migrant's story. An uphill battle, I would say. Editors would lose interest from just seeing the foreign-sounding name of the author on the cover of the manuscript. You would have to anglicize your name to start with ... Besides, in order to sell the story, you would have to heavily spice it with the elements of pot-boilers – sex and scandal.'

‘That would constitute the selling out of a writer’s integrity,’ objected Dusan. ‘I hope that whoever tells our story one day will not succumb to that kind of sensationalism in order to get published.’

‘Excessive integrity may mean writing for your desk drawer …’  

Zabukovec did indeed have difficulty finding a publisher. Queensland University Press argued that the book was not relevant to Australians as it was not set in Australia and did not get to Australia until page 319. Zabukovec ended up self-publishing, and her novel was launched at the Migration Museum of South Australia.

Other autobiographical novels written in this period include *Aviete and After* (1998) by Lithuanian DP Ale Liubinas. In her preface, Liubinas explained how her novel came to be written:

Living in Australia, the war time memories of my childhood traumas haunted me during the nights, appearing in my dreams through adulthood. Sometimes I thought that I would never escape from my nightmares. And yet, each time I woke up frightened and exhausted I was relieved that it was only a dream. In my retirement, I joined the ‘English for Migrants’ class at the Council of Adult Education and was assigned an essay on my childhood memories for my homework. I tried to postpone the unpleasant task, but eventually I gathered enough courage and started writing. I shed more than a few tears in the process. But as I progressed, I noticed that I felt at ease and was more in control of my fearful past … I was able to finish my autobiographical novel ‘Aviete and After’ and so my nightmares finally left me alone.

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634 Interview with Victoria Zabukovec, 1 December 2007.
This ‘fearful’ past included an anxiety-ridden post-war period, full of rumours about Eastern Europeans committing suicide to escape repatriation, and shootings by American troops. Liubinas also recalled having to ‘parade naked in front of Australian officials’ as part of the migration selection process; ‘we filled in all kinds of application forms, signed whatever was put in front of us without fully understanding what it was about and hoped that the immigration officials would be satisfied’.  

Author and journalist Diane Armstrong, a Polish Jewish DP who had arrived in Australia as a child, in 1998 published a family history, Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations. Her 2001 autobiographical novel The Voyage of Their Life about the DP ship Derna’s voyage to Australia in 1948 was based on ‘a collage of history and memory, of recollections, reminiscences, and archival documents’. Armstrong included inflammatory descriptions of Baltic anti-Semitism, depicting the Baltic DPs as ‘Nazi-lovers’, and alleging that prominent Sydney Jewish identity Sam Fiszman threw an Estonian overboard, to his death, during the voyage.

By the 1990s, DPs began to self-publish memoirs; in some cases DPs were interviewed by family members and this transcription was worked

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639 Armstrong, The Voyage of Their Life, pp. 89-90.
into a book.\textsuperscript{640} Memoirs, as opposed to autobiographical novels, gained impetus as a form as the 'multicultural' ethos encouraged migrants to 'share their life experiences with everybody else'.\textsuperscript{641} Many of these memoirs, of variable quality, were self-published.

The motivations behind autobiographical impulses include an earnest desire by DPs 'to describe how life was'.\textsuperscript{642} Gillian Karas explained why her Czech husband self-published his assisted memoir in 2001:

> Many people have listened to Jerry telling his story and he has often been told that it should be written down, but he has laughed at the idea that anyone would be interested in what he had to tell. But this is a story that needed to be told not just to pass on to his family but also because it is a part of history – both European and Australian.\textsuperscript{643}

Polish DP and memoirist Stanislaw Gotowicz similarly noted: 'With an immensely rich experience of life many of us could provide fascinating material for a number of bestsellers'.\textsuperscript{644} Some have political motivations. Ukrainian DP Antin Danyliuk included this plea in his memoir (1995), \textit{My Recollections: A Journey from the Village of Shprakhy to Australia:}

> I appeal to the United Nations to bring to trial through an International Tribunal the Communist Party of Ukraine & the CPSU for the crimes they have perpetrated against the Ukrainian people,

\textsuperscript{640} One earlier example is Cecile Kunrathy, \textit{Impudent Foreigner} (Sydney: Edward & Shaw, 1963).
\textsuperscript{643} Gillian A Karas, 'Foreword', in Jeremy M. Karas as told to Gillian A. Karas, \textit{Into the Unknown: A Migrant's Story} (Gillian A. Karas, 2001), p. iii.
for their underhanded attack on the Ukrainian People's Republic, their massacre of Ukrainian students near Kruty, their execution of Ukrainian People's Army soldiers near Bazar in 1921, for the "executed renaissance" in the 1930s, for the artificial famine in 1932-33, for the deportation of several million nationally-conscious Ukrainians to the Far North of Russia, for their destruction of Ukrainians at the end of WW2 in the western provinces of Ukraine, having falsely accused them of collaboration with the fascists, & for branding every Ukrainian without exception a "Banderite". The Communist mafia has destroyed over 20 million Ukrainians. For this it must be punished.\textsuperscript{545}

While admitting that 'unfortunately we brought with us to this new land our intransigence and chieftainism', Danyliuk became heavily involved in the Ukrainian community in Australia, receiving for his services two decrees from the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church and a decree from the Government in Exile of the Ukrainian People's Republic.\textsuperscript{646}

Other DPs have viewed writing as cathartic. Hungarian DP Cecile Kunrathy explained: 'I have to write out of myself all the good and the bad just as it happened. I have to write about all the injustice I fought against so unsuccessfully. I'd be rid of my burden then, and could forget the whole lot.'\textsuperscript{647} For Latvian Helena Walsh:

\begin{quote}
It was not easy dwelling on the chaotic times. Deliberately calling up past events exposed every raw nerve ending. I suffered the same pain and often felt shaken and weak. The memories revealed an overpowering intensity of feeling, slowly drawing out the pain like a poultice. But with every disclosure I felt a little more relief.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{646} Danyliuk, \textit{My Recollections}, pp. 9, 10.
\textsuperscript{647} Kunrathy, \textit{Impudent Foreigner}, p. 188.
could sleep again and the catharsis became as soothing as balm.648

While the act of writing memoir can be cathartic, it should be noted that DP authors themselves are constructing stories. Historian Jill Ker Conway has argued that autobiography marks a ‘return to the central role of human agency in history (now as the maker of representations)’.649 As academic Terence Wright explains: ‘the very act of packaging events into stories or images, composing them into recountable or visual forms, may enable victims to feel a sense of control’.650

Autobiography is a literary genre, one that anthropologist Vieda Skultans has noted, in a discussion on narrative and memory in post-Soviet Latvia, relies on western literary conventions.651 These include tales of action and triumph for men and, for women, a passive romantic notion of love and family. Kateryna Longley has argued that ‘the genre provides a welcome shield between the memory and the telling, with the memory itself already a protective fiction (my emphasis)’.652 In Letters of Heartache and Hope by Hungarian DP Edith Törökfalvy, for example, Törökfalvy concluded her

648 Helena Walsh, Reaching for the Moon: A Migrant’s Story from War-torn Latvia to Australia (Kenthurst, NSW: Kangaroo Press Pty Ltd, 1996), p. 221.
651 Skultans, The Testimony of Lives, p. xii.
collection with a testament to the happy marriage that helped sustain the couple:

From an outsider's point of view, it would appear that, after a prosperous start with a large choice of social and professional opportunities, our lives shrank to a very narrow existence full of physical exertion, petty emotional hurts, and feelings of frustration and humiliation. [However] life's vicissitudes were to us but waves rippling above a large sea of still water.\textsuperscript{653}

Memoir reads as 'truth' and yet of course is 'doubly edited: during the encounter itself and during the literary (re)-encounter'.\textsuperscript{654} Longley has argued that autobiography 'is always a fantasy of return to a lost world' and 'a way of holding on to one's life as one would like it to be read'.\textsuperscript{655} In other words, we cannot forget that DP memoir is constructed as a self-representation, and is thus valuable in highlighting how DPs wish to be portrayed, and their reactions to their mainstream representations as 'DPs', 'refugees', 'workers', 'migrants', 'New Australians', 'people with problems', and/or 'ethnics'.

Latvian DP Helena Walsh's autobiography contains details of her terrifying war experiences, camp life in Europe, migration and the settlement process. Regarding contemporary representations of the DPs, she remembered:

\textsuperscript{655} Longley, 'Remembering Rublivka', pp. 110, 116.
Although the faces around me were always smiling, the press and other media often expressed concern that the influx of European immigrants would endanger the 'Australian way of life'. We were referred to not so much as people with feelings and sensitivities but as a new breed of sheep which could endanger the fragile environment. The reason for our migrant status was never mentioned. Comparing the reports with the enticements to come to Australia, it seemed as if one part of Australian society had no idea what the other part was doing!\textsuperscript{656}

Noting that 'nobody was interested in where we came from but everybody asked us how we liked Australia', Walsh analysed the discordance between the Australian population and the displaced persons:

The most difficult thing to overcome was indifference. People with different experience did not understand and did not care. For them the war was over. But emotionally, I was still at war, grieving about the fate of my country and the people who stayed behind.\textsuperscript{657}

Walsh also recalled that DP alcoholism became such a stereotype that tragically her husband, Visvaldis, died of a subcranial haemorrhage after both his general practitioner and an ambulance officer had neglected to treat him, accusing him of being an alcoholic.\textsuperscript{658}

Elena Jonaitis, who lost a child while at a displaced persons camp in Italy, saw herself as a victim of fate:

She had dreamt of a new life, where the effort of establishing a permanent home and a united family would replace memories of the past with hope and with peace. But she had not managed to

\textsuperscript{656} Walsh, \textit{Reaching for the Moon}, p. 190.  
\textsuperscript{657} Walsh, \textit{Reaching for the Moon}, pp. 186, 220.  
\textsuperscript{658} Walsh, \textit{Reaching for the Moon}, p. 211.
bring all her three children with her, and the pain of the loss was too sharp for her to renew that dream. 659

Ale Liubinas, in her 2001 memoir, *Under Eucalypts: Stories of Migrant Struggles* conceded that as an 18 year old sent to work in a mental hospital under the DP Scheme, she felt 'anxiety, anger and depression'. She also recalled that DP mental illness became such a stereotype that drunken DPs found themselves being carted off mistakenly to mental hospitals. 660

For Polish DP Stanislaw Gotowicz, whose memoir *Bittersweet Bread* (1998) begins in 1949, 'the label of Displaced Persons was an accursed one, and stuck to us all firmly like dirt, and whatever the future held for the DPs, it was shrouded in mystery'. Gotowicz felt himself an intellectual outsider in a country which expected him to labour, while threatening deportation for 'undesirable elements', and exhibiting prejudice. When he was rejected for a position as a storeman because he was not 'British', he complained:

How well I remember – during the war the Germans called us all sorts of names. I can still hear the obscene epithets that were showered on me. But they were our enemies, and such bouquets of garbage we considered as badges of distinction. It's a different game now. Here we're supposed to be building one happy nation living alongside one another ... 661

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Gotowicz also found Australia’s intellectual and cultural life lacking. When he attempted to order a history of Australian literature, and a history of Adelaide, he was told no such works existed. He also found Adelaide’s ‘intellectual set’ naïve:

How many of them know life in the raw? Who among them has stared death in the face long enough to cherish the beauty of a daybreak like a resurrection? What do they know of freedom, not having lost it? What do they know of pain, not having been kicked where it hurts most? What do they know of fear, hunger and brutality, not having been subjected to it?  

Ann Mihkelson, an Estonian DP who arrived in Australia as a child, took pains to represent herself as educated and bicultural, while portraying the prejudice of Australians towards ‘Bloody New Australians’. She did though admit a desire to become ‘anonymous’: ‘I desperately wanted to fit in, to assimilate, to disappear’.  

One of the earliest memoirs written, that of Hungarian DP Cecile Kunrathy in 1963, contains a spirited defence of the DP scheme in Australia and an acceptance of the descriptor ‘New Australians’: ‘I liked the new name. Within five years we would be naturalized and we would leave the “new” off altogether’. Similarly, Diane Armstrong’s parents ‘liked being called New Australians. It made them feel accepted.’ However, for Ludmilla

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Forsyth, a Ukrainian DP who arrived in Australia as a child, writing in 1990:

The shining quality of being a New Australian dulled into a painful realization that some people thought one was a stupidbloodynewstrain and some children informed me that DP stood for Dirty Person.\(^{668}\)

Regarding naturalization, Forsyth recalled:

I became an Australian, not on the day of our naturalization when I’m fifteen but the day I stand in Kiev, the capital of my parents' homeland, and am told, ‘Go home, Americano’.\(^{667}\)

Such insights can often be completely unexpected, and perhaps disturbing, as in an article written by Andra Kins (1991), the daughter of Gunta Parups, a staunchly nationalistic Latvian DP who became a noted West Australian artist:

Gunta rarely paints landscapes: the childhood place is difficult to remember, the lived-in place consciously ignored ... The fact that one day an Australian landscape appeared in her work surprised and annoyed her.\(^{668}\)

Parups had always argued: 'I am still a refugee, not an emigrant'; for her, Australia was 'a kind of Siberia for the Latvian soul'. She advocated


raising 'Latvian national self-awareness' in order to fight 'Russification in Latvia and assimilation here in Australia'.

Kins discussed her own sense of identity in her 2004 memoir, *Coming and Going: A Family Quest*. Kins' family lived the belief: 'We are all here because of the bloody war. We are here in this dry hot land waiting to go back to our real home once the communists are overthrown.' Kins was not allowed to play with 'dirty English-speaking children', and recalls a life filled with Latvian youth camps, seminars and conferences:

> When I look back, it feels like I was a member of a cult. My life outside school was guided and strictly controlled by my parents and grandparents ... I knew that I had been chosen to play a special role in life — to maintain my 'Latvian-ness' come what may. To ensure that 'Latvian-ness' outlived and conquered communism and Soviet colonialism ... [T]he past and family were all-important, they were everything.

However, Kins said that as an adult, 'Latvian-ness had become a straitjacket that I was not prepared to wear'.

For the second generation, assisting with a parent's memoir can be a 'celebration' of life. *Lilya's Journey: A Russian Memoir*, for example, was transcribed from the tapes and writings actress Lilya Makarova left behind.

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670 Kins, *Coming and Going*, pp. 106, 92, 120.
671 Kins, *Coming and Going*, p. 120.
translated into English and edited by her two children. Lilya’s daughter, Ksana, had:

Tried to persuade Mum to write her memoirs as far back as 1989, even to the point of haranguing her. She had resisted strongly, mainly because she felt that her story was not unique but also because she couldn’t face reliving certain incidents. I cried, I cajoled, telling her that her story was indeed unique – unique to her.672

Published in 2004, the book outlines Lilya’s traumatic early life under Stalin and Hitler, as well as difficulties (particularly cultural and professional) experienced once Lilya arrived in Australia. The memoir allows Lilya’s children to celebrate her ‘astonishing account of human endurance’.673

Memoir can also be a way to work through “‘memory’ and ‘truth’”, exploring ‘silences, absences, gaps and emptinesses’, not only in the public sphere, but also within families (and communities).674 Mark Kurzem’s extraordinary family memoir (2007) detailing his discovery of the story of his father, a Russian Jewish boy made the mascot of a Latvian Police Brigade during the war and brought over to Australia with a Latvian family, is a fitting example. As an adult, Kurzem realized that he was:

Ambivalent about the stories of [my father’s] childhood in Europe during the war. I could never get a clear picture of what had gone

673 Natalenko, Lilya’s Journey, pp. blurb, 219, 221.
on. My father painted that time in the broadest of brushstrokes as if his memories of the period were no more than a skeletal blur.675

When researching his father’s story, Kurzem wrote:

By the time I’d reached the last page of my notes, I realized that my frustration had boiled over unconsciously. In the margin, I had jotted down words such as ‘silence’, ‘memory’ and ‘truth’ which I had then underlined once or twice for further emphasis.676

Third-generation Ukrainian DP John Hughes’s 2004 memoir, The Idea of Home, begins with a discussion surrounding his grandfather’s memory and nostalgia, which ‘works best in the gap between the idea we have of ourselves and what is there’. Regarding his grandfather’s stories (and relating more generally to the ambiguity of many DP identities), Hughes admits:

I can speak with no certainty about this. And although it’s taken me thirty years, I’ve given up caring. Johannes Ivan John-Paul Mähl Myahla Mahl was my grandfather (and one of the children in that bomb shelter in northern Germany was my mother.) He witnessed the events described – he was, in his own mind at least, their most active participant. And he told me about them. And I believed him. He told me many times. He was Russian, after all. Or Ukrainian. Or was that volksdeutsche? His mother, Mariza Gläser, was born in Graz, a city in what was called at the time Austria-Hungary. His father was born in 1872 in Oberpalin, Estonia. And John-Paul first saw daylight in November 1915 in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine but historically (if you’ll forgive the generalization) Russian in all but name, and fitfully, language. He told me because he had been there (and I had not) and in the instant that he saw he was already starting to forget. It wasn’t a character flaw. Such forgetting is central to us all. Because this is what stories are.

676 Kurzem, The Mascot, p. 143.
The tales of his grandfather, told as bedtime stories to a young John, illustrate beautifully the place of literature in a bicultural memory: 'it was the easiest thing in the world to see the forests of the Ukraine, to listen at night to the howl of the wolves, in the backyards of Cessnock'.

Barbara Chobocky's 2004 autobiographical documentary 'Capitalist Drive', meanwhile, shows Chobocky's attempts to calculate whether her parents' migration to Australia made the family better or worse off than relatives who stayed in Czechoslovakia (by the end of the film, her earlier assumption that her family was/is better off in Australia is less sure).

Works by the first and second generations are obviously important in teasing out themes important to individuals, families and communities. Andra Kins's memoir focusing on her Latvian mother, Gunta, caused her to question the place of such stories in a national setting:

As Gunta's daughter I can write her story, but where are the many, many other stories that existed and exist and have been excluded from our written history and cultural heritage? I can think of Silver City as the only Australian film depicting the refugee experience in a DP's camp. The experiences of 'new Australians' have only been presented in a handful of television dramas shown on SBS. How many artworks in our state galleries, and exhibits in our museums, speak of these times and experiences? Where can my children find the stories about how and why their grandparents and great grandparents came to this country of Australia and how they lived here?

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678 Barbara Chobocky (Director), Capitalist Drive (Film Australia: 2004).
679 Similarly, Lily Brett's autobiographical poetry (1988-1993) 'address the effects of genocide that was undertaken outside Australia, but is remembered in Australia, in ways made possible by the effects of Australia's colonisation'. Kins, 'Gunta Parups', p. 91; Gay Breyley, 'Memory, Music and
Some family memories have had an impact beyond the immediate DP family, becoming integrated into a broader Australian literature, but this is usually by way of established Australian authors. Australian poet Les A. (Leslie Allan) Murray and novelist (and former historian) Richard Flanagan, for example, are both married to second-generation DPs (Hungarian and Slovenian, respectively), and have used DP experiences to influence their work. Les Murray dealt with the DPs sympathetically in a 1977 poem entitled 'Immigrant Voyage', describing 'physicians nailing crates [and] attorneys cleaning trams' who would have to deal with taunts of 'wog, reffo, Commo Nazi' before becoming 'the misemployed, the unadaptable, those marked by the Abyss'. Murray characterized the DPs as innocent victims:

Those who, with effort,  
With concealment, with silence, had resisted  
The collapsed star Death,  
Who had clawed their families from it,  
Those crippled by that gravity

Were suddenly, shockingly  
Being loaded aboard lorries:  
They say, another camp –  
One did not come for this -

Flanagan's bleak 1997 novel, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, inspired by personal contacts among DP workers in Tasmania, is based on

informal interviews with DPs around Hobart and 'incredible' stories found in Tasmanian archives. Flanagan also characterized the DPs as unproblematic victims: 'After all that trauma ... to be given the job of building dams in the hope that Tasmania would become the Ruhr Valley of Australia seemed spectacularly ironic, strangely funny and enormously sad'.

Flanagan’s novel centred around a Slovenian DP, Bojan, and his daughter, whose DP mother committed suicide. Flanagan depicted the DP workers as 'drunk and violent men' who had trouble talking about the past:

Bojan’s friendships now, such as they were, were with strangers who without being told, knew the horror of each other’s story, who demanded no explanations, and gave no justification for their own bad behaviour ... There were horrors Bojan kept within him without even a story to enclose them, that he kept shapeless in the hope of dissolving them.

Interestingly, both Murphy and Flanagan chose to focus on tragic themes in their writings about DPs for an Australian audience, tending to the social scientist approach in portraying the DPs as 'people with problems'.

Memoirs can also be made to fit national narratives of multiculture. In one case a Lithuanian woman, Elena Jonaitis, became friends with an Australian writer, Amy Witting. This friendship led to the publication of

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Elena's Journey in 1997 by Jonaitis, and the use of Jonaitis's story as source material for Witting's novel, Maria's War, 1998. Witting described her attraction to Elena's autobiography: 'It is a story of dispossession, endurance, love and survival'. Interestingly, she justified the use of a migrant story by echoing Corkhill's inclusive multiculturalism: 'To me [Elena's story] is essentially Australian, tracing the path followed by many of our present citizens and many of our ancestors' (my emphasis).

This policy of multicultural inclusion has not, however, been unproblematic. Since the advent of multiculturalism in the 1970s, literature written by DPs in English (as opposed to diasporic literature which remains hidden in ethnic communities, as discussed earlier) has been variously classified as 'migrant literature, ethnic literature and multicultural literature'. John von Doussa, President of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, for example, writing in a 2008 'multicultural' anthology, asserted:

Contemporary Australia is multicultural Australia: almost a quarter of Australians were born overseas; another quarter have a parent born in another country. The stories of generations of migrants and

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682 Mycak, 'The Role of Networks in Australian Multicultural Literature', p. 27.
refugees are woven into our national story and the story is richer and greater for their contribution.\footnote{John von Doussa, ‘Introduction’, in Anne-Marie Smith, ed., Culture is ... Australian Stories Across Cultures: An Anthology (Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press in association with the Multicultural Writers Association of Australia, 2008), p. x.}


Ludmilla Forsyth has similarly asked: ‘To what extent do we expect migrant writing to be concerned with being displaced, disoriented, alienated, exiled? And for how long? And who is the migrant in Australia?’\footnote{Forsyth, ‘On the Slippery Margins’, p. 4.}

Brigitta Olubas, arguing from the perspective of a second-generation Lithuanian DP, has argued that ‘access’ to an ‘otherwise unknown’ history has always been ‘in an important sense their justification for mainstream readers’. (As Sneja Gunew has noted, ‘What appears to be very personal is in fact a way of moving beyond the specific individual to that territory of the personal which everyone shares’.)\footnote{Sneja Gunew, ‘Ania Walwicz and Antigone Kefala: Varieties of Migrant Dreaming’, Arena, 76 (1986), p. 74.} The migrant as exotic has thus been domesticated and assimilated. Acceptance of ‘ethnic’ literature in a multicultural Australia can thus be seen in one sense to be
an unproblematic co-option of white migrant stories in the familiar tropes of national narrative and/or individual difficulties.\textsuperscript{689}

This sort of co-option took a strange turn when Helen Darville/Demidenko’s 1995 book \textit{The Hand that Signed the Paper} was published. This book purported to be autobiographical, written by a second/third-generation Ukrainian DP, Helen Demidenko, using family oral histories. The book excuses Ukrainian participation in the Holocaust by blaming Jewish Communists for the 1932-33 Ukrainian famine, in which millions of Ukrainians died; genocide was thus used as payback against a culpable Jewish population. Not content with marketing the book as a thinly-veiled memoir, (Australian-born from English ancestors) Darville convincingly took on the role of Demidenko, appearing at literary functions in Ukrainian costume, replete with ‘family’ stories perpetuating both Australian and Ukrainian stereotypes.\textsuperscript{690} The book was at first to be submitted for publication as non-fiction until the nervous publisher insisted on presenting the work as fiction. The publisher also insisted that the name of the protagonists be changed from Demidenko to Kovalenko.


An autobiographical essay by Demidenko was published as fact in the literary journal *Southerly* in 1995 and described her ‘Baba’ (grandmother) and family as uneducated, relying on social welfare in a mixed immigrant community involving alcoholism and domestic violence. Demidenko ended the piece: ‘So my father who can read and write neither English nor Ukrainian flew to Brisbane to see me after I won a prize for writing-words. So my mother who left school at twelve to work as a domestic, read her first book. So my Baba came to Warana Writers’ Week ... Da Svidaniye [Goodbye].’

Sonia Mycak, a second-generation Ukrainian DP, has pointed out that Demidenko’s stereotypes ignored those things which made one ‘culturally Ukrainian as well as Australian’ such as ‘bilingualism and an awareness of the power and politics of language (given the Russification of Ukrainian language and culture); complex understandings of nation and state ... poignant experiences of homelands and displacement ... particular family and communal relationships (negotiated through church and community structures); and the ambiguity of personal and cultural identity.’

Similarly, historian Zora Simic noted, ‘adopting ethnic dress and writing the dark history of your relatives was rather unusual second-generation

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behavior, which tended to resist identification with ethnic cliché'.\(^{693}\) In other words, Demidenko had tapped into a multiculturalism which focused on trivializing ethnic essentialism; DP identity was/is much more complex.

*The Hand That Signed the Paper* was an immediate success on the Australian literary scene, and Darville won three literary awards, including the Vogel and the Miles Franklin. The Miles Franklin judges reported:

Novels about the migrant experience seem to us to be seizing the high ground in contemporary Australian fiction, in contrast to fictions about the more vapid aspects of Australian life. In particular they are incorporating into the cultural memory first hand experience of the major historical events of the century ... Helen Demidenko's novel displays a powerful literary imagination coupled to a strong sense of history, and brings to light a *hitherto unspeakable aspect* of the Australian migrant experience ... it resists monolithic assumptions about culture and identity (my emphasis).\(^ {694}\)

The book's publication led to a stoush between Stefan Romaniw, president of the Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO), and Dr Jacques Adler, Melbourne University, over whether Ukrainians were anti-Semitic, culminating in a meeting which had to be held for the sake of diplomacy between representatives of the AFUO and ECAJ (Executive Council of Australian Jewry).\(^ {695}\) Some Ukrainians were apparently proud of Demidenko. However, Ukrainian academic Dr Marko Pavlyshyn

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\(^{695}\) Manne, *The Culture of Forgetting*, p. 87.
recognized the harm done by the book to the Ukrainian community in Australia. He alleged that 'no book did more to reinforce the stereotype of the pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic, drunken, peasant savage than Demidenko's'.\textsuperscript{696} Kateryna Longley later wrote that the novel 'touched Ukrainian households in a negative way':

An Australian neighbour who has always taken a friendly interest in my father's stories of the past, particularly his personal experiences as a prisoner of war in Nazi Germany and his analysis of Second World War history, dropped in to see him while I was at home. Excited by all that he had seen and heard about the book and its 'revelations' about Ukrainians, he asked my father pointedly, 'What were you really doing in Germany during the war?'\textsuperscript{697}

The media eventually uncovered the scandal of Darville's real background and found that her source was 'apparently a single person heavily influenced by Nazi propaganda'.\textsuperscript{698} Darville's justification for her actions included a rant against 'ethnic essentialism', alleging that 'authenticity is entirely culturally constructed. It's even bureaucratically constructed in Australia, when one considers ... arts funding'.\textsuperscript{699} Because Darville could 'pull the wog accent', she felt that she deserved the recognition, plaudits and funding that had recently opened up to 'multicultural' writers in

\textsuperscript{696} Manne, \textit{The Culture of Forgetting}, pp. 81-83.
\textsuperscript{697} Kateryna Longley, 'Fabricating Otherness: Demidenko and Exoticism', in Isabel Santaolalla, \textit{New Exoticisms: Changing Patterns in the Construction of Otherness}, Postmodern Studies, 29, p. 27.
Australia. For Kateryna Longley, the farce of Helen Darville playing at being ‘Australia’s first professional Ukrainian’:

Exposed the potential for the exotic in any arena to perform the required circus tricks and to play tame for strategic purposes with the possibility of gaining a political advantage. Ironically, the exotic gains access by vamping up its enticing difference, which is also its stigma, the mark of its alienness.

The Ukrainian-Australian writing community (which is relatively large and productive) was never approached for comment regarding Demidenko or her work. The Australian literary world exhibited an ‘overweening need to be seen to be promoting its obscure or exotic minorities’; a desperation for an apparently ‘authentic authorial voice of contemporary multiculturalism’. However, ironically, Darville garnered a wider readership and greater publicity than any Ukrainian writer or, for that matter, any DP writer. Darville’s book thus exploited an ethnic community and the genres of autobiographical novel and memoir in ‘a shameful use of the tragedy of lived history for self-advancement’. As such, it is a good example of the difficulty of approaching the DP past

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outside of a particularized historical context. As Sneja Gunew has argued, minority writings should be incorporated within the teaching of Australian literature 'so that they are read as complex texts and not exclusively as authentic histories of personal identity or of pathologised group identity, much less as surrogate cultural tours of exotic and foreign places outside the borders of the nation'.\footnote{Gunew, 'Performing Australian Ethnicity', p. 9.} Again, the point is being made that literature, while valuable as an 'access' point for historians, is not an unproblematic source.

The best thing that can be said about Demidenko's book is that it inspired some DPs to write their own literature, although now fearful that 'any hint of ethnicity [would] now be drowned in raucous laughter'.\footnote{Sneja Gunew, cited in Simic, 'The Wog in the Room', p. 39.} As Gunew has further argued: 'We have to write because they've been telling stories about us'.\footnote{Sneja Gunew has argued: 'My own background came from the non-Anglo-Celtic groups (my father was Bulgarian and my mother was German and I was born in Germany after the second world war) and working within Australia led me to discover quickly that people with this kind of background were often ignored or their cultural input was being neglected'. Gunew, 'Multicultural Writers', p. 15; 'A Conversation between Sneja Gunew and Yiu-nam Leung', May 2003 for a forthcoming Tamkang Review, http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/sgunew/LEUNG.HTM, viewed 5 November 2009.} And not just 'about us', but as \textit{us}.

**DP Histories**

Histories are, of course, another form of literature in which DP and migrant voices have been recently heard. In the post-war years, as historian John
Murphy observed, 'the histories of many European migrants were not often allowed to intrude into public space'. DPs and other migrants have been viewed as 'people devoid of history', and have remained, along with other non-English speaking migrants, 'invisible, silent or absent participants in most Australian historical narratives'. Histories have of course been written by ethnic communities, and individual DPs, but remain inaccessible to English readers. There have, however, been histories written for a mainstream readership by so-called 'émigré historians', the first and second-generation DPs who historian Daniel Cohen regards as partly responsible for the 'resurrection' of DP memory in recent times.

M. L. (Martin Louis) Kovacs (1918-), a DP (Hungarian) historian who would subsequently move to Canada and work on migration issues among DP populations in Canada, wrote his Masters thesis at the Department of History, University of Melbourne (1955) on 'Immigration and Assimilation: An Outline Account of the IRO Immigrants in Australia'. Kovacs had worked in a 'Control Centre' for the IRO and was also a former staff member of the Department of Education in Bonegilla Immigration Centre.

709 Murphy, Imagining the Fifties, p. 154.
710 Tavan, 'Good Neighbours', p. 81; Andrews, 'Interior Voices', p. 3.
711 Cohen, 'Remembering Post-War Displaced Persons', pp. 4, 95.
The primary material for his study was based on questionnaires he sent out, and which were returned by 145 IRO DPs.\textsuperscript{713} He found that the primary problems for DPs in Australia were subjective and involved feelings of dissatisfaction, rejection, unhappiness and homesickness, rather than pathological psychologies, or complaints of concrete defects in the new life. As one DP complained:

> It can hardly be called a ‘life’. There is no connection with Australian society. Australia for the time being can be defined as ‘a place where I earn my living’. Society does not make any efforts to accept us. Our own efforts of private contact have been disregarded.\textsuperscript{714}

Another complained: ‘For intellectuals, artists, Australia has nothing to give except food, accommodation and a place as a labourer’. The Good Neighbour Council was characterised by one respondent as ‘a show-window for self-seeking individuals rather than a genuine helping organisation’, while another denigrated the English lessons offered: ‘I only remember one word ‘button’ and what does it matter anyway. They want us to do the work, not talk about it!’\textsuperscript{715} Another DP respondent explained:

> There is no chance to make up for 10 years lost through war and migration, which means that I have to be satisfied all my life with a position and circumstances inferior to that for which I had been trained. This causes a certain state of dissatisfaction and irritation and a feeling that I shall never really fit in the Australian society. This is being accentuated by the fact that Australians themselves

\textsuperscript{713} Kovacs, ‘Immigration and Assimilation’, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{714} Kovacs and Cropley, Immigrants and Society, pp. 108, 110.
are looking on everyone who was not born here as a foreigner no matter how long he lives here.\textsuperscript{716}

Kovacs argued that even though the 'absolute majority' of DP respondents did not belong to any sort of community group, those groups that existed served 'as cushions in many cases to absorb part of the shock incidental to the socio-cultural adjustment by recreating a fraction of the familiar milieu', secured 'opportunities for learning more about the receiving society through collating experiences', enabled DPs to receive 'inspiration from the example of the more resourceful individuals', and acted as 'socio-psychic 'lightning conductors' for the 'neutralisation of adjustmental tensions'.\textsuperscript{717}

In a 1975 book written with psychologist A. J. Cropley and entitled 'Immigrants and Society: Alienation and Assimilation', Kovacs expanded on his thesis to argue that 'the psychology of immigration cannot adequately be understood without recognition of the role of alienation'.\textsuperscript{718}

This argument, while obviously influenced by representations of the DPs by social scientists, echoed that of American historian Oscar Handlin, who in 1951 wrote: 'Seen from the perspective of the individual received rather

\textsuperscript{716} Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', p. 425.
\textsuperscript{717} Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', pp. 413, 318.
\textsuperscript{718} Kovacs and Cropley, \textit{Immigrants and Society}, preface.
than of the receiving society, the history of immigration is a history of alienation and its consequences'.\textsuperscript{719}

With regard to the DPs in Australia, Kovacs noted that even the quick and favourable economic progress made by most DPs was a result of enormous effort, which was a typical response to alienation.\textsuperscript{720} Kovacs also blamed the 'disproportionately high incidence of psychic and mental disorders in the ranks of the IRO immigrants' on 'the strain of adjustment'.\textsuperscript{721} As far as policy categorisations were concerned, Kovacs thought in 1955 that "integration' or 'fusion' would be possibly more descriptive and comprehensive', and argued for the necessity of preserving some basic features of the immigrants' cultural heritage ('cultural pluralism').\textsuperscript{722}

Kovac's contemporary, Egon F. (Frank) Kunz (1922-1997), a Hungarian DP, became the primary historian of the DPs in Australia, with his 1988 history \textit{Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians}. Kunz came from an old Germanic Hungarian family of silk and linen merchants, who set up Josef Kunz & Co. in 1802, a business patronised by European royal houses. His childhood was one of relative privilege. After the company folded in 1929, Kunz's family was supported by his maternal grandfather,

\textsuperscript{720} Kovacs and Cropley, \textit{Immigrants and Society}, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{721} Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', p. 480.
\textsuperscript{722} Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', pp. 229, 497.
the wealthy founder and editor of a Hungarian turf magazine, and owner of hundreds of racehorses. After the war, during which he had been conscripted into the Hungarian Army, Kunz, a poet-intellectual, gained a PhD in Hungarian language, literature and social history. Involved in anti-communist student organisations, he fled Hungary after a Professor at the university was (allegedly) tortured by the communists. His mother, a well-known socialite and writer in Budapest, had been an Anglophile, and so Kunz found himself at 27 years of age en route to Australia, for what he thought would be a temporary visit.\footnote{723}

Disadvantage started immediately, as according to the interviewing (Australian) selection officer in 1949, Kunz ‘tells a pretty big story [that he is] 1) a member of one of the greatest families in Hungary; 2) the real leader of the students opposition … 3) a great writer …’\footnote{724} None of this impressed the Australian officials.

After working at Adelaide Potteries and Ingot Cotton Mills in Sydney under the indentured labour scheme, Kunz approached the Public Library of


\footnote{724 NAA, Series A11939, Department of Immigration, Central Office, Migrant Selection Documents for Displaced Persons who travelled to Australia per General Stewart departing Naples, Italy 24 June 1949, 110, KUNZ Egon born 11 March 1922, Handwritten note on Application for Assistance dated 2 February 1949.}
New South Wales (now the State Library) and was taken on as a library assistant, later rising to become head of the Manuscript Department at the Mitchell Library. During his time at the library, Kunz wrote an introduction to the English version of the Hungarian drama classic *The Tragedy of Man*, translated Hungarian poetry, and wrote *An Annotated Bibliography of the Languages of the Gilbert Islands and Ellice Islands and Nauru*. Kunz then completed a Master's thesis in the history of Hungarian migration to Australia (University of Sydney), which was published in 1969 as *Blood and Gold: Hungarians in Australia*.725

After 17 years at the library, Kunz worked as a senior research fellow in the Department of Demography at the Australian National University for eight years. However, Kunz did not obtain a permanent academic position at ANU and blamed his DP status and lack of connections for this.726 Kunz not only felt that he personally had been treated badly in Australia because of his status as a ‘migrant’, but took on the cause of other


726 Demographer Charles Price reportedly apologized at Kunz's funeral (1997) to Kunz's son, Chris, for not supporting him professionally, backing up these earlier claims that Kunz had been discriminated against. Interview with Chris Kunz, 9 February 2010.
professionals, completing a study at ANU on the issue of professional ‘failure and success’.727

Kunz’s original study broadened to become the book *Displaced Persons: Calwell’s New Australians* (1988), the only general history of DPs in Australia. Kunz later said about the book: ‘Emotionally it was for me a very curious sort of thing and I underwent a very deep change myself’.728 Kunz also wrote a book on DP doctors, entitled *The Intruders*, and numerous articles examining aspects of the DP experience in Australia. He alleged that during the writing of *The Intruders*, the Department of Immigration was ‘leaning’ on staff at the National Australian Archives, who were forced to check the manuscript for errors. The British Medical Association (Australia) then tried to prevent the book’s publication. In this book, Kunz argued that ‘the refugee doctors, fleeing from a major injustice in Europe, became victims of a lesser but, from their point of view, equally tragic injustice in Australia’. For him, it ‘remain[ed] the saddest chapter of the DP saga’.729 In a letter to Kunz’s son after his death, former minister Al Grassby wrote: ‘His [Kunz’s] research was absolutely vital to the understanding of Australia’s emergence from colonialism and racism and naturally there were many who did not want the truth known’.730

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727 Kunz is reportedly ‘acclaimed in Hungary’, where his works on Hungarians in Australia have been translated. Interview with Agnes Kariik, 31 August 2007; NLA. TRC 2262, Dr Egon F Kunz interviewed by Peter Biskup, March/April 1988.

728 NLA. TRC 2262, Dr Egon F Kunz interviewed by Peter Biskup, March/April 1988.


In *Displaced Persons: Calwell’s New Australians* (1988), Kunz used national and international archival documents and statistical sources to thoroughly detail aspects of the DP experience, particularly their origins, integration and occupational achievements. Kunz described the different ‘vintages’ of the various DPs, examining country of origin, political leanings, class, gender, education, occupation, and motivations for leaving their home country in very specific historical contexts.

A major source was Zubrzycki’s 10% Survey of Nominal Rolls of IRO Transports coded and cross-tabulating the characteristics shown against the name of every tenth DP on the shipping lists and flight manifests.731 This sample was created by Zubrzycki to describe the DP cohort: to ‘get an idea of the ethnic composition … to get an idea of who they were, where they came from, what their stated occupation was, their ages, the distribution of the sexes and so on’. Unfortunately Zubrzycki never found time to complete a monograph on the subject, and was happy for Kunz, his ‘Hungarian friend and colleague’, to use the material.732

Kunz also undertook questionnaires and interviews, particularly focusing on tertiary educated men,733 and aimed to build upon the work of H. B. M.

733 The Sample consisted of 13,281 DPs who arrived aboard 12 selected transport ships, then reduced to 5,762 ‘adult males’ whose pre-embarkation characteristics were coded and cross
Murphy, M. L. Kovacs and Jean Martin. While touching on topics such as assimilation and alienation, Kunz particularly wanted answers to such questions as: 'How did age, war-time experience and family conditions affect occupational achievements, and why did so many fail while others succeeded?' and 'What happened to those who did recapture their former status, and what became of those who failed to do so?'

Kunz explained the shock in store for class/status-conscious Europeans in Australia under the indentured labour scheme:

We could never imagine that a gentleman would be employed in any other capacity than a gentleman. That was so deeply in us that we just could not believe it ... And I thought, oh well, Australia is supposed to be a very deserted place, there are lots of deserts. So there will be a lot of Ukrainian and Polish peasants building a road and I will count their salaries or something like that ... 

As Kovacs had earlier noted, it was a 'still fairly widespread prejudice of the inter-war Central Eastern European that only work at a government desk was not below the dignity of a 'gentleman'". Questionnaire respondents included one former Air Force officer who, when enquiring about working at an aeroclub, was told by an official: 'That job was too good for a bloody migrant'. Another respondent explained the effect of classified. Of this Twelve Ships Sample the life stories of 1,816 DPs were followed up for twenty years after arrival, and the data coded (Four Ships Sample). Additional data was sought on the 544 who held tertiary qualifications (Tertiary Sample). A further Boosted Sample of 2,148 arrivals was created by the combination of the two further sub-samples. Kunz, Displaced Persons, p. xxi. 

NLA. TRC 2262, Dr Egon F Kunz interviewed by Peter Biskup, March/April 1988.

Kovacs, 'Immigration and Assimilation', pp. 334-335.

such prejudice: ‘[After s]everal years of hard labouring [we] then lost faith for a better future. Many of these professional people became alcoholic, mentally ill or died in their early years in depression.’

Kunz thought that the indentured labour scheme was perhaps a deliberate policy, to make ‘status-conscious central Europeans humble themselves and acquire a taste for the makeshift and a broader acceptance of fellow man’. Of course, it should be noted that Kunz was representative of the highly educated, ‘status conscious’ Hungarian DPs, rather than the 70% of the DP cohort who had minimal education and possessed basic skills.

Kunz himself is the pre-eminent example of bitterness in lost professional opportunities. He experienced a ‘tremendous amount of breaking down of confidence, intentional and unintentional’, as he was a committed Anglophile and had trusted a British country to look after his best interests. His main argument is encapsulated in a bitter warning he quotes from a Latvian DP:

Never again repeat the disgraceful act of burdening a migrant with two years contract of hard labour instead of giving him a helping hand to establish himself. Some kind of rehabilitation Program as it existed for Returned Soldiers should have been found for professional migrants to adjust themselves.

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740 NLA. TRC 2262, Dr Egon F Kunz interviewed by Peter Biskup. March/April 1988.
Although acknowledging that he could be seen as ‘a certain sort of complaining migrant’, Kunz himself said almost 40 years after his arrival in Australia: ‘I am almost certain, I am now more than certain, had I gone to America, financially, professionally I would have achieved more’.742

While Kunz remained bitter about this perceived injustice, he was an active and important member of the burgeoning ‘ethnic’ history community. In the years leading up to the Australian Bicentenary in 1988, histories of several ethnic communities were researched for the first time.743 Another contemporary, Czech DP and academic Michael Cigler, initiated the Ethnic Heritage Series (1983-1987), published by AE Press (Melbourne), which included the actual and proposed titles of the Afghans, Americans, Baltic (Betty and Antanas Birskys), Cornish, Czechs (Cigler), Dutch, Germans, Hungarians (Kunz), Italians, Jews (Bill Rubinstein), Lebanese, Maltese, Poles (Marian Kaluski), Scots and Spanish in Australia.744 These books, which were virtually all original studies and written by authors (usually academics) with links to the communities, were

742 NLA. TRC 2262, Dr Egon F. Kunz interviewed by Peter Biskup, March/April 1988.
743 York, ‘Migrant Tales’, p. 17.
strongly influenced by the multicultural ethos that ‘Australia has always been an immigrant society’.  

Michael Cigler was a young, single man who had fled Czechoslovakia in 1949 after a period of forced labour during the war, post-war national service, and training as a primary school teacher. He was later to be quite critical of aspects of the DP scheme, arguing that the DPs were ‘the cheapest immigrant source ever’, and characterising the family separations inherent in the scheme as ‘one of the most cruel things which ever happened in Australian migration’. He did, however, have positive memories of his time spent at Bonegilla.  

Cigler had early on differentiated himself from his compatriots who were involved in Czech associations. He found active members of the community ‘too nostalgic’, as they tended to be older DPs with family members still in Czechoslovakia. He described the Czech Club in Melbourne in the 1950s:

They were mainly older people who didn’t have a chance to mix as we did, the younger people. When I started to study I realized – I am not a snob – but my interest was different to their interest ... I wasn’t going to waste my time talking about something which

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745 There is an interesting letter from demographer Charles Price to Cigler dated 26 March 1982: ‘By the way have you thought of getting someone to write a history of the English in Australia. They are the largest and most powerful ethnic group in the country and are often so condescendingly sure of themselves that they do not realise that they are an ethnic group with a language and culture of their own ...’ NLA, MS 8235, Papers of Michael Cigler; Jerzy Zubrzycki, ‘Australian Ethnic Affairs Council – Inaugural Meeting’, 23 March 1977, http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/zubrzycki_3.pdf, viewed 21 December 2010.

746 York, Michael Cigler, pp. 6, 7, 58, 63.
happened ten or fifteen years ago. I'm interested in what's happening now, what's going to happen in the future.\textsuperscript{747}

Cigler was also taught by influential sociologist Jean Martin. In a series of interviews with historian Barry York in 1996 he recalled that his inspiration for the ethic histories came from his pre-academic work as a secondary school history teacher. During a class teaching about the Eureka Stockade he used an 'argument of pluralism or multiculture' for the first time. The books were written for an Australian audience, as well as for migrants and their children. Cigler saw them as important additions to the historical canon in Australia:

I would say what pleases me is that we have added a new spectrum to Australian history. If I'm talking to people I tell them that Blainey and all the other people, they look at Australian history as though they are inside a house and looking through one window. But if they are in the back of the house, to left hand side of a house, right hand side of a house and open up the window they will see a different view; not only of nature but always of the people. So that's what we do in our books, I would say.\textsuperscript{748}

While this genre has been regarded by some as a benign form of 'ethnic cheerleading', at least two of these books courted controversy within the ethnic communities studied:

The Polish book, for instance, didn't have great success because a certain gentleman from Australian National University didn't like the person who wrote the book. So he spoke negatively about the book at the time. You have certain groups who want to forget their ethnicity very often, like Hungarians. So they didn't support fully

\textsuperscript{747} York, Michael Cigler, pp. 10-11, 81.
\textsuperscript{748} York, Michael Cigler, pp. 2, 125-126, 129, 128.
Frank Kunz’s book [‘The Hungarians in Australia’] which is well written.\(^749\)

While acknowledging the importance of the histories (and York himself was planning to write ‘The Maltese in Australia’ before funding ran out), Barry York has criticised the series for tending to exaggerate a group’s importance, isolating ‘the activities of the particular group from the wider social historical matrix’, and failing to examine and link the experience of settlement and migration to conditions in the country of origin.\(^750\)

Cigler’s series was followed, in a similar vein, by *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins* (1988), edited by sociologist James Jupp. This encyclopedia outlined the histories of every ethnic group in Australia, written by academics and community spokespeople, including all of the DP ethnicities (separately). It also contained general sections relating to government policy in regard to immigration, settlement, naturalisation, assimilation and multiculturalism. The book, which was partially funded by The Australian Bicentennial Authority, was a massive attempt to provide comprehensive ‘information on the Australian people, past and present, and describe their diverse origins’.\(^751\)


Sections particularly relating to DP history were written by Egon Kunz ('Post-War Non-British Migration') and historian Glenda Sluga ('Bonegilla Immigration Reception and Training Centre'). While Jupp's intention was to describe relationships between 'peoples of diverse origins that has created, and is still creating, the Australian people', critics of such multicultural tomes have pointed to the ethnic essentialism necessarily enabled by such a task, as well as the 'celebratory, monumental narratives' inherent in the 'genre of 'contributory' history'.

Modes of articulation such as autobiographical novels, memoir and histories are thus as problematic as they are useful (and important). The old tropes of assimilation, multiculturalism, ethnic essentialism and individual difficulties ('people with problems') dominate these forms of expression. Oral histories are, however, often praised as more 'authentic' representations of individual and group experiences. The following section of this chapter will discuss DP oral histories in the Australian context, including the 32 oral history interviews carried out in relation to this thesis project.

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752 Teo, 'Multiculturalism and the Problem of Multi-Cultural Histories', p. 147.
**Oral Histories**

Glenda Sluga has noted the ‘isolation’ of post-war migrants, including DPs, from ‘any shared community input of historical awareness, in the majority of cases until approached by an eager oral historian’. The recent increase in oral histories seeks to open out these personal stories to a wider audience; it is a ‘theory of history which maintains that the common folk and the dispossessed have a history and that history must be written’. Oral testimonies also aim to ‘personalise history’, telling us ‘not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing and what they now think they did’.

However, oral histories can be just as problematic as using literary sources, reliant as they are on ‘canons of appropriateness and rhetorical stereotypes’. In 1950, for example, the IRO publicised the plight of hard-core DPs with ‘abbreviated life histories’ emphasising ‘individual worth’; the DP found himself ‘alone in the world’ and thus reliant on resettlement. Historian Peter Gatrell has argued that this emphasis on the individual can ‘embody assumptions about displacement as a cause of loss and

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755 Alessandro Portelli, cited in Young, "Oral History as Emergent Paradigm", p. 5.
despair'. Isolating life histories from an historical context is thus a real trap.

Oral histories in Australia, for example, can be one-dimensional and trite examples of celebratory assimilation/multiculturalism, replete with stories of ‘exemplary citizens with successful careers’. On the other hand, they have been criticised as ‘historical victim narratives’, when ‘the only memory worth talking about – worth remembering – is memory of trauma’. Historian Ann Curthoys has levelled this charge at migrant histories, arguing that:

Ethnic communities [have] contributed to the idea of Australia as home, with their own versions of historical victim narratives, telling a story of persecution or economic difficulty in their country of origin, experience of racism and rejection after arrival, and the gradual building of a new life and making a contribution to Australian society at large.

Further, oral history projects are necessarily narrow in scope, and therefore not (strictly) representative.

With these criticisms in mind, this section offers a review of oral history projects involving DPs, both internationally and in Australia. Stories of displaced persons have, in common with other migrant groups, historically

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758 Maximilian Brändle, Refugee Destination Queensland (Kangaroo Point, Qld: Multicultural Writers & Arts Friendship Society (Qld), 1999), p. 4.
759 Teo, 'Multiculturalism and the Problem of Multi-Cultural Histories', p. 147; Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. xii.
been ignored out of apathy, silenced as politically inexpedient or kept within the zones of family and ethnic community, although even many second and third generation family members show little interest in 'migrant stories'. The emergent fields of social and oral histories have, however, increasingly brought these stories into the public domain, wherever the DPs found themselves post-war. British historian Kathy Burrell, for example, has carried out an oral history project involving 26 interviews with Polish DPs in the United Kingdom. She found that for Halina, whose father was a Polish DP now living in Britain, her interest in his experiences only occurred as a result of this type of external push:

[My father] was a very private man and he didn't used to divulge an awful lot, unless you asked, but when I was at college I had to do a special exercise at the end. I chose to do about my father. I was about twenty, and I learnt then more about him than I had known up until then, you know, because I really had to sit down and talk to him, and it was fascinating. I felt quite ashamed really that he had had such a fascinating life and experiences that seemed really quite incredible, and things that I had never experienced and probably would never experience, and experiences that were way beyond the norm, and that I didn't know about them. He had stories.761

While such stories may be 'fascinating', oral history projects concerning the DPs have the potential for picking at traumatic memories. A Polish DP involved in the same study, when asked if she ever discussed her background with other people, said: 'No, it hurts. It hurts. I remember but to be honest we don't talk. Perhaps we do, but it brings back bad

memories'. Burrell found a 'lingering legacy of forced migration' in which 'the trauma of displacement has not been resolved at all'. In this case, representations of 'personal exile w[ere] perceived to fit in very easily with the broader history of the Polish nation'.

A German oral history study of former (displaced person) slave and forced labourers found that traumatic experiences resulted in a 'lack of emotional involvement' on the part of some interviewees, either a strategy used to cope with trauma or as a prolonged effect of such trauma, as well as a continuing sense of 'shame'. Likewise, survivors of the Holocaust often have to grapple with an unspoken question: 'What must you have done to stay alive while millions died?' As in second-generation Ukrainian DP Marina Lewycka's British novel, *A Short History of the Tractor in Ukrainian*, the second generation can sometimes be advised: 'The past is filthy. It's like a sewer. You shouldn't play there. Leave it alone. Forget it.'

Historian Gelinada Grichenko has noted that in the Soviet Union, former DPs have been active in owning their own self-representations, becoming

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what is known as ‘professional witnesses’. These professional witnesses represent public organisations and are used to talking about themselves publicly. Such witnesses are ‘chronologically and topically logical, well structured, and are stable, multiple-approved constructs’. 766 Other studies have found that DPs prepare for interviews in advance by reading books and watching documentaries on their particular experience, demonstrating not only a ‘fear of being unable to communicate complicated memories’ but also the ‘trust that is placed in publicly constructed accounts to faithfully represent the experiences of the individual and the community’. Whether DPs present as ‘professional’ witnesses or not, there is an unreality involved when recording their experiences, what Kathy Burrell calls a ‘disjuncture between ordinary people relating such extraordinary experiences, and the strange sensation of wartime traumas being revisited in people’s living rooms’. Burrell, however, found that focusing on familial loss - the fact that war and displacement shatters close family ties - can be a way for oral historians to gain access to these stories. 767

Of course, the flip side of trauma-related issues is when interviewers expect traumatic stories, and don’t get them. Interviewees refuse to see anything unique in their life experiences, and in some cases succeed in putting a positive spin on their experiences. Historian Christoph Thonfeld, for example, found that former forced labourers had an ‘at first glance

confusingly positive notion’ of their time as agricultural workers under Nazi Germany, due to the improvement in living conditions from their home, or in comparison to the experiences of compatriots who stayed behind or fought in the war.\textsuperscript{768} It can be confronting, too, when realising that many displaced labourers in Germany were actually volunteer workers from Eastern Europe, seeking adventure and economic gain. In the case of second generation DPs, historian Mark Wyman was told by one DP: ‘You have to talk to older people. They suffered through it more than we did. For the kids, the camps were fun!’\textsuperscript{769} The heterogeneity of the DPs, as well as the generation divide, means that an expectation of a particular type of trauma, although well-meaning, is thus hardly a generic prism through which to view DP oral testimonies.

British historian Kathy Burrell found in interviews with former Polish DPs that ‘the conversations naturally rested on the personal and family histories of migration, settlement, community, national identity and transnational connections’. Burrell realised that turning points, survival and autonomy were emphasised in an attempt to reduce the ‘distance between the story, the narrator and the listener’ – to make a dramatic account more accessible in modern-day Britain. Moreover, while memories had forged bonds within the community, those who hadn’t experienced aspects of the

\textsuperscript{768} Thonfeld, ‘The Shaping of Memory’, p. 4.
dominant experience felt excluded.\textsuperscript{770} Linda McDowell, interviewing Latvian DPs in the United Kingdom, found a further complicating factor:

Many of these people were able to take advantage of the post-war confusion, to rewrite their identities, affiliations and previous histories, raising complex questions for an oral historian about contested histories and memories that have been expunged.\textsuperscript{771}

This complication, of ambiguous identity and self-representation, was also noted by Grichenko when interviewing former forced labourers in the Soviet Union. While DPs were categorised in the west as ‘refugees’, ‘workers’ and ‘migrants’, DPs returning to the Soviet Union found that they were viewed as traitors and fascists, and were thus forced to construct stories portraying themselves as fighters and protest participants. One narrative of protest involved ‘adventurous practice’, incorporating:

Narratives of impossible circumstances of escapes, of ways to facilitate work impressing by their dodge, of deceit and thefts left absolutely unpunished, etc. All these cases were described with excitement of youth adventure, rather than hard-hurting reminiscence.\textsuperscript{772}

Others tried to minimise the impact of the forced labour period, emphasising their ‘correct’ post-war life. This way of coping with post-war expectations was by no means unique to the Soviet Union. Thonfeld (in Germany) similarly found that:

\textsuperscript{772} Grichenko, ‘Ukrainian Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich’, p. 13.
Discouraged by their environment from dwelling much on the past, they had to develop a very matter-of-fact way to establish a new existence, while the suspicious attention they received from the host societies mostly sparked even harder work, inconspicuous habits and eager adaptation, until they have finally become accepted.\textsuperscript{773}

There does, however, seem to be a growing desire on the part of elderly DPs worldwide to participate in interviews so that their memories are not forgotten. Michelle Winslow’s oral history project interviewing 51 Polish DPs in Britain was originally focused on mental health problems, aiming to locate mental illness among Polish DPs in a historical context. However, Winslow realised that this line of questioning was being expanded upon by DPs who ‘wished to preserve their memories, and to do so in English in order to reach a broader audience’, and this project ‘became increasingly focused on life history’. Winslow concluded:

The motivation of many émigrés who agreed to be involved with this oral history study can be linked with the process of needing to come to terms with the past. Painful memories can be seen to have a ‘useful’ purpose when left as evidence, or as a warning from history, or as commemoration of the dead. Gaining an opportunity to record memories for historical record enables validation of personal experiences.\textsuperscript{774}

Compatriot oral historian Joanna Herbert similarly found that the ‘theme of struggle, especially for women, helps to achieve a positioning which


\textsuperscript{774} Michelle Winslow, ‘Oral History and Polish Émigrés in Britain’, in Peter D. Stachura (ed), The Poles in Britain 1940-200, pp. 87, 95.
deflects any sense of victimhood.' In other words, participating in an oral history project can be a means of emphasising DP agency in the face of the vicissitudes of fate.

In earlier decades in Australia, DP voices were either ignored or made to fit into a vision of assimilationist Australia. As Kateryna Longley has noted:

Our stories were simply not welcome in Australia ... But the past was all-consuming, it was what made us who we were, and so learning the habit of burying it or dressing up acceptable bits for public display, to satisfy curiosity when called upon, was itself a distressing aspect of arrival.776

Questionnaires were used by both M. L. Kovacs and Egan Kunz. Jerzy Zubrzycki also used an oral history methodology in his study of DPs in the Latrobe Valley (1964). Since the rise of multiculturalism in Australia, however, there has been a proliferation of social and oral histories focusing on a culturally diverse Australia. Pioneers in this area were Wendy Lowenstein and Morag Loh’s *The Immigrants* (1977), Janis Wilton and Richard Bosworth’s *Old Worlds and New Australia: The Post-War Migrant Experience* (1984), Lesleyanne Hawthorne’s *Making It In Australia* (1988), and Catherine Panich’s *Sanctuary?: Remembering Postwar Immigration* (1988).777 These books sought to address the dearth of information regarding post-war migrants to Australia, while also giving

voice to the migrants themselves. So influential was this methodology that it is now very rare to come across any writing on migration which does not incorporate some form of oral history, and some former DPs (and other post-war migrants) are now influential in collecting and editing oral histories.

Libraries are also increasingly becoming repositories for migrant oral history collections, even initiating their own collections, although these are usually community-focused. The National Library of Australia, for example, has initiated projects including the Polish-Australian Oral History Project (co-sponsored by the Polish community, with interviews carried out by historian Barry York), wherein the 'social history of Polish Australians is examined broadly in terms of multiculturalism, discrimination, cultural identity and social integration'.

The National Library of Australia has also supported, along with the Migration Museum of South Australia, second-generation Polish DP and historian Paul Sendziuk's interview project 'A Forgotten Odyssey: A Study of Polish-Australian Displacement, Identity and Citizenship through Life Stories and Material Culture'.

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It can now seem that rather than a dearth of information, there is a ‘great babble of immigrant voices caught by the tape recorder’. Oral history projects involving DPs in Australia have sometimes had a parochial focus, with questions focusing on (Australian) identity, and why the DPs ‘chose’ Australia. All too often arrival here is seen by oral historians as the endpoint of migrant stories. Others have an emphasis on ‘migrant’ reactions to and experiences of the local area. While DP stories are no longer ignored by the wider community, the context of war, trauma and displacement are still hard for many Australians to truly empathise with: ‘It is so hard to imagine ... I could really make a film from all this’. Emotional trauma can thus be ignored ‘partly because writers have not always understood the novelty and difficulty of what they are trying to do’. In addition, as ethnicity is deemed central to multicultural histories, identifiers such as religion, class, language, region, and gender is sidelined or ignored. Overall, DP oral history in Australia has tended to correlate with themes expressed in similar projects overseas, that is, ‘the personal and family histories of migration, settlement, community, national identity and transnational connections’.

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In the early 1990s Maryon Allbrook and Helen Cattalini were commissioned by the 'General Langfitt Group', an association of Poles who arrived in Australia via camps Africa, to conduct an oral history project among their cohort. The researchers noted that while the DPs were a strong, supportive community, specific details of war experiences were rarely discussed. Some interviewees 'found it too painful to give more than a brief overview.' Polish DP Tadeus Mikucki has explained: 'I am not very keen to remember that [time] because that remembers make me very sad, especially because it was broken my future.'

While traumatic, some DPs have expressed the opinion that their stories are not interesting, and of no value to wider society. For Hungarian Jeno Masszauer, war 'was not a unique thing. All these things look dramatic but when you are in the thing it is simply normal life'. Helena Turkiewicz wasn’t keen to be interviewed as part of the National Library of Australia's Polish-Australians Oral History Project. As a girl in Poland she had been orphaned, was homeless by the age of nine, raped by her employer when she was 12, and jailed by the Russians. She passed through Siberia,

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Uzbekistan and Africa, bearing a child to an Italian POW in Tangiers, before arriving in Australia. However, she argued against being an interesting subject for an oral history interview: "What for? The story like mine's plenty now." Polish Janusz Smenda responded, when asked about the importance of recording oral testimony:

To be quite honest I don't know that it is really very important. It is important in so far as it is a very minute part of Australian history and, from a sociological point of view, it is a rather unique story. Most of the migrants from the 'General Langfitt Group' have adjusted and adapted very well on the whole.

Interestingly, oral historian Kathleen Ryan has argued that these respondents 'do not really mean to belittle their life experiences but instead are using the phrase as a way to acknowledge society's expectations'; they still want to participate in the 'official' conversation, and public process, of oral history.

Some DPs have participated in oral history projects partly for the sake of their children. They feel that an awareness of past experience is important not only for themselves but for their families, and the wider community. Maria Carrington (Rudowicz) has argued that talking of their experiences to their children can be 'healing' for the DPs, while Polish Halina Juszczyk explained:

790 Ryan, 'I Didn't Do Anything Important', pp. 25, 35.
791 See, for example, Irene Szogi, cited in Brändle, Refugee Destination Queensland, p. 75.
I have often talked to my children about how we came to Australia and they often asked me to write it down. They insisted on having a written record of what I had told them many times so they would not forget. I don’t want to dwell on our past, but it is important to remember. People think the world is very safe. Another Hitler or a new Stalin could emerge if people are allowed to forget about the Holocaust or the grim experiences in Russia. We must learn from history: Hitler could have been stopped but the Western powers closed their eyes. They were also very soft on the Russians. That is what I want my children to know. 792

Further, as with autobiographical novels and memoir, oral testimony can also work to fix identity, or to contextualise in narrative form a story of how a DP ended up in Australia. Kateryna Longley has argued that telling stories, particularly amongst family members, can become, as earlier discussed in relation to memoir, a ‘ritualised process’ of performance art. Such tales are an ‘intensely personal act of self invocation, a conjuring of the old lost self, a frozen self, into the new living reality, across an impossible chasm’. 793 Writer Mark Kurzem, whose Russian-Jewish father’s background was complicated and traumatic, agrees, noting that his father’s stories were well-rehearsed and involved the use of props. 794 John Hughes also concurs with Longley’s argument, commenting regarding his Ukrainian grandfather:

Even when he was alive, what interested me most about my grandfather was his memories. But it wasn’t just me. As with most

migrants, his memories were what interested him most about himself. Memories were his currency – it was how he defined himself – and he dealt in them as a means of filling in the temporal emptiness of his new place. I can see this in the fragment of his voice. How nostalgia works best in the gap between the idea of what we have of ourselves and what is there.\textsuperscript{795}

These ‘fixed narratives’ of memory, moreover, can render the past ‘bearable, speakable and containable as a basis for building the future’.

The routine narratives do, however, contain hints at ‘further worlds of untold and perhaps untellable secrets’. According to Longley, there are two main types of DP stories: these sort of pre-packaged public stories, and private stories, which she describes as:

\begin{center}
Stories of intense suffering, humiliation, exclusion from all possible worlds, stories so painful that they may be untellable even now except within the security of the immediate family or deeply trusted friends. They have not yet been transformed into acceptable fictions. To tell them is almost to relive them.\textsuperscript{796}
\end{center}

Longley further explains the importance to the psyche of being able to testify, even within the confines of publicly-acceptable stories:

\begin{center}
Displaced immigrants are drawn by the past, however appalling its memories might be, because there at least some semblance of stability can be achieved by packaging the past as a set of rehearsed stories. Of course, the past, in spite of everything, always represents home and homeland. At the same time, storytelling is a way of forcing attention on the bodily experience of suffering, which is obscured by historical narrative’s smooth stylizing gestures. This is perhaps why so many post-Second World War immigrants and war survivors everywhere, tell their stories over and over again.\textsuperscript{797}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{795} Hughes, \textit{The Idea of Home}, pp. 21-22.
\textsuperscript{797} Longley, ‘Remembering Rublivka’, pp. 112, 113.
The telling of stories can thus be psychologically important and is a significant freedom available to the DPs. A 're-narration of the past' may assist in rendering it 'bearable, speakable and containable as a basis for building the future'.

For some DPs, sharing 'life stories' can be a means of redemption. Irene Szogi told Maximilian Brändle, researching an oral history project in Queensland, of stories recently related to her Polish father:

In old age some of the former DPs who talked to my father were increasingly tormented by their conscience. Some suffered from having had to kill other human beings in combat and the horror images have kept coming in spite of the lapse of so many years. Some old soldiers became religious, perhaps as a means to find solace or to atone for guilt. At least two of them committed suicide. Some became alcoholics because they were haunted by their misdeeds of long ago ... Men who are dead now talked to my father about their guilt and their remorse ... Frail men talked before the end of their lives.

Motivations for involvement or non-involvement in oral histories can thus be complex. DP self-representations can also be complex, and ambiguous. Sociologist James Jupp has noted, for example, that the 'memories of post-war refugees are very ambivalent, combining gratitude at rescue from Europe with resentment at exploitation by the Australian authorities'.

798 Longley, 'Remembering Rublivka', pp. 112, 114.
799 Brändle, Refugee Destination Queensland, pp. 80-81.
800 Jupp, Immigration, p. 105.
Many oral histories do have a 'victim' narrative thread. Snowy, a Ukrainian forced labourer, recalled that during the war: 'My dream was to have one loaf of bread, then I’d jump under a train and commit suicide'. Another Ukrainian forced labourer, in a separate oral history project, remembered: 'Hungry, starving, men hanged, hard times. You must have guts every day to keep going'. There are also plenty of stories describing prejudice faced by the DPs in Australia. Lithuanian DPs recalled that crossing a road they were shouted at: 'Get back to where you bloody come from, you bloody wogs, and get off the bloody road so we can drive our bloody car'. One man recalled showing his employment and education resume when being interviewed for a job but was told by the official interviewing him not to bother showing it around as ‘nobody is really interested in your past’. Krystyna Pindral, a daughter of Polish DPs, participated in a university assignment requiring her to question her parents regarding their migration experiences. One of the questions was whether her parents regretted coming to Australia, and were they happy here? She says:

Whilst I don’t remember what my mother said, I always remember what my father said, which was that he was very unhappy, he didn’t care for Australia and he seemed very bitter. I was just so shocked. He basically said: 'What's there to be happy about? Sure I earn a salary but that's it'.

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804 Tarvydas, *From Amber Coast to Apple Isle*, p. 13.
Pindrall lamented: 'The unspoken pain behind that statement!' Lithuanian Eugenia Bakaitis described how she felt after traveling to the migrant camp at Bonegilla:

Bonegilla was in the middle of nowhere. There was not a tree, not a flower, just an empty army barracks in an empty, hot, dusty place. There was barbed wire all around it like a German concentration camp. And the heat. The supervisor used to tell us to bring bucket after bucket of cold water and pour it on the floor and then we would all sit in it. We felt this enormous sense of deepening isolation. We didn’t know where we were, we just knew that there was no way back.

One DP described the cohort as the ‘White Slaves of the twentieth century’. Female DPs felt as though families were being ‘held as hostages’ for the breadwinner’s ‘parole’; ‘The difficulty was that we were not together with a family – with husbands. For us, it was as long as we are together, and we are not’.

It is clear that many DPs thought that they arrived in Australia ‘owing the Government the cost of the trip’. Some former displaced persons (and

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806 Knightley, Australia, p. 219.
807 Tarvydas, From Amber Coast to Apple Isle, p. 90.
historians) are still under this misapprehension, for example Edward Dukas, who reasoned in 1992: ‘If the government paid for our passage and so on and our keep for the first couple of weeks ... you can’t expect, you know, everything to be given’. 810 In the words of a Ukrainian DP: ‘[we] were indentured to work to pay off our grim passage to freedom’. 811

Kati Togh, a Hungarian DP, later admitted how her husband had evaded the work contract:

Julius was not used to hard physical work. Among other things he had to plant trees. He had to do the jobs allocated to him under the DP work contract ... Julius was desperate. He could not cope with such a strenuous job and needed to take on other work. He swallowed some chocolate wrapping which showed up on the x-ray as an ulcer. He was advised to take it easy for a while. This is how he got out of the contract ... Many of the DPs had a difficult time under the two year contract. 812

A Polish DP, upon hearing that his wife was in hospital and his two year old daughter had been left in the barracks of the holding camp alone, gathered his luggage and gave an ultimatum to his employer, BHP - ‘Fix job, money, or back to Europe!’ He was called a ‘smart-alec’ and put in the

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810 This mistake is also repeated in some of the literature, for example O. Katchan, ‘Byelorusssians’ in Jupp (ed), The Australian People, p. 291. Edward Dukas, cited in Clark, “Oh my God ... Where are we at?” , p. 51.
812 Kati Toth, cited in Brändle, Refugee Destination Queensland, p. 121.
hardest manual job of the steelworks.\textsuperscript{813} Another, pleading to be taken 'back to Germany', was told by officials that this was too expensive.\textsuperscript{814}

The oral histories also show perceptive analyses of relations within DP communities, and between the DPs and the Australians. 'Snowy', a Ukrainian DP, explained the origins and benefits of his small Ukrainian community in Melbourne:

We'd been set up in Europe to look after our people who might arrive, it was our future job. We were talking about it in every camp. Nobody knew where he was going but wherever we went we would make sure that we stuck together, remember who we are, keep our traditions. Life in the camps strengthened us. In camp we met people from many hundred kilometres from our villages and developed a liking, respect and trust. Here were seven or eight of us from all over the Ukraine but we were like one family. In Australia we've been living together for 40 years without a bad word, caring for each other rather than just for ourselves.\textsuperscript{815}

According to Polish DP George Klim:

Naturally people kept more or less to their own national groups. For just natural reasons. There was no animosity. It wasn't a reason for ... I mean, conflicts were not the reason. It was just simply the fact that you spoke your own language and you had your own traditions.\textsuperscript{816}

One (Polish) DP explained: 'Everything we teach them [dancing, singing, history] what is not against this country (sic)'\textsuperscript{817} Relations within DP

\textsuperscript{813} NLA, Oral TRC 4766/1, Polish Australians Oral History Project, Antoni Suryak interviewed by Barry York, 2001.
\textsuperscript{814} Tarvydas, From Amber Coast to Apple Isle, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{815} Markus and Sims, Fourteen Lives, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{816} NLA, Oral TRC 3498, Polish Australians Oral History Project, Dr George Klim interviewed by Barry York, 1996.
\textsuperscript{817} NLA, Oral TRC 6175/10, Stalin's Poles Oral History Project, Kazimierz Sosnowski interviewed by Paul Sendziuk, 2009.
communities could, however, be complex. Croatian DP ‘Joe’ described the division between pre-war and post-war migrants from ‘Yugoslavia’:

We were quite isolated and unpopular; they avoided us ... They called us Ustashis, fascists, Nazis, throatcutters, butchers, gangsters, all sorts of things because we wanted to call ourselves Croatian.818

For the Polish community, Soviet spies were a worry. George Klim, prominent in the Polish community in Newcastle, explained:

There were none who did it officially. But there were certainly a few people ... A very small group who ... did what the Communist regime instructed them to do, or suggested to them to do. There was a very small group which was financed by the Communist Consul-General here until 1990. They usually formed either sport associations, or Polish-Australian cultural groups, they called themselves. Five, six, a dozen, whatever, 20 ... They were well-known, or reasonably well-known because apart from those, there were people who tried to infiltrate our organizations ... They didn’t succeed, or their success was very limited.819

Klim admitted that the ‘main object’ of his community work was political, countering Polish communist propaganda.

For some, a sense of diaspora was paramount. One second-generation Ukrainian DP has admitted to a mythologised nostalgia, referring to his vision of Ukraine as the ‘garden of Eden’.820 A Polish DP explained the focus on diaspora within community groups: ‘Polish scouting was based

819 NLA, Oral TRC 3498, Polish Australians Oral History Project, Dr George Klim interviewed by Barry York, 1996.
820 NLA, Oral TRC 5373/21-23, Rob Willis Folklore Collection, Bohdan Mykytiuk interviewed by Rob Willis, 21 October 2004.
on the exclusive use of the Polish language as a practical means of preserving Polish culture and tradition. Ukrainian Suzanna Prushynsky recalled that her family was so involved in the Ukrainian community that the children 'were not allowed to speak English at home.' Other DPs, however, rejected a belief in diaspora: 'We tried in the first years to maintain our festivals and traditions but it just didn’t click, it wasn’t the right time of the year ... you change, the differences become yours, part of you.'

Highlighting a lack of understanding between cultures, Latvian DP ‘Irma’ recalled attempting to raise money for a Lutheran children’s home at the Ladies’ Guild and the YWCA:

I [wore] my national costume with all the jewelry. Then they asked about the times back in Germany and I know that there were a lot of people – old people – who needed help back there, and I hoped that they would open their hearts and their purses and help us a bit. And after I told the sad story they gathered round me and admired my jewelry and my national costume and said, ‘Oh, how nice’ (laughs).

Polish DP Tadeus Mikucki, however, recalled the beginning of his association with the RSL:

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822 NLA. Oral TRC 5373/33-34, Rob Willis Folklore Collection, Suzanna Prushynsky interviewed by Rob Willis and Graham Seal, 26 October 2004.
823 Markus and Sims, Fourteen Lives, p. 100.
When we been in Iron Knob I see the returned soldiers association. I went there straightaway and introduced myself, I belong to the Polish underground army and what have you here. They sing me _Waltzing Matilda_ and so on. I sang them my soldier song. They liked it. That was the first time I got in touch with [the] Australian community.⁶²⁵

In a further example of cross-cultural interactions, Latvian Gunna Kinne has described attending a rally after Australia accorded _de jure_ recognition to the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States in 1974 (this decision was reversed by the subsequent government):

The rally was probably worthwhile because Fraser cancelled Whitlam’s decision. Usually we felt as second-grade citizens in Australia, we all stood out only in a bad way. This was sort of standing out in a good way, even if only externally.⁶²⁶

George Klim also recalled the first time the Polish Association in Maitland, NSW was written about in the local newspaper, on the occasion of a visit by a celebrated Polish General, with the hope that the locals would realize that the Polish community ‘were not just riff-raff, you know, migrant labour, what have you’.⁶²⁷

Oral histories can thus be seen to integrate self-representations, a concern with ‘the small and beautiful’ – themes such as personal trauma

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⁶²⁷ NLA, Oral TRC 3498, Polish Australians Oral History Project, Dr George Klim interviewed by Barry York, 1996.
and relationships with(in) family, culture and community – with outside representations, incorporated within the wider themes of national narrative(s), memory and commemoration.828

My Oral History Project

At the beginning of this research project I set out to interview a sample of Displaced Persons now living in Australia. Being representative in a statistical sense was not an aim, as one simply cannot capture the breadth of so many different experiences. However, as historian Paul Thompson explains: ‘One of the deepest lessons of oral history is the uniqueness, as well as representativeness, of every life story’.829 Fortunately, as Vieda Skultans notes, ‘testimony resists generalisation’, and thus a different type of valid history can be written using very different sources to those of the traditional historian.830

With these guiding principles in mind, I set out to interview around 30 displaced persons or their descendants. Twelve of these were family members or personal acquaintances. Eight were people I had heard of and directly requested an interview. Twelve others were interviewed after they responded to an advertisement in The Sydney Morning Herald (see

828 Wilton and Bosworth, Old Worlds and New Australia, p. 37.
Appendix). Many who responded didn’t know quite how they could help, but were willing to participate in the project. Comments included: ‘It is wonderful you are doing research’ and ‘what you’re doing is very important’.\(^{831}\)

I ultimately interviewed 32 people. Twelve were first-generation; eighteen were second-generation and two were third-generation DPs. Eighteen were men and fourteen were women. The (self-identified) nationality breakdown was: Austrian-Jewish (one), Belorussian/Ukrainian (one), Bulgarian (one), Czechoslovakian (two), Estonian (two), Hungarian (two), Latvian (three), Lithuanian (two), Polish (three), Polish-Jewish (one), Polish/Hungarian (one), Polish/Ukrainian (two), Russian (one), Ukrainian (nine), Ukrainian/Russian (one).\(^{832}\)

I have referred to the participants by their self-identified nationality/ethnicity, gender and initials, for anonymity. Participants who are public figures, and whose anonymity would make their contributions nonsensical as I discuss their works in the text, include authors Victoria Zabukovec (first-generation Bulgarian) and John Hughes (third-generation Ukrainian), poet Peter Skrzynecki (second-generation Polish/Ukrainian), researcher Agnes Karlik and her husband Joseph (first-generation Hungarian), and ethnic community workers John Gebhardt (second-

\(^{831}\) Interview with Ms ER, 26 October 2007; Interview with Mr KM, 12 February 2008.

\(^{832}\) Please see Appendix for further information.
generation Polish) and Birute Prasmutas (second-generation Lithuanian),
all of whom kindly agreed to be interviewed openly as part of my project.

Some interviews were preceded by emails, telephone conversations
and/or an informal interview as the interviewee got to know me and what I
expected from the interview process. Only one prospective interviewee
cancelled, pointing me towards her community leaders as the best people
to talk to.

The interview itself followed an informal conversational style, usually led
by my question: 'Tell me about your family background in Europe'. This
followed Kathy Burrell's advice to introduce parents' experiences early in
the interview, in order for the story of the second generation to make
sense.\textsuperscript{833} The interviews ranged from one to four hours and I incorporated
questions surrounding memory and commemoration, as well as the more
prosaic aspects of the displacement and settlement experiences, which
portrayed life histories, and turned up some interesting anecdotes. (As
Michael Cigler has noted: 'The essential humanity of the migrant
experience, in all its diversity, complexity and contradictiveness, is readily
expressed through the spoken word and often summed up in
anecdote').\textsuperscript{834}

\textsuperscript{833} Burrell, 'Personal, Inherited, Collective', p.156.
\textsuperscript{834} York, Michael Cigler, p. 8.
Ukrainian Ms OP, for example, recalled that at an Austrian DP camp in 1945, women drowned themselves and their babies in the river, and 'six families were shot by their fathers', who then shot themselves, to avoid forced repatriation. She and her husband hid in the mountains for three months for fear of Soviet repatriation.\footnote{Interview with Ms OP, 7 June 2007.}

Polish-Jewish DP Mr GK described his meeting with Australian selection officers ('consuls'):

There were two consuls, there was a young one and an old one. I don't know their names but one was called the young one, one was called the old one. The old one wouldn't let any Jew through. The secretary was a refugee, so you would go in with a carton of cigarettes, American cigarettes, you would give it to the secretary and 'don't say a word, you want to go to the young consul'; she knew it. As a matter of cigarettes that carton of cigarettes came from the International Refugee Organisation, she gave me the carton, she knew it. Everybody knew about it. She gave me the carton of cigarettes to give to the secretary.\footnote{Interview with Mr GK, 15 October 2007.}

Conversely, one ethnic German (Romanian) DP who had served in the German Army told his 'whole life story' to Australian immigration officers. However, it didn't count against his selection because, according to his sister, 'pretty much everybody was in some army'.\footnote{Interview with Ms KP, 29 October 2007.} Similarly, Czech DP Mr FK confided:

When they were taking DPs they were taking DPs they were not always DPs. There were some guys ... on the job they had to keep
their sleeves down [due to their SS blood group tattoo]. You know the reason [but] we don’t talk about that.\textsuperscript{838}

Upon arrival, as described by Ukrainian DP Mr LD, ‘the migrants did the dirty jobs the Australians were not interested in’.\textsuperscript{839} Polish-Ukrainian Mr Ll, whose father was sent to work for BHP at Port Kembla, explained: ‘The work was difficult. Our people were basically off the land, so working in heavy industry was a bit of a culture shock.’\textsuperscript{840} Ms DH’s father, a Ukrainian DP and pianist, lost the first joint of all four fingers of his right hand in an industrial accident.\textsuperscript{841}

Some DPs did not cope well with their change in circumstances. Ms OP’s husband absconded, leaving her to pay the accommodation charges in a holding centre, working as a cleaner there while also caring for her two infant sons.\textsuperscript{842} Mr Ll recalled: ‘A lot of our blokes are heavy drinkers and I know with my father-in-law the things that he went through and he used to drink and a lot of it was to blot out the things, you know’.\textsuperscript{843} Mr AH similarly described associates of his father, a Czech man who married an Australian in his late 30s:

A lot of them were completely stuffed. He was living, when he settled in, he was living in the inner-city, inner-west sort of area, in a boarding house situation with lots of Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, they were sort of living as a group and most of them would have

\textsuperscript{838} Interview with Mr FK, 5 July 2007.
\textsuperscript{839} Interview with Mr LD, 4 February 2008.
\textsuperscript{840} Interview with Mr Ll, 17 July 2007.
\textsuperscript{841} Interview with Ms DH, 8 February 2008.
\textsuperscript{842} Interview with Ms OP, 7 June 2007.
\textsuperscript{843} Interview with Mr Ll, 17 July 2007.
been there 20 years actually, because a lot of them were that stuffed from the war and what they'd seen that they were pretty hard living. They drank themselves to death, most of them, they didn't really aspire to anything other than the short-term; they didn't amount to much if you know what I mean ... these people, I think the majority of them were very hard living and that takes a toll on anything. They worked but they were hard living.

Others, former professionals such as Mr VL’s father, a Ukrainian priest, felt ‘insignificant, self-conscious, inferior’. Ms DH describes the prejudice her father experienced at work as ‘terribly, terribly traumatic’, causing him to 'psychologically shut down'.

Meanwhile, relations with community groups were complicated. For Polish second-generation DP Mr WH:

Originally these clubs were set up by refugees who were looking for places to meet, places where they could speak their own language, places where they could interact together in a strange surrounding. They couldn’t go back to Poland, this was Poland to them.

Members of these clubs, and particularly members of the Polish Ex-Servicemen’s Association, ‘had a definite goal to fight communism’. While the diasporic community groups offered a ‘strong support group’, Ms DH found that the ‘gossip’ and internal politics was restrictive. There was a ‘fear of moving away from the group’, and contact with Australians was

844 Interview with Mr AH, 8 November 2007.
845 Interview with Mr VL, 17 June 2008.
846 Interview with Ms DH, 8 February 2008.
847 Interview with Mr WH, 4 October 2007.
848 Interview with Mr WH, 4 October 2007.
discouraged. When she married a Hungarian, there was a 'wonderful sense of freedom' involved in 'getting out of the Ukrainian community'.

Second-generation Ukrainian Ms IC recalls that as a five-year-old she was 'shunned' by the community when her baby sister drowned in her care: 'I was the evil one. I didn’t look after my sister properly; it was the same as killing her'. Later, when her father died of cancer, the community accused her of having the 'cancer germ', so 'none of their children could marry me'. She was also called the 'Estonian girl', illogically as her father was Latvian and her mother Ukrainian. Interestingly, Ms IC is now President of her regional association, perhaps showing the hold that community life can have on an individual.

One of the main themes of interest to me in talking to the interviewees was the transmission of memory. Historians Daniel Bertaux and Paul Thompson have noted that there has been 'surprisingly little work by historians on family transmission'. Family oral history obviously implies a sense of continuity as stories are passed down the generations. Memory is thus a 'living link between generations' which contributes to identity formation from self-representations. It is, however, difficult to isolate family oral history from [ethnic] community oral history or, indeed, any other

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849 Interview with Ms DH, 8 February 2008.
850 Interview with Ms IC, 29 October 2008.
dominant memory discourse. I was interested to see how the dominant tropes of categorisations – 'refugee', 'worker', 'migrant', 'New Australian' - were included in the 'constant flux' of family memories and stories.

Writer Tom Shapcott has argued that second-generation migrants tend to reject, or minimise, their language, cultural and family memory in order to assimilate with the host society: 'The problem of the second generation is universal'. In contrast, by the third generation 'there is often a profound wish by that stage to rediscover the past and the abandoned culture'. I was interested to see whether this generational model applied to the DPs I interviewed, and also to see whether DPs actually thought it important for their descendants to hold onto some form of cultural or familial memory.

I also wanted to discover whether there was a wider sense of a commemorative culture within DP communities, particularly with regard to Australian narrative histories of assimilation and multiculturalism. I found that most of my interviewees, particularly first-generation DPs, had never read a book or seen a film specifically on displaced persons and/or displaced persons in Australia, and they seemed surprised when I asked whether they had. As one (Lithuanian) interviewee memorably stated: 'I've

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854 Tom Shapcott, 'Multicultural Literature and Writing in Australia', in Delaruelle, Karakostas-Sédá and Ward, eds., Writing in Multicultural Australia 1984, pp. 5-6.
lived through it, why would I want to read about it?' A small minority had accessed one or two works relating to the subject, but did not direct me to them. A couple of interviewees commented on the varying quality of DP literature, with Russian Ms ER arguing that 'some of them are not terribly well edited; you do need to write a good story'. In contrast, second-generation Estonian DP Mr TR asserted: 'I'd read some more if I could lay my hands on them. It would be interesting', while second-generation Hungarian Ms GG had recently bought a 'book on migrant ships' because she wanted 'to get the facts about the memory'.

Many of my first-generation interviewees expressed a desire to write their own autobiography for family members or a wider audience, 'because not a lot of people know' the DP story; a few were in various stages of writing a manuscript. Second-generation Estonian Mr TR argued that this sort of recording of the past is important 'because otherwise graveyards get grown over by weeds and blackberry bushes. Nothing left at all.'

Some of my participants did exhibit an 'interview persona'. Besides the persona of the 'professional witness', exhibited by published authors and community workers, as well as those who longed to talk me through their

855 Interview with Ms OM, 8 October 2007.
856 Interview with Ms ER, 26 October 2007.
857 Interview with Mr TR, 5 October 2007; Interview with Ms GG, 19 November 2007.
858 Interview with Ms ER, 26 October 2007.
business careers or other successes in detail, the main problematic persona seemed to be one of ignorance, or denial, as interviewees argued: ‘I haven’t got anything interesting to tell’.

Others did not want to talk about anything they did not have first-hand knowledge of. This, of course, is in itself an interesting response to a study on memory. Mr ED, a second-generation Polish, for example, responded: ‘How would I know?’ to certain questions, which demonstrated to me the validity of his daughter’s wish to access family memory. Mr WP, a second-generation Russian/Ukrainian, responded to many queries in a similar fashion: ‘That side of it I don’t know because I wasn’t even thought of then’, ‘I don’t know the full story’, ‘I don’t know, I don’t know, I can’t tell you’, ‘You’d have to ask my mother’, ‘That’s about all I can recount of it’, ‘To tell you the truth, I don’t know’ and ‘I don’t know what the go was’.

Ms LP, a second-generation Ukrainian, also responded to queries: ‘As far as I know, I wasn’t born then’ and ‘you would have to ask [my older sister] that’.

Ms LP did, however, open up a little when the interview had ostensibly finished, adding further family information. These responses suggest that not knowing certain family information can be embarrassing for respondents, and that a response similar to ‘How would I know?’ can be seen as a defensive mechanism, highlighting a lack of access to family memory.

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860 Interview with Ms OM, 8 October 2007.
861 Interview with Mr ED and Ms LD, 20 August 2007.
862 Interview with Mr WP, 10 January 2008.
863 Interview with Ms LP, 3 June 2007.
As well as being an autobiographical prequel, asking questions about family histories in Europe and how the family arrived in Australia served the purpose of elaborating traces of memory. Was memory in this sense wrapped up in individual testimony, the importance of family, and/or in a sense of ethnic essentialism? Second-generation DPs have already grappled with this question. Regarding memory, third-generation Ukrainian and author John Hughes has noted:

We’re taught it’s essential that we remember. ‘Lest we forget’, we are told. But how can you forget what you never had a chance to remember? Memories you never had? How can you forget experiences that are not your own? Because this is what the injunction boils down to in the end: ‘Remember the memories of somebody else’. 864

These memories, of course, concern not only individual and family memories, but memories of homeland and culture. In this respect, Sneja Gunew has asked:

How does one capture the influence of the ghost of a culture, hardly there and yet certainly a foreign body tangibly present in one’s subjectivity? How does one assess the trace of these fragments? What constitutes memory of a place when that place has never been seen, or experienced in the usual mundane ways, only told or depicted via a range of artifacts, surrealistically stranded in alien contexts? 865

These aspects of family transmission were usually raised by respondents themselves. Most of the first-generation DPs felt that they wanted to

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educate their children about their family history. Czechoslovakian Mr FK, for example, is writing a book ‘so that my grandchildren will know a little bit about the past’.\textsuperscript{866} Of course, these people had all responded to my request for an interview, and must be viewed as particularly open sources, although one first-generation respondent did admit: ‘I don’t know what it is there that I don’t want to remember, but it’s there’, while Mr NB said: ‘There are certain traumatic experiences which one tends to, whose memory one tends to suppress and which one would like to forget [sic]’.\textsuperscript{867} For second and third generation respondents, a lack of access to their family’s past seemed to be a common complaint.

John Hughes talked of his fascination with his Ukrainian grandfather’s adventurous fairytale-like stories, and the intriguing silences, or ‘smokescreen’, contained therein. His imaginative relationship with his grandfather’s past and ‘a type of fairytale Ukraine’ led to his writing a book, \textit{The Idea of Home}, and visiting Ukraine in an attempt to address these issues of family memory and identity. However, Hughes admitted that his mother doesn’t talk about the past, and his grandmother is:

So vague about all these things, it doesn’t really help that much. I don’t know if she doesn’t really remember very much of the detail or she doesn’t really want to talk about it either. She was very keen for my [grandfather] not to talk to me about it.\textsuperscript{868}

\textsuperscript{866} Interview with Mr FK, 5 July 2007.  
\textsuperscript{867} Interview with Ms OM, 8 October 2007; Interview with Mr NB, 1 November 2007.  
\textsuperscript{868} Interview with John Hughes, 3 August 2007.
This was a common experience amongst my respondents. Ukrainian Ms LP explained the dynamics in her family:

My mother talks very freely about most of the aspects of her childhood and her family life and even her time during the war and coming out to Australia. My father is a bit more selective about what he talks about. I think perhaps the more sensitive parts of feelings he might not go into ... he'll touch on some of it but he never talks about how he felt and whether he was scared or whether he was worried about his family he had left behind.\(^{869}\)

Ms LP added that whenever her father is asked about his early life, he changes the subject to talk about his adventures during and after the war, a sort of safe ‘fixed narrative’ perhaps used as a way of obscuring earlier traumatic memories. Mr LI similarly felt ‘there was probably a lot more went on at the time but not really spoken about’.\(^{870}\) In his local Ukrainian community, he thought that around 80% of the first-generation DPs were ‘reluctant and withdrawn’, while the minority ‘tend to be more free-flowing’. Mr AH, whose father was a Czech DP, learnt most about his father’s past from his Australian mother. His father had run from Czechoslovakia after his brother was arrested by Communist officials. A teacher in Czechoslovakia, he worked as a labourer in Australia, drinking heavily and fathering at least one child before marrying. Mr AH explained:

He wouldn’t talk, he would talk shit, he would talk a lot of drivel and a lot of stuff he’s heard at the club but you’re not going to get anything out of that. And it’s not my place to pry. It isn’t, it shouldn’t be either, really, you let it go. But it’s interesting and it’s always fascinated me.\(^{871}\)

\(^{869}\) Interview with Ms LP, 3 June 2007.
\(^{870}\) Interview with Mr LI, 17 July 2007.
\(^{871}\) Interview with Mr AH, 8 November 2007.
Mr AH said about his father: 'I don’t know whether or not he ever let go of a lot of the stuff and that’s a bit sad because you’ve got to because for a start it is all a long time ago and the Russians have gone. You are sort of damaged by something that doesn’t exist anymore.'

Peter Skrzynecki admitted: ‘My mother would tell me very little, my father told me nothing’. However, this disinclination to dwell on the past encouraged, rather than suppressed, Skrzynecki’s curiosity. When he visited the National Archives to find out more about his family’s history:

I sat there like a baby crying ... I just sat there bawling and bawling. It was like I had discovered a secret about myself. That piece of the puzzle that fitted together, occupations, date of births, religion, their places of birth.

Skrzynecki is now a celebrated poet who has written on issues of family memory, particularly in two autobiographical works, Immigrant Chronicle and Sparrow Garden. He has also become an advocate of the commemoration of displaced persons, and other migrants, in a national setting.

Mr PM, a second-generation Polish-Ukrainian, was not told much at all about his family background, and indeed there was a mystery as to why his father had changed his surname upon settlement in Australia, a fact only told to Mr PM on his father’s deathbed. His mother even refused to

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872 Interview with Mr AH, 8 November 2007.
873 Interview with Peter Skrzynecki, 23 August 2007.
apply for forced-labour compensation from the German government because that process involved dredging up the past: ‘Just forget about it’. When Mr PM’s children visited the National Archives recently to access family migration documents, it was an emotional experience: ‘This is my story and I didn’t know anything about it’. According to Mr PM, a ‘can of worms opened up – I’ve now got relatives everywhere!’

For the most part, the first and second-generation DPs I talked to were interested in handing down family memory to their children and grandchildren. Their focus was on the individual and familial rather than the national or diasporic. Upon return to Europe, many of course found that their homelands had moved on and were not ‘home’ anymore.

Many had given their children the option of attending Saturday school in their parents’ native language but had not pushed the issue when the children lost interest. The attitude of Ms DH, a second-generation Ukrainian, is representative, in that she feels that younger generations should know about their heritage and be taken to some ethnic community events, but overall ‘let them grow up as Aussie kids’. Mr AH describes his childhood similarly:

Dad was never religious. Better things to do on a bloody weekend! ... We pretty much did the Aussie sports and things like that, we used to like running and that sort of stuff too ... I like a lot of things about the European culture and things that they get into but just growing up here, it is a pretty good place as well. [My Czech father]

874 Interview with Mr PM, 12 November 2008.
875 Interview with Mr AH, 8 November 2007.
876 Interview with Ms DH, 8 February 2008.
didn't really bring us into his background that much, a bit of food really, a bit of the food.\textsuperscript{877}

In this respect, my small sample fits in with Jean Martin's statistic that approximately 80% of the first generation of DPs did not belong to any nationality-specific community group whatsoever, and of course this figure multiplies exponentially for every generation.

The second and third-generations themselves seem to be interested in family memory for reasons unrelated to ethnicity or political circumstances. According to Mr KM, a second-generation Latvian:

The older generation, they don't care so much, but my generation and the next generation, they want to know, even the little things like what a person's traits are or what their genetic makeup is, they want to know.\textsuperscript{878}

Mr AH explained that he had travelled to Czechoslovakia, meeting family, a number of times, and was grateful for the opportunity to be part of my oral history project. He lamented:

This is a really interesting thing for me because as I said there has been a lot, I'd like to know how [my father] got on when he first came out here, I would like to know, basically I'd like to know what he'd done, what he'd been through, probably 20 years of [stories].\textsuperscript{879}

Ms LD, a third-generation of Polish/Dutch descent, initially became interested in her family background because she wondered why she was

\textsuperscript{877} Interview with Mr AH, 8 November 2007.  
\textsuperscript{878} Interview with Mr KM, 12 February 2008.  
\textsuperscript{879} Interview with Mr AH, 8 November 2007.
the first person in her family to attend university. When she wanted to travel to Europe, the opportunity to obtain a Polish passport, and even visit Poland, was too good to pass up. Interestingly, mothers seem to pass on most of the family information – many of my respondents mentioned that it was their mother who had told them whatever information they had. In Ms LD's case, as her mother is second-generation Dutch, she happened to know a lot about the Dutch side of her family, but nothing of the Polish until she decided to research it herself, accessing general works on post-war immigration to Australia.\textsuperscript{880}

In essence, then, two themes resonated from this examination of interview persona and family transmission: ignorance of the past, and a yearning for it. I found that in my small sample of oral history participants, for all generations the focus was on the individual and familial rather than the national or diasporic. However, individual and family members are not always so easy to access. Ms LD is one example of a later generation DP whose private longing for access to family memory has resulted in a reaching out to memories accessible in the public sphere - autobiography, memoir, histories and even participation in oral history projects. Multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s created a more open environment in which the second and third generations could not only look for information, but also contribute their memories to the wider culture.

\textsuperscript{880} Interview with Mr ED and Ms LD, 20 August 2007.
The next chapter will discuss commemoration – or representations of memory in the wider culture – in what is a fascinating interplay in contemporary Australia between official narratives, professional public historians, and individualized oral histories.
Chapter Five

DP Commemoration

[Bonegilla] is an incredibly moving and important site which should be preserved for all Australians, not just those whose family came here. I'm a sixth-generation Australian and I was moved to tears. – Prue V, Bonegilla visitor 7 April 2007.\textsuperscript{881}

My mum says, 'I hate this place'. – Anonymous, Bonegilla visitor 19 April 2009.\textsuperscript{882}

Bonegilla, the largest and longest-lived of the DP/migrant camps, has a chequered commemorative history. Initially ignored as a site of national importance, by the 1980s it was hailed by migrants and academics as a founding place of multicultural identity, Australia's Ellis Island. It is now a national heritage site, and state-funded as a commemorative site. However, its success as a place of national commemoration is debatable. The attempt at including Bonegilla in a celebratory narrative of multiculturalism has been problematic, for the state, and for the DPs and their children.

Bonegilla is emblematic of DP commemoration in Australia, which itself is part of a larger commemorative effort revolving around 'immigration'.

Factors influencing commemoration (or public memory) include the newly

\textsuperscript{881} Bruce Pennay, 'Block 19 Bonegilla Visitor Book Entries', unpublished paper.
\textsuperscript{882} Pennay, The Young at Bonegilla, p. 22.
professionalized museums, and the rise of the heritage industry and social and oral histories, as well as the emergence of DP or migrant academics and cultural commentators. DP commemoration in Australia is thus part of an ambient ‘cultural politics of recognition’.  

There are, of course, inherent problems in collective remembering by way of commemoration, not least of which is the question of power: who has the power to decide the significance of objects and themes? In a multicultural society (and in one particularly focused on social cohesion), memorialising ethnic community ‘contributions’ can become a way of legitimating a more inclusive national narrative.  

One example of this is the homogenisation of ‘post-war migrants’, and the frequent characterisation of these post-war migrants as ‘nation builders’. The achievement of multiculturalism as the end-point of immigration stories thus becomes ‘a completed stage of history, safely nestled in a sealed-off past’. Indeed, Mark McKenna has argued that the focus on ethnicity and multiculture – ‘the parade of nationalisms’ - in the lead-up to the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988 was a means of government side-stepping Aboriginal grievances by focusing on assimilable ethnics rather

than a postcolonial counter-narrative of 'Invasion Day'. Historians Paula Hamilton and Paul Ashton have further argued that, in general, public historians become 'enlisted de facto in the state's 'management' of cultural difference' because fitting into narratives of the state-sponsored structure of heritage is of paramount importance when applying for funding and recognition. Similarly, historian Graeme Davison has noted that 'heritage is essentially a political idea' that privileges the collective over the individual. Frans Schouten, an academic specialising in cultural tourism, has extended these arguments, going so far as to say: 'Heritage is history processed through mythology, ideology, nationalism, local pride, romantic ideas or just plain marketing, into a commodity'.

Commemorations are thus problematic, generally state-based, forms of representation.

Ostensibly bypassing this issue are those sites purportedly commemorated by DPs themselves. Daniel Cohen has noted that worldwide there is an 'abundance' of websites relating to the DP camps in


Germany, Austria and Italy, and has argued that this is evidence that ‘DPs are manifestly back in force in commemorative practices’.  

This chapter will examine the many sites of memory integral to the DP experience in Australia; that is, DP commemorative practices, particularly with regards to reunions and websites, as well as state-based commemorative practices: museums, archives, and the physical sites which are thought to be of importance in the memory of Displaced Persons and their families, as well as significant to Australia and Australians generally. This chapter will describe how DPs are retrospectively represented in Australia, by whom, and why.

Museums and Archives

Museums and archives are of course the preeminent state-based ‘points of intersection between past and present, memory and postmemory, personal and cultural recollection’. These venues ‘provide history’s best liaisons with the public’, as well as liaising between national, diasporic and postmodern representations. Museums have diverse and extensive audiences who go to museums to learn about themselves, to see what

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891 Cohen, 'Remembering Post-War Displaced Persons', p. 95.
has been identified as significant, and to come away with a stronger sense of themselves within a 'vast web of tradition and knowledge'. Museums are complicated memory sites: they incorporate a translation of the past, audience identification and reaction, and a projection of the future. Added to this are financial pressures where organisations compete for funding, publicity, and customers.

In Australia, the multicultural era has led to a mixture of community-led and community-focused exhibitions and archives within a national institutional framework, with migration a regular topic. In fact, Museums Australia, the peak national body representing the nation's museums and galleries, has a cultural diversity policy which states: 'All Australians have the right to see elements of their culture preserved and interpreted in museums'. In this regard, historian and curator at the National Museum of Australia (1990-2000), Ian McShane, has explained the various pressure points on museums, and particularly national museums, in the area of migration history, including incorporating its many facets within a singular national story, responding to the distinctive histories and identities of particular community groups or regions, responding to new directions in

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895 Dubin, Displays of Power, p. 7.
McShane has identified the usual approaches of the presentation of migration history in museums: the rebirth or redemptive narrative, the enrichment (celebratory multiculturalism) narrative, the journey narrative and the barrier metaphor, with an emphasis on regulatory/exclusionary processes. Historian and curator Mary Hutchison has further argued that in the typical ‘multicultural’ migration exhibition, ‘migration is implicitly ahistorical and diversity is fixed rather than flexible, static rather than interactive’; curators have managed diversity by displaying it in a ‘mosaic of separate pieces’. Not surprisingly, ‘stock’ narratives and ‘undifferentiated’ ethnicities are common when examining exhibitions focusing on DPs. Of course there are also arguments for museums to become a ‘place where ideas about the past can be safely debated and explored’, with an emphasis on ‘multiple interpretations’. McShane, for example, has suggested an additional approach of examining migration through patterns of working life to not only historically contextualize

migration, but to also place migration in the broader scope of an individual's life. Mary Hutchison, meanwhile, has suggested incorporating representations involving 'connection, influence and change' as well as an emphasis on 'the historical, the local and the personal'.

The Migration Museum in Adelaide, established in 1983 and opened to the public in 1986, was the first migration museum in the world. It was established by the South Australian state government in response to a report into the South Australian Museum in 1980, which recommended the establishment of an 'ethnic' museum. The new curatorial staff, however, chose to become a museum of migration (with a focus on social history) rather than a museum of ethnicity, hoping in this way to reinstate various groups into the mainstream history of the state. Its brief was (and is) to document, collect, preserve and interpret migration history. It tends to celebrate multiculturalism, and in fact its two main stakeholders, the South Australian government and the History Trust (SA), are both committed to representing the 'diverse cultures and the contributions made by

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900 McShane, 'Challenging or Conventional?', pp. 128-129.
901 Hutchison, 'Dimensions for a folding exhibition', pp. 73, 67.
migrants', particularly bearing in mind the 'electoral significance of immigrant communities'.

The Migration Museum has a long history of successful collaboration with ethnic community groups, who have a 'deep desire to make their version of a story public' and, perhaps, to keep a sense of ethnic essentialism alive. Director Viv Szekeres recalled in 2007 the pioneering work undertaken by museum staff:

> When the Museum first began the historical research that underpinned the exhibits, we found a dearth of secondary sources. With very few exceptions the universities were not interested in immigration history or migration stories. The Museum curators had to go out in search of these stories.

For one of the first exhibitions at the museum, 'Textile Traditions', Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian and Macedonian community members contributed textiles. A Latvian exhibition, 'From the Past Into the Future: Latvian Handicrafts in South Australia' (1991/1992) examined the close relationship in Latvian culture between folk songs and the geometric symbols used in handcrafts. Other exhibitions to use private collections have included 'Contemporary Lithuanian Bookplates' (1989/90) and 'Ukrainian Embroidery in South Australia' (1988). In 1992 the museum staged an exhibition 'Your Past Is What You Keep?', examining the notion that the kinds of objects people keep are often associated with important

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903 Szekeres, 'Mind the Gap', p. 2.
904 Szekeres, 'Mind the Gap', p. 3.
905 Szekeres, 'South Australia's Cultural Diversity', p. 4.
events and rituals that mark their journey through time. ‘A Ukrainian Perspective’ to this exhibition included Ukrainian costumes, musical instruments and religious paraphernalia.906

Ethnic communities have also used exhibitions at the museum to tie in with various community events. Estonians celebrated the first anniversary of Estonia’s declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1992 with an exhibition, ‘Retaining Estonia’s Cultural Heritage’. The exhibition ‘Hungarians in South Australia’ coincided with the Seventh Hungarian Cultural Convention, held in Adelaide in 1987/1988, while ‘Serbs Down Under’ formed part of the celebrations of an annual Serbian cultural festival in 1987. ‘Lithuanians Alive’, staged five months after Lithuanian independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, set out a Lithuanian history throughout the ages and described Lithuanian settlement in South Australia.907

It is significant that a museum which celebrates multiculturalism has chosen to exhibit primarily in ethnic groupings. These sorts of exhibitions, particularly the earlier, relatively ‘unsophisticated’ exhibitions (in the words of museum director Viv Szekeres), have been characterized by media studies academic Katherine Goodnow as simply displaying ‘pretty things from different cultures’, with little historical context or political analysis.

906 Migration Museum (SA), From Many Places, pp. 296, 314, 509.
907 Migration Museum (SA), From Many Places, pp. 150, 212, 423, 314.
Goodnow, however, argues that later exhibitions have represented 'issues with more subtlety', and have explored 'multiple meanings', allowing 'voices to speak about previously silent areas'.

In 1995 the Museum published extensive histories of ethnic groups in South Australia: From Many Places: The History and Cultural Traditions of South Australian People. When I visited the museum in 2006 I was impressed by the extensive and informative section on Displaced Persons using life narratives and including plaques, posters, photographs, films and artworks, such as drawings and quilts. There was also a walk-in recreation of a Nissen hut with quotes and photographs from migrants, including DPs.

A new gallery (from May 2007), 'Immigration and Settlement of South Australia', sets out a chronological narrative of immigration to South Australia, including a section on DPs. A temporary exhibition, 'Home is where the Heart is: South Australian Immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s' (2010), examined 'the experiences of arriving in a new country, staying in migrant hostels, living in caravans, crates or rented spaces, the hard work of building a house and finally making it a home'. According to one

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909 McShane, 'Challenging or Conventional?', p. 128.
reviewer, agency, ambiguity and complexity were the themes of this study of immigrant domesticity.\footnote{911 Goodnow, ‘Traditional Methods and New Moves’, p. 48; Migration Museum, ‘Temporary Exhibitions: Home Is Where the Heart Is’, http://www.history.sa.gov.au/migration/exhibitions/home.html, viewed 22 December 2010; Vesna Drapac, ‘Home Comforts’, History Australia, 7, no. 3 (December 2010), p. 64.1.}

The museum also holds memorial plaques by migrant groups in its outdoor gallery ‘Reasons to Remember’, including one unveiled by the Baltic Council of South Australia in 1992 ‘to acknowledge the terrible impact of the deportations, including the flight of the lucky from their homelands’, and one unveiled in 1993 by Polish South Australians to ‘commemorate the horrific events that unfolded after September 1939’.\footnote{912 Migration Museum (SA), From Many Places, pp. 295, 378.}

There is also opportunity to buy a tile ($300) in Settlement Square to set out your family’s name, birthplace and date of arrival in Australia.\footnote{913 History Trust of South Australia, Migration Museum, ‘Settlement Square’, http://www.history.sa.gov.au/migration/about/settlement_sq.htm, viewed 9 December 2009.}

The only other migration museum in Australia, the Immigration Museum in Melbourne, has chosen a different approach. Opening in 1998 as a new campus of Museum Victoria, with funding from the State Government, the museum supports a state-based community history: ‘Immigration is about us all – ourselves, our families and our ancestors. Through the stories we tell we can begin to understand the rich histories of Victoria.’\footnote{914 Museum Victoria, Immigration Museum (Melbourne: 1998), p. 19.} Although some supporters of the museum speak of celebrating ‘multiculturalism’, museum staff thought that a concern with ‘the history of immigration since
the Second World War, and focus on the history of culturally specific immigrant groups' is 'impractical' and that 'the emphasis on multiculturalism had had the unintended consequence of displacing the experiences of British and Irish immigrants from mainstream immigration history'.

Curators thus decided to redefine immigration as an 'experience that was shared by the families of all non-indigenous Australians', told through the six themes of leavings, journeys, arrivals, settlings, impacts and reunions. This is a rather conservative approach, and historian Sara Wills has charged the museum with emphasizing the 'safe investment' of migration and of migration achievement. It could be said that the Museum has neatly sidestepped debates around multicultural ideology in order to demonstrate the complexities of the immigration process, rather than the nationalizing process. On the other hand, this tendency to homogenize migrants and refugees can be seen as a safe domestication and assimilationist narrative along the lines of 'we were all migrants, we are all Australians now'.

The DPs have been highlighted in various temporary exhibitions such as 'In Search of Freedom: Refugee Journeys', which used photographs and artefacts to tell life stories of the refugee as 'a person who is forced to flee

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915 May Kalantzis, cited in Museum Victoria, Immigration Museum, p. 31.
their homeland'. Another exhibition 'Lost and Found' featured works by migrants and indigenous artists on themes of dislocation and belonging, while a ceramic installation 'The Space Between Alienation and Assimilation' explored the experience of 280 Polish DPs who worked in Tasmania building villages, roads, dams and power stations in the 1950s.918 'The Migrant Hostel in Springvale' exhibition recorded the history of the hostel and the impact it made on the surrounding community of Springvale as well as on Victoria's broader multicultural landscape'.919 A Polish exhibition, 'Terra Nova', which commemorated fifty years of post-war migration by Poles to Australia, was also held at the museum before touring both Australia and Poland.920 Bulgarian DP Agnes Karlik, whose father made a motion picture film of the voyage to Australia, gifted parts of the film to the museum; however, they are not on permanent display.921

Included in the Immigration Museum complex is a Community Gallery, which has the same function as the Migration Museum's community 'Forum', allowing communities to develop their own exhibitions. The Museum includes a Tribute Garden within which Victorians may engrave their family's name and 'commemorate the role played by their families in the creation of our culturally diverse state'. There is a Share a Story

918 Wills, 'Finding Room For Loss', p. 75.
921 Interview with Agnes Karlik, 31 August 2007.
database where Victorians can add their own migration story to a bank of oral testaments, and search stories that others before them have left. The Museum also holds ‘enormously popular’ immigration ship reunion days.\textsuperscript{922}

The establishment of a third state-based immigration museum has often been discussed but there are no firm plans for such a museum and, surprisingly, no plans for a national immigration museum even though among museum professionals there is ‘a desire for a more avowedly national representation of the migration experience’.\textsuperscript{923}

The National Museum of Australian (NMA), opened to the public in 2001 in Canberra, is publicly ‘committed to telling great stories about Australia and Australians’, and not without courting controversy.\textsuperscript{924} The gallery ‘Horizons’ (2001-2007) examined the ‘peopling’ of Australia, including generations of Anglo-Celtic settlers. According to a 2003 government review which took exception to this representation of migration, colonial settlement should be depicted as a heroic foundation event rather than part of immigration history. The review suggested instead using life


\textsuperscript{923} McShane, ‘Challenging or Conventional?’, pp. 122, 130.

\textsuperscript{924} National Museum of Australia, \textit{The National Museum of Australia} (pamphlet).
histories to best represent 'diversity'; one example of how life stories and oral histories can be used to de-contextualise migrant, and DP, history.925

The NMA's gallery 'Eternity' now holds a spectrum of Australian biographies – 'stories from the emotional heart of Australia' - including migrant biographies. The gallery 'Australian Journeys' (2009) holds some objects relating to migration, including a 'Little Red Riding Hood' wall-hanging made by a Ukrainian DP in a German displaced persons camp after World War Two and given to an Australian aid worker.926 This hanging was rejected by the Australian War Memorial, the War Memorial considering it to be 'social history'.927 'Australian Journeys' also includes a Latvian national costume donated in 1989 by DP Guna Kinne, who had no female relatives to pass the dress on to. The national costume had been made by Kinne in Riga in the late 1930s, taken with her as her 'most important possession' when she fled the Soviet invasion of Latvia, and completed in a DP camp in Germany. Kinne wore the dress in Australia to greet Princess Alexandra of Kent at a Good Neighbour function in 1959, and at protests for Latvian independence in the 1960s and 1970s.

According to curators, the costume ‘connects Latvia and Australia, and the protests on the streets of Riga at the time of the Soviet invasion with protests on the streets of Melbourne 40 years later. Interwoven with her personal biography, the biography of her dress connects Riga, Gdansk and Geestacht with Wangaratta and Melbourne’.\textsuperscript{928}

Kinne’s donation was part of a migrant heritage collecting program undertaken by Jerzy Zubrzycki and Egan Kunz between 1988 and 1990, which ‘resulted in a significant collection documenting the arrival and experiences of displaced persons and refugees after the Second World War, as well as assisted migrants from central and northern Europe’.\textsuperscript{929}

Their intent was to:

Portray the history of the movement, history of settlement, and provide a future historian with a sufficient array of three dimensional objects as well as documents and oral history and other documents, to provide an insight into the mechanics and the dynamics of migration and settlement in Australia at the turn of the century and up to this day.\textsuperscript{930}

Other collection items include objects from the Pennington Migrant Centre (although only one object related to Bonegilla).\textsuperscript{931} However, migrant

\textsuperscript{930} NAA, Oral TRC 2569 Prof. Jerzy Zubrzycki (1920-2009) interviewed by Peter Biskup, 1990.
\textsuperscript{931} National Museum of Australia, ‘Pennington Migrant Centre Collection’, http://www.nma.gov.au/collections-
contributions actually exhibited at the NMA are scant. Its 1982 Plan for the Development of the Museum of Australia explicitly set out that a history of ethnic origins was to be set out only ‘in the contexts of the peopling of Australia, and developing nationhood from a multi-national background’. In other words, ‘ethnic heritage’ must conform to a multicultural narrative.

A review of the NMA was commissioned in 2003, inviting submissions from the public with regards to its exhibitions and public programs. Jerzy Zubryzcki and others argued in favour of a stronger immigration and ethnicity component for the NMA. Zubryzcki complained: ‘At present we have a miniscule display consisting of a handful of migrant heritage material (within the larger area dedicated to post-1788 people)’. The review panel responded: ‘A national museum cannot do everything’.

Similarly, the Australian War Memorial’s Peter Stanley has stated:

Without seeking to misrepresent the presence of ethnic minorities in a society 95 per cent Anglo-Celtic, the Second World War Gallery includes many reminders that the war affected people of other cultures who were or who became Australians. So, for

935 Review of the National Museum of Australia, p. 10.
example ... we tell the stories of people who came to Australia because of the war: a Polish colonel who fought at Tobruk ... 936

Within the War Memorial there is no specific reference to Displaced Persons as refugees of the Second World War, although interestingly historian Bruce Pennay has recently argued that the reception centre site of Bonegilla could be classed as 'an uncommon war memorial' because of its accommodation of 'civilians uprooted from war zones'. This thought perhaps originated with artist Domenico de Clario (who arrived in Australia from Trieste in 1956) who, when preparing an art exhibition in 2008 in Albury, arranged the memorabilia from Bonegilla as an ossuary. His exhibition was a tribute to the 'Unknown Migrant whose bones originate from the numberless micro-narratives of the migrants who passed through Bonegilla'. 937

Giving DPs a more prominent position in the nation's history, the National Australian Archives (NAA) has recently placed its collection of DP immigration records onto the UNESCO World Australian Memory of the World Register (2000-), a 'selective list of Australia’s significant documentary heritage' (which holds 34 separate collections). 938

936 Peter Stanley, 'Diversity of Visitors, Diversity of Interpretation: The Australian War Memorial’s Second World War Gallery', in McIntyre and Wehner, National Museums, p. 63.


records were nominated by the NAA as 'unique, irreplaceable and influential' records for historical and individual reasons:

The collection ... documents a major shift in Australia's immigration priorities, which prior to World War 2 had favoured migration from Anglo-Celtic sources, and thus transformed political and social expectations of the cultural diversity of Australia. But beside being the evidence of shifts in government policy, the collection is also of significance for its resource of personal histories. These have not only evidentiary value but also emotional significance as the interface between old European family identities and new Australian citizen identities.939

This of course points to a new representation of the DPs as Australian citizens who have 'old European family identities' (where European increasingly stands for status); personal connections which are firmly in the past. The DP records collection is one of only two collections concerning post-war migration; the other is the personal archive of Joseph Stanislaus Ostoja-Kotkowski, a Polish DP and prominent artist-scientist, held at the State Library of South Australia and Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne.940

At the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) at Darling Harbour in Sydney, which is the only national museum outside Canberra, exhibitions on migration themes are a regular occurrence. A permanent exhibition, 'Passengers', presents aspects of the long sea voyage made


by many migrants. An exhibition ‘Displaced Persons’ by Anne Zahalka and Sue Saxon was held in Refugee Week 2006 to commemorate the journey of the artists’ fathers to Australia from Eastern Europe in 1950. Twenty white handkerchiefs – ‘cloths that are traditionally used to wipe away tears and to wave farewell’ – contained montages of documents, maps, postcards, photographs and mementoes as well as embroidered words which highlighted the ‘complexities and ironies of all migrant journeys to new lands’.

The ANMM also incorporates a 100-metre long bronze Welcome Wall, publicized as a ‘national tribute to all migrants’. Migrants are invited to pay $105 to have their name inscribed on the Wall, with brief biographical notes to go on the Museum’s publicly accessible database. There are already 18,000 names on the Wall, with space for 30,000, and new names are unveiled twice yearly at public ceremonies. The Welcome Wall seems to be popular with Displaced Persons, as it is a testament to individuals and families, even if some haven’t quite got around to getting their name inscribed. Estonian Mr TR had his family’s name inscribed on the wall because ‘it’s a little bit of history – part of Australian history (my emphasis)’. He has a hope that his family’s story will ‘continue in

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946 Interview with Ms OM, 8 October 2007.
perpetuity for future generations that whoever follows me there is a past that is recorded, because otherwise graveyards get grown over by weeds and blackberry bushes; nothing left at all'.\textsuperscript{947} Latvian Mr KM also has his family's name inscribed and seems to connect his family history with a broader Australian migration narrative:

I've also got an inscription on the Darling Harbour Welcome Wall, panel number 26, and also you can go on the internet too and read a little bit about my family history. I was only there last Friday actually; in Townsville I met a student from Korea ... and so we met up at Darling Harbour last Friday and I took her around.\textsuperscript{948}

State and smaller museums have also held exhibitions relying on input from community groups. Recent examples include the Gold Museum and the Ballarat Historical Society organizing an exhibition in 2008 entitled 'Migrant to Citizen: Stories from Ballarat's Polish community', to commemorate sixty years of the Polish Association in Ballarat.\textsuperscript{949} Similarly, a planned exhibition of DPs in an area heavily populated with Croatians, Serbs, Russians and Poles was intended to 'allow the youngsters, some 3000 whose parents and grandparents fall into this group, to understand their family history which for many has never been discussed or told ... over a 45 year period'.\textsuperscript{950}

\textsuperscript{947} Interview with Mr TR, 5 October 2007.
\textsuperscript{948} Interview with Mr KM, 12 February 2008.
As successful as these exhibitions have been, their over-reliance on ethnic community groups to initiate and develop their own exhibitions is unrealistic. Most DPs have never identified as members of ethnic community groups, while those who do seem to be more interested in continuing their involvement with ethnic community and/or diasporic archives. Since independence from the Soviet Union, for example, many individual migrants and community organizations have sent many of their holdings back to the Baltic States, reasoning that as they are part of the larger diaspora, centralized collections in the 'historical Motherland' was preferable. Historically, libraries and archives were seen by some communities to be an important part of the diaspora. The Estonians, Latvians, Poles and Ukrainians maintained libraries, while other communities cherished private collections. The Estonian Archives were established as early as 1952 for the purpose of collecting and preserving material relating to the life of Estonian DPs in Australia. Much of the material related to organisations protesting against the Soviet occupation of Estonia, as archivists were concerned that the Soviet government would re-write Estonian history. Likewise, Latvians sent material to their central archives in Sydney. In Adelaide, the Lithuanian community association maintains a museum and collection of archives, and the Polish

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952 Martin, Community and Identity, p. 38.
Historical Society collects Polish material. The collection of Ukrainian books held at the Ukrainian Catholic Centre in Melbourne is now the largest in the southern hemisphere.954 Other groups have never held collections. For all, active members of the communities are getting older. As Ukrainian Ms IC has complained, ‘I’ve put on displays for the Ukrainian community, I’ve done what I can, even though the community is shrinking’.955

In this regard, oral histories can help to bridge the gap. In 2005 the Museum of Queensland hosted an exhibition by the Brisbane Lithuanian community, initiated and developed by second-generation Lithuanian DP Eve Wicks. Wicks recorded 74 oral histories, photographed subjects, carried out research and collected artifacts with an aim to ‘produce a strong engagement of the audience with individual community storytellers’.956 Over 200 people, including second and third-generation Lithuaniens attended the exhibition opening, with many returning a number of times. The community response was said to be ‘cathartic’, with Wicks noting:

A feeling of pride and, for the generations who experienced life in Australia under its assimilation policy, relief that exhibition

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955 Interview with Ms IC, 29 October 2007.
evaluation demonstrated that there is a broad community acceptance of their culture, experience and contribution.\textsuperscript{957}

In 2009 Launceston’s Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery held an exhibition, *Past Lives, New Beginnings* which focused on post-war immigration to Tasmania. As an adjunct to the exhibition, playwright Stella Kent was commissioned to write a play based on around 50 oral history interviews held at the Museum and taped by Community History Curator Jill Cassidy. Kent’s play *New Tasmanians* shows a real effort to display the heterogeneity of the experiences of the migrants the actors portray.\textsuperscript{958}

There has been increasing second and third-generation involvement in the creation of art and artifacts, particularly since the 1980s, and such involvement can further serve to join the national and diasporic. Sociologist Jerzy Smolicz has noted regarded Polish cultural heritage in Australia, and particularly in relation to a 1995 exchange between the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography in Łódź of contemporary Polish folk art and the Museum of Tropical Anthropology at James Cook University in Townsville of contemporary material culture and art of indigenous of Australia and Oceania:

Some cultural elements may unfortunately never be retrieved alas, but their absence is partly compensated by the addition of new items from young artists born in Australia of second, or even fifth,  

generation who have infused into their creativity the vibrancy of Australia's diversity.  

According to Smolicz, the exhibition 'Roses and Red Earth', featuring contemporary Polish and Polish-Australian artists: 'confirms the view of [US poet] Thomas Stearns Eliot that the most inspiring cultural creativity does not lie buried in the depths of a culture, but shines most brightly at the friction edge of cultures'. An example of this sort of meeting cultures is in the work of Polish-Jewish-Australian artist Felix Tuszynski, who draws in ink on large ostrich eggs. He jokingly states that this is an 'Australian response to the Polish tradition of decorating Easter eggs'.

As far as first-generation artifacts are concerned, however, Ukrainian Mr Li makes the valid complaint that 'there is no clearly defined repository for these things'. The Polish Historical Institute (PHI) signed an agreement in 2000 with the National Library in Canberra (the only such ethnic partnership with the NLA) that archival material could be held at the Library - manuscript and pictorial material as well as publications of Australian interest in Polish or English and oral history interviews with Polish Australians. This arrangement is seen by the PHI as important in 'bringing Australia and Poland together' so that documents can be 'got at

960 Smolicz, ‘Creativity Where Cultures Meet’, p. 64.
961 Maria Wrońska-Friend, ‘Artists’ Profiles’, in Maria Wrońska-Friend, Roses and Red Earth, p. 120.
962 Interview with Mr Li, 17 July 2007.
by researchers'. However, there are still limitations on depositing material, as Mr WH points out: 'Everybody would like to have their auntie's memoirs in there but unfortunately we can't do that, for one there is a lack of space and relevance as well – just not relevant'.

The internet has created an additional, more democratic space where museums can record and share their history. Historian Joanne Maddern has queried whether the type of identities and memories favoured by the 'new social history' can ever be represented institutionally in a personalized fashion, or whether they 'demand new technologies of representation'. Mainstream Australian institutions, and commemorative sites such as Bonegilla, have websites, and the area of migration history seems one ideally suited to internet broadcast. As artist and second generation DP Anton Veenstra has noted, 'websites on immigration seem to be the refuge of those seeking to remember, recreating a virtual reality where the physical site has been demolished'.

The NSW Migration Heritage Centre (1997) website, a 'virtual heritage centre', was conceived by the NSW Premier's Department as a way to record the memories and heritage legacies of post-Second World War

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964 Interview with Mr WH, 4 October 2007.
migrants. Now part of the Powerhouse Museum, it works as a facilitator between community groups around the state and trained curatorial and heritage staff, which partnering often leads to local exhibitions. Permanent online exhibitions include 'Fields of Memories: Scheyville Farm and Migrant Centre'; 'From Estonia to Thirlmere: Stories from a Unique Community'; 'Half a World Away: Postwar Migration to Orange District'; 'Meie uus Kode (Our New Home): Estonian-Australia Stories'; and 'So Much Sky: Bonegilla Reception & Training Centre'.

The main online exhibition, however, is 'Belongings', which features 'post-World War Two migration memories and journeys'. It uses snippets of oral history interviews as well as photographs of individuals and artifacts to set out a brief history of individual migrants, including DPs. Subheadings include Name, Cultural Background, Place of Origin, Start of Migration Journey, Place of Arrival in Australia, Migration Accommodation, Next Home in Australia, First Job in Australia, Other Jobs in Australia, Migration Memories and Photographs. Focusing on an artifact as a 'memento' is an attempt, of course, to engage with the commemorative practices of migrants themselves. Latvian DP Amelia Brinkis, for example, explained the importance of her saucepan and ladle (procured in Germany) and her coffee table (made by her husband from their luggage crate box):

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967 Petersen, 'Though This be Madness', pp. 35-36.
My husband has passed away now and I often live in my memories of the past, both the good and the bad. I am reminded of the past whenever I look at my saucepan and ladle or simply have a cup of tea and rest it on the coffee table.970

‘Belongings’ documents histories and keepsakes, and creates community awareness as to the safeguarding of material effects. However, the Powerhouse Museum does not act as a repository for any of the artifacts, which stay with their owners. Ukrainian Mr LI has complained, ‘I suppose it’s recorded but why hasn’t it been kept somewhere or [at least] a lot of the better stuff collected?’971 Similarly, Ukrainian DP Mr LD expressed a desire to place his documents in a collecting institution: ‘I don’t know what to do with them, where would be the best place’.972 The goal of the online exhibition, rather than collection, is to enable ‘mementoes [to] be passed down within families with their stories and meanings understood; historians [to] know which memorabilia items are important and why; and curators [to] request a loan from the private owner for museum exhibition displays’.973

971 Interview with Mr LI, 17 July 2007.
972 Interview with Mr LD, 4 February 2008.
As well as not providing a repository for artifacts, online exhibitions also face the valid criticism of 'the question of how far memory is shaped into modern day media bytes'.974 While being the most easily accessible form of public history commemoration, and perhaps more amenable to 'layering' than conventional exhibitions, online exhibitions can lack in-depth historical context and analysis.975 The NSW Migration Heritage website, for example, aims its collection and interpretation squarely at school audiences, and website hits have provided evidence that schools are the site's 'key audience'.976

While the NSW Migration Heritage Centre's positions itself as apart from interpretation (and a 'sanitised and celebratory' multicultural narrative), its focus on working with local 'migrant' communities is problematic. Its staff also act, understandably, as advocates of migrant heritage. This perhaps creates, rather than fulfils, a migrant need for commemorative activities. The Centre, for example, is planning to promote migrant accommodation centre reunions by using social media in hope of creating groups around the 38 centres operating between 1946 and 1978.977

974 Email from Bruce Penney, 15 October 2008.
975 Wilton, 'Belongings', p. 17.
977 Petersen, 'Though This be Madness', pp. 44, 37.
Actual sites around which DP memories coalesce, or are seen to coalesce, include individual ships and their voyages from Europe to Australia, the reception and holding camps, and workplaces, predominantly the Snowy Mountains Scheme. The ships themselves as physical relics are not the focus of any commemorative attempts. Rather, it is their passenger lists and memories of shipboard experiences that are remembered and commemorated by both 'memory specialists', and by the DP themselves.\textsuperscript{978} The Snowy's landscape and the sheer physicality of the DPs' work lives on in memory and in commemorations which include only Snowy Mountains workers and their families, however this iconography has recently become central to attempts to celebrate all migrants. The reception and holding camps are the clearest examples of a 'landscape-identity nexus' interacting with the politics of collective memory and nationalism.\textsuperscript{979}

\textbf{The Voyage: Ships}

In DP histories, and memories, there is an emphasis on reunions as a commemorative practice in the remembering of ship voyages. Ship reunions seem to include spontaneous acts of DP commemoration as well as the more formal get-togethers organized by ethnic groups and public

\textsuperscript{978} Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, 'Introduction', in Darian-Smith and Hamilton, MEMORY \textit{and History}, p 6.
\textsuperscript{979} Moore and Whelan, \textit{Heritage, Memory and the Politics of Identity}, p. x.
institutions such as the 2003 reunion of DPs who had travelled on one of four ships: *Neptunia, Oceania, Australia* and *Fairsea*, as organised by the Immigration Museum in Melbourne. Historian Bruce Pennay has noted that DPs 'plainly see the journey to Australia as an important part of the migrant experience and seem to readily recall not only the date of arrival but the ship on which they travelled'. A group from the *Fairsea* who ended up in Newcastle held informal reunions every year and in 1969 a ball was held to commemorate the twentieth year of their arrival in Australia. Likewise, the 'Siberiaks', a group of Polish DPs with backgrounds of incarceration in Siberia, in 1975 held a 25th anniversary of their arrival in Australia, which attracted around 300 people. However, it was not until the 1980s, with 40th year celebrations and the rise of celebratory multiculturalism, that ship reunions and commemorations became common. An advertisement placed by a DP in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 2007 expressed the desire for a ship reunion plaintively:

SS Roma: On October 31, 1950 the SS Roma left Bremerhaven, Germany, with 949 passengers, mostly displaced persons and children, bound for Australia. The vessel made a very slow voyage, taking more than five weeks to reach Fremantle on December 9. It then continued to Newcastle, NSW, where it berthed on December 18 and disembarked all its passengers, who were then transferred to Greta Camp and settled into army barracks. As far as I know,

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980 Kate Pollard, 'The Voyage Out', *Eureka Street* (December 2003), p. 16.
981 Bruce Pennay, 'Significance Assessment', p. 17.
982 Interview with Mr VL, 17 June 2008.
there has never been a reunion of passengers. I am very keen to be part of a reunion. 985

Some reunions and commemorative activities have been initiated by DPs, although often there is collaboration between DPs, both individual and collective, and public institutions, such as the plaque in Fremantle commemorating the 40th anniversary of the arrival of DPs from East Africa on the *General W C Langfitt*, a joint project by the Western Australian Maritime Museum and the DP 'General Langfitt Group' (an association of Polish DPs who had arrived from Africa on the *General W C Langfitt*, formed in Melbourne during the early 1990s). 986

Motivations behind memory-initiation are diverse. Second-generation Estonian Anne Marie Birdsey (Daczko) organized a 50-year anniversary in 1999 for those who came out on the ship *Bundy*: 'Because I was so young I felt really “Aussie” compared to our older neighbours and I thought let’s get them all together before it gets too old to remember. I wanted to see what people felt about Australia.' 967 Hungarian DP Agnes Karlik has done an enormous amount of work in commemorating the shipboard voyage of the *Anna Salen*, which arrived in Australia in December 1950. Her father had recorded the original journey on motion-picture film, which was

subsequently returned to Germany and widely distributed. Karlik had always vaguely planned a follow-up documentary showing the life of the passengers 45-50 years later, an:

Historical documentary production that would, although based on the lives of families who arrived on ‘my’ boat, be presenting a cross-sectional historical view of migration and the contribution of migrants towards the development of this beautiful modern country of ours, Australia. ⁹⁸⁸

Karlik realized in the 1980s that ‘waiting any longer would mean losing the opportunity to talk with many of the original people’ and so she obtained the Ship’s Manifest from the Perth Archives Office and set about tracing her fellow passengers. Some DPs responded to her overtures with ‘enthusiasm for the concept bordering on the ecstatic’. For Karlik, her research fits in neatly with a vision of a multicultural Australia:

Their stories must be told, recorded for posterity. It is as much part of the history of Australia, Australia’s growth as a respected member of this Family of Nations living on Planet Earth, as are the First Fleeters, the colonizers and the Aborigines ... The greatest influence on the growing up of Australia as a Nation was the arrival of the post-war migrants from Europe. Not just the individuals who became enormously successful by various standards in our society, but by each and every one of those persons who arrived on the Anna Salens of that era. The sacrifices made by many in giving up qualifications, hard-learned trades to work in manual labour – because that was the price of admission to a country that needed to ‘populate’. ⁹⁸⁹
A similar multicultural (and nationalist) sentiment was expressed by Prime Minister Bob Hawke in a telegram to a group commemorating the 40th anniversary of the 1948 landing of the *Derna*:

I am delighted to extend my best wishes to all those gathered here who arrived in Australia on board the SS Derna exactly forty years ago. In choosing Australia as your home you have helped to create the multicultural nature of our society. As a result, Australia is a richer, more exciting, more diverse, more prosperous society with a more distinctive identity. It is fitting that you are marking the Australian Bicentenary of European settlement with your own important anniversary.\(^\text{990}\)

Books on particular ship voyages have also been popular, as there seems to be a desire amongst DPs to 'get [the] facts about the memory'.\(^\text{991}\) The 'General Langfitt Group' formed with a 'desire to record their history', and commissioned a book *The General Langfitt Story: Polish Refugees Recount Their Experiences of Exile, Dispersal and Resettlement*. This 1995 history was funded by the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research.\(^\text{992}\) Similarly, second-generation Polish-Jewish DP Diane Armstrong's 2001 autobiographical novel *The Voyage of Their Life: The Story of the SS Derna and Its Passengers* is based on archival research and interviews.

As well as reunions and books, there are now also websites on the various IRO ship voyages. The most wide-ranging is that of second-

\(^{990}\) Armstrong, *The Voyage of Their Life*, p. 467.
\(^{991}\) Interview with Ms GG, 19 November 2007.
generation Estonian DP Ann Tündern-Smith, who has named her website 'The Fifth Fleet' in a disparaging reference to the convict era: Four fleets arrived from Britain between 1788 and 1792, and Tündern-Smith explains that the IRO's DP ships were 'the next time in Australia's history that settlers came in a group of ships "owned or operated as a unit". They were Australia’s Fifth Fleet.'

Tündern-Smith, whose parents arrived on the very first DP ship of 'beautiful Balts', thus consciously adds DP ships to an Australian narrative of convicts and indentured labourers. The website disseminates basic information on the voyages and aims to 'get people with a personal connection to the Fifth Fleet and other refugee movements from Europe during 1946-54, or an interest in them, sharing their information and perhaps reconnecting'.

In August 2010 the website included a forum which had 507 registered users, although only 287 posts, with most posters requesting family information, either for family history or contact purposes. 'Jade', for example, posted this request online on 18 March 2010:

Does anyone know where the ship docked and where the passengers lived. I am looking for my uncle, Michael Dzintarnieks who is Alfred Dzintarnieks' son. Alfred has passed away and I really need to get in contact with my uncle and have no contact details for him. Alfred used to work for Actil. I am wondering if anyone from the ship kept in contact with him and may know who his children were. Any info would be much appreciated or suggestions for sites that may be able to help me.

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Others are very interested in reunion possibilities: 'I would very much appreciate contact with other migrants/refugees from this era'.

**Migrant Reception Centres and Holding Camps**

Archaeologist Tadhg O'Keeffe has argued that 'all landscapes qualify as somebody's heritage'. In the case of the DPs, it is the reception and holding camp locations which are thought to act as both 'testimonial objects' and 'points of memory'. Australian DPs and their families have been enthusiastic users of a website founded by an American second-generation Ukrainian DP, Olga Kaczmar, based on the histories of various DP camps in Europe, as well as information on migrant reception and holding camps in various countries, including Australia (which is the largest section among the settlement countries). Many Australians contact the site's founder in order to try to locate missing family members, or missing family histories. Anne-Marie Pijanka explained, 'as all my grandparents have died – I am now on a quest to gather as much information as I can'. Similarly, Liz McKenzie wrote, 'Sadly, as most people on your site, I also found info after my mother passed away. She

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never spoke of her life at all, not even about her parents. If I asked questions, she would become angry.  

Another Australian emailed to 'try and locate a family my Grandmother accommodated in her home'. American Jenny Apfel, whose father migrated to Australia, wrote a heart-rending plea to the site’s founder:

Do you or do you know people who can do research? I was born in Unterluess, Block A-18, 1949. I have found my mother, but not able to find information on my father who emigrated to Australia. Any information I could get as to him, his family or genealogy via camp information would be great for my heart and good for my children in the future. I have been looking for him for ten years and have only recently found proof he did emigrate to Australia, but the info I got was sketchy. Perhaps he had a family? That is an avenue I may pursue. Thanks for the time.

It seems that these second and third-generation DPs are eager to access their family’s pre-Australian past; family histories, which are not taught in Australia’s education system or included in a national meta-narrative. All of those who write to the site’s founder seem grateful that there is a forum for easily accessible research and queries. Australian Maria Nolan, whose father was a forced labourer and mother a concentration camp survivor, wrote:

Congratulations on your site. It is fantastic. You have done so much wonderful stuff and gone to so much trouble. You are an inspiration

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and a tremendous help to other people doing research into their background, people like me who knew nothing about their parents’ past lives. I feel to have a future, you must know your past. Thank you for your contribution. It is much appreciated.  

Historian Mark Wyman found in 1994 that, internationally, there had been no reunions or commemorations of the European DP camps:

While they frequently gather across the US and Canada as Lithuanians, or Poles, or Hungarians, I found only one camp’s members who had ever had a later reunion as DPs: a student group who had attended the University of Graz. Their American camp director had somehow kept them in contact over the years and encouraged the reunions.

European DP camps seem to exist in memory, therefore, only for future generations who hope to locate family histories. In other words, there is a solely private impetus behind attempts at remembrance. In contrast, Australian migration and reception camps have been the centre of commemorative efforts in Australia. In a history of the largest reception camp in Australia Bonegilla: A Place of No Hope (1988), historian and second-generation Slovenian migrant (non-DP) Glenda Sluga examined the symbol that was/is ‘Bonegilla’ (the largest camp) both for migrant ex-residents and the broader Australian community. Sluga quoted a poem by second-generation Ukrainian DP Peter Skrzynecki about the migrant camp in Parkes, in order to show a possible migrant longing for some sort of official recognition:

Except for what memory recalls
there is nothing to commemorate our arrival
no plaques, no names carved on trees,
nothing officially recorded
of parents and children that lived beside
the dome-shaped, khaki coloured hills
and the red-dust road that ran between Parkes and Sydney.1006

Slug a described this search for order out of chaos as a ‘migrant
dreaming’, or popular history, which is ‘created out of and against the
existence of an official version in which it is granted no status or social
meaning’.1007 In this way, commemorative sites become:

An antidote to the restlessness of the exile, driven by the
experience to give the migrants back an understanding of their
history, of which they had been ignorant carriers and victims, but
about which they are now teaching themselves.1008

Rather than just being about and/or for migrants, Sluga argued that giving
migrants’ lives a historical context and space for commemoration works as
‘participatory dialogue’ to create a ‘synthesis of intercultural knowledge’. In
this way, memories can be a mediator between the experience of
migration from an old world and the public non-recognition of that
experience in the new one.1009

1006  Peter Skrzynceki, cited in Sluga, Bonegilla, p. 135.
1007  Sluga, Bonegilla, p. 133.
1008  Glenda Sluga, ‘Bonegilla and Migrant Dreaming’, in Darian-Smith and Hamilton, eds.,
Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia, p. 203.
Sluga noted that migrant camps were a 'focal point' for many of the stories and poems of post-war immigration, and argued that through such written and spoken words, the migrant camp, and particularly Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre in the Albury-Wodonga region, as the largest, had become a 'symbolic and actual point of orientation in the process of cultural transition'.\textsuperscript{1010} Writing around the same time (1988), historian Catherine Panich was convinced of the importance of the physical remnants of the migrant camps, complaining that 'much has been irrevocably lost to posterity through carelessness, a lack of official interest, ignorance and deliberate destruction'.\textsuperscript{1011}

Since the 1980s, a few of the former migrant camps have been the focus of heritage activity. However, historians have pointed out that commemorating such sites is less a matter of preservation than of reconstruction.\textsuperscript{1012} This leads to a concern, pinpointed by geographers Iain Robertson and Tim Hall, that:

Explicit attempts at memorialisation suggest a fixed and self-contained form of heritage-making. These memorials are attempts to fix and authentically record what is in the past and offer that past to future generations of insiders.\textsuperscript{1013}

\textsuperscript{1010} Sluga, \textit{Bonegilla}, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{1011} Panich, \textit{Sanctuary?}, pp. 188-189.
\textsuperscript{1012} Maurice Halbwachs, cited in Iain Robertson and Tim Hall, 'Memory, Identity and the Memorialisation of Conflict in the Scottish Highlands', in Moore and Whelan, \textit{Heritage, Memory and the Politics of Identity}, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{1013} Robertson and Hall, 'Memory, Identity and the Memorialisation of Conflict in the Scottish Highlands', p. 34.
Sluga was aware of this problem, warning in 1994 that the symbol of Bonegilla could be the subject of a ‘co-opting of a version of the past into a bureaucratic framework’.\textsuperscript{1014} Brigitta Olubas has also critiqued (in 2003) the ‘marking of these sites within a community (heritage) history’ as domesticking them, ‘re/producing undifferentiated assimilation as a \textit{fait accompli}, as (always already) ‘our’ own achievement’.\textsuperscript{1015} In other words, the migrant camp sites are only offered as heritage-worthy because they are seen to fuse collective and individual experience in a national narrative about Australia.\textsuperscript{1016} DPs and migrants become, in the words of cultural studies academic Vicki Karaminas, ‘an extra in another narrative of Australian history … the accumulation of signs, images and texts, histories and narratives, that form the dominant sets of truths in the imaginary of this nation’.\textsuperscript{1017} The appropriation of these sites by the nation, fusing collective ethnic and national memories with individual testimony in the service of assimilation, integration and/or multiculturalism, has thus been an attempt to infuse Australia’s national story with migration as a trope of nationalism.

This section will examine the various reception and holding camps in order to tease out why, and by whom, these landscapes have been deemed

\textsuperscript{1014} Sluga, ‘Bonegilla and Migrant Dreaming’, p. 206.
\textsuperscript{1016} Kate Darian-Smith, ‘War Stories’, in Darian-Smith and Hamilton, \textit{Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia}, p. 139.
important, and whether the above critiques are still valid. Is the migrant camp a focal point for DP memory? Have the physical remnants of these camps been ‘irrevocably lost’? Has the state attempted to appropriate the commemoration of these sites to serve in the cause of an exclusively national narrative?

**Bonegilla**

Bonegilla was the longest-lived reception centre, as well as the largest. Between 1947 and 1971, around 320,000 migrants passed through, including half of the DPs.\(^{1018}\) Relinquished by the Army in the late 1990s, Bonegilla is now a heritage listed commemorative site dubbed ‘The Bonegilla Migrant Experience’. It is ‘widely referred to as the birthplace of Australian multiculturalism’, with its former residents celebrated as ‘ordinary people who contributed to the task of nation-building’.\(^{1019}\) The story of how this all came about raises questions not only as to whether Bonegilla is a reactivated or a failed site of memory, but also as to the success or failure of multiculturalism as a historical narrative in Australia.

Some DPs, who were the first migrant inhabitants of Bonegilla, have spoken of Bonegilla as a type of ‘memory hinterland’, a concept which

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became popular during the 1980s, and particularly leading up to the Bicentennial year of 1988.\footnote{Ludmilla Forsyth, 'Life', p. 27.} Wanda Skowronska, a child of Polish and Latvian DPs, agreed with Glenda Sluga’s thesis as to the symbolism inherent in the migrant camps, stating in 2004 that ‘Bonegilla has become, in a mysterious way, a symbol of the hopeful journey, that physical and spiritual template so indelibly at the heart of Australian history’.\footnote{Wanda Skowronska, 'Journey to Bonegilla: A child of refugees looks back on a journey that ended happily', Annals Australasia (August 2004), p. 14.} Writing in 1998, Stanislaw Gotowicz, a Polish DP, argued:

> If one accepts that history to a nation is what memory is to an individual, then there could be no doubt that in Bonegilla camp, history was in the making and the newcomers were undeniably playing a significant part in that process. But how much of this history would be registered and what would remain of their experiences? Above all, what would it mean to future generations; in particular to those who, in search of their roots, would want to delve into the past?\footnote{Gotowicz, Bittersweet Bread, p. 78.}

It was not until the Army demolished most of the buildings in the early 1980s, and tried to sell off the rest of the site, that any attempts were made, by anyone, to memorialize Bonegilla. There was an idea that a rock cairn may be a suitable commemoration, however soon there were calls from the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council, comprised of former residents of the reception centre, for the remains of the site (known
as Block 19) to be turned into an immigration museum.\textsuperscript{1023} As subsequently noted by the government:

Block 19 was one of 24 blocks which comprised Bonegilla. However, Block 19 does not exhibit all the principal characteristics of a post-war migrant reception centre. None of the remaining 23 buildings at Block 19 were used for language instruction, children’s schooling or child care. Training in English and in the Australian way of life was part of the ‘integration’ of non-English speaking Europeans into Australian society. No buildings remain that were related to all the important elements of postwar immigration policy. Bonegilla often housed women and children while male members of the family were sent to work in industries, often at distant or remote places. Many of the elements no longer exist that made up the township, including the hospital, schools, kindergarten, three churches. cinema, a creative and leisure centre, tennis courts, and a youth centre.\textsuperscript{1024}

Block 19 is thus a remnant, and fairly unrepresentative section, of Bonegilla. Advocates of retaining Block 19 as a commemorative site have therefore usually also advocated introducing artifacts onto the site to create some sort of museum. In 1984, a Bonegilla Immigration Museum Committee was formed by former residents, along with a former officer of the Department of Immigration, and supported by the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia Inc and around 19 other individuals or organisations. As a priority, it began gathering memorabilia.\textsuperscript{1025} One of the participants, Michael Cigler, explained the importance of the site:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[1025] Bruce Pennay, ‘Significance Assessment’, p. 7; Department of the Environment and Water Resources, Australian Heritage Database: Places for Decision, ‘Bonegilla Migrant Camp – Block
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Being situated halfway between Melbourne and Sydney, the ex-camp site is often visited by people to whom Bonegilla was their first Australian home. They re-visit and re-tell their memories and experiences to their wives or husbands, their children, grandchildren and friends. Facts like these and the approaching Bicentennial Year of 1988 were considered by a few local enthusiasts who felt that the Bonegilla camp should be highlighted for posterity.  

As well as transforming the site into an immigration museum, there were also plans, supported by Wodonga Councillor Valentina Gillard, a second-generation Ukrainian DP, for a Migrant Studies Library and/or School.  

Further, hostel accommodation for ‘young people of migrant background’ and even a ‘sister city’ type arrangement with the Ellis Island Committee in the United States were mooted. As Louis Maroya (background unknown), President of the Bonegilla Immigration Museum Committee, set out:

The Museum was not envisaged as merely constituting a commemoration of those who passed through the gates of Bonegilla. Rather they and their children and children’s children [estimated at perhaps 2 million today] are seen as part of that huge influx of new faces, new cultures, hopes and aspirations which began reshaping this country from 1947 onwards.

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1026 NLA, MS 8235, Papers of Michael Cigler, Manuscript of Michael Cigler.
Bonegilla was to be a ‘living plaque’ to a vision of successful multiculturalism, described by Maroya as:

[A] positive dimension to a multicultural Australia [achieved] by combining features of a celebratory-commemorative nature; by facilitating and encouraging research and scholarship in the areas of immigration history and intercultural communication, thereby raising awareness of the intellectual dimensions of multiculturalism in the wider context of the life of the nation.  

Cigler noted that it was ‘encouraging’ that the Committee was receiving ‘letters from all over Australia’ from ‘people whose first home in Australia was Bonegilla’. The Committee also received many requests for information from the second generation about their parents, seeking to ‘place their parents as well as their own lives in a historical context’. As well as support from DPs and other migrants, the Committee was supported by the local newspaper, Albury-Wodonga’s Border Morning Mail, and received in-principle support from the Minister for Immigration, Chris Hurford, who visited Bonegilla in November 1986.  

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1031 Unfortunately, I could not locate any of these early letters in Michael Cigler’s papers held at the National Library of Australia. NLA, MS 8235, Papers of Michael Cigler, Manuscript of Michael Cigler.  
1033 Border Morning Mail, Editorials, 28 November 1986 and 7 December 1987; Pennay, Albury Wodonga’s Bonegilla, p. 36.
In 1987 a reunion festival was organized by the Committee at Bonegilla, which attracted a few thousand former DPs and other migrants, as well as officials. The Committee’s Press Release stated:

The Back to Bonegilla Festival has been organized for two reasons: to provide a long overdue opportunity for former residents to attend a reunion at Bonegilla and to draw attention to the fact that if we are unsuccessful in gaining the buildings as the basis of a museum, this may be the last year in which this important link with the era exists.\textsuperscript{1034}

Officially, the new Minister for Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, Mick Young, overtly linked the commemoration of Bonegilla with the growth of a multicultural ideology:

While Bonegilla provided relief from the ravages of Europe, it was not a heart warming experience for all. The lessons learnt at Bonegilla helped change Australian attitudes towards migrants and their needs ... This weekend there will be a lot to think and reminisce about. As we look at the program and consider the variety of cultural activities, the folkloric dancing and singing, the diversity of food, we can reflect that this would have been unimaginable in Australia 40 years ago, but they now are part of the colour of the Australian society of which we all can be very proud.\textsuperscript{1035}

Glenda Sluga, visiting the Festival, observed that despite ‘official constraints’ which ‘saw migrants sitting out a ceremony under a relentless sun while the ex-camp director and immigration officials welcomed them back from the shelter of a canopied raised dias’, the migrants ‘took over

\textsuperscript{1035} Mick Young, quoted in Sluga, Bonegilla, p. 132.
the day and the site for themselves'. Thus the reunion component was a successful commemorative practice.

Tied in with the festival and reunion elements were various cultural works. The Albury Regional Museum mounted an exhibition 'Bonegilla: The Migrant Experience' and the Murray River Performing Group staged a play, 'Promised Land', at the Albury Railway Station exploring the emotions of groups arriving and living at Bonegilla. Poems, a photographic exhibition, silkscreen works, a documentary and plays were also created by those with a migrant background of Bonegilla, including second-generation Serbian-German DP Milan Milojevic's silkscreen works 'Reception': Arrival Series'.

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1036 Sluga, 'Bonegilla and Migrant Dreaming', p. 207.
1037 Pennay, ‘Significance Assessment; Pennay, Albury Wodonga’s Bonegilla, p. 37.
Tess Lyssiotis, a second-generation Greek migrant, wrote and directed the plays *Hotel Bonegilla* (1982/83, performed at the 1987 festival) and *The Journey* (1985, in which *Hotel Bonegilla* was combined with three other plays exploring migrant issues). These plays were reportedly sold out, and were the inspiration behind Glenda Sluga's study of Bonegilla.

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Lyssiotis explained to Sluga, in a later conversation, what motivated her to choose Bonegilla as a subject:

When people realize what Bonegilla was, they've begun to question what it also represents in terms of post-war immigration to this country. In particular, the issues raised in Hotel Bonegilla should ideally lead people to question their own history. Once people discovered their parents had been through the camp they questioned them not only about the camp, but also other questions, such as why did you migrate? How? What was it like? How did you feel? How did you find work not knowing the language? ... Again ideally, the experience of something like Bonegilla should help migrants of my generation place their parents, as well as their own lives, into a historical context. Yes, Bonegilla is special. Perhaps not the least reason being that it has been neglected officially for so long.1040

When Sluga completed her Master of Arts study, which was turned into the book Bonegilla: A Place of No Hope, she set out a history of Bonegilla which challenged official versions of problem-free assimilation. Sluga also noted the migrant takeover of the very name itself. Bonegilla had always been pronounced 'Bone-gilla' until the DPs with their European accents changed the place to 'Bon-e-gilla'.1041 Sluga's observation influenced the ABC's Standing Committee on Spoken English, which now advises '/bohn-GIL-uh/' is the pronunciation for Bonegilla, the town and Army base, but when referring to the migrant hostel, the name should be pronounced [bon-uh-GIL-uh] because that's how the migrants pronounce the

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name'. However, historian Bruce Pennay in his audio tour of Bonegilla pronounces the migrant camp 'bone-gilla' and interestingly, a non-migrant who recently (2009) wrote to the *Albury Border Mail*, reminiscing about his work at the camp, added a hyphen - 'Bone-gilla' - to make his pronunciation obvious.\(^{1043}\)

Although there seemed to be some Commonwealth Government support for a museum, the Committee's 1987 bid for Bicentennial funding for a museum failed.\(^{1044}\) However, in 1988 a letter from the South Australian Ethnic Affairs Commission to the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) expressed support for the AHC to take over the site in order to develop a museum:

> In fact for some members and staff of the SA Ethnic Affairs Commission Bonegilla was – for better or for worse – our first home in Australia. We would like to see the museum being established and to be able one day to return there to reminisce. We would also like to give our fellow Australians the opportunity to understand something of our initial settlement experience.\(^{1045}\)

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\(^{1044}\) Pennay, *The Army at Bonegilla*, p. 19.

\(^{1045}\) NLA, MS 8235, Papers of Michael Cigler, Letter from Alessandro Gardini, Secretary to the Commission, South Australian Ethnic Affairs Commission to Mr P Galvin, Chairperson, Australian Heritage Commission, dated 27 July 1988.
Opponents to this idea included the Army, which was concerned lest the military significance of the site be lost, formally objecting to an interim heritage listing:

Block 19's role in immigration pales into insignificance compared to its status as a relic of the complex that gave birth and succor to units prominent in Australia's war efforts, and no doubt fondly remembered by the survivors of those units ... If Block 19 is to be listed on the Register of the National Estate, it should be for its military significance and not for the minor role that it placed in post-war immigration.¹⁰⁴⁶

Due to the advocacy of the Bonegilla Immigration Museum Committee, Block 19 Bonegilla was eventually placed on the Register of the National Estate (RNE) in 1990, which saved the last remaining 28 huts of Block 19 from demolition.¹⁰⁴⁷ However, the Committee disbanded in 1991 amid claims of a lack of (non-migrant) community support. Chairman Bill Day alleged, 'the people of Wodonga and Albury have not grasped that Bonegilla is a symbol of a new Australia'.¹⁰⁴⁸ This may have been the case locally; however, nationally 'Bonegilla' had become a recognizable concept.

In 1995, the ABC produced a ten hour drama series loosely based on Bonegilla and characterising the (DP and other) migrants as 'a straggly bunch of leftovers who talked funny'.¹⁰⁴⁹ More 'magic realist' soap drama

¹⁰⁴⁷ Bruce Pennay, 'Remembering Bonegilla', p. 43.
¹⁰⁴⁸ Pennay, Albury Wodonga's Bonegilla, pp. 40-41.
¹⁰⁴⁹ Cameron, Ken, and Gilmour, Ian (Directors), Bordertown (ABC TV: 1995).
than cultural or political commentary, the series nevertheless affirmed that ‘Bonegilla’ was a national story, in this peak period of commemorating migration.\textsuperscript{1050}

Albury and Wodonga City Councils (and particularly staff at Albury Wodonga Regional Museum) took up the slack left by the disbanding of the Committee to organize the 1997 ‘Back to Bonegilla’ reunion and festival (a commemoration and celebration) with the primary stated (multicultural) aims to:

- Reaffirm the significance of multiple cultures within Australian society;
- Raise awareness of the historic significance of this event and location;
- Provide the wider community with the opportunity to understand and appreciate other cultures through active participation;
- Further develop and grow the Bonegilla Collection housed at the Albury Wodonga Regional Museum; and
- Legitimise the second and third generation migrants to speak ‘the mother tongue’.\textsuperscript{1051}

30,000 people attended, generating an approximate $4 million.\textsuperscript{1052} Plans were soon made to hold the festival biannually but to ‘broaden’ its appeal to include local migrants from Asia and South America, who of course had


never resided at Bonegilla.\textsuperscript{1053} Such a policy would work to emphasise the purported celebratory multiculturalism aspect of Bonegilla's significance to the Australian community. Another festival was held in 1999, leading to the formation of the 'Friends of Bonegilla' and the development of Albury Regional Museum's 'Bonegilla Collection', which includes written memory pieces, photographs, objects, print materials and documents donated by former residents.\textsuperscript{1054} This collection hit the road in a traveling exhibition 'From the steps of Bonegilla' in the year 2000, highlighting the significance of Bonegilla as a testimonial, or commemorative, site:

This Exhibition is about the relationship between a place, Bonegilla, and Australia's post-war immigration program ... A few remnant buildings of Block 19 stand as testimony to the thousands of people who lived and worked at Bonegilla. Bonegilla is the site of their first encounter with Australia: the climate, the food, the landscape, the flora and fauna, the language, the people and the system. It is the place where their earliest memories of Australian life are located ... the site represents the shared experience of thousands of Australians ...\textsuperscript{1055}

The exhibition profiled staff and former residents, including Russian-Ukrainian Anatoly (Tom) Tscherepko, who had called his first racehorse Bonegilla Tom.\textsuperscript{1056} Interestingly, the exhibition was dependent upon funding by community groups in order to travel to various centres, and in Melbourne a specific state-based component was added to the exhibition.

\textsuperscript{1053} Howell, 'Bonegilla', p. 12.
\textsuperscript{1054} Pennay, 'Significance Assessment', p. 11.
\textsuperscript{1056} Albury Regional Museum, \textit{From the Steps of Bonegilla}, p. 19.
by the city’s Immigration Museum.\textsuperscript{1057} Over 90,000 people saw the exhibition in the three years that it toured, including 12,879 who visited the exhibition at the National Archives of Australia in 2003.\textsuperscript{1058} The exhibition garnered responses in comment books, around 300 of which have been analysed by historian Bruce Pennay, who found that:

Just over a quarter of the sample said they were at the exhibition trying to recapture their parents’ experiences rather than their own ... One expressed disappointment that there was no picture of Arthur Calwell; the Bonegilla experience was presented in a political vacuum. Another from Latvia bemoaned the emphasis on the assisted migrants rather than the first inhabitants – the Displaced Persons.\textsuperscript{1059}

Themes of loss and harshness dominated:

Many felt it important to record their father’s trade, perhaps because of the indignity involved in Australia’s not recognizing overseas qualifications. Just as many told of the family upset when the father was forced by work to separate from the family unit. A common recollection was mother crying. One wrote of the confusing hurt of having her name Anglicised. The memories jotted down on a visit to the exhibition suggest that migrant memories carry strong feelings centred on self and on the impact on the fortunes of the family unit.\textsuperscript{1060}

It seems, then, that although Bonegilla has been framed as the birthplace of multiculturalism in Australia, DPs and other migrants are interested

\textsuperscript{1059} Pennay, ‘Significance Assessment’, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{1060} Bruce Pennay, ‘Framing Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze’, \textit{Albury & District Historical Bulletin} (October 2004), p. 3.
more in 'Boney-bloody-gilla' (in the words of one respondent) as a historically specific staging post in their personal migrant experience.¹⁰⁶¹ Bonegilla is a site which attracts individual memories that make up a collective, rather than a symbol of collectivity and nation-building. It should also be emphasized that these comments were gathered from a traveling exhibition, an exhibition which reached out to communities across Australia, rather than from migrants traveling to the actual geographical site of Bonegilla. This suggests that the assumption on the part of Bonegilla advocates that DPs and other migrants would want to make a pilgrimage back to Bonegilla is rather optimistic.

However, the idea of turning Bonegilla into a commemorative centre for/about immigrants was again taken up after expressions of concern by the Australian Heritage Commission about the loss of heritage values at Bonegilla. In the late 1990s the Army transferred the site to the Victorian Government, which in turn transferred responsibility for the site to Albury Wodonga Region Parklands. Albury Wodonga Parklands proposed a commemorative centre at the site with the goals of telling the story of the migrant centre 'within the context of migration history and the movement towards multiculturalism', assessing and celebrating the 'contribution of migrants to Australia' and fostering 'artistic endeavours related to migration'.¹⁰⁶²

¹⁰⁶¹ Pennay, 'Framing Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze', p. 8.
¹⁰⁶² Pennay, Albury Wodonga’s Bonegilla, p. 37.
Albury Wodonga Parklands commissioned David Lock Associates (DLA) to create a Block 19 Interpretation Plan in 1999. DLA sent out 500 surveys to relevant migrant bodies, of which 150 surveys were returned. These surveys indicated, of those groups which bothered to reply, the 'possessiveness of migrants for the artifacts and buildings that framed their personal experiences, and the keen desire for these to be kept on site, suitably maintained and protected'. Freeman Leeson Architects and Ruth Daniell's Block 19 Bonegilla Conservation Management Plan (1996), commissioned by the Department of Defence, had similarly found: 'The depth of concern for the precinct which has been expressed from a number of different migrant groups and concerned individuals and organisations has been an extraordinary feature of our work on this Plan...The Bonegilla experience, although often brief, appears to have left a profound impression on a significant proportion of Australia's population.'

'Many responses' received by DLA also emphasized the need to use Bonegilla 'constructively in terms of understanding and contributing to our future as a healthy multicultural society', with an 'overriding' impression gained by DLA of a 'positive view of the migration process, in hindsight'. DLA's advocacy of allowing multiple


1064 David Lock Associates, 'Bonegilla: The Migrant Experience', Block 19 Interpretation Plan, September 1999, p. 4. Unfortunately I have been unable to locate and analyse these responses myself.
representations of Bonegilla's history in a 'hybrid historical landscape' was thus subservient to its '1999 Vision':

As Australia matures as a nation, we are able to look back on our past in a more sophisticated way. This has led to a subtle repositioning of our response to it, and a greater recognition of the achievements of our migration program. In turn, this has led us to a greater awareness of the significance of multiculturalism – and our overwhelming commitment to tolerance and diversity – to our identity.  

DLA argued that a permanent memorial should be commissioned to commemorate the migrants who lived at Bonegilla, and even advocated re-creating the original 1940s landscape, helpfully suggesting that if it were not possible to 'repopulate the area with the wildlife of the time, their sounds could be reproduced'. (In an interesting parallel, during the 1940s the Commandant used a recording of a kookaburra as a 'reveille', 'remarking that it would be very appropriate for European newcomers to be awakened each morning by the call of Australia's national bird.)

DLA's grand plans included incorporating exhibition and performance spaces into the site, an amphitheatre, an artist in residence, festivals, an art competition and even a commissioned novel to popularize Bonegilla in the nation's imagination. One of DLA's suggestions which has been taken up are the use of silhouetted figures, 'stylised, anonymous' 'to avoid the

\[1066\] NAA, CP 815/1, Department of Information, Central Office, Correspondence Files, 021.134 Attachment, Immigration – Displaced Persons – General, Letter from H. G. Bonney, Director-General, to Dr Hoy, director, Radio Australia, dated 8 December 1948.
distinctions that separate people’ as well as to ‘represent the layering of fleeting experiences at the site’.\textsuperscript{1067} In other words, DPs again became part of a homogenized migrant mass. Just as Egon Kunz observed of the original ‘flattening out’ of status, the migrants would be déclassé.\textsuperscript{1068}

Much activity followed DLA’s 1999 Interpretation Plan. In 2000 the Victorian Government granted $2 million for a commemorative centre, justified as a regional tourism initiative and influenced by the Tourism Minister, John Pandazopoulos, who had Bonegilla (non-DP) family connections.\textsuperscript{1069} Funds were also provided by the Cultural Heritage Projects Program, Festivals of Australia and the Bonegilla Steering Committee.\textsuperscript{1070} In 2001 historian Bruce Pennay (based at Charles Sturt University), who is also a volunteer member of the Bonegilla Steering Committee, published \textit{Albury Wodonga’s Bonegilla: A Provincial Centre’s Experience of Postwar Immigrants, 1947-71}. This study relied on primary source material in the \textit{Border Morning Mail} to address ‘the challenge of Jean Martin to examine particular social settings in which the immigrants and the native-born adapted to each other’.\textsuperscript{1071} Pennay has also periodically written brochures on a number of topics to do with Bonegilla, which have been funded and used by various government agencies and

\textsuperscript{1068} Kunz, \textit{Displaced Persons}, p. 165.  
\textsuperscript{1069} Pennay, ‘Framing Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze’, p. 2.  
\textsuperscript{1071} Pennay, \textit{Albury Wodonga’s Bonegilla}, p. 1.
institutions. He writes as an advocate for tourism, heritage and community history in the Albury region, and in fact received both a Medal of the Order of Australia and a History Council of NSW Annual History Citation in 2009 for this work, and particularly with regard to the establishment of the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre Heritage Park.

In 2002 Block 19 was registered with Heritage Victoria and placed on the Victorian Heritage List (VHL) for reasons of significance to both migration and Army history. In 2007 Pennay authored a successful nomination of the site to the National Heritage List (NHL) of the top twenty heritage sites in Australia, which includes only items that are of outstanding significance to the nation as a whole. This nomination was supported by the Albury Regional Museum, Albury City Council and Wodonga City Council, ethnic groups associated with Darebin and Moreland Councils (Vic), the Albury-Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council, Multicultural Resource and Information Centre Inc, Albury, the Albury & District Historical Society and

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1072 See bibliography for a full list.
1075 I am grateful to Bruce Pennay for drawing my attention to the fact that Kevin Rudd’s Labor government (2007-2010) only added two items to the National Heritage List, both of which can be seen as politically correct additions: Bonegilla, and the Myall Creek Massacre site – ‘the first and last attempt by the colonial administration to use the law to control frontier conflict between settlers and Aboriginal people’, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Work, Population and Communities, ‘Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial Site, New South Wales’, http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/myall-creek/index.html, viewed 18 December 2010.
the Wodonga Historical Society, the Albury-Wodonga Branch of the Military History Society, the Army Museum Bandiana, Director of Heritage and Environment Department of Defence, Bonegilla Former Residents Association (Vic) Inc, the Blacktown Migrant Recourse Centre (NSW), the Australian Polish Community Services group (Footscray, Vic) and the Victorian Multicultural Commission (Melbourne). The government’s Australian Heritage Database sets out the reasoning behind the decision:

The site is significant to the whole nation as a host society. It invites exploration of the mixed community responses to newcomers, prompting examination and explanation of the expressions of feelings such as wariness, hostility, compassion, neighbourliness and indifference associated with ‘taking in strangers’.

The national heritage listing was accompanied with the placing of a two-metre plinth declaring Bonegilla to be ‘a symbol of post-war migration which transformed Australia’s economy, society and culture’. Bonegilla has also featured as one of ten five-minute documentaries of NHL ‘National Treasures’, which screened in 2009 on ABC TV.


1078 Penney, ‘Framing Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze’, p. 5.

The National Heritage Listing, in effect, acknowledged the work that had been done by heritage advocates (namely Bruce Pennay) and the Victorian government in (re)-making Bonegilla as a commemorative site. In December 2005 the open-air commemorative centre was revealed with 'a full program of celebrations'. The centre incorporates a short documentary, a wall of immigrant faces and voices, pamphlets and a cluster of silhouette statues:

Silhouette statue at Bonegilla.\textsuperscript{1080}

Bruce Pennay explained:

Fred Chaney of Cox Sanderson and Ness [Architects & Planners] established the design principles for the commemorative centre in 2003. He insisted that any new buildings be of a similar domestic scale, simple and austere. He wanted the place to be 'silent and still': 'a place to remember and learn'. Chaney designed the pavilion and the wall of faces. The long open pavilion is meant to suggest the journeys people had to and through Bonegilla. The wall of faces suggests something of the huge number and variety of people who came to Australia via Bonegilla. Thylacine fitted the interpretative materials and the wall of voices. The wall of voices focuses attention on the experience of the refugees and the migrants.¹⁰⁸¹

The Bonegilla Migrant Experience Heritage Park, however, has 'had difficulty in attracting visitor numbers' and the 120-seat cafe which was built in 2005 has yet to be leased. According to Bruce Pennay, the promotion of Bonegilla is still crudely event-led and remains a pilgrim rather than a tourist venue: 'We have not yet persuaded locals to include a visit in the tours they give family visitors, let alone attracted the grey nomads that ply the Hume Highway'.¹⁰⁸² Even though the regional tourism body is supportive, Bonegilla is still not 'one of the obvious places in Albury' to visit.¹⁰⁸³ Pennay laments:

Thus far we even fall short of that old heritage site development jibe – 'Welcome to a nice cafe with Old Parliament House or Former Migrant Centre attached'. We do not yet seem to have met the challenge of capturing the imagination like other national sites such

¹⁰⁸² Pennay, 'Selling Immigration', p. 10.
¹⁰⁸³ Email from Bruce Elder, travel writer for Sydney Morning Herald, 13 November 2008.
as Port Arthur, Eureka or Glenrowan. Perhaps the Migrant Experience will never match visitor predilections for Bushranger, Convict, Gold, Crocodile and Dinosaur experiences.\textsuperscript{1084}

When I visited the site in July 2006, there were few signs and the landscape was one of isolation and emptiness – no staff, a huge unopened café (and hence no public toilets), a small outdoor commemorative platform incorporating little explanation, particularly of the unintelligible soundscape wall, small and rusty silhouettes, locked and graffitied buildings, and holiday cabins for Army personnel. Apparently a mess hall exhibition on the Dutch experience of Bonegilla is opened on prior request, a fact that I was not told upon earlier enquiries.\textsuperscript{1085} I was advised by staff at the Albury Regional Museum that any records to do with Bonegilla were held in Melbourne at the Immigration Museum. Albury Regional Museum’s fact-sheet ‘Archival Records for Bonegilla’ also directs visitors to the Public Record Office Victoria and to the National Archives in Canberra, with no mention of the extensive holdings of their own Bonegilla Collection.\textsuperscript{1086}

Bonegilla now (2010) has a staff member present at the site, Bernadette Zaniat, who kindly provided me with visitor statistics for November and December 2009. In November 2009 there were 143 general visitors, most of whom had a personal link to Bonegilla as migrant camp. There were

\textsuperscript{1084} Pennay, ‘Framing Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze’, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{1085} Pennay, ‘Framing Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze’, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{1086} Albury Regional Museum, \textit{Archival Records for Bonegilla} (pamphlet), handed to me by staff in July 2006.
also two school groups, and two tour groups, including a visit by 25 members of a Greek community. The majority of visitors tended to come from Melbourne.\textsuperscript{1087}

Many of Bonegilla’s difficulties in achieving tourist status obviously come from the fact that it is in an isolated, rural area, to which it is not easy for elderly migrants and their families to travel.\textsuperscript{1088} However, a pragmatic emphasis on the tourist dollar is perhaps misplaced. One advocate described Bonegilla as ‘the seed that has enabled the flower of cultural diversity to grow and enhance the fabric of Australian culture’, a somewhat mixed metaphor which leads to the question: do Australians really celebrate multiculturalism as an integral value of contemporary Australia?\textsuperscript{1089} And if they do, are they willing to travel, or even stop in, at a place few Australians have heard of in order to pay their respects to what is being sold as a founding place of this multiculturalism? The answers to these questions, as the visitor statistics to Bonegilla show, is a resounding no! Bonegilla is not (or at least not yet) Australia’s ‘Ellis Island’, the creation of which has been a stated aim of the Bonegilla Steering Committee.\textsuperscript{1090}

\textsuperscript{1088} See interview with Mr FK, 5 July 2007.
\textsuperscript{1089} Howell, ‘Bonegilla’, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{1090} Pennay, ‘Selling Immigration’, p. 11.
Many visitors are still migrants and their families, and the comment books from the commemorative centre show that some DPs do see Bonegilla as a significant site. A Polish DP wrote in 2008: ‘Thank you for keeping the memory alive for others to see what we, as families, endured to become Australians’. Antonia B, whose parents arrived from Croatia in 1949, wrote: ‘My family were forever grateful to the Australian community for helping them in their most desperate times of need. This has been and will always be a very special place to me, a very emotional time, however, it is beautiful that such a place still exists – thank you’. Ann Tündern-Smith, one of the first babies born at Bonegilla, has said that her mother rarely talked of her experiences: ‘she didn’t like to dwell on the past’. In contrast, Tündern-Smith made it her mission to trace every one of the 839 ‘Balts’ in the first IRO shipment to Australia, and has self-published a book (2008) which is now on sale at the site.

While family memory thus seems to be the most important driving force behind a visit to Bonegilla, it could not really be described as a successful site for migrant pilgrims. Bruce Pennay has acknowledged that although Bonegilla has been billed as ‘a Migrant Experience Heritage Park’, we

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1091 Bruce Pennay has also noted, however, that ‘like other visitor book entries those at Block 19 can be abrupt, scribbled in haste, clichéd and formulaic. One entry can set the precedent for those that follow.’ Pennay, ‘Framing Bonegilla for the Tourist Gaze’, p. 9; Pennay, ‘Remembering Bonegilla’, p. 51.

1092 Pennay, ‘Block 19 Bonegilla Visitor Book Entries’.

have become all too aware of a kaleidoscope of migrant experiences'. Homogenising the migrant experience has not worked. In 2007 the planned 60th anniversary celebrations, ‘celebrating the role Bonegilla has played in shaping the nation’, had to be cancelled due to lack of funding. Interestingly, Dutch and Greek groups from the local area, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, put on their own displays, ‘a triumph for vernacular as opposed to official celebrations’ and speaking ‘loudly for the commitment of the difference cultural groups who want to celebrate this anniversary, and at no cost to any (except for their own travel costs etc!!!)’. No DP groups were apparently interested enough to join them.

DPs and their children I have interviewed have a variety of responses when asked about Bonegilla. A second-generation Polish-Ukrainian DP said, ‘I only have vague recollections. It doesn’t resonate with me’. Mr FK, a Czech DP: ‘You might go there once but why would you go there again?’ Ms OM, a Latvian, argued: ‘Who is going to go all the way over there to have a look at things like that?’

1094 Pennay, ‘Selling Immigration’, p. 10.
1097 Interview with Mr PM, 12 November 2008.
1098 Interview with Mr FK, 5 July 2007
1099 Interview with Ms OM, 8 October 2007.
For some DPs, however, Bonegilla was a ‘totemic’ event for them personally.\textsuperscript{1100} Latvian Mr KM was asked to take photographs of Bonegilla for an elderly DP who was dying of cancer and had fond memories of the centre.\textsuperscript{1101} Some see Bonegilla as ‘an integral part of Australian history.’\textsuperscript{1102} John Hughes, whose Ukrainian mother passed through Bonegilla but who himself has never visited the site, nevertheless argues:

Unless there is a ... museum of some kind then it’s as if that history is not quite real and even though we know it is and those people did come over here from 1949 onwards ... to give it some spot where you can actually go and say ‘ah, this is where they were’ ... it just makes it more real. It gives you something to be attached to, something that evokes that kind of emotional response which is quite difficult to do in the abstract ... I like to think that even if I wasn’t the son of a displaced person that I would still think of it as an important part of Australian history and still having some resonance for now as well.\textsuperscript{1103}

In September 2010 a new on-site exhibition was launched, featuring an audio tour by Bruce Pennay, objects of memorabilia, and a claymation:

The story cleverly unfolds via an ‘off-camera’ grand child asking each character the kinds of probing, innocent questions, as only a grand child can.... about their experiences at Bonegilla such as why they were there and how they felt – the responses to these questions pulling out different arrival experiences the characters had and highlighting the different perspectives of how life was for them at Bonegilla.\textsuperscript{1104}

\textsuperscript{1100} Interview with Mr NB, 1 November 2007.
\textsuperscript{1101} Interview with Mr KM, 12 February 2008.
\textsuperscript{1102} Interview with Mr Ll, 17 July 2007.
\textsuperscript{1103} Interview with John Hughes, 3 August 2007.
\textsuperscript{1104} 3 Hand Studios, http://3handstudios.com/about!.html, viewed 10 January 2010.
This new exhibition is supported by the NSW Migration Heritage Centre.\textsuperscript{1105} In this regard, the most successful forays into commemoration of Bonegilla appear to be website-based and institution-led. There is now a Bonegilla Migrant Experience website, supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission, which includes access to guides and a regular newsletter.\textsuperscript{1106} The NSW Migration Heritage Centre has included the stories of Bonegilla residents on its \textit{Belongings} website, and has also set up a website \textit{Blue Sky} incorporating historical contributions by Bruce Pennay.

In the year 2000 the Australian Heritage Commission held a ‘Places in the Heart Competition’ in which people had to name and describe the place in Australia that had the greatest hold on their hearts. Uluru came first, and Bonegilla second.\textsuperscript{1107} This would seem to corroborate the 1980s argument that there is a need for a symbolic, commemorative presence at the old migrant centre site. However, in setting out a main tenet of ‘migrant dreaming’, or community (re)-creation, Glenda Sluga also offered the main critique of such an approach:

\begin{quote}
Sketched out as a particular shared experience of geographical displacement, the ‘migrant dreaming’ encapsulates, contains and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1105} NSW Migration Heritage Centre Newsflash Email (20 October 2010), can be viewed http://www.thecccc.org.au/news/article/nsw-migration-heritage-centre-newsflash-20-october-2010.


engulfs even greater distances, distances of class, gender and ethnicity, as well as of diverse individual pasts and divergent futures.\textsuperscript{1108}

According to Vicki Karaminas, whose Greek father spent time at Bonegilla in the 1950s:

Bonegilla is a centre that is always full: a marked site. It is here that the values of Australian society are gathered and condensed: power (administration offices, Social Services, Commonwealth Employment Offices, etc), currency (banks), consumerism (general and central store), spirituality (three churches), language (theatre, library, primary school) and law (police station). To enter Bonegilla is to encounter a microcosm of cultural reproduction.\textsuperscript{1109}

Just as in the ideologies of assimilation and multiculturalism, a ‘migrant dreaming’ relies on a community of migrants with common pasts, presents and futures. Even such a small migrant ‘group’ as the DPs cannot be said to have, or to perceive, commonalities that extend across ethnic, class and gender lines. This is not to say that there is no space for Bonegilla as a symbol to disparate groups, rather that hopes for Bonegilla as a ‘political symbol’, as having meaning for a ‘multicultural’ Australia, are misplaced.\textsuperscript{1110} Bruce Pennay, historian and member of the Bonegilla Steering Committee, for example, baldly views the Committee’s self-appointed ‘task of interpreting the site’ as ‘the construction of a public memory place’, rather than a ‘re-construction’.\textsuperscript{1111} A further re-imagining of

\textsuperscript{1109} Karaminas, ‘Greetings from Australia’.  
\textsuperscript{1110} Sluga, ‘The Migrant Dreaming’, pp. 42, 44.  
\textsuperscript{1111} Pennay, ‘Remembering Bonegilla’.
the site has been that of historian Sara Wills, who has recently argued that Bonegilla (and other migrant sites) ‘could offer a ‘pre-history’ to detention centres, and a place to reconfigure the nation’s pain and shame’ in relation to Australia’s treatment of (all) refugees. Bruce Pennay has agreed with this slant on Bonegilla’s commemorative possible purpose, arguing:

Some use the site visitor book to rail against asylum seeker detention and the then contentious citizenship test. Bonegilla prompts thinking about how Australia took in and still takes in strangers.

All of this leads one to the conclusion that multiculturalism, the newly professionalized museums, the heritage industry and the rise of social and oral history, as well as the emergence of DP or migrant academics and cultural commentators (in which group I must include myself) are responsible for the propagation and commemoration of the ‘memory’ of Bonegilla rather than former residents, many of whom have little interest in the place, or are interested only insofar as family memory is involved. The ‘idea of Bonegilla’ has been ‘co-opted into the realm of immigration myth’, not only by state agencies who had used it to ‘construct its own image of a successful immigration program’, and later a successful multicultural society, but also by some migrants and cultural workers who sought to include Bonegilla in a national narrative of assimilation and

1113 Pennay, ‘Remembering Bonegilla’, p. 58.
multiculturalism or, perhaps, a counter-narrative of refugee policy critique.
For DPs themselves, Bonegilla remains a symbol with an 'indefinite and occasional nature'.

As well as the somewhat monolithic ‘Bonegilla’, there are other DP (and later migrant) camps with varying histories of commemoration. Other large camps were Bathurst in New South Wales, Woodside in South Australia, and Northam in Western Australia, while Greta, near Newcastle, served primarily to channel refugees to Queensland. Smaller camps used were Rushworth and Benalla (Vic), Cowra, Parkes and Uranquinty (NSW), Stuart (Qld), Brighton (Tas), and Graylands (WA) as well as smaller centres such as Wacol (SA), Scheyville (NSW) and Kelmscott (WA). There were also numerous workers’ hostels used by DPs and later migrants. The following section will examine commemoration initiatives surrounding these centres by focusing on the questions of who initiates commemoration, how the camps are commemorated and whether such attempts have been successful on a community-wide scale.

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Reception Centres and Holding Camps

Most of the reception camps and holding centres which were transitory homes for the DPs were closed during the 1950s and their buildings were dismantled. Many sites were sold and there were no initial efforts to remember the site’s place in Australia’s immigration history. In Bathurst, home to 100,000 migrants before closing in 1952, the cinema hall which held scenery for the Tosca Opera Company painted by a DP theatrical designer from Warsaw was also destroyed and for the regional authorities, ‘recognising that the paintings held some significance, yet unsure as to whom to contact, the logical solution was to consign it to the local tip’.1115 There have been few efforts to save original buildings; one exception is that of remaining buildings of a migrant hostel at Fairy Meadow, New South Wales. Former DPs and migrant residents (particularly Italians), together with other members of the Illawarra Migration Heritage Project, started campaigning in 2003 to save the original Nissen and Quonset huts from demolition by the site’s owner, the University of Wollongong. Following this local pressure, the huts were added to the NSW State Heritage Register in August 2009, and the University is now developing an interpretation plan for the site.1116

1115 Panich, Sanctuary?, p. 189.
In general, however, reunions have been the most successful form of commemoration in regard to the migrant camps. A reunion of former residents took place at Bathurst in 1985 at the city's centenary celebration, which was the ‘first of its kind in Australia’ and was also the first event of its kind, according to Catherine Panich, ‘to pay public tribute to the contribution of the postwar immigrants, elevating that era to its rightful position in our history’.1117 Although no buildings now exist, a memorial to the camp was unveiled, and two further reunions were held in 1988 and 1999.1118

Peter Skryznecki looked forward to visiting Parkes with his mother for a reunion in the bicentennial year of 1988: ‘People will crowd around the camp site, everyone with a different story to tell’.1119 The reunion program, organized by Parkes Shire Council and Migrant Camp Re-Union Committee, which included former DPs, included a Parade of All Nations (national costumes), an International Gala Day (folk dancing, singing and maypole dancing), the unveiling of a migrant plaque at the site of the former camp, a memorabilia display and visits to former camp sites.1120 A

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1117 Panich, Sanctuary?, p. 189.

Scheyville, which was a small migrant camp in Sydney, and formerly a training farm, closed in 1964 and the site is now part of Scheyville National Park. Polish Maria Cebulski attended a reunion there in 1995:

> It was very nice. Some younger people and nuns recognize[d] me. Richard [my son] met a boy he went to school with and Elizabeth [my daughter] and her husband went too ... I was upset at how the barracks are damaged though – it’s important to see how people used to live.\(^{1121}\)

Estonian Anne Marie Birdsey, who was a child at Scheyville, also attended:

> I took Mrs Jeremieczick to [the reunion at Scheyville National Park in April 2005 which] brought back a lot of memories. I remembered the mess hall and a few of the dormitories; it was so ghost-like [yet] nice to go back. I was listening to people, a couple of women were “going on” – well perhaps things were bad, but to me it didn’t seem that way. To me we lived there, went to school, ate, played!\(^{1122}\)

The reunion incorporated a tour of the site in a ‘migrant history walk’.\(^{1123}\)

Former residents were encouraged to bring photographs which were indexed by staff and volunteers of Scheyville National Park on the day. A

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number of video histories were also completed, and some memories and artifacts recorded as part of the NSW Migration Heritage Centre’s *Belongings* online exhibition.¹¹²⁴

As well as reunions, there have been official and unofficial attempts to commemorate the history of the camps, although interestingly there has been little interest from DPs themselves. Two exceptions to this rule, Peter Skrzynecki (commemorating Parkes and Bathurst) and Anton Veenstra (Scheyville and Cowra), are both second-generation DPs who view the camps through the prism of family, as well as national and diasporic, memory. In *The Sparrow Garden*, a book to his parents’ memory, Skrzynecki explains his keen interest in returning to visit the migrant camp at Parkes: ‘Just as my parents remember what happened to them in Germany during the war, so I can remember, at least in part, what happened to me in Parkes, and I know that one day I will return’. Visiting in 1984 ‘in response to a persistence of memory’, Skrzynecki was enthusiastic:

> Finally, after days of searching I’ve found what I was hoping to find, yet, for some reason, dreading the discovery: the site of the migrant hostel where I lived with my parents from 1949 to 1951. I am thirty-nine years old and it’s been thirty-three years since I was here last. For nearly four decades I’ve lived with memories and shards of memories … ¹¹²⁵


Skryznecki felt an impulse to ‘visually record the site’, photographing ‘eight shots of the sewerage works [an important landmark], knowing there will never be a better time to do this’. On a subsequent visit he carried out interviews with family friends in Parkes, and also attended the 1988 reunion and festival. However, in the end, Skryznecki felt ambiguous towards the actual site:

Driving home ... I expected to be drawn back to a last look at the site of the migrant camp. The foundations and concrete blocks that were there when I first returned in 1984 had been removed. Tall grasses waved in the breeze. The trees growing along the side of the road had concealed the site that’d now become another lot of paddocks on a farmer’s property. But the last look didn’t eventuate. There was no slowing down or pulling over to the side of the road. I just kept driving.¹¹²⁶

Anton Veenstra, whose mother was a Slovenian DP and father a Dutch migrant, is an artist who has woven tapestries of his family at Scheyville and Cowra based on family photographs, such as this one depicting the artist and his mother at Cowra Migrant Camp (1999):

¹¹²⁶ Skryznecki, The Sparrow Garden, pp. 61, 74.
The 'unimaginable loss' of diaspora is referenced:

My experience was of an inherited loss and therefore diluted emotions. In examining the details of these photographs, I revisited my mother’s sense of displacement. Modifying the image[s] … meant retaking possession of a part of my family history. Refashioned, relived, renewed.\(^{1128}\)


\(^{1128}\) Veenstra, The Imagined Homeland, pp. 4, 18.
Veenstra’s photographs appeared in an exhibition ‘From This Place’ at the Cowra Regional Art Gallery in 2004. He explains the politics behind his work:

Like many first generation migrants, I feel the need to reclaim childhood experiences made banal by a dominant post-war Anglo-Australian culture. My work in woven tapestry required the translation of embroiderers and lace motifs from Slovenian folk culture, and these form parts of a visual vocabulary from which I use to describe this marginalization.  

Rather than a former migrant centre site being implicated in a multicultural setting, then, Veenstra’s work locates the migrant experience firmly in a context of assimilation, exploitation and marginalization.

Official (and/or institutional) commemorative efforts have included collecting artefacts, publishing visitors’ leaflets, curating exhibitions, creating information displays, erecting monuments on site, and even one proposal to recreate a ‘migrant heritage park on site’. Books incorporating oral histories, usually commissioned by government agencies or individuals and written by local historians, of varying quality, have also been a popular choice. These include:


• Boatload of Dreams: Journeys by European Immigrant Workers 1947-1994 by Catherine Murphy and the United Trades and Labor Council (South Australia) (1994) commemorating the Woodside Immigration Centre;

• We Came With Nothing: Story of the West Sale Migrant Holding Centre by Ann Synan (2002);

• Wacol Remembered: 1949-1987 by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (2003), suggested by a Frenchman who had migrated to Australia in 1971;

• Fields of Memories: The Scheyville Training Farm and Migrant Accommodation Centre 1911-1964 by Sue Andersen and Mary Ann Hamilton (2005).1131

Ann Synan argued in her history: 'Holding centres ... are the places marking a new beginning for these immigrants, important places which have now been woven into their own family stories'.1132 The following section will focus on efforts to commemorate three of the main holding camps for 'dependents' (women with children): Greta, Uranquinty and Cowra.

1132 Synan, We Came With Nothing, p. 195.
Greta

Greta was the second largest migrant camp, with 100,000 residents, before the camp was closed and buildings were sold off in 1960. In 2008 the site, while now practically devoid of ‘major landmarks’, was included as an item of local environmental heritage.

The site was first commemorated in a 1984 film about the DPs, *Silver City*, which was written by Thomas Keneally and Sophia Turkiewicz. The film portrays an extramarital romance between two Polish DPs living at ‘Silver City’ at Greta in 1949. *Silver City* is sympathetic to DPs and includes portrayals of ex-Nazi camp police, a persecuting Polish priest, and the attempted rape of the Polish heroine by Australians, as well as depicting friendly Australian neighbours. The tragic nature of the romance also allows the nostalgic refrain ‘Remember Silver City?’, an acknowledgement of the importance of memory in DP history. However, the political message is upbeat with comments such as: ‘This is a country where peasants do well’, ‘still beats being behind the Iron Curtain I reckon’, and the camp and contract system is portrayed as an ‘inconvenience in the

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short-term'. In conclusion, the Polish hero tells his mistress: ‘You’re one of the lucky ones’.\textsuperscript{1135}

Since then there have been three official reunions held on site, with the first in the bicentennial year of 1988, attended by 3,000 people. DP Janina Sulikowska said that it was ‘a day full of non-stop emotion ... People kept turning around and seeing old friends, some they hadn’t seen for 30 years. There was hugging, kissing and tears all day long’.\textsuperscript{1136} In 1999 a 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary was organized by the Ethnic Communities Council of Newcastle and the Hunter Region (ECC), with about 6,500 attendees.\textsuperscript{1137} Second-generation Ukrainian DP Mr LI regretted not making this reunion: ‘I didn’t go to it. I’m not sure if I knew it was on. So that was an opportunity missed, I think because there might have been a few photos that would have jogged a few memories.’\textsuperscript{1138}

Following successful reunions held at Greta, the Ethnic Communities Council attempted to collect as much information about Greta as possible, particularly photographs, with a local Polish lady acting as repository. When she passed away unexpectedly, however, her son burnt all the boxes. The ECC’s collection is now held in a storeroom and brought out

\textsuperscript{1135} Sophia Turkiewicz (Director), \textit{Silver City} (Limelight Productions: 1984).
\textsuperscript{1136} Christopher Keating, \textit{Greta: A History of the Army Camp and Migrant Camp at Greta, New South Wales, 1939-1960} (Burwood, NSW: Christopher Keating, Uri Windt, the New South Wales Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and the Australian Heritage Commission, 1997), pp 79-80.
\textsuperscript{1137} Interview with Mr LI, 17 July 2007; Interview with John Gebhardt, 7 August 2008.
\textsuperscript{1138} Interview with Mr LI, 17 July 2007.
for special heritage events, including World Youth Day, to 'project the multiculturality of Australia', as according to the ECC's John Gebhardt, who is also a second-generation Polish DP who resided at Greta, the camp was 'a good example of cultural diversity'.

The site has belonged to the Windt family since 1979. Mr Uri Windt is a migrant property developer who has taken an extraordinary interest in the heritage value of the old migrant centre site. He provided funding, along with the New South Wales Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and the Australian Heritage Commission, for Christopher Keating's 1997 book, *Greta: A History of the Army Camp and Migrant Camp at Greta, New South Wales, 1939-1960*. Keating's history is a positive one, alleging that 'nearly all of the people whose memories are gathered in this book recall Greta Camp quite fondly' and making the asinine judgment:

> It must be kept in mind that no matter how dull, frustrating and bureaucratic camp life could be, it was still a preferable existence (with greater future potential) to the one they had experienced in war-torn Europe.

In regard to commemoration, Keating argues, without offering evidence:

> Many Australians will retain forever an intimate and often deeply emotional attachment to Greta Camp ... For the multitude of postwar migrants to Australia, Greta was a breathing space.

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1139 Interview with John Gebhardt, 7 August 2008.
1140 Interview with John Gebhardt, 7 August 2008.
between a difficult past and brighter future, a door to great possibilities. Greta Camp will not be forgotten.\footnote{Keating, Greta, p. 80.}

For some DPs, of course, this is true. Mr VL, a Belarussian DP who volunteers as a guide at Greta, says that it is 'necessary to remember' and to 'cherish roots' as this makes 'one's life richer'.\footnote{Interview with Mr VL, 17 June 2008.} He has a 'great nostalgia and love for the camp'.\footnote{Emma Swain, 'Migrant Camp in the Spotlight', Maitland Mercury, 2 September 2009, http://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/news/local/news/general/migrant-camp-in-the-spotlight/1612011.aspx, viewed 19 December 2009.} As well as acting as tour guide for occasional visitors, courtesy of a key to the property given to the ECC, Mr VL helped to organise the 60th anniversary 'shindig' for 2009.\footnote{Interview with Mr VL, 17 June 2008.} However, he acknowledges that not all former residents are happy to celebrate the memory of Greta: 'Most don’t want to think about, reminisce about, one of two are disgusted by it, that they ever lived there'.\footnote{Interview with Mr VL, 17 June 2008.} Keating's book itself reports political and domestic conflicts, with stablings and suicides. One resident of Greta township said that many of the DPs 'had to put up with a hell of a lot before they came here' and some of them 'couldn't take it'. He recalled that one woman hung herself in the lavatory at Greta, after which her husband shot himself. Another man had been in a jealous rage, beating up his wife and then disappearing for three days before hanging himself with fencing wire.\footnote{Hungarian Edith Noetel, when pressed about}
memories of Greta, replied reluctantly, ‘It was not too bad really’. For some, the lack of original landmarks at the site is discouraging. Second-generation Ukrainian DP, Mr LI, remembers driving past recently:

The only thing left of the ... thing is some little old ruins of the stoves out of the kitchen huts and that sort of thing so I just drove past the place ... there's nothing there – all the huts are gone.

In an effort to redress the destruction of the original site, Uri Windt has incorporated a ‘heritage park’ into his $620 million Anvil Creek proposal for a master-planned resort and residential development currently under consideration by Cessnock City Council. The development proposes to celebrate post-war migrant history by creating a ‘focus for gatherings, a publicly accessible park with a large interpretive exhibition, and a walking trail that will mark and interpret important elements of both the indigenous and European heritage on the site’.

Uri Windt, apparently a man ‘conscious of the importance’ of the site to migrants, provided the ECC with a scanner after the unfortunate incident in which their repository was destroyed and the Anvil Creek website now

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1149 Interview with Mr LI, 17 July 2007.


includes a Greta Camp Photo Gallery, a ‘permanent photographic record of life at the camp’ which ‘can be accessed by the community at large’.  

Queries have been received by the ECC, and the website has acted not only as a ‘research tool’ but as a means of ‘putting people in touch with each other’.  

It was reported in The Maitland Mercury in 2008 that a woman living in Africa found a relative using the gallery site, while local woman Liz McKenzie, whose mother was a Russian DP housed at Greta, 

1154 Interview with John Gebhardt, 7 August 2008.
is hopeful that the ‘round-up’ of photos may uncover an image of her older sister, who died at 14 months of age in 1955.\textsuperscript{1155}

The photographs were officially handed over to the custodianship of the Newcastle Region Library by the Windt family at the launch of an exhibition at Wallsend Library featuring 15 storyboards detailing aspects of life at the camp.\textsuperscript{1156} The photographs were also exhibited in the ECC’s 60\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of post-war migration to the Newcastle and Hunter Region weekend in November 2009. The celebrations included a showing of the film \textit{Silver City}, as well as a Celebration Ball held at the Polish Centre. Organised bus tours to Greta were also available.\textsuperscript{1157} Another exhibition using these photographs was held in December 2009 at East Maitland Library. At the launch of this exhibition, second-generation DPs Alek Schulha, a former journalist with the \textit{Newcastle Morning Herald}, and Olga McTackett (nee Kmetyk), Branch Librarian at East Maitland Library, talked about their families’ experiences at Greta.\textsuperscript{1158}

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It remains to be seen, of course, whether the Heritage Park will attract visitors or whether it is a cynical attempt to include heritage values in a multimillion dollar property development. The occasional visitor seems to be well served now by reunions on major anniversary dates, personal tours of the site from a former DP and a freely accessible photographic collection. The Heritage Park, if completed and along with Bonegilla, may well become a failed site of memory where interest in the project has been assumed rather than examined.

**Uranquinty**

In a similar case to that of Greta, commemorative efforts at Uranquinty have been largely the work of one (non-DP) individual. Erwin Richter, a local, has initiated both a migrant memorial at Uranquinty and a history of Uranquinty, Sherry Morris’s 2000 book, *Uranquinty Remembers*. The site itself is now a canola farm.1159

Richter approached the Uranquinty Progress Association ‘as a way of gaining support for his ideas’ with the aim to:

Create an ongoing awareness of the contribution that the migrants made to the development of the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme and that the women and children were housed at the old

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RAAF Training School at Uranquinty while husbands and fathers worked away.¹¹⁶⁰

He soon gained support for his ideas from the Uranquinty Progress Association and Wagga Wagga City Council, as well as the New South Wales Premier's Department and the Migration Heritage Centre, who all supported 50th anniversary celebrations ('a celebration of Australian migration heritage and recognition of the contributions of migrant men, women and children') in 2001, which attracted around 400 former residents.¹¹⁶¹

Richter offered reasons for his interest in the foreword to Morris's history:

Having been involved in a support and settlement program together with numerous volunteers from various aid organizations, including the Australian Red Cross and Church groups from within the district, working and assisting the many hundreds of Displaced Persons/Immigrants from war-torn Europe during periods of varying duration spent at the Uranquinty and Kapooka Migrant Holding Centres, I believed it most appropriate the significant chapter of the region's past history and contribution made by countless numbers of migrants towards the development of the district be acknowledged. It had long been my desire to initiate the publication of a documented history relative to that era of time, highlighting facts, personal accounts and experiences surrounding the lives of those 'New Australians' ... and thereby provide an insight of the incredible hardships many experienced, more particularly so by women and children as they faced the future with the daunting challenges of rebuilding their lives in a strange new country ...¹¹⁶²

¹¹⁶⁰ Email from Katie Salmon, Uranquinty Progress Association, 15 October 2008.
¹¹⁶² Erwin Richter, 'Foreword', in Morris, Uranquinty Remembers, p. v.
A 'commemoration and dedication' of the monument created by local artist Canny Kinloch, 'Kaia', depicting her mother and children, was held in April 2000, concurrently with the launch of Morris’s history:


'Kaia Monument', National Library of Australia. 1163

The beautiful and haunting statue, cast at the Wagga Iron Foundry and placed in the centre of town, is meant to be a ‘visual reminder’: ‘Kaia is a very strong symbol; she not only is a woman alone with children and a single suitcase but she is placed so that she faces in the direction of where her husband is (towards the Snowy Mountains)’. Accompanying the monument is an information board setting out the history of Displaced Persons in the area.

The monument is truly arresting, and the passion of Erwin Richter and members of the Uranquinty Progress Association, as well as the artist, Canny Kinloch, is apparent. Katie Salmon, former President of the Uranquinty Progress Association replied to my requests for further information: ‘Thank you for your interest in our Kaia and all that she represents.’ Sherry Morris’s history is also well researched and sympathetically written. Kinloch remembers that there was a ‘large crowd’ ‘from many places’ at the commemorative weekend, who gasped with delight at the unveiling of the statue:

Many women expressed gratitude and later told me they cried when they saw how they had been remembered. Only this year I was introduced to a local elderly woman who has been taken by her daughter several times to look at the sculpture. She expressed great gratitude.

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1165 Email from Katie Salmon, Uranquinty Progress Association, 15 October 2008.
1166 Email from Canny Kinloch, 11 November 2008.
Polish DP Jo Armata also enjoyed the 50th anniversary celebrations: ‘It meant a lot to me see the old place, although there isn't much left of the migrant camp.’

There has, however, been little financial support for commemoration efforts at Uranquinty. Kinloch has never been paid for her weeks of working on the statue due to a lack of funding, even though a benefit concert was held and memorial pavers were offered for sale. Wagga Wagga City Council declined to fund the monument, instead donating $1,000.

Cowra

Approximately 17,000 migrants (including DPs) resided at Cowra, which was a holding camp for dependents located close to the Snowy Mountains Scheme (and not the camp used for internment of Japanese prisoners of war). The site closed in 1955 and there is now only a plaque in honour of the army at the actual site, ‘no mention of the Holding Centre!’ Anton Veenstra recalls a visit in 1994:

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1169 Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p. 23.

1170 Barbara Evans, cited in Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p 46.
I ... was told by a tourist information officer that only one army hut of the original camp had survived but that it was now private property. My partner drove us out of town and we stood at a barbed wire fence. We could see the army hut at the end of a paddock.¹¹⁷¹

While the site itself remains derelict, in 1999 Cowra Shire Council, with funding assistance from Rotary and labour from the Work for the Dole Scheme, renamed a city park ‘Europa Park’ to commemorate the 50ᵗʰ anniversary of the Cowra migrant camp. The park itself was located on the outskirts of town between the town and the migrant camp and was a ‘significant area on the pedestrian path from the migrant campsite to town and return’. Europa Park now encompasses a recreation area, a memorial wall including commemorative pavers, a meditative area and special areas for group gatherings, as well as a planting of exotic trees with family information plaques attached (cost to be paid by the migrant). There is also a plaque:

Europa Park commemorates 17000 migrants from 27 European Nations who passed through the Cowra Migrant Camp between 1948-1955. This is a tribute to their courage, resolve and invaluable contributions to Cowra and Australia.¹¹⁷²

As part of the 50ᵗʰ anniversary celebrations, Cowra Visitors’ Centre held an exhibition of artefacts, including photographs, and a subsequent exhibition, ‘Out of a Suitcase’, was funded by the Illawarra Ethnic Affairs

¹¹⁷² Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p. 23; Marion Starr, quoted in Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p. 43.
Council. Second-generation Latvian DP Mr KM described his visit to Cowra for the celebrations:

I hired a Tarago and I had my sisters, my father and of course my wife, I think a brother-in-law, anyway we had a lot of us, full complement, and we stayed in Cowra two nights and they had the festivities, the Mayor, and Alby Schultz, the member for Hume, he was there. We went there and then we went out to the site of the migrant camp, which was just a dairy farm, and we could see the foundations of where we were, and where we were when we were little kiddies.

Also in 1999, after publishing a history of their association, the Ukrainian Women's Association in Australia (UWA) 'deemed it fitting to include Cowra in our list of celebratory venues'. Delegates in traditional Ukrainian dress were met by representatives of the Council, Historical Society, Rotary Club, the media and the public. Cowra Visitors' Centre hosted an exhibition of Ukrainian artefacts and five trees were planted in Europa Park representing each of the states where there is a State Executive of UWAA and one representing the organization as a whole. Ms IC described the day:

It was lovely going there. And the Ukrainian community planted a number, I think five trees, planting them and different members got dressed up. I took my son, about twenty came all the way from Lidcombe [Sydney] to do the ceremony ... The Cowra community put on a luncheon for us and then in the evening we went to one of the RSL clubs and we put on a concert for them, and had a Ukrainian mass in the local church.

I [also] took my mother back to the Cowra camp that she was in when she came to Australia and she could pick where her tent was,

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1174 Interview with Mr KM, 12 February 2008.
she could pick the markings, they took us to the area, they showed us, this is probably where yours was, the building, the kitchen building. When my mother came to Australia they came via ship and then off the ship a bus took them to Cowra and they lived in tents for about a year before the barrack type buildings. For the first three months it rained continuously and they were living in tents [with] a baby, a one-year-old, a sick one-year-old. That sounded harsh. 1176

The Ukrainian Women’s Association in Australia subsequently also used the park in 2004 for their 55th anniversary celebrations. 1177 In 2005 an ‘opening ceremony’ was held at Europa Park which included ‘migrants and family representatives who had ‘travelled both near and far to be present’. 1178

Local historian Jenny Hayes’s 2007 history, Australia: A New Country – A New Life: An Insight into the Migrant Community that built up the population of Cowra’s Community in the 1940s to 1950s, has a strong regional emphasis. It was published ‘For the Cowra & District Historical Society & Museum Incorporated’, and relies heavily on stories taken from the local newspaper, The Cowra Guardian. Latvian Mr KM attended the book launch of approximately 120 people and remembers, ‘people were buying these at $50 a pop like hotcakes’; the first print run of 300 copies sold out and a second edition is currently being prepared. 1179 Mr KM also

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1176 Interview with Ms IC, 29 October 2007.
1178 Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p. 25.
bought a memorial paver at Europa Park and exclaimed, ‘The Rotary people are doing a bloody good job, honestly’.\footnote{Interview with Mr KM, 12 February 2008.}

While Jenny Hayes wished to enable migrants to ‘share fond memories’ and stated that ‘most have made a wonderful life for themselves and all have made an outstanding contribution to Australia’ (even while including some heart-wrenching stories),\footnote{Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p. 61; see, for example, Anna Krznaric, cited in Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p. 157.} an Australian ex-teacher at Cowra, Barbara Evans, wanted it made known that:

These people [Displaced Persons] have integrated and made valuable contributions to Australia due to the policy of integration and not multiculturalism ... The two years spent at Cowra were happy ones and so I commend your Memorial Project, honouring all those migrants who served Australia for two years and now are proud, hard-working Australians.\footnote{Barbara Evans, cited in Hayes, Australia: A New Country – A New Life, p 46.}

Thus even in Cowra, with its proximity to the Snowy Mountain Scheme, supposedly the ‘cradle of multiculturalism’, there is debate as to whether the legacy of the DPs is in fact multiculturalism or a successful assimilation/integration.

Away from the politics, there is definitely a personal legacy in individual memories of Cowra. Mr KM says, ‘I’ve been back quite a few times because I have this affinity, it is such a lovely place, too’.\footnote{Interview with Mr KM, 12 February 2008.} Polish DP
Josephine Zeleznick, also a resident of the Illawarra, which is approximately four hours' driving distance from Cowra, explains: 'Since about 1988 I have tried to visit Cowra at least once every two to three years. Being born in Cowra in November, 1950, it is my roots and I feel very proud of being born there'.\textsuperscript{1184} Polish Stefania McDonald has also returned to Cowra many times, even before the bicentennial year of 1988. She visited with her parents in 1959 and with her fiancé in 1967. She also attended, with her children, the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary celebrations, which coincided with her own 50\textsuperscript{th} birthday, as well as the opening of Europa Park in 2005. The link is so strong that Stefania has now bought land nearby.\textsuperscript{1185}

**Contract Scheme: The Snowy**

Along with reception and migrant camps commemorations, the Snowy Mountains Scheme, of which more than two-thirds of the 100,000 workers were migrants and many of these were DPs, has become a focus for commemoration, and is similarly tied to a multicultural ideology.\textsuperscript{1186} While DPs were an important part of both migrant camps and worksites such as the Snowy, they have tended to be lumped together with all non-English speaking migrants in commemorative attempts, with simplistic nation-
building narratives tying together the post-war immigration scheme and its contemporary representations.

There is a plethora of books about the Snowy Mountains Scheme, the most recent being Heather Felton’s 2008 Hydro Tasmania-commissioned book based on oral histories, *Ticklebelly Tales and Other Stories from the People of the Hydroy*. Interestingly, some earlier books do not even mention the migrant workers. A commemorative attitude surrounding the Scheme is another example of multicultural revisionism. Author Siobhan McHugh, for example, in her 1995 article ‘A Snowy cradle for postwar multiculturalism’, alleged that multiculturalism ‘was launched officially in the late 1970s, but it really began three decades before, in the mighty challenge met by those who built the Snowy’. According to McHugh, it was ‘in this rugged Alpine region [that] multicultural Australia became a reality’. The Powerhouse Museum’s 1999 exhibition on the 50th anniversary of the Snowy Mountains Scheme followed this theme, claiming that the scheme was the ‘birth of multicultural Australia’.

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1187 See, for example, Kirsty McGoldrick’s *Snowfraus: The Women of the Snowy Mountain Scheme* (East Roseville, NSW: Kangaroo Press, 1998).
1189 Advocacy group Rural Australians for Refugees has taken this narrative one step further, arguing: ‘After World War II the Snowy Mountains Scheme was built largely with the labour of thousands of refugees. Let us again give refugees a chance to contribute to this country in the twenty-first century.’ Ian McShane, ‘Challenging or Conventional? Migration History in Australian Museums’, in McIntyre and Wehner, *National Museums*, p. 128; Rural Australians for Refugees, http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/, viewed 3 November 2010.
As communication and media studies academic Grahame Griffin has pointed out, 'the triumph of the scheme’s multicultural workforce is [now] (almost) everything; then it was (almost) nothing'. In the 50th anniversary celebrations in 1999, the term used to appropriate and market DP memory was multiculturalism, however the subtext was assimilation:

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the scheme in 1999 provided the opportunity for a pivotal re-rendering and reaffirmation by media and politicians of what was promoted as an enduring, successful and ‘acceptable’ way of handling immigration exemplified by the scheme itself.\textsuperscript{1190}

In contrast, DPs and other migrants seemed more interested in the reunion aspect of the commemoration, with the memorial occasion becoming ‘possibly Australia’s biggest reunion and certainly its largest picnic’\textsuperscript{1191}. Snowy workers are now permanently commemorated by a 500-acre International Plantation of trees – ‘native to, or bred in, or named by a botanist of, each nation represented by Snowy workers’ – on the shoreline of Lake Jindabyne. In the nearby township of Cowra, flag representing each of the worker nationalities are flown.\textsuperscript{1192}

A very recent initiative (2001), Immigration Bridge Australia (IBA), is the brain child of Italian migrant and Cooma resident, Gianni De Bortoli, to


\textsuperscript{1191} Griffin, ‘Selling the Snowy’, p. 49.

commemorate the contributions that migrants have made to Australia, particularly with regard to the Snowy Mountains Scheme:

The links with the Snowy Scheme, and that new chapter in Australian multi-cultural cooperation, are very strong. The Snowy set the tone for future Australian multi-racial harmony with over 30 nationalities working together on Australia’s greatest engineering undertaking.\(^\text{1193}\)

The not-for-profit organization IBA, with prominent supporters including Peter Skrzynecki, initially aimed to build the $30 million bridge over Lake Burley Griffin by 2013, and then present the Bridge as a ‘Gift to the Nation’. The bridge would include a History Handrail engraved with 200,000 migrant names, years of arrival and countries of origin (at $110 each) and a Migration Book displayed under glass on the bridge. This original plan has now changed to ‘Immigration Place’, a land-based monument within the Parliamentary Triangle. An important part of the project is the IBA website, which contains hundreds of stories submitted by migrants, including DPs (1,531 by 13 August 2010).\(^\text{1194}\) The IBA contends that up to 50,000 per month read the stories online:

Increasingly they see as we do that we are at a critical stage of our country’s history where so many of the people who came here after the Second World War are getting old or are already lost to us ...


They are increasingly recognizing the need to preserve what little they know and to discover and record more.\footnote{\textit{Immigration Bridge Australia Newsletter} #27 from Andrew Baulch, Email dated 9 December 2009.}

The IBA website seems to have struck a chord with DPs and other migrants and their families. Polish DP Tadeusz Sas-Baczynski has written, on the IBA website: 'My wife and daughter have always said that I should write a book about my life experiences and maybe the Immigration Bridge project will further inspire me to do so.'\footnote{Immigration Bridge Australia, Tadeusz Sas-Baczynski, \url{http://www.immigrationbridge.com.au/www/248/1040427/displayarticle/1011104.html?pub=1&pagemode=2&objectid=1019682}, viewed 12 December 2009.}

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DPs in Australia seem to be ambiguous about commemorating particular sites. Czech Mr FK, for example, has revisited places in Queensland where he used to work on contract because 'all those places ... have a very good memory'. He is not, however, at all interested in visiting his first Australian home at Bonegilla.\footnote{Interview with Mr FK, 5 July 2007.} Others like the idea of some sort of commemoration but are easily swayed from visiting, such as Ukrainian Ms DH who thought of visiting the old camp site when in Bathurst but didn't go because 'it was bucketing down'.\footnote{Interview with Ms DH, 8 February 2008.} Most of the site commemorations are initiated by those who have never been DPs, and among the DPs...
themselves, reunions based on people rather than places are the most successful of the memorial efforts.

As far as DP memory and commemoration are concerned, multiculturalism can be seen as a failed historical narrative of nationalism, as flawed as the earlier assimilation model incorporating 'New Australians'. Bonegilla is not Australia's 'Ellis Island', because in America Ellis Island signifies much more than the actual site, it commemorates, and celebrates, 'American immigration' in general.\footnote{Nancy L. Green, 'History at Large: A French Ellis Island? Museums, Memory and History in France and the United States', \textit{History Workshop Journal}, 63 (2007), p. 243.}

Some parts of Australian society, and some migrants in Australia, including some DPs, do celebrate 'Australian immigration' as part of our 'multicultural' history and are very interested in commemorating resettlement experiences. However, for most the idea of commemoration in the public sphere is not something they are interested in. The dichotomy of assimilation versus involvement in ethnic community groups has influenced individual DPs' opinions regarding commemoration: they are either not very interested, seeing themselves as Australians with 'migrant' backgrounds (or are perhaps too used to being represented in this manner), or are heavily involved in their own ethnic commemorations which have no place for DPs of other ethnicities. On the other hand, ethnic communities do not speak for all DPs. Only a minority of DPs belong to
ethnic community groups, and in any case the DP experience does not fit neatly into 'ethnic' categories. Hungarian DP Agnes Karlik, for example, chasing funding for a documentary on the ship Anna Salen, refused to approach the Hungarian Association: 'Why should I? It is not [just] a Hungarian thing'.

We have seen that national institutions have incorporated DP histories in varying ways. Ignored at the Australian National Museum and placed firmly within a broader migration context at the Immigration Museum of Victoria, the Migration Museum of South Australia supports ethnic community exhibitions, and individual oral histories are incorporated on the ‘Belongings’ website of the NSW Migration Centre. There is a place for most of these interpretations, although a national or multicultural narrative tends to homogenize DPs, and all migrants, so that ‘prior divisions are rendered irrelevant by the experience of migration’. Of course there is an argument, put eloquently by historian Sara Wills, that the ‘unfinished-ness’ of migrant camp sites [and perhaps migration history in general] in Australia works to resist the production of an easy national narrative, and ‘might remind us how tough the process of negotiating a new place can be’.

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1200 Interview with Agnes Karlik, 31 August 2007.
1201 Wills, 'Losing the Right to Country', p. 61.
1202 Wills, 'Between the hostels and the detention centre', p. 277.
Individual oral histories seem, ironically, the most representative in their heterogeneity. Oral history requires an engagement in an interactive process, and offers 'particular, local, regional knowledge' as well as 'the lived, blurry history we tend to associate with the post-modern world'.

Here, then, is a way in which 'the small-scale, the local, the fragmentary, the inconclusive, the unverifiable, and the fictional' can integrate with the national, international and transcultural. Perhaps an emphasis on placing complex life histories online (rather than just media-bytes), by both ethnic community groups and mainstream Australian institutions, would better represent the heterogeneity of individual DPs, and the complexity of migration history generally. In any case, DP representations should be historicized, with an emphasis on the local and the personal.

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Conclusion

Historians may wish to reflect on memory and history making in relation to refugee issues. – Klaus Neumann, 2010. ¹²⁰⁵

Historian Klaus Neumann argued in 2010 that ‘immigration generally and Australian responses to refugees and asylum seekers in particular have been neglected fields in Australian history’. He further called for histories ‘shaped by memories’ as an ‘appreciation of the making of memories and histories can ... be as important as a thorough understanding of the past’. ¹²⁰⁶

This thesis has recovered a range of DP experiences, in order to particularly focus on how representations of the DPs have been constructed and presented. These representations, both past and contemporary, include the international categorizations of this heterogenous group as ‘Displaced Persons’, ‘refugees’, ‘political refugees’, ‘workers’, and ‘migrants’, or as members of a ‘diaspora’ with an ‘exile mission’. In Australia the DPs have been further categorised and presented as ‘New Australians’, ‘people with problems’, and, subsequently, as the founders of multiculturalism: the DPs have been a

¹²⁰⁶ Neumann, ‘Historians to the Fore’.
marker to changing immigration and settlement policies, and have been critical to evolving constructions of national identity. Along with these representations by international and national bodies, this history has interrogated representations of memory constructed and presented by individual DPs.

Despite the failure of the DP 'hard core', and latent issues of nationalisms and agency, the IRO scheme was largely viewed as a political and humanitarian success. The immediate post-war 'Displaced Persons' had been successfully categorized, and re-categorised, joined by 'refugees' and 'political refugees'. The thorny issue of repatriation to the Soviet Union had been tackled head-on with the formation of the International Refugee Organisation, and more than one million DPs, now publicised as 'workers' and potential 'migrants', were resettled by the end of 1951. This vision of success was clearly apparent than in Australia, where DPs were re-branded as 'migrant workers', rapidly becoming 'New Australians'.

The Australian government, however, put more thought and effort into creating, controlling and marketing a pliable workforce than it did into matters of rehabilitation and assimilation, which was seen as largely inevitable, at least over the ensuing generations. The aspirations of the DPs were largely just not considered, to the perceived detriment of many of the DPs. Social scientists, particularly H. B. M. Murphy, Jean Martin and
Jerzy Zubrzycki, associated the 'problems' experienced by individual DPs (and later non-English speaking migrants) with the government policy of rapid assimilation. Martin and Zubrzycki became vocal proponents of cultural pluralism, playing their part in an environment in which integration and then multiculturalism became part of public policy.

The rise of multicultural policy in the 1970s and 1980s contributed to a more open environment for DP memory, including the writing of autobiographical novels and memoirs; 'migrant', 'ethnic' and 'multicultural' literature; and 'ethnic' and 'multicultural' histories. These modes of articulation are, however, as problematic as they are useful (and important). Dominant tropes of assimilation, multiculturalism, ethnic essentialism and individual difficulties ('people with problems') dominate these forms of expression.

Dominant tropes also appear in oral history interviews. However, I found that a counter-narrative of individual and familial themes, rather than the national or diasporic, were emphasized by participants. Indeed, private longing for access to family memory has resulted in a reaching out to memories accessible in the public sphere (commemoration). Institutional commemoration is also inherently problematic, as governments and cultural workers have constructed and presented a DP past which tends to follow lines of assimilation, integration and (ethnic essentialism within)
multiculturalism, rather than focusing on 'negotiation, compromises and conflicts'.\textsuperscript{1207} As far as DP memory and commemoration are concerned, multiculturalism can be seen as a flawed, or failed, historical narrative of nationalism. The use of oral histories - historically contextualized ambiguous, individualized representations - within institutional commemorative endeavours seems the most inclusive way of framing DP memory.

* 

National (and diasporic) memories involve, as Andreas Huyssen has pointed out, 'imaginaries of belonging' incorporating 'constructed deep histories, deliberate forgetting, and false memories'.\textsuperscript{1208} It is, therefore, important to search for any 'discrepancy between individual interpretation of lived experience and official commemoration providing collective meaning' in order to confront 'the ways in which the nation is itself constituted and reproduced through its collective memories'.\textsuperscript{1209} In the context of the DPs, this thesis has argued that the national, the diasporic and the individual DP have all been variously constituted and reproduced, to fulfil differing agendas. The ways in which the DPs have been

\textsuperscript{1207} Huyssen, 'Diaspora and Nation', p. 87.
\textsuperscript{1208} Huyssen, 'Diaspora and Nation', p. 83.
perceived, remembered and commemorated speak largely of dominant international and national narratives, scientific paradigms, discursive forms, and personal biases. To search for discrepancies in this process this thesis has attempted to heed historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s injunction to ‘leave room for the smaller histories, in which regional, minority and individual rememberings are allowed space to grow in all their complexity and ambiguity’. These ‘smaller histories’ include those stories which do not fit into dominant national narratives.

This thesis has examined DP representations, memory and commemoration as a way of opening up ‘smaller histories’, giving rise to questions about experiences from the DP’s pre-arrival past, and the impact of their historical experiences into the future. These include the post-Cold War ‘exile mission’ of those such as Dr Algimantas Taškūnas of the University of Tasmania, who has made consciousness of Lithuanian issues in Australia a professional (and personal) priority. Speaking in 2008, he argued:

[I] have discovered that the world knows very little about Lithuania and its people. That’s why Lithuania needs many more friends among the non-Lithuanians – people who understand our problems and can speak up for Lithuania in times of need.¹²¹¹

The (non)-pursuance of war crimes trials is also indicative of a problematic history ‘deemed best forgotten’ in a ‘sanitised version of Australia’s multicultural beginnings’.\textsuperscript{1212} The story of war crimes in Australia seems to be that of ‘widespread indifference’, with agency again taken away from those DPs accused of war crimes: the time and distance from events rendering the individual ‘superfluous to the proceedings and theatre into which [they] had been thrust’.\textsuperscript{1213}

These themes are relevant to the many postwar migrant groups in Australia, and will continue to be relevant. There is, for example, continuing controversy about Australia’s acceptance of refugees, and the various categorizations of ‘humanitarian refugee’ and ‘economic migrant’, as well as the manner in which such people are temporarily housed, and the settlement processes once eligibility has been confirmed. The issue of war crimes is also continuing; Australia does not have any standing means by which to investigate new war crime allegations.

As historian Ann Curthoys has pointed out, the question of migrant and indigenous connections, particularly under the umbrella of a post-colonial ‘multicultural’ discourse, is also important and continuing.\textsuperscript{1214} In this regard, the Polish community at Bielany, a recreational reserve in New

\textsuperscript{1213} David Bevan, \textit{A Case to Answer: The Story of Australia’s First European War Crimes Prosecution} (Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 1994), p. x.
\textsuperscript{1214} Curthoys, ‘An Uneasy Conversation’, p. 281.
South Wales, has stated: 'Once Australia was land of the Aboriginal, then England, but now today it is a land of many nationalities, and we are trying to endow this land [with] Polish culture'.\textsuperscript{1215} Kateryna Longley, meanwhile, has argued for a re-labelling of postwar migrants as members of a 'Fifth World' (following a 'Fourth World' of indigenous colonized people) in what she sees as 'an essential part of the continuing postcolonial reshuffle'.\textsuperscript{1216}

The purpose of this thesis, then, in answer to the call from Neumann, has been to examine the representations, memory and commemorative practice surrounding the heterogenous group of displaced persons in Australia: an immigration and refugee history emphasizing the 'making of memories and histories', in the past and into the future.

\textsuperscript{1215} Drozdzewski, 'A Place Called “Bielany”', p. 865.
\textsuperscript{1216} Kateryna Longley, 'The Fifth World', p. 135.
Appendix

Oral History Project

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<td>Polish Ukrainian</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
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