

***The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews 1942-1946:
Australia's First Formal Channel for Interfaith Dialogue***

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requirements for the degree of**

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work, and that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or academic institution. I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and the extent to which I have availed myself of the work of others is acknowledged in this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews was Australia's first, albeit short-lived, official channel for interfaith relations. The plans to establish the Council were announced at a protest meeting held at the Sydney Town Hall in November 1942, at a time when news of the Holocaust began to be revealed. Relations between Christians and Jews were already strained at this time due to problems of antisemitism and anti-refugee hysteria in the media, government and the Australian public.

The creation of the Council was a response by Christian and Jewish denominations to the suffering experienced by Jews at the hands of the Nazis. It was modelled on a similar, successful Council in Britain and was important in that it was the first time that representatives of various Christian denominations, especially Anglicans and Catholics, as well as representatives from both Orthodox and Liberal Judaism, officially met to discuss issues of common concerns in order to create better relations and understanding between the two faith groups in Australia.

This thesis will examine the relations that existed between Christians and Jews in Australia during the colonial period and the early twentieth century, prior to the Council's establishment and then analyse the reasons leading to its establishment, as well as its accomplishments. Emphasis will be placed on the key roles played by certain Council leaders during its brief existence, especially Rabbi Dr Israel Porush and Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher. The thesis will also examine the reasons for the Council's demise after the war as well as its legacy.

DEDICATION

For my mother: Silke Bohleke,
who taught me that knowledge is a power which no tyrant can take away

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Anyone who has ever embarked on higher degree research studies knows this can be at times a lonely exercise. I owe everything to my mother, Silke Bohleke, who is my best friend and great inspiration. I am eternally grateful for her love, her many sacrifices and her unwavering encouragement in support of my dreams, which has kept me going throughout these years. I also thank Isaac Nakhla for his patience and understanding. Especial gratitude is also to my friend and mentor Dr Jon Yaakov Gorr z”l for his invaluable support and guidance.

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Last but not least I would like to extend my gratitude to the good people of Australia. This is a country where dreams are made, with a people who support and encourage those who wish to follow their goals. I feel privileged to be a part of this country and thank all those who have assisted me in reaching this achievement, especially all my wonderful Australian teachers. No doubt there are many others whose advice and counsel have informed this thesis and who are not able to be listed here, but to whom I also extend my sincere thanks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	2
Abstract	3
Dedication	4
Acknowledgements	5
Abbreviations	8
Glossary	10
Chapter 1: Introduction	12
Chapter 2: State of Research	20
Chapter 3: Jewish-Christian Relations in the Australian Colonies	36
Chapter 4: The 1880s and Beyond: Integration and its Obstacles	71
Chapter 5: The 1930s: Increasing Concerns About Antisemitism	121
Chapter 6: The Creation of the Council of Christians and Jews	153
Chapter 7: Rabbi Dr Israel Porush: The Driving Force of the Council	180
Chapter 8: Christian Founders of the Council: Diversity and Debate	217
Chapter 9: The Council's Activities, Achievements and Disagreements	256
Chapter 10: The Demise and Legacy of the Council	300
Appendices	310
Bibliography	314

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Australian Archives (now known as National Archives of Australia)
AAJ	Archives of Australian Judaica at Fisher Library, The University of Sydney
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
<i>AJC</i>	<i>Australian Jewish Chronicle</i>
<i>AJH</i>	<i>Australian Jewish Herald</i>
AJHS	Australian Jewish Historical Society
AJHSA	Archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney
ASJ	Archives of the Society of Jesus (also known as the Jesuit Archives) in Melbourne
BJA	Board of Jewish Affairs (NSW)
<i>CB</i>	<i>Council Bulletin</i> of the National Council of Jewish Women
CCJ	Council of Christians and Jews (NSW)
CJW	Council of Jewish Women (NSW)
CMG	Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George
<i>DT</i>	<i>Daily Telegraph</i>
ECAJ	Executive Council of Australian Jewry
HRA	Historical Records of Australia, Series I
<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Standard of Australasia</i>
IC CJ	International Council of Christians and Jews
IE IJA	Institution identifier for the Irish Jesuit Archives in Dublin, Ireland
JBoD	Jewish Board of Deputies (NSW)
MBE	Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
MUIOOF	Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity
NAA	National Archives of Australia in Canberra
NCJW	National Council of Jewish Women of Australia
NCJWA	Archives of the National Council of Jewish Women in Sydney
NSDAP	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i> , the German Nazi Party
OBE	Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

RIP	Rabbi Israel Porush Collection at the Archives of Australian Judaica at Fischer Library, The University of Sydney
RSL	Returned and Services League of Australia
<i>SMH</i>	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
UAOD	United Ancient Order of Druids
UECEJ	United Emergency Committee for European Jewry (NSW)
UJORF	United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund
VD	Volunteer Officer's Decoration
WJC	World Jewish Congress
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

GLOSSARY

<i>Anschluss</i>	Refers to the annexation of Austria into Nazi-Germany in 1938
<i>Bar Mitzvah</i>	Coming of age ceremony for Jewish boys when they turn 13 conducted in a synagogue.
<i>Beth Din</i>	Jewish ecclesiastical court
<i>Chasid (pl. Chassidim)</i>	Literally: pious ones, a sub-group of <i>Haredi</i> Judaism
<i>Chevra Kadisha</i>	A Jewish burial/funeral society
<i>Dayan</i>	Higher level of rabbinic ordination allowing the person to be a judge on a Jewish ecclesiastical court
<i>Deutschtum</i>	Literally: Germanness, referring to German identity
<i>Eretz Israel</i>	Refers to the land of Israel as opposed to describing the modern State of Israel
<i>Frum</i>	Religious or observant Jew
<i>Haredi (pl. Haredim)</i>	Ultra Orthodox Jews
<i>Halakha (pl. Halakhot)</i>	Jewish law
<i>Hanukkah</i>	Jewish festival of lights usually occurring in December
<i>Hashgafa</i>	Outlook, worldview or guiding philosophy
<i>Keren Hayesod</i>	The United Israel Appeal, a fundraising organisation for Israel
<i>Kippah (pl. Kippot)</i>	Skull caps worn by religious Jews
<i>Kristallnacht</i>	Nazi <i>pogrom</i> against Jews in Germany conducted on 9-10 November 1938
<i>Minyan</i>	A gathering of 10 Jewish men for the purposes of Jewish prayer
<i>Peyot</i>	Side locks often worn by observant Jewish men
<i>Phylacteries</i>	Religious devices used by observant Jews during the morning prayer, which are fastened to the head and arm by leather straps, and which contain parchments with inscriptions from the <i>Torah</i> , known in Hebrew as <i>tefillin</i> .
<i>Pogrom</i>	Violent riot, aimed at massacring or dispersing a particular ethnic or religious group, usually Jews.
<i>Reichsdeutsche</i>	Archaic term for ethnic Germans with German citizenship
<i>Rosh Hashana</i>	Jewish new year festival usually celebrated in September
<i>Shabbat</i>	Sabbath observed by religious Jews from Friday night to Saturday night

<i>Shabbat Va'era</i>	Name of the Sabbath on which the <i>Va'era</i> portion is read from the <i>Torah</i>
<i>Shul/Shule</i>	Yiddish for synagogue
<i>Talmud Chakham</i>	Honorific title given to a well-respected Jewish rabbinical scholar
<i>Tisha B'Av</i>	A sombre annual fast day on which a number of calamities that befell the Jewish people over the millennia are commemorated
<i>Torah</i>	The Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses.
<i>Torah im Derekh Eretz</i>	Philosophy espoused by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (Literally: the way of the land, but implying combining secular and religious knowledge)
<i>Torah v'Avodah</i>	Ideology within Judaism that combines secular studies with Jewish studies.
<i>Verjudung</i>	Literally: Jewification or Judaization
<i>Weltanschauung</i>	World view or outlook
<i>Yahrzeit</i>	Anniversary of a deceased person
<i>Yeshiva</i>	A Jewish theological seminary for the study of religious texts and training of rabbis
<i>Yiddishkeit</i>	A Jewish way of life
<i>Yishuv</i>	Refers to the Jewish residents in British Mandate Palestine (Literally: settlement)
<i>Yom Kippur</i>	Jewish day of atonement, usually occurring in September

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview of the Thesis

The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews was Australia's first formal channel of communication between Christian and Jewish leaders from 1942-1946. It was created at a time of particularly tumultuous relations between the faiths, at the height of World War Two with the aim to combat antisemitism and foster harmonious relations between Christians and Jews. It was modelled on the larger and successful Council of Christians and Jews in Britain and involved representatives of the main Christian denominations prevalent in Australia at the time as well as representatives from Liberal and Orthodox Judaism. To date there has been no in-depth analysis of the history of the Council during this period. This thesis aims to fill this gap, as well as examine the background relationships that existed between Christians and Jews from colonial times to the 1930s. In so doing, it reveals both the efficacy but also the limits of interfaith relations in Australia at a time when global antisemitism threatened Australia's historically tolerant and relatively harmonious religious landscape.

The thesis seeks to examine a number of important questions surrounding the Council's brief existence. These include the reasons for why it was necessary to establish the Council in 1942, the achievements of the Council, the dynamic of the key people involved in its existence and the reasons for the Council's demise after the war. The two key personalities in the Council's existence were Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, chief minister of Sydney's Great Synagogue from 1940, and Dr Charles Venn Pilcher, Sydney's Anglican Bishop Coadjutor. Both Porush and Pilcher will be discussed in detail in the course of this thesis. In order to ascertain why Porush and Pilcher felt the need to establish a formal channel for communication between Christians and Jews in New South Wales in 1942, the thesis first seeks to provide a background to the development of largely positive Christian-Jewish relations in Australia throughout the colonial and early post-federation period and then to examine the decline in those relations as a result of rising antisemitism in the 1930s. Whilst a number of scholars have written on the relations that existed between Christians and Jews on this continent, none have hitherto provided a comprehensive overview of the history and analysed the importance that these relations had on communal harmony, as will be demonstrated in the state of research.

The focus of the latter part of the thesis is on the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews, which was based in Sydney but whose activities reverberated interfaith religious efforts on a national scale with the purpose of improving real-world interfaith relations in Australia. It consisted of the leaders of the main faith groups in Australia at the time, such as the chief rabbi of Sydney's Great Synagogue, as well as both the Anglican and Catholic archbishops of Sydney. The Council was able to leverage its high-profile membership to attract the attention of both the media and politicians and thus disseminate its message effectively. New South Wales was considered as the 'mother state' from its foundation in 1788, with the largest population in Australia, and activities in the state tended to have a broader national impact. The hope was expressed that eventually similar councils could be established in other states as well as a national council representing Christian and Jewish interests in Australia.

In undertaking this historical analysis of Christian-Jewish relations in Australia, with a focus on the Council, this thesis seeks to corroborate the materials found in the relevant archives with Porush's first-hand accounts through a number of his publications.¹ Relevant secondary materials are then used to provide further context, where possible, but since not many secondary materials are available on this topic, the thesis instead relies heavily on primary archival evidence, with a discussion of these materials providing a basis for analysis of the foundation, achievements and demise of the Council.

It should be noted that this thesis is not a study in Holocaust or Genocide Studies as such, but rather one in Australian Jewish history, which occurred in Australia, during the period of World War Two and the Holocaust. Whilst news of the emerging catastrophe in Europe was the major factor that ultimately led to the establishment of the Council, the thesis does not aim to examine the news as it emerged or the impact this had other on other aspects of Australian history apart from the fact that it was sufficient to ensure the Council's creation. Much has already been written on the topic of Australia and the Holocaust and these issues have already been dealt with in detail by other historians.² The thesis also does not examine the impact that was had on

¹ Israel Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 6, Part 4 (1968): 181-195, and *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press: 1977), 161.

² See for example: Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994); Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001); Suzanne D Rutland, '1942: What was known Down Under, at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?,' in *The End of 1942: A Turning Point in World War II and Comprehension of the Final Solution?* eds. Dina Porat and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Yashem, 2017), 255-278; Suzanne D Rutland, "'Are You Jewish?'" Post-war Immigration to Australia 1945-54,' *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1991): 35-58; Suzanne D Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,'

Australia of the liberation of the concentration camps, since this requires a separate study. Rather, it seeks to examine a neglected aspect of the impact of the Holocaust on Australia – the emergence of the Council in New South Wales and the role it played during the war in terms of fostering positive Christian-Jewish relations and countering antisemitism.

1.2 Summary of Chapters

This thesis is divided into 10 chapters, of which this introduction is the first. Chapter 2 of this thesis will discuss the state of research and review a selection of the key secondary literature relevant to the topic of Christian-Jewish relations in Australia. This chapter is organised according to themes and authors starting with an overview of the major historians on Australian Jewry, Suzanne Rutland, Hilary Rubinstein and William Rubinstein. It then progresses to the key sources for the background chapters, namely Israel Getzler, Frank Fletcher, Paul Bartrop and Christine Winter and then includes discussion of the methodology used to study the Council's history, especially the archival research.

Chapter 3 and 4 of this thesis provide a broad overview of the state of Christian-Jewish relations during the colonial period up to the 1930s. In particular, Chapter 3 discusses the story of Jewish emancipation in Australia from 1836 to 1872 known as the *Church Acts*. This chapter relies heavily on Israel Getzler's work *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, which is still the most important study of the issue to date. The passing of the *Church Acts* in the various Australian colonies in the mid-nineteenth century was the first time that Australian Jewry felt ostracised by the government as they had until then assumed that they were emancipated when in fact this had never been enshrined in law. The story provides an important insight into Christian-Jewish relations in colonial Australia as many Christians came to the defence of the small Jewish minority, which often lacked official representation or a unified voice. It showed that harmonious relations existed between the faiths, as the Australian gentile public was broadly in favour of extending the same benefits to Jews as were enjoyed by Christians.

Chapter 4 is the second background chapter and continues to build on the harmonious relations examined during the *Church Acts* period. This chapter relies heavily on Frank Fletcher's article

Menorah: Australian Journal of Jewish Studies Vol. 2, No. 2 (Issue 3) (December 1988): 77-91; Konrad Kwiet, "'Be Patient and Reasonable!'" The Internment of German-Jewish Refugees in Australia,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1985-04): 61-77.

in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* entitled ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901: Its Interrelationship with the Majority Gentile Society.’³ Fletcher provides an important insight into the state of relations between Christians and Jews through the lens of culture assimilation and integration. Chapter 4 also discusses the relations that were fostered between various Jewish ministers, who acted as the unofficial leadership of the Jewish community since no elected lay-leadership existed at the time. These ministers fostered cordial relations with their gentile colleagues which further cemented the harmonious relations that existed between the faiths.

Chapter 4 will also discuss the role that women have played in Jewish-Christian relations by focussing on the initiatives of the National Council of Jewish Women. This organisation of lay women played an important part during the 1920s to ensure harmonious community relations existed between gentiles and Jews and also evidences a gradual shift in Jewish communal leadership away from congregational ministers to laypersons.

Chapter 5 examines the decade preceding the Council’s establishment and will focus on the rapid emergence of antisemitism in Australia which coincides with the rise of Hitler and fascism on the European continent in the 1930s. This marked a low-point in Jewish-Christian relations in Australia as will be evidenced through the increasingly restrictive migration policies of the Australian government towards Jewish refugees and anti-refugee hysteria amongst the Australian public. This was spurred on by the impact of the depression as well as by the antisemitic press,⁴ publicly expressed by parliamentarians⁵ and resonated amongst many Australians so much so that soon Jewish refugees were barred from certain professional organisations, such as doctors in New South Wales.⁶

This popular anti ‘Refu-Jews’⁷ hysteria manifested into hostility towards local Jews and was met with further alarm when considering the efforts of local Nazi movements, which were

³ Frank Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901: Its Interrelationship with the Majority Gentile Society,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 8, Part 5 (1978): 221-272.

⁴ Anne Andgel, *Fifty Years of Caring: The History of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, 1936-1986* (Sydney: Australian Jewish Welfare Society and AJHS, 1988), 3-10; and Rutland, ‘Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,’ 82.

⁵ Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 179-180.

⁶ Suzanne D Rutland, “‘An Example of Intellectual Barbarism’: The Story of Foreign Doctors in Australia,” *Yad Vashem Studies* Vol. 18 (1987), 233-257.

⁷ *Smith’s Weekly*, 10 December 1938, 4, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 122.

fostered by Germany's emissaries. All this combined with news of the deteriorating situation in Europe, meant that Australian Jewry was deeply concerned that their safety was not guaranteed and their status within Australian society under threat. During this period the first small steps were being taken to foster relations between Christians and Jews on a more formal, organisational basis. The arrival of Rabbi Porush at the Great Synagogue in Sydney in 1940 provided a perfect opportunity to assist and strengthen these early endeavours in the 1930s.

Chapter 6 discusses the foundation of the Council of Christians and Jews and in doing so also discusses the state of Jewish-Christian relations in Australia at the beginning of the 1940s. Increasing news of the emerging catastrophe in Europe meant that the Australian public and Christian leaders could no longer look away and needed to be seen to take action. At a protest rally at Sydney Town Hall in November 1942, it was decided to create an organisation, which would provide a more formalised channel for communication, 'a body that would represent and further the spirit of brotherhood so badly needed, and would, whenever confronted, denounce collectively the iniquity of racial or religious intolerance.'⁸

The Council of Christians and Jews was born under the auspices of Rabbi Porush and his friend the Anglican Coadjutor Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher. It was officially chaired by Sydney's Anglican Archbishop Howard Mowll and with the blessing of Sydney's Catholic Archbishop Cardinal (later Sir) Norman Gilroy. Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, the Salvation Army and Liberal Judaism were also represented in the Council. The chapter will explore the reasons for the establishment of the Council and also contrast this with Lutherans and Christadelphians, who for different reasons, were not participants in the Council despite assisting significantly in the fight against antisemitism.

Chapter 7 is dedicated to Rabbi Israel Porush, the unofficial leader of Australian Jewry, and a key person who lobbied for the establishment of the Council. The chapter will explore his background, both his education in Weimar Germany and his first ministry in Britain during the 1930s, to decipher his interest in Jewish-Christian relations. As will be discussed, Porush witnessed the rapid deterioration of these relations in Germany and, to a lesser extent, in Britain and he wished to prevent the same occurring in Australia. In achieving this aim, he sought to enlist the help of his colleagues in the Christian clergy and with this campaign he found a 'a

⁸ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

great friend of the refugees and a champion of the Council'⁹ in Bishop Pilcher whose help was equally as pivotal in the Council's establishment.

Chapter 8 will discuss the other important personalities involved in the Council's existence, including Bishop Pilcher, noted as being one of Australia's foremost philosemites.¹⁰ Little is known about Pilcher and few sources were available to explore the origins of his philosemitism. This thesis attempts to fill this gap to some extent with materials uncovered in the archives and highlight the important contributions of a man who is somewhat of a forgotten hero of Australian Jewry. This chapter also explores the other key personalities involved in the Council, namely Archbishop Howard Mowll, Cardinal Norman Gilroy and his representative on the Council, Father Noel Hehir. Combined with Pilcher and Porush, these men almost exclusively dominated the affairs of the Council and set the agenda. Since the Council was run by the religious leadership, and at the time there were no female ministers of religion, this is a male story. Their personal differences ultimately led to the demise of the Council as it could not function without a unified concerted effort of all parties involved.

The purpose of Chapter 9 is to focus on the achievements of the Council during its brief existence from 1942-1946. The chapter is heavily reliant on primary sources uncovered in the Archives of Australian Judaica and discusses items such as letters written to the prime Minister on behalf of the Council advocating for Jewish refugees, surveys, radio broadcasts and the Brotherhood Week initiative. As will become evident, the Council started with much enthusiasm by all parties involved but as the war drew to an end, especially from 1945 onward, the Council effectively ceased to function as the urgency of the crisis seemed to have passed by then. The chapter will also discuss the complimentary roles played by the Bureau of Jewish Affairs and the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry, in which both Pilcher and Porush were involved as well. The chapter ends with a discussion of the demise of the Council, around the time of an international conference of Christians and Jews in London, which was attended by Porush on behalf of the Council.

Chapter 10 of this thesis is the conclusion, which seeks to reflect on the Council's brief existence and provide some analysis for the reasons for its demise. The Chapter will discuss

⁹ Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press: 1977), 161.

¹⁰ Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 243.

that since the Council was always driven by a small group of key men, and even more specifically by Porush and Pilcher, there was no momentum to keep it alive without them, especially when the urgency that faced European Jewry and the concomitant antisemitism facing Australian Jewry had abated, and the issues of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine had become a major but also contentious issue.

1.3 Aim and Focus

As will be discussed in the next chapter, the topic of Christian-Jewish relations in Australia has been under-researched and only limited secondary sources are available on the topic. Whilst many of the foremost scholars of Australian Jewish history have mentioned the Council and Jewish-Christian relations, thus far no comprehensive study has been undertaken in this field and this thesis aims fill some of this gap. Throughout, this thesis will focus on the relationship that existed between Christians and Jews in Australia and argue that these relations were for the most part harmonious and mutually beneficial until the 1930s. There were some noted exceptions, particularly relating to the emerging Australian nationalism in the 1880s, concerns about Russian Jewish refugees fleeing the Tsarist *pogroms* in this period and the economic downturn of the 1890s. The fact that instances of antisemitism were minimal, especially when compared with Europe, is reflected in this positive relationship that resulted in thriving connections between the two faith groups in both urban and rural settings. This ensured that the Jewish community was well-integrated and well-respected by the non-Jewish Christian majority. Nevertheless, with the exponential rise of fascist antisemitism in Europe during the 1930s, Australia also experienced for the first time the emergence of organised antisemitic movements, contributing to a deterioration of relations between Christians and Jews and creating concerns for the Jewish community. It was also a period when anti-Jewish migration rhetoric was laced with antisemitism. By the time Porush arrived in Australia in 1940, relations between Jews and Christians were being challenged.

The thesis aims to explore whether the Council of Christians and Jews was thus founded in 1942 by Porush and Pilcher to strengthen the relations and understanding between the Christian majority and Jewish minority on the Australian continent with the aim of combating antisemitism. This was especially the case in the light of information emerging of the destruction of European Jewry. The thesis will explore the foundations of the Council, its achievements, the key personalities involved and reasons for its demise. The thesis will support

Porush's description of the Council as being 'of short duration, unspectacular but meaningful.'¹¹ It will argue that the limited achievements of the Council nevertheless improved Jewish-Christian relations and showed that there was sufficient common ground across the major faith groups to unite under the banner of protecting Australia's Jewish minority. This was particularly during the time of extreme challenges created by World War Two and Hitler's war against the Jews. At the same time, it will discuss the different reactions of the Protestant and Catholic branches of Christianity, especially in relation to Zionism.

This thesis is, therefore, not a study of Australia and the Holocaust as such but rather a historical analysis of Jewish-Christian relations which faced challenges in the 1930s with the emergence of antisemitic and Nazi organisations in Australia. Relations between the two faith groups were revived during World War Two through the establishment of a formal channel of communication in the form of the Council of Christians and Jews. Through the Council, the Christian majority once again defended and supported its Jewish minority against antisemitism, a tradition that was reinvigorated with the establishment of the Council. This development, which has so far been neglected by the existing scholarship, will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹¹ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

CHAPTER 2

STATE OF RESEARCH

2.1 The State of Research on Jewish-Christian Relations in Australia

The purpose of chapter is to review the key literature published on the topic of Jewish-Christian relations in Australian history and to discuss the state of research on this subject as well as the research methodology undertaken in this thesis. The chapter is organised according to the key authors of the major works that have influenced Australian Jewish history, indicating the central themes that are relevant for this thesis and which have been utilised most extensively within the thesis. Whilst many other sources are also relied upon, the discussion of the literature and state of research will limit itself to the key materials.

As discussed in the introduction, the issue of Christian-Jewish relations in Australia has been under-researched. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to filling this gap in this area of Australian history until the end of the 1940s. Many well-respected authors have written at length on Australian Jewish history but have, for the most part, either neglected or severely limited express discussion of the history of interfaith relations that existed in Australia from 1788 to the immediate post-World War Two period. As a result, there is no scholarship which discusses these relations comprehensively across the time period examined in this thesis from the colonial period to the 1930s and it was also difficult to find relevant secondary literature that dealt with the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews in the 1940s as the Council is often merely mentioned in a sentence or two or at best a paragraph. The only detailed publications on the Council were written by Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, one of the key figures during the Council's existence, and to whom an entire chapter of this thesis is devoted.

2.2 Major Overviews of Australian Jewish History

There are two major approaches to a broader overview of Australian Jewish history: that of Sydney-based Suzanne D Rutland, and of Melbourne-based Hilary L Rubinstein and William D Rubinstein. The works of these three scholars have informed this study throughout the thesis.

Suzanne Rutland's book *Edge of the Diaspora* is utilised consistently throughout the thesis as it represents the most comprehensive, chronological history of Australian Jewry to date. This

work does cover Jewish-Christian relations directly, albeit briefly. Rutland mentions the initial Council of Christians and Jews in the context of relief organisations assisting European Jews during World War Two.¹ The organisations she discusses varied in membership, mostly consisted of Jews, but some also had Christians involved, such as the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry.

Rutland discusses Jewish-Christian relations throughout Australian history in the context of integration and assimilation. Rutland argues that ‘Organised anti-Semitism² did not develop in Australia before the 1930s because Australian traditions of democracy and tolerance did not foster prejudice.’³ This certainly explains the harmonious relations that existed between Christians and Jews until the 1930s, particularly given the achievements of some notable Jews such as Sir Isaac Isaacs and Sir John Monash. It also explains why so many Christians came to the Jewish community’s defence during the *Church Act* debates. Rutland further argued that this was the result of ‘dispersion and [the Jewish community’s] cultural assimilation,’⁴ and lack of religious observance. She also contrasts the lack of prejudice towards Jews compared with the discrimination faced by Catholics in the 1920s.⁵ The deterioration of relations between Christians and Jews during the 1930s is also covered in *Edge of the Diaspora*, through discussion of Christian reactions to Nazi antisemitic propaganda and the effect this had on politicians and the general public in Australia.⁶ Whilst Anglican Bishop Pilcher was portrayed as a philosemite who empathised with the Jewish plight, the Catholic Church was less interested in this and more concerned with the persecution of Catholics in Europe.⁷

Even though the discussion of Jewish-Christian relations in *Edge of the Diaspora* is short and in the context of antisemitism and assimilation, of all the major books written on Australian Jewish history, this work has the most comprehensive discussion of the topic. However, it lacks

¹ Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 222.

² The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has standardized the unhyphenated use of the spelling of ‘Antisemitism’, which is the current academic practice because the concept of ‘Semitism’ does not exist. However, given this practice is a recent recommendation, many quotes throughout this thesis use the original hyphenated spelling which has been retained in this thesis to ensure the integrity of the quote remains unaltered. See: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, ‘Spelling of Antisemitism,’ accessed 25 March 2022, <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/antisemitism/spelling-antisemitism>.

³ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 144.

⁴ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 144

⁵ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 144

⁶ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 196

⁷ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 196

further detail on the relations that existed between Jewish ministers and Christian clergymen and how this contributed to harmonious relations. Whilst the book offers a reason for why relations deteriorated sharply and rapidly during the 1930s, it neglects to discuss in detail what the various ministers did to attempt to alleviate this situation.

Given that Rutland has written extensively on the topic of Australian Jewish history, *Edge of the Diaspora* is by no means the only work of hers utilised in this thesis. The need for a unified elected Jewish representative body was discussed in the community from the early 1940s, as it became evident that the Jewish clergy was no longer able to comprehensively represent the community.⁸ A lobby group that advocated for the Jewish community's interests was needed, as became evident after Hitler's rise to power.⁹

Rutland discussed these issues in a variety of articles and from a variety of perspectives. One further example is her work on Jewish professionals seeking admission to professional bodies during the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁰ She also discusses in detail what was known in Australia of the emerging catastrophe unfolding in Europe, which ultimately proved that the Australian public was increasingly aware and informed of the plight of European Jewry. This in turn ultimately caused the churches to reverse their position and re-engage with the Jewish community to assist in combating antisemitism, such as through their involvement in the Council of Christians and Jews.¹¹ As such, Rutland's scholarship provides valuable overview for this thesis.

Apart from Rutland, Hilary Rubinstein and William Rubinstein are the most prolific writers of Australian Jewish history to date and both have at least alluded to Jewish-Christian relations in most of their books with an emphasis on philosemitism. On the one hand, Hilary Rubinstein's *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* merely mentions the Council of Christians and Jews in one line¹² but does pay tribute to Bishop Pilcher.¹³ On the other hand, her history of *The Jews in*

⁸ Suzanne D Rutland and Sophie L Caplan, *With One Voice: A History of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies* (Sydney: AJHS, 1998), 13.

⁹ Suzanne D Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' *Menorah: Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Issue 3) (December 1988): 79.

¹⁰ Suzanne D Rutland, *Take Heart Again: The Story of a Fellowship of Jewish Doctors* (Sydney: Fellowship of Jewish Doctors, 1983).

¹¹ Suzanne D Rutland, '1942: What Was Known Down Under at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?' in *The End of 1942: A Turning Point in World War II and in Comprehension of the Final Solution?* eds. Dina Porat and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2017), 269.

¹² Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 244.

¹³ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 243.

Victoria offers a more detailed discussion, such as the fact that St Kilda Hebrew Congregation's Rev Elias Blaubaum wrote an article on the fundamentals of Judaism, which was published in the *Melbourne Review* and which later even appeared in the local Catholic press.¹⁴ He did this as a consequence of an interaction he had with an interested Christian whilst travelling to Ballarat.¹⁵ Rubinstein further wrote of how Blaubaum fostered relations with Christian ministers in the St Kilda area.¹⁶ Rubinstein also notes the prejudice that existed, particularly against Eastern European Jews, during the depression of the 1880s and 1890s¹⁷ and Blaubaum's efforts to counter this.¹⁸ She notes the efforts of the St Kilda and Melbourne Hebrew Congregations to counter negative stereotypes of Jews noting 'increased sensitivity of the Jewish community to gentile perceptions'¹⁹ during the 1890s.

Her work further described the assistance that was afforded by certain Christian ministers during this difficult time, culminating in the coverage of the Dreyfus affair.²⁰ Thus, she shows an awareness of the importance of the relationships that existed between the Jewish ministers and their Christian counterparts in ensuring harmonious relations between Christians and Jews. Her thematic history, the first volume of *The Jews in Australia*, did not discuss the Council of Christians and Jews but did discuss the concept of philosemitism at length and throughout her book. She noted that many Christians financially supported the building of synagogues²¹ and many Christian ministers 'were outspokenly pro-Jewish'²² in nineteenth century Australia. She describes Anglican Bishop Pilcher as 'the most tireless and indefatigable'²³ philosemite in Australia and noted at length the Christian philosemitism espoused by Melbourne's Archbishop Daniel Mannix in his support for the Kimberley Scheme²⁴ and the 'legendary'²⁵ support of the Christadelphians for Zionism.

¹⁴ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria: 1835-1985* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), 76.

¹⁵ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 76.

¹⁶ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 76.

¹⁷ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 84.

¹⁸ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 85.

¹⁹ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 92.

²⁰ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 93.

²¹ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume I* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 481.

²² Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 481.

²³ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 514.

²⁴ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 514.

²⁵ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 514.

William Rubinstein's second volume of *The Jews in Australia* did briefly discuss the Council of Christians and Jews in the context of Christian-Jewish relations during the war.²⁶ He wrote that during the 1930s and World War Two, there were many philosemites to be found amongst the non-Jewish left, including intellectuals and artists and that this may have been the result of their proximity to the Jewish community then centred around Melbourne's Carlton suburb.²⁷

Whilst neither Hilary nor William Rubinstein specifically discusses the original New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews at length, they nevertheless contribute significantly to the understanding of Christian-Jewish relations in Australia through their focus on various philosemitic individuals and causes that fostered understanding between the two faith groups. Their focus is often on lesser known philosemites such as Sir James Barrett, which Hilary Rubinstein describes as a 'champion of Jews and Jewish causes.'²⁸ They highlighted the importance of the relationships that individual Jewish ministers and key Jewish lay leaders fostered with their gentile colleagues and community leaders, such as Sir James Barrett, and that this unofficial network ensured that key gentile figures could be called upon to assist the small Jewish community when needed.

Thus, the works of these major scholars of Australian Jewish history helped to provide a framework and background for this thesis. However, there is still lack of a synthesis that focuses on Christian-Jewish relations across the period from colonial times until the early post-war. Individual scholars, including Israel Getzler, Frank Fletcher, Paul Bartrop and Christine Winter, have dealt with specific periods.

2.3 Philosemitism in Australia

The literature dealing with British philosemitism is limited, as noted by Gertrude Himmelfarb, who describes that which exists as 'meager.'²⁹ Much of what has been written, including Himmelfarb's own book, relates to British support for the nascent Zionist movement as

²⁶ William D Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume II* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 470.

²⁷ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. II*, 477.

²⁸ Hilary L Rubinstein, 'Sir James Barrett (1862-1945): Australian Philo-Semite,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 12, Part 1 (November 1993), 91.

²⁹ Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The People of the Book: Philosemitism in England, From Cromwell to Churchill* (New York: Encounter Books, 2011), 1.

evidenced by Lord Balfour and others in his cabinet³⁰ and Winston Churchill's strong support for a Jewish homeland.³¹

Hence, the main study relevant to this thesis is William and Hilary Rubinstein's detailed history in their book *Philosemitism*. As mentioned above, the Rubinstein's often discussed Jewish-Christian relations in the context of the philosemitism espoused by certain gentile individuals but also noted the involvement of whole communities in some circumstances. For example, even during the bitter fighting surrounding the *Church Acts* in Tasmania, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Anglican Bishop of Hobart and the Mayor and 165 other gentiles donated to an appeal for the improvement of conditions for the Jews in Jerusalem.³² Similarly, the Rubinsteins discuss resolutions condemning the Russian *pogroms* in the various Australian colonial parliaments and how these were for the most part sponsored by non-Jewish parliamentarians.³³ This continued even after federation as Prime Minister Alfred Deakin expressed Australia's condemnation of the *pogroms* to the British government.³⁴ They argue that the 'surprising range of philosemitism'³⁵ in Australia and indeed the entire English-speaking world is a result of the community's remoteness from the antisemitism prevalent in continental Europe.³⁶ Instead, they stress that 'Roman Catholics were the chief objects of religious hostility in both Britain and America'³⁷ and that generally, 'throughout the English-speaking world Jews were regarded as a small, low-profile minority who were seldom viewed by the Protestant majority in a dark light.'³⁸ All in all, 'as in Britain, philo-Semitism [*sic*] in Australia during periods of crisis facing the Jewish world between 1881 and 1905 crossed political boundaries and denominational frontiers, and elite figures were identified with it.'³⁹

Philosemitism also covered the protests that erupted across Australia as a result of Hitler's rise to power in Germany. This included a protest meeting organised by the Jewish community in Melbourne in April 1933, at which former Acting Prime Minister William A Watt as well as

³⁰ Himmelfarb, *The People of the Book*, 130.

³¹ Himmelfarb, *The People of the Book*, 138.

³² William D Rubinstein and Hilary L Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1849-1939* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999), 19

³³ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 45.

³⁴ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 56

³⁵ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, xi.

³⁶ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 5.

³⁷ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 5.

³⁸ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 5.

³⁹ Hilary L Rubinstein, "'A Noble Sight to See': Philo-Semitic Responses in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Australia to Jewish Crises Overseas,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 13, Part 3 (November 1996), 425.

state ministers and the president of the Victorian Council of Churches were speakers.⁴⁰ Similarly, the book discusses the widespread political support for the Kimberley Scheme across Australia,⁴¹ crowning this as ‘One of the strongest displays in Australia of philosemitism across the political divide.’⁴² The emerging news of widespread killings of Jews in Europe, which led to a protest being organised at Sydney Town Hall in November 1942, is also covered. *Philosemitism* mentions that the Council of Christians and Jews was founded at this meeting as a response to the emerging news and that it received widespread support from the community, including the Anglican and Catholic Churches, as well as the Lord Mayor, Labor and Liberal politicians, academic and activists such as Camilla Wedgwood.⁴³

The book aims to draw attention to an under-researched tradition of philosemitism and diversity of approaches that were taken in this regard.⁴⁴ It provided a plethora of examples from across the English-speaking world which highlight that a tradition of gentile philosemitism was the basis of harmonious Jewish-Christian relations in many societies with British heritage, including Australia. This thesis aims to build on these examples by adding further support that this philosemitic tradition which was fostered by many individual religious clergy (both Jewish and non-Jewish) as well as prominent lay leaders. The Council of Christians and Jews aimed to draw on and renew this tradition at a time of particularly strained relations between Judaism and Christianity by uniting philosemitic clergymen in support of Jewish causes. At the same time, as will be demonstrated in this thesis, Jewish-Christian relations in Australia is a complex story, and at times either indifference or antisemitic views could prevail.

2.4 The *Church Acts*

The first background chapter of this thesis starts with an examination of the initial legal challenge that the Australian Jewish community faced to their freedoms as a separate faith community from Christianity, in what became known as the *Church Acts*. These threatened the harmony that was hitherto enjoyed on the continent between the various religions. The struggle of the small Jewish communities in the Australian colonies is part of the broader struggle for Jewish emancipation in the nineteenth century. Israel Getzler’s ground-breaking book *Neither*

⁴⁰ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 104.

⁴¹ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 105.

⁴² Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 105.

⁴³ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 106.

⁴⁴ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, ix.

Toleration nor Favour provides a detailed and comprehensive examination of this struggle and is relied upon heavily for this chapter. Subsequently, there has been no further significant research, apart from *Australian Genesis* by John S Levi and George FJ Bergman, published in 1974 with a new edition in 2002, which takes a broader approach to the convict and early settler colonial story, so that Getzler's book is still the seminal work on this topic.

Whilst the focus of Getzler's book is an examination of the attitudes of the various colonial governments of the time, it also sheds lights on Jewish-Christian relations in colonial Australia. Getzler meticulously analyses hundreds of parliamentary debates in the Australian colonies from 1836 to 1872 on the topic of the *Church Acts*, which were designed to imbue morality into Australia's convict colonies by allowing for taxpayer funded purchases of land, building of churches and salaries of religious ministers. The fact that the Acts stipulated that these funds were only available for the purposes of Christian worship meant that the Jewish community felt ostracised.⁴⁵ These Acts were vigorously debated in the relevant colonial parliaments, and most Australian colonists and the local press opposed the fact that the aid discriminated against Jews.

Getzler highlights the debates surrounding these Acts, both of supporters and opponents of extending state aid to Jews. Thereby, he vicariously has produced a clear historical analysis of the state of political relations that existed between Christians and Jews in colonial Australia at the time. He corroborated his research into parliamentary debates with contemporary newspaper reports, which highlighted the fact that the general Australian public was strongly in favour of extending aid to their Jewish co-settlers on an equal footing and that there was popular resistance against importing old world discrimination against Jews from Europe to Australian shores. Getzler was careful to note that many of those arguing in favour of Jewish emancipation in Australia were in fact Christians, of both the Catholic and Protestant persuasion, and that antisemitic stereotypes by elitist British governors were mainly rejected by the public and lampooned in the press. This was the case in Tasmania, which will be discussed in detail in later chapters of this thesis.

⁴⁵ Israel Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour: The Australian Chapter of Jewish Emancipation* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970), 20.

Getzler's book relies heavily on primary research and has little secondary material due to the fact that little has been written on the topic of the *Church Acts* and interfaith relations. His arguments are clear: Jews were *de facto* fully emancipated in the Australian colonies *ab initio* and perhaps took their political rights for granted.⁴⁶ The advent of the *Church Acts* across Australia thus shocked the community. Since no organised Jewish leadership existed at the time, nor were there many Jewish religious ministers on the continent to assist in organising the Jewish community, prominent Jewish laymen such as members of parliament, as well as Christian sympathisers, came to the community's defence, seemingly without any central coordination.⁴⁷ All this stands in stark contrast to the experience of the Council of Christians and Jews in the 1940s, which was established at a time when relations between Christians and Jews were at a historical low-point so that it was necessary to establish a formal channel of communication for the two religious communities.

Getzler's study of the Australian chapter of the history of Jewish emancipation represents the first history written of Jewish-Christian relations on this continent. His book has made not just important contribution to Australian Jewish history, but it has also an important contribution to Australian legal history by documenting the joint battle fought together by Christians and Jews to ensure there is clear separation between church and state on this continent. However, his work neglects to analyse the dynamic that existed between the important Jewish and Christian dissenters to the Acts, which could have further elucidated the cooperation of Jews and Christians. It is a history of the struggle for Jewish political and legal rights in Australia rather than a history of relations that existed between Christians and Jews that allowed for the Acts to ultimately be defeated. This is not to negate the importance of this research in terms of understanding the role Jewish-Christian relations played in overcoming the barriers created by the Acts in most cases.

2.5 Interrelationships in Late Nineteenth Century Victoria

The second background chapter relies heavily on an article by Frank Fletcher in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* entitled 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901: Its

⁴⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 11.

⁴⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 13

Interrelationship with the Majority Gentile Society.’⁴⁸ This chapter draws on Fletcher’s Honours thesis. Whilst it is not as extended a study as Getzler’s, it also has produced important research in terms of Jewish Christian relations in the period he examined. Fletcher provides a concise summary of Jewish demographics and history of the Jewish community in Australia to 1891 as well as the community’s achievements and struggles with antisemitism. His section dealing with the Jewish achievements in particular relates to the reader the cordial relations that existed between Jews and Christians in late nineteenth century Victoria (and by implication thereby the rest of Australia). Through his discussion of assimilation and integration through education, Fletcher elucidates the interrelationships of that period. For example, many Jewish parents were eager to send their children to one of the elite private schools in Melbourne, such as Wesley College, Scotch College or those run by the Church of England⁴⁹ as this was seen by wealthier Jews as a way to enter the upper echelons of Victorian society. Similarly, ‘Jewish satisfaction with the state school system remained quite strong’⁵⁰ until parliament reintroduced Christian references in textbooks⁵¹ and propositions to reintroduce mandatory scripture lessons,⁵² which was met with significant opposition from the Jewish community.

Fletcher furthermore examined the relations that existed in other areas of society, too, such as Jewish involvement in charities, freemasonry, the professions and politics. He portrays the Jewish community as well-integrated with overall harmonious relations with their Christian neighbours yet audacious in voicing their concerns and not afraid to protest vehemently when their equal status as citizens was threatened. Fletcher paints a comprehensive picture in his article of Jewish-Christian relations in the decade prior to federation and his article is one of the few that examines the religious issues that faced the community. It is written from the secular perspective of the Jewish community as a whole and does not consider the relations that existed between the faith leaders. His article concentrated on examining the integration of the community in the society at large and the issues faced by secular Jewish leaders, such as prominent Jewish parliamentarians. Yet, no unified Jewish community leadership existed at the time and most of the leadership was in fact exerted by Jewish clergymen. Fletcher’s article

⁴⁸ Frank Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901: Its Interrelationship with the Majority Gentile Society,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 8, Part 5 (1978): 221-272.

⁴⁹ Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 232.

⁵⁰ Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 233.

⁵¹ Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 233.

⁵² Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 234.

did not examine the relations that existed between the Jewish clerics, who led the main congregations, and the Christian clergy, nor the impact that these had on harmonious relations.

This thesis seeks to rectify this by adding to Fletcher's research material on prominent Jewish clergymen and their interactions with the wider non-Jewish society. It draws on individual studies of these key rabbinical leaders, drawing on the key scholarship of Rabbi John S Levi in relation to both Jacob Danglow and Herman Sanger, Rabbi Raymond Apple's study of Francis Lyon Cohen, and research on Perth Jewry in relation to Rabbi David Isaac Freedman.

2.6 The Rise of Antisemitism During the 1930s

There are a number of works that deal with the issues relating to the emergence of organised antisemitism in the 1930s in response to the depression and the threat of mass refugee migration to Australia. This includes the research of Suzanne Rutland, discussed above, and other scholars. However, the key scholar of this period is Paul Bartrop, whose book *Australia and the Holocaust* is based on his doctoral thesis which examined Australian government policies and community reactions for the period 1933-1939. His research is utilised extensively in Chapter 5.

Bartrop concentrates on government policies during that period, which increasingly restricted the flow of migrants to Australia by specifically targeting Jewish refugees. This was partially in response to anti-refugee hysteria created in some newspapers, notably *Smith's Weekly* and the *Bulletin*.⁵³

The discriminatory restrictions, this time through administrative policies coming from the minister, rather than by parliamentary legislation, was the second time in Australia's history that government policies specifically targeted Jews negatively. Just as it did with the *Church Acts*, the Jewish community organised itself to respond to this threat. Yet, according to Konrad Kwiet, the community struggled in their attempt to counter the rise of antisemitism due to their inability to 'overcome their own misgivings and shortcoming, internal disputes and differing attitudes.'⁵⁴ This time, the Jewish community also did not receive much support from the

⁵³ Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 122.

⁵⁴ Konrad Kwiet, 'Responses of Australian Jewry's Leadership to the Holocaust,' in *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, ed. William D Rubinstein (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 202.

Christian majority, albeit with some notable exceptions. Whilst Bartrop barely mentions the relationship between Christians and Jews in his book, his work nevertheless exposed a religious rift that existed between the two religious communities. His book, as well as a number of his journal articles, does provide a significant discussion of non-Jewish negative attitudes, and as such is important in helping to set the scene for the more detailed discussion of the Council in this thesis.

The rise of antisemitism emanating from government policies and espoused in the media was not the only source of angst for Australian Jewry. A rise in Nazi activity, sponsored by Germany, which targeted Jews living in Australia, raised further alarm that European fascism could well be spreading in Australia as well. Christine Winter published a chapter entitled 'The NSDAP Stronghold in Finschhafen, New Guinea' in the book she co-edited with Emily Turner-Graham named *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect and Aftermath in Germania Pacifica*. Herein, she described how Germany's Consul-General in Sydney, Rudolf Asmis, followed a delicate balancing act of adhering to Nazi policies and promoting German culture whilst trying not to alienate the Australian government.⁵⁵ This included promoting the local branch of the Nazi party and their publications.⁵⁶ Whilst the public Nazi propaganda activities ceased with the outbreak of World War Two, Australian Jewry nevertheless remained aware of the threat that local Nazis could pose to them and that some of the Nazi leaders were well connected within government. This created a further impetus for the community to unite in an effort to counter these antisemitic threats during the 1930s.

2.7 The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews

The 1930s represented a low point in relations between Christians and Jews in Australia. The Jewish community lacked a centralised, nationwide leadership that could counter the issues it faced. This left a void which was filled by Rabbi Dr Israel Porush after his arrival, which he filled by reigniting the Jewish clergy to serve again as the central spokesman of the community. As part of his efforts, he suggested the establishment of a Council of Christians and Jews in

⁵⁵ Christine Winter, 'The NSDAP Stronghold in Finschhafen, New Guinea,' in *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect and Aftermath in Germania Pacifica Vol. 4*, eds. Emily Turner-Graham and Christine Winter (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2010), 33.

⁵⁶ Winter, 'The NSDAP Stronghold in Finschhafen, New Guinea,' 53.

the early 1940s. Just as in the past Jewish ministers unofficially represented the entire Jewish community so, too, he thought he could represent it in his capacity as chief minister of Sydney's Great Synagogue and liaise with friendly Christian denominations interested in assisting Jewish causes through the Council's establishment. While his doctorate was in mathematics, in Australia Porush became deeply involved with charting the trajectory of Australian history. He wrote various books and articles on the community, including his history of the Great Synagogue entitled *The House of Israel*, as well as his memoirs, *Journal of an Australian Rabbi* and an article on the history of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*.

These materials were used extensively throughout the thesis as they represent first-hand primary source materials since Porush was one of the key personae involved in the Council's establishment and activities. To date, Porush's accounts are the only histories of the Council in existence and very little else has been written on the matter. His accounts of the Council are almost identical in his *AJHS Journal* article and his *Memoirs of an Australian Rabbi*, with a shortened abstract included in *The House of Israel*. The New South Wales Council was modelled on the very successful Council of Christians and Jews in the United Kingdom (and its predecessor Society of Jews and Christians), which existed from 1941 and which similarly has very few secondary resources written about it.⁵⁷

The House of Israel was written as a general history of Sydney's Great Synagogue, which Porush describes as the 'Mother Congregation'⁵⁸ of Australian Jewry. This, presumably in his eyes, made him the father of Australian Jewry given that he was its chief minister for more than three decades. The book dedicates a few pages to the Council of Christians and Jews, wherein he justified its creation as a response by Christians to the 'barbarities of the Nazi regime [by] righteous Christians.'⁵⁹ Interestingly, he also stresses the close relationship he had with individual Christian clergymen that shared his concerns, especially Bishop Pilcher.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Anne Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2014), 830.

⁵⁸ Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press: 1977), iii.

⁵⁹ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 160.

⁶⁰ Israel Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi* (Melbourne: Special Publication of the AJHS (Vic), 1992), 47.

The Journal of an Australian Rabbi and his article in the *AJHS Journal* significantly expand on his memories of the Council and thus offer a rare first-hand insight into the intricacies of the Council's activities and the relationship that existed between the key people involved. In particular, his difficult encounters with the Catholic Church's representatives provide an insight into the frosty relations that existed between Jews and Catholics in Australia at that time. This included Cardinal Gilroy's initial inability to see a need for the Council⁶¹ as well as the Church's reservations on the issue of Palestine.⁶² It is noteworthy that in both in his article⁶³ as well as his memoirs,⁶⁴ Porush mentions that his initial attempt to create the Council in early 1942 did not succeed due to 'the novelty of the proposition'⁶⁵ whilst correspondence found in the archives indicated that this was clearly as a result of a lack of interest from the Catholic Church.⁶⁶

Similarly, his recollections provided little insight into his participation at a conference organised in Oxford by the British Council of Christians and Jews in 1946, merely stating that he provided a report to the Board of Deputies about his attendance⁶⁷ since the Council had ceased to function by this stage. Yet this conference is now remembered as the first ever international conference of such kind to be held⁶⁸ and laid the foundations for the establishment of the International Council of Christians and Jews.⁶⁹ The archives provided an insight not just into Porush's attendance but also the activities and deliberations of the conference, which no secondary sources has hitherto examined in such detail.

As a result, there is a disconnect between Porush's public accounts of the Council's history and the original correspondence found in the archives. Whilst this may be the result of Porush's concern not to discredit the Catholic Church, it nevertheless means that there is a need to revisit his accounts and corroborate these with primary source materials from the archives. Thus, the

⁶¹ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, undated but definitely prior to October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶² Israel Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 6, Part 4 (1968), 193.

⁶³ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

⁶⁴ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 47.

⁶⁵ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 47.

⁶⁶ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, undated but definitely prior to October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶⁷ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 194.

⁶⁸ William W Simpson, 'Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' *Transactions & Miscellanies (Jewish Historical Society of England)* Vol. 28 (1981-1982), 97.

⁶⁹ Simpson, 'Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' 97.

aim of this thesis is to revisit this issue and to write a more comprehensive and in-depth history of the Council's formation, its achievements and the reasons for its demise than is offered in Porush's accounts.

2.8 Research Methodology and Primary Sources

This thesis draws extensively on the historical methodology of primary source materials found in the relevant archives, as well as the newspaper accounts based on research in the TROVE online resource of the National Library of Australia. The central parts of the thesis are based on original sources found in the Archives of Australian Judaica at Fischer Library at The University of Sydney as well as the Archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney. These sources are then corroborated with some contemporary newspaper articles and relevant secondary sources. The collections of the National Archives of Australia have also been utilised. Every effort has been undertaken to access primary sources, especially those located at the National Archives of Australia. Unfortunately, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made this difficult due to lockdown closures and associated delays. This has meant that, at times, this thesis had to rely on primary sources cited in secondary materials, such as the works of Paul Bartrop and others.

The main component of this thesis is analysis of the archival materials found in the Archives of Australian Judaica, which are corroborated by the first-hand materials published on the Council by Rabbi Israel Porush in his memoirs, *Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, and his article published on the Council in the *Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society*. This thesis relies on these materials, given that Porush's works are first-hand accounts and not much else has been written on the Council and, therefore, treats Porush's article and *Journal* as primary sources. The Australian Archive of Judaica located at Fisher Library at The University of Sydney is the most important archival source for this thesis as it houses a large collection of primary materials, which prior to this thesis had been neglected by historians. These materials showed that there was much more to the history of the Council than the brief accounts published by Porush. Further materials were uncovered in newspapers using TROVE and other collections of the National Archives of Australia as well as the Archives of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in Sydney. These archives housed a rich variety of materials, including detailed notes and minutes of meetings, newspaper articles, letters, sermons and transcripts of radio broadcasts, to name just a few.

The Porush collection is a particularly rich source, which includes many sermons written by Rabbi Israel Porush whilst he was still in England during the 1930s and which highlight his increasing concern for the safety of German-Jewry and the rise of fascism in Europe in general. The Archive of Australian Judaica collections also contains copies correspondence Porush had with the various key people involved with the council, such as letters and telegrams and a complete collection of the minutes of the Council of Christian and Jews' meetings. Achievements of the Council could be corroborated as copies of transcripts of radio broadcasts were found in the archives, letters written to government officials advocating for European Jewry and reports on activities such as Brotherhood Week. The archives further housed a collection of materials dealing with the conference held in Oxford in 1946 organised by the British Council of Christians and Jews as well as correspondence between the secretary of the British Council, Reverend William Simpson, and the News South Wales Council, which provided a rich insight into the reasons for the Council's demise. All of these materials will be explored in depth in the following chapters of this thesis, which at times will add to, and at times challenge, the arguments presented in existing secondary sources.

A review of the main literature of Jewish-Christian relations in Australia has shown that most of the main secondary sources have at least to some extent paid homage to the unusually harmonious relations that existed between the two faiths on this continent, when compared to Europe. However, thus far, none of these works have dedicated themselves to analysing why these relations were not just harmonious but even mutually beneficial and why these relations deteriorated rapidly during the 1930s so that a formal channel of communication in the form of the Council of Christians and Jews became a necessity. In order to explore the need for the Council's establishment, it is therefore necessary to discuss the relations that existed during the colonial and early post-federation periods between Christians and Jews, which will be explored in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 3

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES

3.1 Jewish-Christian Relations in the Early Colonial Period

The origins of the Australian Jewish community lie with the First Fleet of 1788, which transported an estimated 24 Jewish convicts to the new colony. Approximately a further 1,000 Jewish convicts were to follow until 1852.¹ They were seen by the authorities, the established church and their fellow convicts and settlers as fellow pioneers in developing the new colonies under sometimes extremely harsh circumstances. As a result, the non-Jewish establishment regarded their Jewish minority as one of their own and awarded them largely the same rights and privileges they themselves enjoyed. There is even evidence of a reprieve of a Jewish convict, Joseph Samuels, being saved from execution when it appeared that by ‘divine intervention,’ the rope around his neck broke twice.²

This set the basis for the successful future integration of the Jewish minority in early colonial Australia amongst the Christian majority and their willingness to integrate and acculturate meant the Christian majority held them initially in high esteem. The extension of benefits to Jews under the British *Toleration Act* of 1813 was litigated in the English courts in the so-called ‘Bedford Charity Case’ whereby a Jewish family sought to enrol one of its children in a charitable school; the fact that the litigation was taking place in England did not stop sympathetic reporting of the trial in Sydney: ‘The question was of considerable importance; namely, whether a Jew was to be excluded from a public charitable institution.’³ By 1842, colonial newspapers such as the *Melbourne Times* were inserting information about Jewish holidays, as well as office and shop closures, for the information of their non-Jewish readership.⁴

Overall, the relations that existed between Christians and Jews during the early colonial period in Australia, can best be described in the words of a contemporary traveller and visitor, Rabbi

¹ Helen Bersten, *Jewish Sydney: The First Hundred Years 1788-1988* (Sydney: AJHS, 1995), 5.

² ‘Sydney,’ *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 2 October 1803, 2.

³ ‘Bedford Charity,’ *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 16 January 1819, 4.

⁴ See for example ‘Provincial News,’ *Melbourne Times*, 3 September 1842, 2.

Jacob Levi Saphir, who came to Australia in the 1860s to collect donations for Jerusalem. He described the relations as follows:

There is no discrimination made between nation and nation. The Jews live in safety, and take their share in all the good things of the country. They also occupy Government positions and administrative posts. In this land they have learned that the Jews also possess good qualities, and hatred towards him has entirely disappeared here.⁵

The harmony that existed between Christians and Jews in the early colonial period may be attributed to the fact that the Jewish convicts and settlers had to integrate due to their community's small size. For example, the education system was initially controlled by the Anglican Church,⁶ all convicts were initially forced to attend Anglican services,⁷ which drew the ire of Jewish and Catholic convicts and may even have created some common grounds for Irish Catholic and Jewish convicts to bond over. There was also a shortage of available Jewish women for marriage forcing many Jewish men to marry non-Jews. In comparison to Christian female convicts, only half as many Jewish females were transported to Australia.⁸ All of these issues meant it was a necessity for Jews to foster harmonious relations with the Christian community and integrated as much as possible in order to survive.

Efforts to obtain land for a Jewish burial ground, accompanied by the formation of a *Chevra Kadisha*, was one of the first instances of Jews uniting to form a group for collective purposes in the colony. The fact that this occurred to afford their deceased proper burial rites became a theme for the establishment of Jewish communities throughout Australia. Given that 'the imperial government supported the efforts of the Church of England to secure a dominant position overseas,'⁹ especially during the early colonial period in New South Wales, gaining a land grant required a harmonious existence between Jewish and non-Jews, and this was mainly the case.

⁵ Rabbi Jacob Saphir, *Eben Saphir*, as translated from the Hebrew by Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk. See Leib A Falk, 'A Hebrew Travel Book: Being a Translation from the Hebrew of Rabbi Jacob Saphir's Book, "Eben Saphir," giving an account of his visit to Australia and New Zealand,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1939), 45.

⁶ Suzanne D Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14.

⁷ Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*, 13.

⁸ Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*, 11.

⁹ Paul Knaplund, *The British Empire: 1815-1939* (London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941), 50.

In Sydney, a plot of land specifically for Jewish burials was not allocated until 1820, when Anglican Archdeacon William Cowper granted a portion of the Anglican cemetery division in the new Devonshire Street Cemetery to the Jews, even though this grant was not formally recorded until 1832.¹⁰ Cowper in fact mentioned that ‘all the Jews are most respectful in their conduct towards me and I feel it my duty to serve them.’¹¹ Cowper and Joseph Marcus had numerous biblical and theological discussions, visited prisoners together, and developed a close friendship.¹² By the time the Rockwood Cemetery was opened in 1867, a portion for Jewish burials had already been allotted since 1863.¹³ Similarly, in rural New South Wales, cemeteries specifically for Jewish burials were allotted in Yass in 1845,¹⁴ Goulburn in 1844¹⁵ and Maitland in 1846.¹⁶

In the case of Maitland, it is evident from the cemetery that influences of the wider non-Jewish community had impacted on the local Jewish community living in the town. The headstones of many of the graves portray elaborate inscriptions and ornamentation, common amongst Victorian era gravestones. Yet, such ornamentation is in contradiction to the modest gravestones that traditionally mark Jewish graves.¹⁷ Furthermore, many of the Hebrew inscriptions have errors in them¹⁸ further indicating that the Jewish community of Maitland struggled but attempted to persevere to maintain Jewish burial traditions even in their remote isolation.

In Tasmania, the securing of a special burial ground for Jews was initiated by one individual, rather than by the collective community. Bernard Walford, a Vienna born convict was sentenced to serve his sentence in Van Diemen’s Land arriving, along with five other Jews, in 1804.¹⁹ Whilst it seems that he was, indeed, wedded to an Irish-Catholic woman, ‘he was the only one of the early Jewish arrivals to care deeply enough about his faith to arrange a Jewish

¹⁰ Bersten, *Jewish Sydney*, 18.

¹¹ John S Levi, ‘The Tale of Australia’s First “Rabbi”, Joseph Marcus 1767-1828,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 8, Part 2 (1975), 31.

¹² Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 23.

¹³ Bersten, *Jewish Sydney*, 19.

¹⁴ John S Levi and George F J Bergman, *Australian Genesis: Jewish Convicts and Settlers 1788-1860* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 300.

¹⁵ ‘Goulburn’s Jewish Heritage,’ *Goulburn Post*, 31 May 2013.

¹⁶ Janis Wilton, ‘A Cemetery and Its Stories,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 20, Part 1 (June 2010), 43.

¹⁷ Wilton, ‘A Cemetery and Its Stories,’ 53.

¹⁸ Wilton, ‘A Cemetery and Its Stories,’ 54.

¹⁹ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 196.

funeral for himself²⁰ and a plot of land was granted to him ‘and his brethren in that persuasion’²¹ for this purpose in 1828.²² His burial on that land was reported some four months later.²³

In a letter of appreciation to Lieutenant-Governor Sir George Arthur for this grant, Walford mentioned that this grant had been approved ‘by the highest authority of the Church of England resident in the colonies.’²⁴ This indicates that the grant of a burial plot specific to the Jewish settlers in Van Diemen’s Land was discussed between the primate of the Church of England and the lieutenant-governor and that neither had any objection to such a specific request indicating that the Jews of the colony, all of whom were convicts or ex-convicts in 1828,²⁵ were for religious purposes seen as equal to convicts of any other denomination.

Levi and Bergman, however, mentioned that the grant of a plot of land for a cemetery in Hobart was ‘the only boon [the government] granted its Jewish citizens.’²⁶ Unfortunately, the same did not repeat itself in Launceston, where Henry Davis petitioned Governor Arthur for a grant of land to bury Launceston’s Jews.²⁷ His first request was ignored and his second eventually denied in 1832,²⁸ after which Davis donated some of his own land to be used as a Jewish cemetery in 1836.²⁹

From the outset it seems as though the Jews of the infant Port Phillip colony, like their brethren in New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land equally had no difficulty acquiring a burial plot for their deceased and secured an acre of land at the Old Melbourne Cemetery (now part of the Victoria Market) in 1843,³⁰ a year before the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation applied for a plot of land to build their synagogue.³¹ In 1850, the New South Wales Parliament passed an Act establishing a new General Cemetery in Melbourne in the then outer suburb of Carlton and

²⁰ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 196.

²¹ ‘The Country Post,’ *The Hobart Town Courier*, 24 May 1828, 3.

²² Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 196.

²³ ‘What News?,’ *The Hobart Town Courier*, 27 September 1828, 3.

²⁴ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 196.

²⁵ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 196.

²⁶ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 206.

²⁷ Lazarus M Goldman and Gladys Cohen, ‘The History of the Launceston Hebrew Congregation: Part 1,’ in *A Few from Afar: Jewish Lives in Tasmania from 1804*, eds. Peter and Ann Elias (Hobart: The Hobart Hebrew Congregation, 2003), 53.

²⁸ Goldman and Cohen, ‘The History of the Launceston Hebrew Congregation: Part 1,’ 53.

²⁹ Goldman and Cohen, ‘The History of the Launceston Hebrew Congregation: Part 1,’ 53.

³⁰ ‘Local Intelligence,’ *Melbourne Times*, 14 July 1843, 3.

³¹ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria 1835-1985* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), 8.

plots of land were allocated to each denomination, including for Jews.³² In 1853, twenty acres of Crown land were reserved for a future cemetery in St Kilda, with a further four acres for possible extensions.³³ The initial reserve had no allocation for Hebrews, Aborigines or Chinese, however, Jews were given an allocation in the later extension and the first Jewish burial took place in 1877.³⁴

Gradually, as the colonies developed, *Church Acts* were introduced in each one. These affected the Jewish applications for land grants, synagogues and schools, assistance with building synagogues, salaries for their ministers. These privileges were initially only granted to the Anglican establishment, but the *Church Acts* broadened this to the main Christian denominations. The different Jewish colonial congregations believed that this was a form of discrimination and petitioned to be accepted as equals by the colonial governments. These battles for full emancipation and recognition will be discussed in the next section. Their largely successful resolution was to set the parameters for the successful Jewish integration into mainstream colonial societies.

In the period of time from 1830 to 1860, there were two contradictory narratives, one liberal and the other conservative. On the one hand there was the relative equality and high-level acceptance that Jews enjoyed in colonial Australian society; on the other hand, many of the negative stereotypes against Jews still existed. These competing narratives found their expression in the arguments over the question of state aid to religion, encapsulated in the *Church Acts*. The conservative narrative favoured Christianity, often focused on Anglicanism, as the ‘superior’ religion. As this chapter will show, Tasmanian statistics demonstrated that adherents of the Church of England received a greater distribution of state aid for religion than adherents of any other faith. The more liberal narrative appeared to support the idea that members of colonial society were free to adhere to whichever faith they chose, and that choice was an entirely private matter. There was a lack of social consensus on this question: some supporters of each narrative thought that state aid to religion meant that the adherents of one faith were subsidising the religious activities of adherents of other faiths and found this

³² Marjorie Morgan, ‘The Old Melbourne Cemetery – Report from an Address to the General Meeting, 11 May 2002,’ Port Phillip Pioneers Group, accessed 6 December 2021, <https://portphillippioneersgroup.org.au/pppg5z.htm>.

³³ Friends of St Kilda Cemetery, ‘History of the Cemetery,’ accessed 5 February 2021, <https://foskc.org/about/history-of-the-cemetery/>.

³⁴ Friends of St Kilda Cemetery, ‘History of the Cemetery,’ accessed 5 February 2021, <https://foskc.org/about/history-of-the-cemetery/>.

abhorrent. Colonial Australians mainly agreed on one thing: people were free to practise their religion, as long as they did not attempt too strenuously to change the faiths of others. The *Church Act* debates contained the seeds of the attitudes of Christians to Jewish refugee migration from Nazi Germany, which emerged a century later.

3.2 The *Church Acts*: A Challenge to Jewish Emancipation in Australia

Unlike in Britain or continental Europe, the struggle for equality before the law was one hitherto unknown to the Jews of early colonial Australia. As Hilary Rubinstein wrote, the Jews ‘owed their favourable position to the tolerance and fair-mindedness of their fellow citizens and to the liberalism of the civil authorities.’³⁵ In 1849, nearly a decade before the first Jew was elected to the British Parliament in London, Lionel Samson became a member of the Legislative Council in Western Australia. Similarly, Jews were elected to the Houses of Parliament in New South Wales and South Australia in the 1850s, without having to be professing Christians or taking a Christian oath of office.

It is important to remember that none of the liberties that Jews enjoyed in the Australian colonies were enshrined in legislation and they depended entirely on the good nature of the colonial citizens who viewed their Jewish minority as a natural part of the general free and emancipist population entitled to the same civic rights as they themselves were. Two decades before the battle for the *Jewish Relief Act* of 1858 in Britain came into full swing, the mood in Australia – ever ready to copy and implement anything that stemmed from the motherland – suddenly changed as well.

The *Church Acts* of the 1830s and 1840s in the various Australian colonies questioned the civic equality the Jewish minority had previously enjoyed, because state support was granted to some religions, but not others. They invoked the notion of a Christian state and sought to limit all civic privileges to Christians, and in many cases particularly to Protestants, although in some cases there was a modicum of state aid was granted to Jews. This was represented in the mixed attitudes towards Jews, which could often be negative, as expressed in one popular newspaper:

³⁵ Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 40.

Never buy of a street Jew. not because of his faith, but because all Christians being united to persecute him, he very fairly thinks himself bound to retaliate by taking them in whenever he can.³⁶

In the same year, an objection was published to the idea of a free public Grammar School in Sydney. The writer claimed that religious doctrines, other than that of Anglicanism, might pollute ‘the morals of good Christian lads’³⁷ and stressed this referred not only to the pollution of Catholicism, but also of Judaism and, even worse, of non-Conformism and Dissenting Protestantism.³⁸ Others took a more liberal approach, arguing that there were so many Christian sects – upwards of fifty, all claiming to be the only true faith – that allowing one more religious group, that of the Jews, could hardly make matters worse.³⁹ When a petition signed up by more than 500 Jews, asking for the removal of their civil disabilities, was presented to the British parliament, Australian press reports seemed fairly neutral. Even when the British cabinet decided to leave the question to a conscience vote of members of parliament, no Australian newspaper took a firm stand on the issue, simply reporting about the debate.⁴⁰

As a result, there was a mixed reaction to the question of state aid to religion. Opponents of the *Church Act* legislation often took trenchant stance in favour of Protestantism. For example, a meeting in Hobart, in 1853, petitioned against the *Church Act*. Various clergy supported a resolution claiming that the legislation was a ‘public dishonour to Almighty God’⁴¹ on the basis that it extended state aid and encouragement to ‘those [religions] of any name, whether Mahomedans, Jews, or Idolators...’⁴² without making it clear whether Catholics, as well as Chinese and Hindus, were included in the expression ‘idolators’⁴³:

That, while it must ever be the duty of all men to encourage and promote the Truth, it can never be their duty under any circumstances to encourage and support Error; and that therefore to enact by law the pecuniary sustentation of religious creeds which are

³⁶ ‘Londiniana—The Streets,’ *Launceston Advertiser*, 25 June 1830, 3.

³⁷ ‘The Sydney College,’ *The Australian*, 5 March 1830, 2.

³⁸ ‘The Sydney College,’ *The Australian*, 5 March 1830, 2.

³⁹ ‘Education,’ *The Tasmanian*, 23 April 1830, 7.

⁴⁰ See for example ‘Editorial,’ *The Australian*, 30 July 1830, 2; ‘Editorial,’ *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 22 July 1830, 2.

⁴¹ ‘The Church Act,’ *The Courier*, 27 July 1853, 2.

⁴² ‘The Church Act,’ *The Courier*, 27 July 1853, 2.

⁴³ ‘The Church Act,’ *The Courier*, 27 July 1853, 2.

conflicting and mutually subversive, must necessarily involve the sin of countenancing error, is a virtual denial of the supreme authority...[otherwise] It might be that some Chinese, many of whom were now making their way hitherward, would combine to set up a pagoda; would be at the expense of gilt paper and sandal-wood burn in the Joss-house thereof...⁴⁴

It is important to note that the experience was different in each colony. For example, upon separation from New South Wales in 1859, Queensland's parliament pursued a secular trend of 'free exercise of religious tolerance'⁴⁵ and cut off all state aid to churches in one of its first Act of Parliament.⁴⁶ The Queensland press pushed for an approach that would 'Allow every man the free exercise of his own religion and never make either his God or his creed the subject of ridicule or oppression.'⁴⁷ Parliament even debated the definition of secularism at length during the 1860s.⁴⁸

However, the issues created by the various *Church Acts* in the other colonies became the first battle the Jewish minority had to fight in the Australian colonies to safeguard their minority rights, and those of others. It represents both a particularly dark chapter of inter-religious relations between Christians and Jews in Australia, but also one of the finest examples where Christians and Jews assisted one another to secure the rights of minority denominations, with contrasting experiences in the different colonies.

3.2.1 The *Church Act* of New South Wales

In 1836, Sir Richard Bourke, the then governor of New South Wales, successfully passed his *Church Act*. This law provided state-aid for the procurement of land, the construction of churches and the employment of ministers to all Christian denominations,⁴⁹ but heavily privileged the Church of England.⁵⁰ While prior to 1836, Jews were mostly treated equally with Christians in receiving land grants to build synagogues and cemeteries, the *Church Act* changed

⁴⁴ 'The Church Act,' *The Courier*, 27 July 1853, 2.

⁴⁵ *The North Australian*, 20 April 1860, 4, as cited in Cathy Byrne, *Religion in Secular Education* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 207.

⁴⁶ Byrne, *Religion in Secular Education*, 207.

⁴⁷ *The North Australian*, 20 April 1860, 4.

⁴⁸ Byrne, *Religion in Secular Education*, 209.

⁴⁹ Randall Nolan, 'A Mediating Tradition: The Anglican Vocation in Australian Society,' Unpublished PhD thesis (Griffith University, 2008), 58-59.

⁵⁰ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 42.

this. For the first time, the Jewish community of New South Wales found itself discriminated against by exclusive legislation, but it took another eight years before the community made any attempt to have this discrimination reversed.⁵¹ Interestingly, the *Church Act* did not just discriminate against Jews specifically but all non-Christian religions, thus also excluding the Aboriginal and Chinese minorities as well. It was exclusively the Christian churches that were seen as having the welfare of the community in mind.⁵² Hilary Rubinstein noted that the Jews of New South Wales

were clearly distinguishable only by religion, and it is significant that from an early period they described Judaism as a 'denomination' which emphasized their resemblance to other citizens and demonstrated their assumption that Judaism was equal with Christianity and would be treated as such... [Jews] were determined to play full part in the life of the general community while retaining their identities as Jews.⁵³

The *Church Act* itself was not without controversy within the various differing Christian denominations. The preamble of the Act left 'Christian Worship' undefined and thus broke the longstanding privilege of the Church of England in the colony, which now had to receive state aid on par with the Catholic Church and others.⁵⁴ This caused dissention: the Catholic Church rejoiced but the Anglican establishment was piqued.⁵⁵ Interestingly, Israel Getzler, the foremost scholar on this topic, noted that Governor Bourke was aware of the ire he would draw from the Anglican establishment if he gave Catholics equal share of state aid.⁵⁶ In fact, the Anglican Bishop of Australia, William Grant Broughton, 'rubbed in the point that Bourke's scheme would extend religious equality to dissenters and Jews.'⁵⁷ Getzler suggested that since the tiny Jewish community in Sydney had neither a minister nor a synagogue in 1836, the governor did not want to push the limits of what was acceptable in terms of religious tolerance before the law by including the future needs of a tiny Jewish minority, which would surely

⁵¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 42.

⁵² Nolan, 'A Mediating Tradition,' 110.

⁵³ Hilary L Rubinstein, 'Australian Jewry: A Brief Historical Overview,' in *When Jews and Christians Meet: Australian Essays Commemorating Twenty Years of Nostra Aetate*, ed. John W Roffey (Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches, 1985), 4.

⁵⁴ Israel Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour: The Australian Chapter of Jewish Emancipation* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970), 20.

⁵⁵ Naomi Turner, *Sinews of Sectarian Warfare? State Aid in New South Wales 1836-1862* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1972) 3-4.

⁵⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 20.

⁵⁷ Bourke to Glenelg, 3 December 1835, HRA Vol. 18, 700, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 20.

have endangered the passing of the Act.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the Jewish community itself showed no evidence that it felt discriminated against by the governor;⁵⁹ rather they congratulated him on ‘the great and liberal spirit of religious toleration that has adorned your Vice-Royalty’⁶⁰ upon his farewell.

The Jewish community only awoke from its complacency in 1844, when a public meeting was held to discuss and protest the proposed exclusion of the Jewish community from state funded education. Resolutions were adopted requesting full equal rights before the law.⁶¹ In the ensuing debate that was sparked within the colony, Philip Joseph Cohen, the leader of the Jewish congregation exerted the community’s beliefs thus:

That as British subjects, the Israelites of this colony are entitled to the same rights of civil, political and religious liberty which their fellow subjects of different religious opinions enjoy, and they therefore consider themselves entitled on grounds of public equity, to a proportionate share of advantage from any measure for General Education which may be instituted at the public expense, without compromising their faith or waiving their paternal rights.⁶²

This statement was a radical statement given the lack of equality of Jews in Britain at this time and certainly set the tone for the ensuing debate, the focus of which was the proposed discrimination in public education not the salary of a minister, land grants for synagogues and cemeteries or any other financial assistance. The awakening of the community coincided with a more than doubling of Jewish numbers in the colony from 841 in 1841 to 1,668 in 1846,⁶³ as a result of the discovery of gold, first in New South Wales and then in Victoria.

The result was a petition to the Legislative Council that the Jewish community drafted ‘to secure the rights of Englishmen to every man, let his creed be what it may.’⁶⁴ Since the debate

⁵⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 20.

⁵⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 20.

⁶⁰ A Cohen, ‘President of the Israelitish Community,’ to Sir Richard Bourke, November/December 1837, as cited in Herbert I Wolff, ‘Governor Bourke and the Sydney (Bridge Street) Synagogue,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 1, Part 5 (1941), 144.

⁶¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 23.

⁶² As cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 24.

⁶³ Ralph Mansfield, *Analytical View of the Census...* 1846, 81, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 21.

⁶⁴ As cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 24.

still only centred on their exclusion from education funding the petition asked the Council that, if a denominational system of education was to be adopted (as opposed to a general system of education for all), that the Jewish community be afforded an equal share of funds to afford their children a Jewish education or that Jewish children be exempt from religious instruction. The *Australian* newspaper strongly supported this claim stating that ‘no one dreams of denying’⁶⁵ the Jews equal ‘civil, political and religious liberty’⁶⁶ in New South Wales. Similarly, the *Examiner* was also sympathetic to their cause,⁶⁷ proving that the general non-Jewish public was aware of the issue and sympathetic to their Jewish co-settlers. The petition was presented on 2 October 1844 but was not assented to.⁶⁸

As a result of this first setback in their struggle for equal share of state aid, the Jewish community became more determined to secure their goals. The ‘Report of the Sydney Synagogue 1845’ makes clear that ‘a crisis has now arrived which will if properly followed up lead to important results for the Jewish community.’⁶⁹ The colonial government was actively supporting the building of churches throughout the colony, yet nothing had been contributed to the York Street Synagogue, the first purpose-built synagogue in the colonies, which had just been completed a year earlier. The debt incurred for this ambitious building project prevented the community from hiring a minister and thus the hope of receiving some share of state aid became not just an ideological endeavour but a financial necessity.⁷⁰ They had in fact been granted land to build a synagogue in 1841 but this plot proved to be unsuitable for building a synagogue; they were prevented by the government from selling it and thus the community had to purchase a new plot at their own expense.⁷¹

In October 1845 a second petition was made to the Legislative Council, this time not concerning equality in terms of education but equality in the meaning of public worship.⁷² They emphasised the loyalty of the Jewish citizenry to the government, their contribution to government revenue and their desire for equal treatment that included a share of the money set aside for public worship to mitigate their debt and fund a salaried minister. Furthermore, the

⁶⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 25.

⁶⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 25.

⁶⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 27.

⁶⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 25.

⁶⁹ Report, 9, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 27.

⁷⁰ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 27.

⁷¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 27-28.

⁷² Turner, *Sinews of Sectarian Warfare?*, 71.

petition questioned whether the 'Christian Worship' clause of the 1836 *Church Act* was overridden by the new and more broad-minded 'Public Worship' clause in the 1842 *Constitution Act*.⁷³

The ensuing debate within the Legislative Council showed how sensitive the issue of state aid to religion was in the general community.⁷⁴ Edward Deas Thompson, the colonial secretary, held the *Church Act* was still valid and that no appropriations were to be made for the Jewish community as there was no English precedent for this.⁷⁵ JH Plunkett, the attorney-general held that had there been sufficient number of Jews in New South Wales at the time the *Church Act* was passed, then proper resources would have been allocated to them.⁷⁶ Dr JD Lang objected to the whole notion of state aid or any increase thereof, whilst Charles Cowper, a staunch Anglican, held that state aid should only be given to the Church of England, as the only purveyor of truth, and not to any other Christian faiths, let alone Jews.⁷⁷ This was against the background where the number of adherents of the Church of England amongst all migrants was declining: by 1848 in New South Wales, including the area which became Victoria, this had decreased to less than half: 3,801 of 7,885.⁷⁸

It is important to note that whilst Cowper did not share the belief that Jews were entitled to a share of state aid, he did ensure his remarks were not deemed to be antisemitic, mentioning the 'high character of the Jewish community.'⁷⁹ Other more liberal members of the Legislative Council strongly questioned the attorney-general's contention whilst others questioned the need for an English precedent and that if there were none, one should be made.⁸⁰ It is evident that the issue of state aid to religion was a sensitive subject in the colony as a whole and not just with regard to the inclusion of the Jewish community.

The Jewish community certainly must have felt encouraged by these sentiments having made two petitions before the Council on this issue. The first petition for the Jews to receive £1,000 to pay off the synagogue debt was granted but the petition that they receive a special grant from

⁷³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 28.

⁷⁴ Turner, *Sinews of Sectarian Warfare?*, 74.

⁷⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 28-29.

⁷⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 29.

⁷⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 29.

⁷⁸ 'Immigration for 1848,' *The Argus*, 5 July 1849, 4

⁷⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 29.

⁸⁰ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 29-30.

the general revenue was defeated. Altogether, there were 12 votes supporting state aid to the Jewish community with four opposing.⁸¹

Whilst popular newspapers of the time championed the complaint of the Jewish community, indicating general sympathies towards their cause amongst the general Christian public, many politicians themselves questioned the need for state aid at all. Opinions of the Jewish minority varied in the colony but generally the Jews were held in high esteem. One contemporary noted that ‘it is remembered that the Children of Israel from this colony [are] an important section of the population, and that they are for the most part industrious, useful and respectable members of the community.’⁸² Virtually every colonial newspaper warmly welcomed the positive outcome, with the *Cumberland Times* calling New South Wales Jewry ‘an influential and respectable class of their fellow colonists.’⁸³ Only one correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald* protested under a pseudonym, ‘Christianus,’ indicating that he must have been afraid to voice his objection to the outcome by signing his name to a public objection in light of the broad support for the vote. However even this Christianus noted that the Jews should not be ‘needlessly insulted’⁸⁴ or persecuted, thus indicating a degree of respect for the Jewish minority.⁸⁵ The fact that virtually every colonial newspaper in Australia welcomed this change, indicated the broad support the Jews enjoyed amongst their fellow colonists and indicated a harmonious relationship between the Jewish minority and the Christian majority.

Despite this jubilation and support, it was premature because the Executive Council denied the request of the Legislative Council to grant state aid to the Jews. Yet, the new Governor Sir George Gipps was positive in his position towards Jewish needs, and he granted land to Jews for the building of synagogues⁸⁶ but he felt the *Church Act* had not been repealed and that he was thus required to limit state aid to Christian worship only.⁸⁷ This view was in line with that of Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies,⁸⁸ and fully supported by the Colonial Office in London. Furthermore, Gipps appeared to favour the Church of England as the

⁸¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 30.

⁸² Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 32-33.

⁸³ As cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 30.

⁸⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 31.

⁸⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 31.

⁸⁶ Turner, *Sinews of Sectarian Warfare?*, 72.

⁸⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 33.

⁸⁸ Stanley to Gipps, 24 August 1844, HRA Vol. 23, 732-8; Gipps to Stanley, 7 August 1845, HRA Vol. 24, 440-3, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 33-4.

‘Established Religion in the Empire.’⁸⁹ The Colonial Office had in fact instructed the governor five months earlier that the *Church Act* must not be changed ‘in any wanton spirit of innovation.’⁹⁰

These ideas corresponded with the battle for the admission of Jews to the House of Commons in England, which Gladstone fiercely opposed. The tragedy of European antisemitism was, thus, brought to the shores of Australia not by the opinions of common settlers but by the supposedly enlightened elite governing the colony and their masters in London. Interestingly, the press of the time sharply criticised Governor Gipps for his actions, calling it ‘passive persecution but of the highest order and the most dangerous kind.’⁹¹

Despite this setback, there was a small victory. In 1846 the Jewish community again petitioned the Legislative Council to grant them £1,000 to pay off the debt for building their synagogues as well as an annual stipend of £200 to pay for a minister.⁹² This money was to come from the General Estimates, instead of the budget allocated under the *Church Act* for Christian worship and was granted by the Council.⁹³ The annual stipend was an amount approximately equivalent to the rate of 3 s. 8 d. (44 pence) per head of population afforded to members of the Church of England, at least in the colony of Tasmania.⁹⁴ The Council vote in favour of state aid was passed 17 to 11.⁹⁵

The suggestion that the *Church Act* was wide enough to support non-Christian faiths did receive some support in the Legislative Council. For example, Richard Windeyer was reported as being of the opinion that Jews were entitled to come under the provisions of the *Church Act*, because they engaged in the activity discussed by that Act, that is ‘public worship.’ This was not sufficient in that gentleman’s opinion, to permit him to support the allowance of funds for a debt which had already been incurred.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ Gipps to Stanley, 21 January 1844, HRA Vol. 23, 350 as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 34.

⁹⁰ Gladstone, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 34.

⁹¹ ‘Religious Persecution,’ *The Australian*, 11 November 1845, 2.

⁹² ‘Legislative Council,’ *SMH*, 21 September 1853, 5.

⁹³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 35.

⁹⁴ ‘House of Assembly,’ *The Courier*, 7 October 1858, 3.

⁹⁵ ‘Legislative Council,’ *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 19 September 1846, 4

⁹⁶ ‘Legislative Council,’ *SMH*, 15 October 1846, 2.

Complications continued as there was a change in governor and the new Governor, Sir Charles FitzRoy, was not of the same mindset as Gipps, his predecessor. He approved the grant of £1,000, but felt that he needed to discuss the annual stipend for a Jewish minister with his superiors in London.⁹⁷ Sir Charles was well aware of the changes that were occurring within the empire with regard to the status of Jews within society.⁹⁸ He referred to the Jewish community in New South Wales as ‘being a numerous, respectable and influential class in this community contributing largely to the Public Revenue.’⁹⁹

A second vote for state aid took place seven years later, and the attitude had apparently changed. In the rather charged parliamentary debate, Robert Campbell noted that the Jews had organised substantial charitable works amongst themselves:

It appeared that when, in 1848, the Governor had reported to the Secretary of State [in England] that he had granted £1,000 for the liquidation of the debt remaining on the Jewish synagogue... the reply was a rap on the knuckles to the Governor for having granted the Jews any money at all ... [times had changed 5 years later to the point that the Council would have consensus on the point that] no denomination, deriving support from the public revenue should have any advantage over any other. And by the Church Act, all Christian denominations... were placed on a footing of perfect equality.¹⁰⁰

Campbell, therefore, believed that because Christianity had sprung from the Jewish background, and because the Jews had taken care of relief to the poor, established a Jewish Orphan Society, a Jewish library, a Hebrew Grammar School, and other institutions which also benefitted Christian charities, they were entitled to state aid.¹⁰¹

The vote to amend the *Church Act* was lost in the Council, 14 to 14, with the Speaker following convention in money bills by voting against a change in the status quo: ‘The members being equal, the SPEAKER said, that in accordance with the practice of Parliament, this being a

⁹⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 35.

⁹⁸ Turner, *Sinews of Sectarian Warfare*, 73.

⁹⁹ Sir Charles FitzRoy, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 35.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Legislative Council,’ *SMH*, 21 September 1853, 5.

¹⁰¹ ‘Legislative Council,’ *SMH*, 21 September 1853, 4.

motion which involved a money grant, he must give his vote with the noes; and the question was thereupon declared to be negatived.’¹⁰²

Campbell maintained this position in later debates.¹⁰³ The Speaker, Sir Charles Nicholson was baptised an Anglican, and at the time was a well-connected and wealthy landowner in New South Wales. He was instrumental in the establishment of the University of Sydney and remembered as a businessman, scholar and politician.¹⁰⁴ Nicholson served as speaker of the NSW Legislative Council three times, and received his knighthood for his service.¹⁰⁵ He was created Australia’s first baronet in 1859,¹⁰⁶ and took up the study of Hebrew in the 1880s.¹⁰⁷ Yet, despite what counted for worldly experience at that time, he was aligned with the conservative bloc in the parliament.¹⁰⁸ He could have exercised his tie-breaking vote in favour of reform, in keeping with the Council’s 1846 vote on the £1,000 grant for the liquidation of the synagogue building debt. Instead, he chose to follow parliamentary convention and exercise his tie-breaking vote in denying equality to Jews, on the basis that the bill before the house was a money bill. The motion to allow state aid to Jew, therefore, was defeated, despite the governor’s reference to the fact that state aid had already been afforded to Jews living in Jamaica without prejudice from the Colonial Office,¹⁰⁹ thereby inferring that this precedent should apply equally in New South Wales.

The New South Wales Jewish community seemed to be content with receiving state aid from the general estimates rather than the *Church Acts*. Previously, it seems that the whole idea behind their struggle was to remove the word ‘Christian’ from the definition of public worship and be placed on an equal religious footing with all other religious communities in the colony. Instead, having failed at this, they seem to have been satisfied with a grant of money from the government from any budget so long as money was forthcoming, indicating their dire financial straits.

¹⁰² ‘Legislative Council,’ *SMH*, 21 September 1853, 5.

¹⁰³ See for example, ‘Abolition of state support for religion,’ *Empire*, 4 July 1856, 5.

¹⁰⁴ David S Macmillan, ‘Nicholson, Sir Charles (1808–1903),’ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/nicholson-sir-charles-2508/text3387>, published first in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 23 June 2020.

¹⁰⁵ Macmillan, ‘Nicholson, Sir Charles (1808–1903).’

¹⁰⁶ Macmillan, ‘Nicholson, Sir Charles (1808–1903).’

¹⁰⁷ Macmillan, ‘Nicholson, Sir Charles (1808–1903).’

¹⁰⁸ Macmillan, ‘Nicholson, Sir Charles (1808–1903).’

¹⁰⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 35.

Furthermore, the Jewish community engaged in intensive lobbying for their cause not just in New South Wales but also in London. The Jewish Board of Deputies in London strongly advocated their cause to the Colonial Office and London's Jewish newspaper, the *Voice of Jacob*, even had a correspondent in Sydney who conveyed the hope of the New South Wales Jewish community for being granted equal standing before the law. One article flatly stated that granting the Jewish minister an annual stipend from the general budget 'will evince to the world and mankind the progress of religious toleration and the good feeling existing between Christians Government and her Jewish subjects.'¹¹⁰ Clearly, the cause of the Jewish minority in New South Wales was mirrored around the British Empire, because a favourable decision would set a precedent for other communities in the Empire, thus cementing equal legal status to both Christian and Jewish worship.

Naomi Turner commented:

[The *Church Act*] had originally been conceived as a religious act whereby the political body recognised the equality of all denominations by extending a responsibility for the existence and growth of one Christian church to all that desired its patronage. After the Jews had requested and been refused a participation in the benefits of the Church Act, state aid became a practical token of the equal rights of all British citizens in society and politics, just as state aid had been in 1836 a practical token of religious equality. As the *Australian* wrote: 'What is there in a Government which should constitute it before and beyond all other bodies or individuals, judges of religion, more than of mathematical, chemical, or astronomical "truth"?'¹¹¹

The Jews of London and Sydney knew full well that even if the governor granted them the £1,000, there was no guarantee that the Colonial Office would agree with an ongoing annual stipend. Indeed, James Stephen, the under-secretary in London, 'was deeply religious'¹¹² and believed that 'the religion of Jesus Christ affords the only plausible solution to the great mystery of human life.'¹¹³ He was thus not inclined to allow the stipend and, thereafter, the

¹¹⁰ *Voice of Jacob*, 20 May 1847; also see Jacob Levi Montefiore to S Cohen, 6 November 1846, private letter (Mitchell Library, Sydney), as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 36.

¹¹¹ Turner, *Sinews Of Sectarian Warfare?*, 74.

¹¹² Paul Knaplund, *James Stephen and the British Colonial System 1813-1849* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953), 18.

¹¹³ Knaplund, *James Stephen and the British Colonial System*, 19.

legislation only applied for the advancement of Christianity.¹¹⁴ It must be noted that Stephen did sympathise with ‘the abolition of all legal disabilities based on creed.’¹¹⁵ Knaplund wrote that when Jamaica abolished differential treatment for Jews in 1825, Stephen ‘rejoiced that the old barbarous ideas concerning the Jews had been abandoned,’¹¹⁶ and even proceeded to write a historical treatise on the subject.¹¹⁷

Yet despite this, the message from London was loud and clear to any future governor and legislators in the colony and the Jewish community had little chance of winning their struggle so long as the Colonial Office held those beliefs. Instead, the Jews sought to highlight that the colony – and indeed the Empire as a whole - was falling behind the rest of the world, since Jamaica, France, Belgium and the Netherlands had already abolished any differential treatment with regards to state aid for both Christians and Jews.¹¹⁸

Whilst the governor of New South Wales and the legislature in the colony now clearly understood the will of their masters in London, Christian members of parliament, such as Colonial Secretary Thomson, nevertheless voiced their respect for the tiny Jewish community in the colony and their hope to see them be afforded equal rights in all respects.¹¹⁹ Thomson had led the opposition to the granting of state aid to the Jews as he saw the legislature bound by the dispatch from Earl Grey.¹²⁰ This petition was once again led by William Wentworth, a settler of Irish-Catholic background and liberalist who favoured the extension of religious equality to the Jews. A gifted orator, Wentworth had previously petitioned the Legislative Council for the Jewish cause as well, which was graciously appreciated by the Jewish community. Needless to say, the last petition to see the *Church Act* extended to the Jews as well, failed at the end of August 1849,¹²¹ and no further attempts were made for several years.

It is obvious that the Jews of New South Wales worked extremely hard to alter their image in the society they lived in. They were keen to shed the old stereotypes that non-Jews had of them, particularly that of the poor Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the British Isles. Instead,

¹¹⁴ Stephen A Chavura, John Gascoigne, and Ian Tregenza, *Reason, Religion and the Australian Polity: A Secular State?* (London: Routledge, 2019), 95-103.

¹¹⁵ Knaplund, *James Stephen and the British Colonial System*, 149.

¹¹⁶ Knaplund, *James Stephen and the British Colonial System*, 149.

¹¹⁷ Knaplund, *James Stephen and the British Colonial System*, 149.

¹¹⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 41-42.

¹¹⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 41.

¹²⁰ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 41.

¹²¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 41.

they wanted to be seen as respectable, hardworking and integrated members of the society, pioneering the British colonisation project in New South Wales along with their Christian neighbours. It seems that despite their failure to secure equal rights with regard to the *Church Acts*, they succeeded in all other respects.

The Jewish community petitioned the legislature again in 1853 for a regular stipend to support a minister, when a Jewish minister was about to arrive in the colony.¹²² By this time, Earl Grey had resigned from the Colonial Office, and it was hoped that the winds of change would sweep through to New South Wales as well. William Wentworth once again led the cause in the Council and the motion was opposed once again by Thomson.¹²³ The petition was also once again defeated but this time in a draw, where the Speaker had the decisive vote.¹²⁴ From the minutes of the arguments brought for and against the motion, one can clearly see that the liberalist viewpoint had become increasingly vocal. They advocated for religious equality before the law not just for Jews anymore but for all religions.

Wentworth and George Nichols called Bourke's *Church Act* a 'mistake'¹²⁵ and went so far as to say that full equality should be extended even to 'Mohammedans,'¹²⁶ if they so sought.¹²⁷ At the same time, opposition voices invoked old world stereotypes, stating that the Jews had enough money to pay for the minister themselves as well as invoking the idea of a Christian state.¹²⁸ After the petition had been rejected, Henry Parkes' *Empire* newspaper recommended the Jews 'to accept our recommendation, never again to apply to the Legislature for a benevolence for their religious institutions.'¹²⁹

New South Wales Jewry had no such intentions and persisted in their struggle. In August 1854 George Nichols introduced another petition in the Legislative Council to have a stipend availed for payment of a Jewish minister out of the general revenue.¹³⁰ Once again, the 'Mohammedan' scare was invoked by the opponents¹³¹ to which, AT Holroyd, a prominent liberalist, responded

¹²² Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 42.

¹²³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 42-43.

¹²⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 44.

¹²⁵ R Nichols, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 43.

¹²⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 43.

¹²⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 43.

¹²⁸ Robert Campbell as mentioned in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 44.

¹²⁹ 'The Hebrew Stipend Motion,' *Empire*, 24 September 1853, 2.

¹³⁰ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 45.

¹³¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 45.

that he ‘would rejoice to see their minarets adorn the city.’¹³² This time, even members of the government came out in favour of extending the stipend to the Jews, which was a shift from all previous debates.¹³³ The petition succeeded, with a vote of 20 to 10 in favour.¹³⁴

The governor at the time, Sir Charles FitzRoy, felt himself still bound by the dispatch from Earl Grey in 1847 and thus stated that he could not comply with the address.¹³⁵ The matter was thus referred to the Colonial Office in London again, where Lord John Russell, the new Secretary of State and champion of Jewish emancipation in England, quickly instructed the new Governor, Sir William Denison, to abide by any wishes the local legislature may have.¹³⁶ Immediately, an annual payment of £200 was set-aside for the Jewish minister for the budget of 1856.¹³⁷

Needless to say, the Jewish community rejoiced in the decision in 1854 stating that ‘This will place us upon an equal footing with members of the Christian Faith and remains the sole grievance we were labouring under in this colony.’¹³⁸ The community thanked Nichols for his advocacy on their behalf with a special gift.¹³⁹ They considered this ‘a great triumph of the cause of civil and religious equality by securing to them their rights of citizens irrespective of their religious beliefs.’ Nichols responded that the Jewish community had finally managed to secure ‘those rights to which you are justly entitled.’¹⁴⁰

Israel Getzler notes that in essence, the only complaint the Jewish community of New South Wales had, was that they could not secure a stipend from the public purse to pay for their minister but that otherwise, after a struggle that lasted over a decade, they had been placed on an equal footing with their fellow Christian settlers in every respect. He further notes that this inequity was more the fault of the Colonial Office in London rather than the local society they lived in.¹⁴¹

¹³² AT Holroyd, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 45.

¹³³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 46.

¹³⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 48.

¹³⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 48.

¹³⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 49.

¹³⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 49.

¹³⁸ Entry for 6 September 1855, in Sydney Synagogue Letter Book, October 1846-September 1859, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 49.

¹³⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 49.

¹⁴⁰ Entry for 30 September 1855, in Sydney Synagogue Letter Book, October 1846-September 1859, 95-96, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 50.

¹⁴¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 50.

In 1854 Saul Samuel (later Sir) was elected to the New South Wales legislature, thus becoming the first Jewish representative in the colony, four years before Baron Lionel Rothschild took his seat in the English House of Commons in 1858.¹⁴² In New South Wales, even the oath of office was adjusted to accommodate the new Jewish representatives as well as Catholics.¹⁴³ This in itself supports Getzler's position that local Jewry in New South Wales were seen in high esteem by their fellow citizens and enjoyed a great array of freedom not even afforded to them in Britain at the time. It evidences the notion that in colonial New South Wales, Jews and Christians lived peacefully and with respecting each other, and that they held each other in high regards and even aided one another in their respective struggles.

In Western Australia, the New South Wales *Church Act* was virtually copied albeit offering less government assistance for the erection of churches.¹⁴⁴ This copied Act included the fact that local Anglican priests were under the nominal oversight of the distant Bishop of Sydney, which effectively 'meant that the governor was their paymaster and their superior.'¹⁴⁵ The governors of Western Australia exercised extreme control over the local clergy due to this financial power, including 'the authority to place clergy and to make decisions even in the specifically ecclesiastical areas of the clergy's life.'¹⁴⁶ This also ensured that the Church of England received favourable treatment when compared to other denominations in the colony.¹⁴⁷

3.2.2 The *Church Act* of Tasmania

New South Wales was the premier colony in Australian history, often setting the tone for the rest of the colonies to follow. In regard to the *Church Acts*, Tasmania – which was then known as Van Diemen's Land – and Victoria both followed the New South Wales example and enacted their own versions of the Act. The *Church Act* in Tasmania was particularly viciously enforced because of the colony's Governor, Sir John Franklin, who strongly believed in the

¹⁴² Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 112.

¹⁴³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 52.

¹⁴⁴ Rowan Strong, 'Church and State in Western Australia: Implementing New Imperial Paradigms in the Swan River Colony, 1827–1857,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* Vol. 61, No. 3 (July 2010), 526.

¹⁴⁵ Strong, 'Church and State in Western Australia,' 525–526.

¹⁴⁶ Strong, 'Church and State in Western Australia,' 539.

¹⁴⁷ Strong, 'Church and State in Western Australia,' 526.

notion of a Christian state and who authored the Act in 1837.¹⁴⁸ As discussed, his predecessor, Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur, gave land generously in one instance to Barnard Walford, who had petitioned the governor for land for a Jewish cemetery in Hobart.¹⁴⁹ Yet, he had refused a similar request from the Jews of Launceston, who he may have held to be too few in number.¹⁵⁰ His successor was not so kindly disposed nor were the other government officials in the colony.

In 1842, following the arrival of several free settlers who brought with them a greater commitment to Judaism the Hobart Hebrew Congregation was founded. The small Jewish community boasted several reputable members, such as the emancipist merchants Judah and Joseph Solomon, Louis Nathan and Phineas Moss, who worked as chief clerk of the Registrar in the Probation Department.¹⁵¹ Prior to the formation of the congregation however, Van Diemen's Land's Jews did not enjoy such a favourable reputation as their counterparts in New South Wales. The *Colonial Times* called the community 'beardless Shylocks with whom the Colony swarms.'¹⁵² It went on to say that these 'like an incubus have fastened [on us] or who rather as vultures, have preyed on its vitals.'¹⁵³ The notorious 'Ikey' Solomon, the prototype of Charles Dickens' Fagin, was one of the community's shadier members.¹⁵⁴ It is not surprising that in 1842, the Police Chief Magistrate and Probation Director refused a petition by the congregation to allow Jewish convicts to attend services on *Yom Kippur*.¹⁵⁵ In response, the local press was sympathetic to the cause and publicised the refusal widely; even the *Voice of Jacob* in London reported the incident.¹⁵⁶

Despite an economic depression in the 1840s,¹⁵⁷ the Jews of Hobart embarked on an ambitious scheme to build their synagogue, collecting no less than £500 from both their ranks and their

¹⁴⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁴⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 52.

¹⁵⁰ Elliston's *Hobart Town Almanack and Van Diemen's Land Annual 1837-1938* (Hobart, 1838), as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 55.

¹⁵¹ George FJ Bergman, 'Phineas Moss (1795-1866): Public Servant and Author,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 6, Part 5 (1968), 269.

¹⁵² 'Hobart Town,' *Colonial Times*, 18 December 1832, 2.

¹⁵³ 'Hobart Town,' *Colonial Times*, 18 December 1832, 2.

¹⁵⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 56.

¹⁵⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 56.

¹⁵⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 56-7.

¹⁵⁷ RM Hartwell, *The Economic Development of Van Diemen's Land 1820-1850* (Melbourne, 1956), 226-7 as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

fellow Christian colonists.¹⁵⁸ Their numbers had grown to some 300 by 1843,¹⁵⁹ many of whom were still convicts.¹⁶⁰ They petitioned the Governor, Sir John Franklin, for state aid, encompassing a grant of land, money to build the synagogue and a stipend for their minister, but were informed that ‘the principle of the *Church Act* is not sufficiently comprehensive to sanction the giving of the Aid applied for.’¹⁶¹ The *Church Act* in Van Diemen’s Land was modelled on the New South Wales Act, but Franklin, ensured that it was worded more strongly to remove any doubt that it only applied to Christian denominations.

In Launceston, the small Jewish community was not even granted land for a synagogue or cemetery let alone any other state aid, when they petitioned Governor Franklin in 1843.¹⁶² Getzler describes this refusal ‘as the only clear-cut case in the Australian colonies of religious discrimination against a group of Jewish settlers as a matter of principle.’¹⁶³ He stressed that as a result of the appeal by Launceston’s Jews to the Colonial Office in London, and Lord Stanley’s refusal, the case did not just help shape colonial policy but defined ‘Public Worship’ as uniquely Christian throughout the Empire.¹⁶⁴

Organised Jewish life in Launceston began in 1838, when the few Jewish settlers of the town formed a Benevolent Society to assist their poor.¹⁶⁵ In 1842 a Hebrew Congregation was formed and £400 for a synagogue building had been collected by 1843,¹⁶⁶ when a request for a land grant for a synagogue and cemetery was made to the lieutenant-governor. They added to their petition that their numbers, albeit small, were steadily increasing due to immigration and there was reason to believe this trend would continue.¹⁶⁷ The governor refused their petition and even added that he would not support an appeal to the Secretary of State in London.¹⁶⁸

¹⁵⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁵⁹ *Statistical Account of Van Diemen’s Land of Tasmania*, Vol. 1, 1804-48 (Government Printer, Hobart, 1856), as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁶⁰ Circular of Launceston Hebrew Congregation to ‘Members of the Jewish Persuasion in Australia,’ September 1850, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁶¹ JE Bicheno (Colonial Secretary) to Louis Nathan (President of Hobart Hebrew Congregation), 30 May 1843, CSO 8/165, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁶² Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁶³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁶⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 57.

¹⁶⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 58.

¹⁶⁶ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 58.

¹⁶⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 58.

¹⁶⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 58.

The events following this refusal best exemplified how endeared the local Jews were to their fellow settlers in the colony. The press took their side with gusto, stating that ‘the treatment perpetrated on the body of the Jews by His Excellency Sir John Franklin, has created a universal feeling of dissatisfaction and we may add disgust.’¹⁶⁹ Other papers lamented the place ‘dogmatic theology’¹⁷⁰ took within the colony’s executive.

Support for the Jews of Launceston was so great that the local newspaper published a half page summary of the 1845 debates of the Second Assembly of Rabbis of Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany, which expressed the ‘expositions of the thoughts and feelings of the speakers which were evolved in the debate,’¹⁷¹ and presented a summary of the discussions of the development of doctrine in areas as diverse as the coming of the Messiah, purpose of religion, role of women within the Jewish society and the role of the Hebrew language (70 years before Ben-Yehuda revived it).¹⁷²

In light of such popular support, the Jews of Launceston took the matter to Lord Stanley in London explaining that ‘his Excellency, Sir John Franklin evinced the most marked hostility towards the attainment of the object of their petition.’¹⁷³ They published their petition in several newspapers but were pre-empted by Franklin, who explained his actions to the Colonial Office thus: ‘I have not felt myself justified in Countenancing at the Public Expense a religion essentially hostile to that of Christ, until I shall be honoured by your Lordship’s instructions upon the subject.’¹⁷⁴

The Launceston Jewish community was confident that since previous governors in the Australian colonies readily granted land for cemeteries and synagogues, they, too, should be entitled to such.¹⁷⁵ They even wrote to Moses Montefiore, the chief spokesperson for British Jewry in London at the time who also petitioned Lord Stanley on their behalf. Despite these efforts, Lord Stanley rejected the petition on procedural grounds claiming that a statutory

¹⁶⁹ ‘Commercial, Agricultural and Naval Register,’ *Cornwall Chronicle*, 11 March 1843, 2.

¹⁷⁰ *Launceston Examiner*, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 58.

¹⁷¹ ‘The Jews—Remarkable Debates,’ *Launceston Examiner*, 21 February 1846, 7.

¹⁷² ‘The Jews—Remarkable Debates,’ *Launceston Examiner*, 21 February 1846, 7.

¹⁷³ Letter to Lord Stanley, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 59.

¹⁷⁴ Sir John Franklin, as quoted in Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 213.

¹⁷⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 58-59.

minimum of 200 people¹⁷⁶ was needed to allow for any state aid including grants of land and that the census showed only 58 Jews resident in Launceston at the time.¹⁷⁷

Lord Stanley's refusal was criticised by the local newspaper:

It seems bitter mockery to refer the Jews to the disqualifying clauses of an Act which does not contemplate their persuasion, but exclusively confines its favours to certain Christian denominations. The Jews did not rest their claim on the existence of this law. As members of the community, who, contribute towards the support of civil government, they were entitled to share its advantages.¹⁷⁸

Thus, by denying the petition, Lord Stanley effectively sanctioned Sir John Franklin's principles of a Christian state, thereby making it colonial policy. Sir John's successor, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot was equally ill-disposed towards the Jews, having previously voted against Jewish emancipation during his tenure in the British House of Commons.¹⁷⁹

The Jews of Launceston, having been denied state aid for their synagogue, proceeded to build one with their own means. Building began in September 1844 with the support of the local masonic lodge, members of which appeared in full masonic robes, together with the band of the 90th Regiment.¹⁸⁰ Clearly, the town of Launceston stood firmly behind their Jewish settlers and came to support them in their struggle for state aid. Whilst the government of the colony may have been able to discriminate against the Jewish minority on religious grounds, the settlers of the colony clearly stood in defiance of their unpopular governor.

The local newspaper greeted the opening of the synagogue in ecumenical tones, although curiously omitting, in its description of ecumenical brotherhood, any mention of Catholics:

The numbers present included members of almost every Christian denomination, Episcopalian, Wesleyan, Independent, Presbyterian, Baptist, &c., and whether attracted

¹⁷⁶ *Launceston Examiner*, 6 July 1844, as cited in Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 213.

¹⁷⁷ CO, 280/157 (Reel No. 520), Launceston 20 May 1843, as cited in Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 213.

¹⁷⁸ 'The Jewish Synagogue,' *Launceston Examiner*, 6 July 1844, 6.

¹⁷⁹ Parl. Deb. (UK) III, Vol. 39, 519 as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 63.

¹⁸⁰ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 213.

by curiosity or influenced by a devouter feeling, their presence upon such an occasion is an incontestable proof that a spirit of religious toleration and a liberty of conscience unfettered by the restraints of form, are cherished amongst the highest classes of this community. The liberal mind united, with moral principle, will rejoice at any extension of facilities for the worship of God. The members of the Jewish persuasion have long been inconvenienced and disunited for want of a Synagogue... There is an amicable approach and a kind sympathy even of opposite extremes, when the Christian unites with the Jew in praise of the common Father of All.¹⁸¹

The status quo remained in Van Diemen's Land until the implementation of the *Australian Colonies' Government Act* in 1852, which granted the colonies, including Van Diemen's Land some representative government. The Jews tried to petition the Legislative Council in 1852 to no success, and again in 1854, this time quoting precedents from Canada, Jamaica and New South Wales to support their claim to state aid.¹⁸² This time they succeeded but the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Denison, sought instruction from the Colonial Office in London on a technicality before giving effect to the resolution of the Legislative Council, despite concurring with it.¹⁸³ The new Secretary of State, Lord John Russell, informed the governor that he was free to grant the sum to the Jewish community and £100 were immediately allocated for a minister in Hobart and £50 for a minister in Launceston.¹⁸⁴

The struggle for an equal share of state aid for Jewish public worship was concluded satisfactorily and the Jewish communities in Van Diemen's Land continued to receive state aid until its abolition in 1869. Whilst the struggle for equality in Van Diemen's Land is the only example of government sanctioned antisemitism in early colonial Australia, the episode also highlighted in what high esteem the Jewish communities were held by their fellow settlers, popular opinion and the press. It is, perhaps, the most powerful example of local homogenous Christian-Jewish relations in Australia at the time.

¹⁸¹ 'Consecration of the New Synagogue,' *Launceston Examiner*, 28 March 1846, 6

¹⁸² Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 69-70.

¹⁸³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 70.

¹⁸⁴ V&P (LCVDDL) Vol. 5 (1855), 164, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 71.

3.2.3 The *Church Act* of Victoria

The colony of Victoria was only created in 1851 after gold was discovered near Ballarat. By this time, the argument as to whether or not to extend state aid to the Jewish religion was at its peak in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land and the Jews of Melbourne were very much aware of this. As a result of the gold rush, the Jewish population in Victoria grew from 200 in 1850 to 2900 in 1860.¹⁸⁵ The nascent Jewish community lost no time in petitioning for state aid, which the newly created Victorian Legislative Council debated in December 1851.¹⁸⁶ As in New South Wales, a Presbyterian named William Westgarth heralded their petition before the Council, seconded by a Catholic, John O'Shanassy.¹⁸⁷ The motion would have required a changing of the *Church Act*, which had been passed, but the 'technical difficulty of defining religion apart from Christianity'¹⁸⁸ remained, so that the initial optimism of Melbourne Jews for a positive response to their 1851 petition proved misplaced.

The community had previously received a land grant for a cemetery in 1843 and a year later, when their 80 to 90 members applied for a grant of land to build a synagogue, Governor Gipps also granted this request.¹⁸⁹ The press lost no time in contrasting Governor Gipps' behaviour towards his Jewish subjects with that of Governor Franklin in Van Diemen's Land.¹⁹⁰ However, with the spectacular growth of their community during the gold rush, the small synagogue with 100 seats built in 1847-8 proved too small. The congregation embarked on an ambitious building project, but their budget was stretched to the limit. They petitioned Governor FitzRoy in 1850 but he rejected their request in light of Earl Grey's earlier dispatch to Governor Franklin.¹⁹¹ With the separation from New South Wales, the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation quickly petitioned the Legislative Council in 1851 as it was facing a mounting debt crisis. It still had not paid off the £200 it had borrowed in 1848,¹⁹² before the initial building was completed, to pay urgent debts.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁵ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 293.

¹⁸⁶ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 294.

¹⁸⁷ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 294.

¹⁸⁸ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 294.

¹⁸⁹ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 8.

¹⁹⁰ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 84.

¹⁹¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 86.

¹⁹² Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 85.

¹⁹³ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 32.

William Westgarth once again brought up the issue of full Jewish emancipation in 1852¹⁹⁴ but the hurdle of defining public worship other than Christian worship (as defined in the preamble of the *Church Act*) remained. The issue continued to be discussed but in subsequent debates the initial liberal spirit of the Legislative Council faded, and the debate became more about the equality of Jews in the colony than their petition for financial aid.¹⁹⁵ The difficulty was a concern for opening the floodgates as many legislators were in essence not opposed to granting financial aid to the Jewish community but feared that such a grant would entitle ‘such men as Mormons and Socialists and such as resided in abodes of love’¹⁹⁶ to claim the same.

With the Legislative Council unable to reach a definition of public worship that warranted granting state aid to Jews, more liberal legislators attempted a new strategy of abolishing state aid to religion all together in 1852.¹⁹⁷ This motion was roundly defeated. Israel Getzler believes this was the result of a social crisis facing the colony at the time, as the gold rush brought about large-scale migration.¹⁹⁸ The result was a strengthening of state aid to Christian worship by the new *Public Worship Promotion Act*, which increased the budget from £3,000 annually to £60,000 and excluded all forms of worship that was not Christian.¹⁹⁹

Furthermore, a new draft constitution for the colony sought to enshrine the definition of public worship as Christian in 1854. The proponents of a Christian state faced a fierce challenge in the Legislative Council by those opposing this. Some suggested altering the definition of public worship to ‘Hebrew and Christian Religions,’²⁰⁰ whilst others took great issue to openly ‘support Jews, Mahomedans [*sic*], and Pagans.’²⁰¹ The other side warned that broadening the definition of public worship could indeed lead Chinese Buddhists and Indian Hindu migrants to be included. It was argued that ‘The doctrines of these people were subversive of all morality according to Christian ideas and yet they might claim their share in the fund.’²⁰² In the end, the Legislative Council decided that public worship was to be defined as Christian in the constitution, greatly alarming the local Jewish community.

¹⁹⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 88.

¹⁹⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 91.

¹⁹⁶ Dr Francis Murphy, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 90.

¹⁹⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 91.

¹⁹⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 91.

¹⁹⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 91.

²⁰⁰ JP Fawkner, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 92.

²⁰¹ WF Stawell, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 92-3.

²⁰² Foster, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 93.

The Jewish leadership in Melbourne called for an emergency meeting in February 1854 to express their anger and alarm at the proposed erosion of their civic rights in the colony.²⁰³ The result was a petition to the Legislative Council with no less than 504 signatures, which requested the Council to reconsider and include some form of state aid to the Jewish community. It humbly read

And while Your Petitioners ask neither for toleration in a Colony where all Her Majesty's subjects are upon an equality, nor favour from those who are bound to mete out justice to all, they claim as a right, being good citizens and loyal subjects, that they be not excluded from participation in the said Grant of £50,000 or that they be not compelled to bear an unequal burden in the State with the recipients of such Grant.²⁰⁴

John O'Shanassy, who was the leader of the Irish Catholics in Victoria and promised the full support of Victoria's Catholics for the Jewish cause,²⁰⁵ presented the petition to the Council in March 1854. However, in the ensuing debate, neither those who wanted to completely abolish state aid to religion, nor those who favoured the inclusion of Jews in the definition of public worship were successful. Thomas A'Beckett, a staunch proponent of the Christian state ideal, 'could not consider any religion to be a religion except the Christian religion.'²⁰⁶ As a last resort, the Jews petitioned the Colonial Office in London in 1855 to protest their exclusion from state aid but their petition was once again rejected.²⁰⁷

By 1856 the congregation was significantly in debt, owing £2,500, but the general election of 1856 offered some hope of change as state aid and the definition of public worship in the constitution had become major election issues.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, Getzler wrote that a spirit of liberalism swept over the colony to the extent that even staunch Anglican supporters of a Christian state ideal such as Thomas A'Beckett now supported the extension of state aid to Jews.²⁰⁹ Since New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land had already extended state aid to their respective Jewish communities in 1855, there was good reason for optimism. Indeed, faced with a liberal backlash and potential political oblivion, the once staunch proponents of a

²⁰³ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 94.

²⁰⁴ V&P (LC Vic) Vol. 3 (1853-4), 1089, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 96.

²⁰⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 97.

²⁰⁶ Thomas A'Beckett, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 96-7.

²⁰⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 99.

²⁰⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 102.

²⁰⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 102.

Christian state were now forced to admit their ‘error in judgment’²¹⁰ and support the Jewish claim to state aid.

Despite the refreshing change of fortunes, however, Victoria’s Jews had to wait another three years until finally in February 1859 they were allocated a grant of £2,000 per annum until 1862, when this changed to £500 annually.²¹¹ State aid to religion was abolished altogether in Victoria in 1872.²¹²

3.2.4 The *Church Act* of South Australia

The history of Jewish emancipation in the colony of South Australia is entirely different to the rest of the continent. The colony was only established in 1834 and it was the only Australian state that was never a penal colony. The colony encouraged immigration by free settlers of any religion and Jacob Montefiore, a wealthy London based Jewish banker, was in fact one of the original eleven commissioners of the colony.²¹³

Jewish settlement of a new frontier region in Australia usually began with the need for a suitable burial ground and South Australia was no different. In 1843 the governor was petitioned for a land grant which was promptly approved,²¹⁴ the same year that Governor Franklin in Tasmania had denied the same request of the Jewish community in Launceston, which was double the size of that in Adelaide. Growth of the Jewish community in Adelaide was slow and they only numbered about 25 in 1844 when a regular *minyan* was begun²¹⁵ increasing to 50 in 1846.²¹⁶

In 1846, the devout Anglican lieutenant-governor of the colony, Frederick Holt Robe, in an effort to advance the Anglican establishment, introduced his version of the *Church Act* to the Legislative Council.²¹⁷ As expected, the Act would only assist Christian denominations and

²¹⁰ Thomas A’Beckett, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 103.

²¹¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 107.

²¹² Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 107.

²¹³ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 39.

²¹⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 75.

²¹⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 75.

²¹⁶ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 39.

²¹⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 75.

thus exclude the minute Jewish community. Although their numbers were small, no time was lost to petition the Legislative Council to aid the Jewish community proportionately.²¹⁸

The *Church Act* was passed but a debate erupted in the Council following this about the Jewish petition. Two Christian voluntaryist, named Major O'Halloran and Captain Bagot, introduced the petition and motioned for £5 to be placed on the estimates for the Jewish community despite the *Church Act* restricting aid to Christian denominations.²¹⁹ Despite the objection of the governor, the motion was carried and 'Captain Bagot had the satisfaction of reminding those who had voted in favour of state aid to religion that they had created the Jewish problem.'²²⁰ The governor furthermore asked 'and do you mean to propose Pagans?'²²¹ to which O'Halloran and Bagot answered 'yes.'²²²

The press thoroughly enjoyed themselves in attacking the governor for his failed attempt to aid the Anglican establishment. The *South Australian Register* wrote 'The Governor's droll question "do you mean to propose pagans?" is very amusing! Pagans! Of course! And everything and everybody else.'²²³ Particularly noteworthy is the fact that at this time there was neither a synagogue nor a Jewish minister in South Australia; the fifty odd Jews that were living mostly in Adelaide had barely organised a *minyan*, yet they managed to do what their compatriots in Sydney, Melbourne, Launceston and Hobart could only hope for. They received symbolic sums of £2 18s in 1846 and £5.16s in 1847 until their full equal standing before the law was recognised in 1848.²²⁴ Whilst these sums were indeed merely symbolic, they established an important precedent for the rest of the British Empire and upheld the spirit of religious tolerance upon which South Australia was founded.

In London, the Colonial Office was reassured by the governor that the Jews were included in the estimates 'merely on principle.'²²⁵ Earl Grey was said to be very disturbed by the news but 'would not oppose their wish, though he should regret it.'²²⁶ To his satisfaction, the Jews never

²¹⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 76.

²¹⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 76.

²²⁰ See enclosure in Franklin to Stanley, 14 June 1843, in VDL Duplicate Despatches, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 76.

²²¹ Frederick Holt Robe, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 77.

²²² TS O'Halloran and CH Bagot, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 77.

²²³ John Stephens, as cited in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 77.

²²⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 78.

²²⁵ Robe to Grey, 15 September 1846, CO 13/50, as quoted in 78. Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*,

²²⁶ CO 13/50, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 78.

collected the money allocated to them as they met in private residences and thus did not require the funds.²²⁷ In fact, when the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation was eventually formed, it adopted a voluntaryist stance and opposed state aid to religion.²²⁸

In 1847 a more comprehensive *Church Act* was introduced that initially left public worship undefined but added the word ‘Christian’ before worship at the second reading thereby excluding the Jewish community.²²⁹ Major O’Halloran once again led the cause objecting that ‘if the Chinese, Hindoos [*sic*] or New Zealanders came to South Australia, he considered that they would be as fully entitled to their quota as the members of any Christian Religion, upon the principle that they were equally contributing to the State.’²³⁰ Governor Robe in fact never invoked any notions of a Christian state but rather cleverly rebutted this criticism, stating that ‘the Council was legislating for the Christian religion. The Bill for the promotion of Mohammedanism was not yet before them.’²³¹

The new *Church Act* was enacted specifying only Christian worship, albeit limited only until 1850.²³² Major O’Halloran immediately asked to ‘introduce a Bill to give the Jews the same privileges as the Christians.’²³³ Careful not to overtly discriminate against the Jewish minority, the governor reminded the Council that the Jews had not yet collected their funds for 1846 and that he did not want to legislate on any matter unless it was the express wish of the Jewish community.²³⁴ It took less than a week for the Jewish community to draft a petition headed by Joseph Barrow Montefiore himself,²³⁵ one of the original eleven commissioners of the colony and who had arrived in Adelaide in 1846.²³⁶

It is important to note that despite the traditional Christian monopoly, the lieutenant-governor kept his word of ‘conferring upon the Jewish faith the same privileges respecting religion and education enjoyed by Christians.’²³⁷ He intended to keep his word of granting state aid to his

²²⁷ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 79.

²²⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 77.

²²⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 79.

²³⁰ *South Australian Register*, 17 July 1847, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 79.

²³¹ *South Australian Register*, 17 July 1847, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 79.

²³² Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 79.

²³³ *South Australian Register*, 6 August 1847, as quoted in Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 79.

²³⁴ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 80.

²³⁵ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 80.

²³⁶ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 39.

²³⁷ ‘Legislative Council,’ *South Australian Register*, 18 August 1847, 3.

Jewish subjects should they request it but without a minister or place of worship, the Jews of Adelaide did not have any need for any state aid at this point in time. They were content with the governor's promise and in fact, when a synagogue was eventually built and a minister hired, the congregation remained faithful to their voluntarist ideals and did not request any state aid, not even when faced with financial difficulty. Instead, they rather turned to their co-religionists in Sydney and London for support.²³⁸ State aid to religion was abolished in South Australia in 1851.²³⁹

3.3 Conclusion

In Europe at the same time, the struggle for full emancipation was well under way. Karl Marx drafted a resolution to emancipate the Jews of Cologne for the regional parliament in 1843, despite his 'distaste for the Jewish faith.'²⁴⁰ Even Richard Wagner was able to suppress his own antisemitism and fought for the emancipation of Jews in the German revolution of 1848.²⁴¹ Interestingly, whilst the struggle for emancipation in Europe gained momentum, fired by popular liberalist sentiments, the Australian colonies opted to restrict some of the rights Jews had enjoyed with the *Church Act*. Nevertheless, the Jews of the Australian colonies opted to fight for their rights as 'a matter of principle rather than finance.'²⁴²

Whilst the concept of Bourke's *Church Act* was the same in each colony, the response the Jewish minorities received was very different. The Act was the first time they encountered discriminative legislation on Australian shores, and it acted as a uniting factor for the various communities to rally against. Most free settlers in Australia, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, came to seek a better life away from old-world stereotypes and procedures in Europe. As demonstrated, many Christians, although fervent in their own denomination, were committed to a society where religious pluralism was the order of the day, and where no particular denomination had ascendancy over any other. The Jews were adamant not to have any antisemitic stereotypes imported let alone enshrined in legislation. Similarly, it seems from the response of the press, that their non-Jewish co-settlers shared these values.

²³⁸ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 81.

²³⁹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 83.

²⁴⁰ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 6.

²⁴¹ Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour*, 6-7.

²⁴² Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 42.

Despite the many setbacks the Jewish communities received, they remained focused on their goal of eliminating any legislation that limited their rights or discriminated against them and succeeded, albeit not without difficulty. As a result, the Jewish communities managed to unite behind this issue. It can thus be said that the chapter of the *Church Acts* in Australia caused the Jewish community on this continent to reach adulthood and represented at the same time a highpoint, from those who wished to include Judaism within the framework of public worship, and a low point from those who opposed this and denigrated Jews, in relations between Christians and Jews on the continent.

It also appears that, unlike a century later, the Jews united both to gain the support and sympathy of those around them, and to conspicuously contribute, as Jews, to those around them. They did not appear to adopt a 'small target' approach, and in arguing for their civil rights, attracted the support of many non-Jews, particularly in Launceston, where opposition to them from government appears to have been the fiercest. They were able to do this as part of the general debate on the role of religion in society; the argument of the Jew for civil emancipation therefore appears to be at the heart of the Australian attitude to the separation of church and state.

In the end, the extension of state aid to Jewish institutions was successful, resulting in Jews achieving full equality before their European confreres, including Britain, enabling them to live in harmony with their Christian neighbours. Jews reciprocated by becoming politically active and seeking to give back to their new homeland. Jews served as mayors across country towns and as members of parliament for their respective colonies. There seems to have been no issue with a Jew representing the Christian majority of the town. Taking into consideration the examples of Ballarat, Goulburn and Maitland, to name a few, it seems fair to conclude that the Jewish communities in country areas, which constituted 40 percent of the Jewish population in the second half of the nineteenth century, coexisted harmoniously with their Christian neighbours. They contributed to building their communities and participated actively in the civic and social life of their towns. In return, the Christian majority of these towns seemed to have respected their Jewish neighbours without prejudice. Rutland has referred to this period of Australian Jewish history as 'The Golden Age.'²⁴³

²⁴³ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 107-140; see also Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume I* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 359-470.

However, the emerging Australian nationalism with the push for federation from the 1880s, combined with the depression of the 1890s, did lead to the emergence of antisemitic tropes, especially in the yellow press and from some political figures. In response to this antisemitism, key rabbinic figures in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth became the spokesmen for the community, seeking to foster good relations with their Christian colleagues. In addition, the key roles played by Sir John Monash and Sir Isaac Isaacs, amongst others, tended to mitigate against the demagoguery and antisemitism, reinforcing the harmonious relations of colonial Australia. These factors will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE 1880S AND BEYOND: INTEGRATION AND ITS OBSTACLES

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, by the 1880s, the Australian Jewish minority was highly acculturated and integrated into the general Australian society with a high level of intermarriage. In terms of demographics, 40 per cent lived outside the major cities and whilst they were usually shopkeepers or worked in other service industries rather than as farmers, they were very much part of these rural societies. Similarly, by this time, the Jewish communities that lived in the capital cities were also well integrated, and many had risen in social status and entered the professions. Those of Anglo-Jewish ancestry in particular had managed to enter the upper echelons of colonial society. This could be seen with the high proportion relative to the population of Jewish representatives in parliaments, particularly in Victoria and New South Wales.

However, with growing Australian nationalism, antisemitism for the first time began to emerge through the media, social and recreational clubs, trade unions and the Labor Party, as well as fringe antisemitic organisations. The Jewish response to the emergence of antisemitism was largely through rabbinical representation and efforts to meet with members of the clergy and other key figures within the general Australian society. The development of a close relationship between the key rabbinical leaders in each colony – and later states – with important members of the Christian churches from both the Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations introduced a new phase in Jewish-Christian relations in Australia, as will be discussed in this chapter.

4.2 The 1880s and the Rise of Popular Antisemitism

After the defeat of the exclusivist Christian position of the *Church Acts*, the Australian Jewish minority no longer suffered from any legal discrimination unlike their counterparts in Europe. Jews could serve in the armed forces, become members of parliament and be members of the

stock exchange. Nevertheless, emerging in the 1880s, 'they were the object of prejudice'¹ in all of the colonies. There were a number of reasons for this development, including the Victorian land boom scandals of the 1890s, a general economic depression and rumours of large-scale migration of poor Eastern European Jews fleeing the *pogroms* in Russia. These fuelled already existing prejudices against the Jewish minority. Combined with the emergence of Australian nationalism eventually leading to federation, the Jewish minority began to experience a targeted campaign against them. A popular misconception was that 'all Jews were dishonest and rich.'² Combined with their involvement in the land boom scandal and several prominent bankruptcies³ it was not surprising that popular prejudices against this visible minority came to the forefront in times of economic difficulties through the media, trade union movement and in politics.

The assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 sparked numerous antisemitic measures enacted in Russia, as well as *pogroms* against the Jewish population in the Pale of Settlement. This caused mass emigration of poor Eastern European Jews to the New World. Most settled in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom and around 2,500 came to Australia.⁴ Of those who settled in Australia, one-third had spent some time in the United Kingdom prior to arriving here, ensuring that they spoke some English and had some familiarity with Anglo customs.⁵

In Brisbane, a 3,000-4,000 strong Russian-speaking community emerged⁶ predominantly South of the Brisbane River⁷ with many Russian-speaking Jews settling amongst them, forming the separate South Brisbane Hebrew Congregation in 1915.⁸ In 1919, tensions arose in Brisbane between the many unemployed ex-servicemen returning from Europe and the socialist-aligned trade union movement which included many Russian Jews, who tended to be disproportionately represented in the trade union and labour movements at this time.⁹ Clashes known as the Red Flag Riots eventually erupted on 24 March 1919 between the two groups

¹ Frank Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901: Its Interrelationship with the Majority Gentile Society,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 8, Part 5 (1978), 248.

² Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 258.

³ Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 258.

⁴ Charles A Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 5, Part 8 (1964), 375.

⁵ Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 77.

⁶ Raymond Evans, *The Red Flag Riots: A Study of Intolerance* (St Lucia: UQ Press, 1986), 28.

⁷ Jennifer Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, (Brisbane: Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies, 2016), 19.

⁸ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 20.

⁹ Jennifer Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness": Politics, Religion, Nationalism and Identity in the South Brisbane Russian Jewish Community, 1912-22,' *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 30 (2017), 82.

and as a result, '[a]ll things Russian'¹⁰ were viewed with suspicion in the aftermath, which included the Russian-Jewish community. Unlike many Russian cultural institutions in South Brisbane,¹¹ the South Brisbane Hebrew Congregation was not damaged during the riots¹² but the event was a pivotal moment for Brisbane's Russian Jews in that it 'creolised [a] form of local Jewish identity, one which performs different aspects of Russian, Anglo-Australian and Jewish culture together.'¹³ The congregation, thus, tried to dissociate itself from 'all things Russian'¹⁴ to avoid being subjected to any further prejudice in the wake of the riots.

In Australia, the Russian Jewish refugee scare started in April 1891, when rumours circulated about an apparent influx of poor Eastern European Jewish migrants with figures ranging from 2,000 to 500,000 being quoted in the media.¹⁵ It was claimed that this was a project of the French Jewish philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch, who denied any such plans existed at the time.¹⁶ The *Daily Telegraph* in New South Wales wrote that

We must insist that the first duty of the Australian people is to themselves and their children. Keeping that duty in mind, they must insist on precluding any wholesale influx of people wholly incapable of assimilating with them, unfitted by their condition to become immediately self-supporting, and almost certain to become a burden and a source of future discord if admitted.¹⁷

The reference to the Australian people is noteworthy, given that this was published before federation.

Regarding antisemitism in late nineteenth century colonial Australia, Levi and Bergman wrote:

¹⁰ Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 82.

¹¹ Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, 28.

¹² Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 82-83.

¹³ Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 83.

¹⁴ Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 83.

¹⁵ Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 248.

¹⁶ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 94.

¹⁷ 'A New Invasion,' *DT*, 20 April 1981, 4.

The pattern appears in the first newspapers and can be traced through the years to the anti-Semitic cartoons and jokes printed in Australian journals during the first flowering of national consciousness at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁸

The Russian Jewish scare, combined with the emergence of Australian nationalism and the general depression, provided a toxic mix that turned from general xenophobia of anything foreign and non-Anglo-Saxon to antisemitism. The Chinese and Hindu minorities were generally regarded as unwelcome foreigners from the Gold Rush onwards,¹⁹ but it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that the Jewish minority was included in this category as well.

The earlier influx of Jewish migrants was by this time well established and hardly distinguishable from the mainstream of society except for their religious identification. However, the later arrivals of Russian Jewish migrants, who often clung to their traditions more firmly than those of Anglo-Jewish origin, became the focus of attention and served as the scapegoats for the woes of society at the time. The Australian colonies were on track to federate into one nation, and the emerging nationalism aimed to retain its specific Anglo-Celtic identity. Whilst the major focus was against Asian migrants, the ‘yellow peril,’ the Eastern European migrants also did not fit into this image and thus became the target of those who opposed their migration.²⁰

The predominant form of overt antisemitism was observed in the newspapers of the time, in particular the *Bulletin*, *Punch*, *Tocsin* and later *Truth*. These papers appealed to the working-class, which was most affected by the depression. They published scathing cartoons invoking typical Jewish stereotypes such as long beards and noses, as well using themes highlighting usury and greed. In response to the Russian Jewish scare in 1891 the *Bulletin* wrote that:

Even the Chinaman is cheaper in the end than the Hebrew, and if Australia had to choose between the two Asiatics [*sic*], the one with the tail is preferable to the one with the Talmud every time. We owe much to the Jew – in more than one sense – but until

¹⁸ John S Levi and George FJ Bergman, *Australian Genesis: Jewish Convicts and Settlers 1788-1860* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 141.

¹⁹ *Argus*, 15 December 1856, as cited in Israel Getzler, *Neither Toleration nor Favour: The Australian Chapter of Jewish Emancipation* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970), 103. Also, see debate in Victorian Parliament as described by Getzler from page 93 onwards.

²⁰ Suzanne D Rutland and Sol Encel, ‘Australian Multiculturalism: Immigration, Race and Religion,’ *Antisemitism International* Nos. 5-6 (2010), 66.

he works, until a fair percentage of him produces, he must always be against democracy.²¹

The above statement reveals the bigotry of the *Bulletin*'s editors towards both the Chinese and the Jews and totally ignored the contributions of the Jewish community to colonial Australian society. Instead, it concentrated on poor Eastern European Jews migrating to Australia. Interesting to note is that the *Bulletin* argued that Australia should not accept Jewish migrants before Australian federation. The *Bulletin* and *Punch* also attacked Indigenous Australians. Thus, it is clear that the emerging Australian nationalism was one underlying factor for the paper's blatant antisemitism. Even more mainstream papers such as the *Argus*, *Bendigo Independent*, *Australasian* and *Mount Alexander Mail* echoed this viewpoint in that they believed the Russian Jew would not be a 'desirable acquisition'²² to Australia, especially as he was not 'as a rule, a producing factor in the State.'²³

In 1894, Victorian Attorney-General Isaac Isaacs (later Sir), a prominent Jewish member of parliament, introduced a Usury Bill in an attempt to limit the often exorbitant amounts of interest charged on loans. The irony of a Jew introducing this bill was not lost on the *Australasian*, which commented that Isaacs who 'should know his race well, is going to cure money-lending Jews of their sordidness by depriving them of interest rates above the rate of 10 per cent.'²⁴ By this time, the Russian Jewish scare had subsided but it seems the stereotype connecting Jews with usury, which had featured so prominently in many newspapers in 1891, was re-invoked as a reminder to the reader in 1894.

The Boer War provided a further reason for the *Bulletin* to express its rampant antisemitism. Its editor, Victorian born journalist, Jules Francois Archibald, co-founder of the paper, stated that the Boer War was in the interest of 'Levy and Cohen'²⁵ and was seen as a 'product of the greed of international Jewry.'²⁶ Volunteers were persistently called 'Cohentingenters.'²⁷

²¹ *Bulletin*, 9 May 1891, 7, as quoted in Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 250.

²² *Mount Alexander Mail*, 2 May 1891, as cited in Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 249.

²³ *Mount Alexander Mail*, 2 May 1891, as cited in Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 249.

²⁴ *Australasian*, 14 October 1899, 875, quoted in Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 252 and Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 95.

²⁵ *Bulletin*, 8 February 1896, 7; 23 September 1899, 8; 2 December 1899, 17; 23 December 1899, 20; 2 June 1900, 13, as quoted in Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 252.

²⁶ Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 252-3.

²⁷ Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia*, 32 as cited in Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 253.

Ironically, Archibald had been born into a Christian family, but later reinvented himself, claiming his mother who died when he was a child was French and Jewish. He also married a Jewish woman.²⁸ Another newspaper, *Tocsin*, also proclaimed that the war was fought to make ‘a few British soldiers Peers, and a few Johannesburg Jews millionaires.’²⁹

Which particular type of Jew the paper would like to invoke depended on the issue at hand but regardless, the Jew was a foreigner and at fault for the woes of society no matter how hypocritical the differing invocations was. What began in the media in the 1890s as xenophobia against non-Anglo foreigners had turned into toxic antisemitism by 1905 when the paper *Truth* wrote that

Theologically, ethnogenically, ethno-psychologically, ethno-technically, and it may almost be said anthropologically, the Jews are anti-pathetic if not absolutely antagonistic to the great civilized comity of Christian nations of the West.³⁰

If papers such as *Bulletin*, *Punch*, *Tocsin* and *Truth* are in any way reflective of the attitudes of parts of Australian society in the late nineteenth century then a clear deterioration in the relationship between the Christian majority and Jewish minority can be seen with this emergence of more open antisemitism.

As antisemitism became more prevalent in the media, so, too, did it become increasingly noticeable in politics and the workplace. The trade unions complained about the slack work ethic of Russian and Polish Jewish immigrants,³¹ stating that they ‘lived on the labour of other men’³² and that they were not ‘as a rule, a producing factor in the State.’³³ In fact, the trade union movement blamed the failure of the 1891 tailors’ strike on the non-cooperation of Jewish tailors.³⁴ It also argued that the Russian Czar was justified in his persecution of the Jews and

²⁸ Sylvia Lawson, ‘Archibald, Jules Francois (1856-1919),’ Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/archibald-jules-francois-2896/text4155>, published first in hardcopy 1969, accessed online 13 February 2016.

²⁹ *Tocsin*, 2 November 1899, 4, as cited in Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 249.

³⁰ *Truth*, 12 November 1905, as cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 96.

³¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 94.

³² Minutes of The Trades Hall Council, in *Argus*, 2 May 1891, 11, as cited Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 251.

³³ *Mount Alexander Mail*, 2 May 1891, as cited in Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 249.

³⁴ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 94.

‘acting as a father to his country’³⁵ since ‘in that part of the world, as elsewhere, the Jews were usurers and reaping great benefit at the expense of the peasants.’³⁶ The Trades Hall Council in Victoria pressured Victorian Premier James Munro to write to the Agent-General in London, reminding him ‘of the strong feeling which exists here against any influx of emigrants of the pauper or destitute class’³⁷ and that the ‘introduction of such persons into this colony is most undesirable.’³⁸

By implying that Jewish moneylenders were oppressing the Russian peasants, the union movement believed it was supporting them. This fits in well with the popular misconception that had been prevalent in New South Wales and Victoria since the early days of settlement, that ‘all Jews were dishonest and rich.’³⁹

No doubt, such sentiments emanated in the workplace and caused significant strife between Jewish and Christian workers. Noteworthy is the *Australasian*’s comment on the Trades Hall Council’s comments regarding the Czar’s attitude stating: ‘that in sentiment the leaders of the new unionism find themselves in absolute accord with almost the last surviving despot of the old world.’⁴⁰ Fletcher claimed this comment was more in line with colonial opinion.⁴¹

Nevertheless, it is evident that a sizeable portion of the non-Jewish population in colonial Australia had significant antisemitic attitudes and were not afraid to voice these. This was done through the trade union movement and the press and negatively impacted on the relations that existed between Christians and Jews in late nineteenth century Australia.

Jews participated widely in Australia’s trade union movement and were ‘instrumental in establishing some of the Queensland labour movement’s key early newsletters and publications.’⁴² One such publisher was Boris Taranov-Skvirsky, a Russian-Jewish immigrant

³⁵ Minutes of The Trades Hall Council, in *Argus*, 2 May 1891, 11, as cited in Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 250.

³⁶ Minutes of The Trades Hall Council, in *Argus*, 2 May 1891, 11, as cited in Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 250.

³⁷ *Victorian Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, 16 July 1891, 338, as cited in Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 249, and Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 94.

³⁸ *Victorian Parliamentary Debates*, Legislative Council, 16 July 1891, 338, as cited in Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 249, and Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 94.

³⁹ Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 258.

⁴⁰ *Australasian*, 9 May 1891, 886, as cited in Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 251.

⁴¹ Fletcher, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,’ 251.

⁴² Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 22.

living in Brisbane, who espoused Bolshevik political tendencies and eventually returned to Russia in 1919 to become a Soviet diplomat.⁴³ A Jewish Workers Association was founded in 1914,⁴⁴ but which was 'disbanded in 1919 to dissociate the local Jewish community with the Socialist movement.'⁴⁵ Instead, Jewish workers turned to support the wider Australian trade union movement,⁴⁶ which was increasingly seen with suspicion as many had socialist tendencies and substantial Russian membership.⁴⁷ Antisemitism within the labour movement was widespread at the beginning of the twentieth century and may even have influenced the opinion of politicians, such as Prime Minister John Curtin, who was himself a former trade union official.⁴⁸

Fletcher argues that the media and government were against the introduction of Eastern European Jewish migrations primarily for xenophobic reasons rather than antisemitism, yet he admits that the sentiments raised, particularly in the press, 'were also anti-Jewish in sentiment.'⁴⁹ He argues that the reason for the more general emergence of antisemitism from 1880 onwards was the fact that, in addition to the general economic depression and emerging nationalism, the Jews were seen as distinct from the general non-Jewish population. He wrote that 'Judaism was undeniably "different" in many ways from the colonial, Christian mainstream of religion, despite many attempts by establishment Jewry to minimise these differences wherever possible.'⁵⁰ He posits that until the late nineteenth century, the distinctiveness of Eastern European Jewish migrants was either not clearly visible or overlooked by the general society but that the Russian Jewish scare of 1891 highlighted their distinctiveness and focused attention on the difficulties these migrants faced. They were disliked, just like the Chinese and Hindus, because of the difference in religion, dress, and customs but also because 'they did not conform to the image of the "typical" Australian of Anglo-Saxon stock.'⁵¹ He thus infers that what had originally started as xenophobia, turned into distinct antisemitism during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

⁴³ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 22.

⁴⁴ Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 81.

⁴⁵ Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 83.

⁴⁶ Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 85.

⁴⁷ Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 82.

⁴⁸ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume I* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 485-486.

⁴⁹ Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 249.

⁵⁰ Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 258.

⁵¹ Fletcher, 'The Victorian Jewish Community 1891-1901,' 258.

Yet, what may have initially started as a peculiar mix of xenophobia and antisemitism to thwart off any attempt to bring thousands of Russian Jews to Australian shores quickly morphed into more specific hatred of Jews. A scapegoat was needed for the economic woes of the time and the wealthy Jew, who enriched himself from the Boer War, the Jewish moneylender who charged high interest rates and the poor Jews, who would flood Australia filled this role. These traditional stereotypes were inherited from Europe and mirrored attitudes in the British motherland, where the British Brothers League was formed in 1901 with the aim of restricting Jewish immigration, leading to some violence against Jews.⁵² Robert Wistrich writes that the momentum eventually spread into parliament and led to the Aliens Bill of 1905, which severely restricted the entry of East European Jewish refugees.⁵³ Further, he describes that in Britain the Boer War was also blamed on the Jewish press and South African Jewish diamond millionaires,⁵⁴ a sentiment that quickly spread throughout the Empire.

A coherent response was needed to counter this insurgency of antisemitism in Australia, yet no representative Jewish community institutions existed to counter it. Australian Jewry had hitherto only been organised in congregations led by a minister and a lay leadership board and in 1900 none of the colonies had a secular Jewish Board of Deputies. Instead, often the community looked towards their ministers for leadership in terms of Christian-Jewish relations.

4.3 Rabbinic Leadership as Spokespersons for the Community

The Australian rabbinic era started around the time of federation when several prominent ministers around the country started to actively represent not just their individual congregations, but also the Jewish community of their state as a whole. These leaders were not asked to take up the task of being the Jewish spokesperson but rather took it upon themselves to fill a leadership void that had emerged in the wake of the recession of the 1880s and 1890s. This made the Jewish communities across the colonies acutely aware of the need to counter the rise in antisemitic sentiments amongst certain sectors in the gentile Australian society. As there was no collective Board of Deputies acting as spokesperson for the community, the rabbinic leadership in each of the respective colonies rose to the challenge to defend their communities.

⁵² Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 105.

⁵³ Wistrich, *The Longest Hatred*, 105.

⁵⁴ Wistrich, *The Longest Hatred*, 105.

These rabbis tried to live an exemplary life, being true to their Jewish faith yet living the most Anglo-centric lifestyle possible. Traditionally, a rabbi held a scholarly role within the community but in Australia Jewish ministers emulated their Christian colleagues by predominantly fulfilling pastoral and community leadership roles.⁵⁵ Their aim was to be an example to their fellow Jews, to enlist in the army when needed and serve the community respectively, as well as be an example to the gentiles, of how integrated and appreciative to the Empire the Jewish minority was. Raymond Apple wrote that these men shared the trait of British patriotism amongst them, which ‘was a major expression of rabbinic and community identity, willingly accorded by Jews in Britain and the Empire in gratitude for the secure haven which antisemitism had denied to Jews initially in the Iberian Peninsula during the period of the Inquisition and then across the rest of Europe.’⁵⁶

These ministers further shared a passion for creating ties with the gentile population by educating them through lectures and editorials and by serving on various charitable boards. They included Rev Elias Blaubaum and Rabbi Jacob Danglow in Melbourne, Rev Alexander Bernard Davis and Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen in Sydney, Rev Abraham Tobias Boas in Adelaide and Rabbi David Freedman in Perth. They actively sought to foster Christian-Jewish relations in their respective cities, as will be demonstrated through a brief discussion of each of their contributions in this area.

4.3.1 Reverend Elias Blaubaum of Melbourne

Reverend Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904) was a prominent leader of Melbourne’s Jewish community in the late nineteenth century. Born and educated in Germany, he arrived in Melbourne in 1873 to become St Kilda Hebrew Congregation’s inaugural minister. He remained in the position for 31 years.⁵⁷ He was a strong supporter of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsh, a key figure in the development of the Modern Orthodox philosophy in nineteenth century Germany,⁵⁸ who promoted the concept of *Torah v’Avoda*, that is secular studies as

⁵⁵ Raymond Apple, ‘The British Rabbi in Australia: The First 150 Years,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 24, Part 2 (2019), 281.

⁵⁶ Apple, ‘The British Rabbi in Australia: The First 150 Years,’ 281.

⁵⁷ Hilary L Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 9, Part 8 (1985), 567.

⁵⁸ Hilary L Rubinstein, ‘Blaubaum, Elias (1847-1904),’ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/blaubaum-elias-12802/text23105>, published first in hardcopy 2005, accessed online 9 August 2015.

well as Jewish studies with an aim to reach out more to the non-secular world – an ideology he shared with the instigator of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews, as will be discussed later. Rabbi Apple observed that he ‘must have wielded rather a powerful influence on communal thought in his triple capacity as minister, member of the *Beth Din* and editor.’⁵⁹

Blaubaum rose to prominence in Melbourne not just due to his stewardship of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. Through its website, the Synagogue still pays tribute to him ‘as a truly remarkable man who engineered the early religious life of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation to a place of prominence within the Australian Jewish Community.’⁶⁰ Despite speaking no English before he left Germany, he had mastered the language sufficiently to deliver sermons by the time he arrived in Australia.⁶¹ His Orthodox German-Jewish family origins appealed to many at St Kilda as many of the congregants spoke German and were of German origin themselves.⁶² Hilary Rubinstein wrote that his ‘attitude exemplified that of the established Australian Jewish community, with its pursuit of integration without assimilation, and its resolve to resist both the honey and the sting of the wider society.’⁶³

Apart from leading the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, Blaubaum also served alongside Reverend Israel Goldreich and Rabbi Dr Joseph Abrahams as one of the three ministers on the Melbourne *Beth Din*.⁶⁴ He was also president of the United Jewish Education Board and founding editor of the Melbourne *Jewish Herald*.⁶⁵ Another organisation that Reverend Blaubaum was active in was the Melbourne branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association.⁶⁶ Hilary Rubinstein wrote that Blaubaum ‘devoted so much time to Jewish secular and religious causes, to promoting the reputation of Jewry in the Christian community and to writing and lecturing on Jewish topics that [Rabbi Dr] Abrahams believed this unremitting work [...] contributed to his comparatively early death.’⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Raymond Apple, ‘The Victorian Jewish Community, 1900-1909,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 5, Part 1 (1959), 59.

⁶⁰ St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, ‘Rev Blaubaum,’ accessed 9 August 2015, <http://stkildashule.org.au/past-rabbis/rev-blaubaum>.

⁶¹ Newman Rosenthal, *Look Back with Pride: The St Kilda Hebrew Congregation’s First Century* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson (Australia), 1971), 48-9.

⁶² Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 568.

⁶³ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 567.

⁶⁴ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria: 1835-1985* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), 72.

⁶⁵ Rubinstein, ‘Blaubaum, Elias (1847-1904),’ ADB.

⁶⁶ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 44.

⁶⁷ *Jewish Herald*, 17 June 1904, as cited in Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 570.

Due to his heavy involvement in interfaith work and service as a spokesperson for the Jewish community Blaubaum wrote and lectured frequently on all topics related to the Jewish community, including combating antisemitism. Wherever possible he tried to forge links with Christian clergymen and strove to live by example by actively engaging in interfaith work and educating the Christian majority about Judaism. He firmly believed 'that a man may be a good Jew and yet a devoted patriot, a firm believer in the coming Messiah and yet an able and zealous administrator of the law under which he lives.'⁶⁸

He taught Hebrew at the Victorian Congregational College, whose principal from 1876-1913 was Alexander Gosman, who was also the minister at the St Kilda Independent Church from 1863.⁶⁹ The church was located at 9 Alma Road in St Kilda, located just meters away from the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation.⁷⁰ As a result of the proximity of Gosman and his church to Blaubaum's synagogue, it is possible that the two met privately to discuss matters of mutual concern.

Blaubaum lived initially at Charnwood Grove, near the synagogue, and advertised the premises as being only a short walk from Wesley College,⁷¹ 'the great public school which soon became favoured by St Kilda Jews.'⁷² Despite Wesley College being a Wesleyan Methodist school, Blaubaum had his children educated at the school as well.⁷³ They succeeded academically at the school and his son Athol was a member of the school's football team.⁷⁴ It is noteworthy that Blaubaum chose to send his children to one of Melbourne's elite Christian private schools even though this was generally deplored in the Jewish community as Reverend Jacob Lenzer of East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation was criticised by the community when he sent his children to a Catholic school.⁷⁵

The fact that Blaubaum taught Hebrew at a Congregational College and wrote on matters of Judaism in the mainstream press indicates that he was actively involved in promoting positive

⁶⁸ *Jewish Herald*, 4 September 1885, as cited in Rubinstein, 'Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,' 570.

⁶⁹ St Kilda Historical Society, 'Independent (Congregational) Church,' accessed 9 August 2015, [http://skhs.org.au/SKHSchurches/independent_\(congregational\)_church.htm](http://skhs.org.au/SKHSchurches/independent_(congregational)_church.htm).

⁷⁰ St Kilda Historical Society, 'Independent (Congregational) Church.'

⁷¹ Rubinstein, 'Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,' 569.

⁷² Rubinstein, 'Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,' 569.

⁷³ Rubinstein, 'Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,' 69.

⁷⁴ Rubinstein, 'Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,' 569.

⁷⁵ *Table Talk*, 4 August 1899, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 80.

interfaith relations between Christians and Jews in late nineteenth century Melbourne. In fact, Hilary Rubinstein wrote that ‘his personal combativeness and tenacity when confronted with anti-Jewish prejudice, made him the nearest approximation to a nationwide, communal spokesman that Australian Jewry possessed.’⁷⁶ Furthermore, he himself had his children educated at a non-Jewish school, thereby assisting in combating stereotypes by educating Jewish and non-Jewish children together. He thus lived his ideal of integration without assimilation but sadly, two of his oldest sons married non-Jewish women thereby extinguishing the Blaubaum male-line in Australia.⁷⁷

The fact that two of his sons married non-Jews is an ironic turn of events as Reverend Blaubaum vehemently opposed apostates such as Herman Herlitz, a German-born Jew who converted to Christianity and presided over the Victorian Lutheran Synod from 1868-1914.⁷⁸ A prominent Christian minister later told Blaubaum that Jewish converts to Christianity ‘are no credit to you, and they are no credit to us [...] They are not worth having.’⁷⁹ The threat of Christians attempting to convert Jews was prevalent in colonial Victoria and Blaubaum attempted to defend his faith by writing in the *Jewish Herald*:

We admit our people have their faults. What human beings have not? But, on the whole, they compare very favourably with the followers of other denominations. Lazy loafers, drunkards, wife-beaters, bad fathers and mothers are very rare among us...⁸⁰

He further demonstrated his own prejudices, despite vigorously defending the Jewish community, when he stated that ‘there are hundreds of men and women in the back slums and the dens of the most degrading vices who stand much more in need of conversion than the Jews.’⁸¹

Blaubaum’s relentless mission to advance the perception of Jews amongst the general population in Victoria kept him especially busy during the recession of the 1890s as rumours of mass immigration of poor Russian Jews fuelled a wave of antisemitism in the colony.⁸² He

⁷⁶ Rubinstein, ‘Blaubaum, Elias (1847-1904).’

⁷⁷ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 569.

⁷⁸ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 74-75.

⁷⁹ *Jewish Herald*, 21 April 1893, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 75.

⁸⁰ *Jewish Herald*, 24 January 1896, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 75.

⁸¹ *Jewish Herald*, 2 April 1897, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 75.

⁸² Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 573.

rebuked those who asserted wrong or misguided stereotypes and demanded an explanation from Reverend Alexander Marshall after he had described Jews as ‘greedy, gutter-grubbing bloodsuckers’⁸³ before the congregation at Scots’ Church.⁸⁴

Blaubaum tried to engage with Christian clergymen by finding common ground between the two faiths. In a lecture before a mixed-denomination crowd, he asserted that ‘charity should be dispensed irrespective of “race and creed”’.⁸⁵ In fact, as editor of the *Jewish Herald*, he called on his fellow Jews to contribute to the Irish famine relief and commended the work of the Salvation Army.⁸⁶ As a result of such calls, ‘Blaubaum was on amicable terms with several Christian clergymen, who readily admired his efforts for his own “denomination” and his attempts to make the principles of Judaism intelligible to interested non-Jews.’⁸⁷ One such interested non-Jew urged him to write an article entitled ‘Judaism’ which was eventually published in the *Melbourne Review* in 1883.⁸⁸ The article in the *Melbourne Review* served as the basis for a later article entitled ‘Catholics and Jews’ published by JHB Curtis in Melbourne’s Catholic journal *Austral Light* in 1902.⁸⁹

The mission to bring Jews closer to their Jewish heritage and to educate non-Jews on the value of the Jewish faith was not limited to the boundaries of Melbourne. Blaubaum was a sought after speaker at weddings and performed many weddings throughout country Victoria.⁹⁰ Furthermore, in 1900 he travelled to New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.⁹¹ He spoke before the Dunedin Synagogue in New Zealand on the ‘Principles of Judaism’ and gave a public lecture on ‘What the Jews have done for the World’ before an audience of Jews and non-Jews.⁹² He encountered some Jews during his visit to Fiji, Samoa and Tonga and lamented their lack of connection to the faith of their ancestors.⁹³ His visit to Tonga in particular imparted on him

⁸³ *Bohemia*, 30 April 1891 as cited in Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 573.

⁸⁴ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 573.

⁸⁵ *Jewish Herald*, 21 August 1881 as cited in Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 574.

⁸⁶ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 579.

⁸⁷ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 574.

⁸⁸ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 574.

⁸⁹ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 76.

⁹⁰ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 573-4.

⁹¹ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 575.

⁹² *Jewish Herald*, 13 April 1900, as cited in Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 575.

⁹³ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 576.

the notion that ‘the Divine image is stamped on all alike.’⁹⁴ He subsequently wrote an attack on Australian immigration policy stating that ‘We, that is, those that rule us, want a white Australia, and to let a South Sea Islander enter our territory would be downright contamination. And worst of all, the churches stand quietly by and raise no protest against such an intolerant policy!’⁹⁵

Despite these criticisms of his Christian colleagues, upon his return to Melbourne, he continued his quest to bring Jews and Christians close together and delivered a speech before the Melbourne Jewish Literary and Debating Society entitled ‘The Jewish Origins of Christianity.’⁹⁶ As a result of his momentous interfaith work, when Blaubaum died in 1904 his funeral was attended by many prominent non-Jews, including the local Member of Parliament.⁹⁷ The Board of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation described him as ‘a constant worker in the cause of the spiritual well-being of the young and old of his flock, a scholar, indefatigable student and a faithful follower and teacher of the laws of Judaism.’⁹⁸ His work and activities in interfaith work were unrivalled in Australia at the time and his death left a vacuum that needed to be filled. He had thus laid the ground for his successor, Rabbi Jacob Danglow, who had a daunting task ahead.

4.3.2 Rabbi Jacob Danglow of Melbourne

Rabbi Jacob Danglow (1880-1962) succeeded Blaubaum at St Kilda Hebrew Congregation in 1905 and found a community ‘although small, [that was] active, co-operative, and regular in attendance at the House of Worship.’⁹⁹ He served the congregation as well as the larger Victorian Jewish community for over half a century.¹⁰⁰ Until a more formal community structure was established in the 1920s, he continued Blaubaum’s role as the spokesperson for

⁹⁴ *Jewish Herald*, 20 November 1903, as cited in Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 576.

⁹⁵ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 576.

⁹⁶ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 575.

⁹⁷ Rubinstein, ‘Rev. Elias Blaubaum (1847-1904): Minister, Editor and Scholar,’ 577.

⁹⁸ Rosenthal, *Look Back With Pride*, 48.

⁹⁹ Jacob Danglow, ‘An Australian Ministry,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 4, Part 4 (1954-58), 172.

¹⁰⁰ John S Levi, ‘Danglow, Jacob (1880-1962),’ Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/danglow-jacob-5876/text10001>, published first in hardcopy 1981, accessed online 6 November 2015.

the Jewish community in Melbourne. Between them, Blaubaum and Danglow led St Kilda Hebrew Congregations for 86 years.¹⁰¹

Danglow was born and educated in the United Kingdom.¹⁰² His father had previously migrated to England from Krakow in Poland, which would have resonated with many established Anglo-Jews in Australia at the time who had a similar heritage. His Anglo-Jewish heritage would define his role in Melbourne's Jewish leadership. He aligned his congregation under the Chief Rabbi's United Synagogues of Great Britain and as a member of the Melbourne *Beth Din* he wielded significant influence.¹⁰³ By marrying May Baruch, the granddaughter of the congregation's founding president,¹⁰⁴ he firmly established himself in Melbourne's Anglo-Jewish society and by continuing his academic studies at Melbourne University;¹⁰⁵ he also gained respect in the wider non-Jewish society.

Danglow was commissioned as a chaplain to the Australian army in 1908¹⁰⁶ and participated in both World Wars, serving on the Western Front in France and New Guinea and the Pacific Islands.¹⁰⁷ He was only the second Jewish chaplain to be appointed in the Australian army¹⁰⁸ and was an ardent patriot, once stating in a sermon that 'England has given the fullest freedom and protection to the Jew, and the Jew, who has been the glad recipient of these priceless boons is eager to prove his love for England.'¹⁰⁹ Sir John Monash, a member of the congregation, himself unveiled the plaque to commemorate the 19 servicemen from St Kilda Shule who died in World War One.¹¹⁰ This was not just a reflection of his staunch allegiance to the British Empire but also a manifestation of his ideals that Jews should integrate as quickly as possible into the surrounding Anglo establishment. He and the 113 other men who enlisted from St Kilda Hebrew Congregation in World War One,¹¹¹ wanted to show the non-Jewish establishment that Australian Jewry was as British as they were and that they had total

¹⁰¹ St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 'Rabbi Danglow,' accessed 6 November 2015, <http://stkildashule.org.au/past-rabbis/rabbi-danglow>.

¹⁰² Levi, 'Danglow, Jacob (1880-1962).'

¹⁰³ Levi, 'Danglow, Jacob (1880-1962).'

¹⁰⁴ St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 'Rabbi Danglow.'

¹⁰⁵ Raymond Apple, 'Rabbi Jacob Danglow – A Profile,' accessed 6 November 2015, <http://www.oztorah.com/2011/03/rabbi-jacob-danglow-a-profile/>.

¹⁰⁶ Apple, 'Rabbi Jacob Danglow – A Profile.'

¹⁰⁷ St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 'Rabbi Danglow.'

¹⁰⁸ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 116.

¹⁰⁹ *Jewish Herald*, 14 December 1917; cf. Melbourne Hebrew Congregation *Annual Report*, 1915, 5 and 7; and *Annual Report* 1916, 6, as quoted and cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 115.

¹¹⁰ St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 'Rabbi Danglow.'

¹¹¹ St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 'Rabbi Danglow.'

allegiance – and perhaps even gratitude – to the Empire. He was active in promoting interfaith relations between the Christian majority and the Jewish minority, serving alongside Christian ministers in the Australian Army in both World Wars lest there have been any reports that Jews were not participating in the war effort.

Due to his loyalty to the British Empire, he favoured a Jewish homeland under a British mandate,¹¹² another reflection of his Anglo-Jewish ethos and after the war opposed the creation of a Jewish state. He also took a very conservative position to Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors, advocating that they acculturate as quickly as possible into the Australian culture.¹¹³ Danglow furthermore was active in freemasonry and founded the third St Kilda Scout Group in 1924.¹¹⁴

Danglow was passionate about his Jewish identity and strongly opposed Christian missionary work amongst Jews. When in 1913 Reverend Alexander, moderator of the Presbyterian Church's General Assembly, lamented the difficulty of missionary work amongst the Jews of Jerusalem, describing them as bigoted, Danglow was quick to summon his colleagues to issue a letter of protest.¹¹⁵ The result was a letter to the *Herald* newspaper, which read: 'We are glad to count many Christians, including ministers of the Christian religion among our friends. We Jews have no wish to enter into religious controversy. We only wish and ask to be allowed to follow the faith of our fathers without molestation or interference.'¹¹⁶

An argument ensued in the press between Danglow and Alexander when Alexander replied that 'I have nothing but respect for all that is good in Jewish faith and life and have no wish for Israel but that it may walk in the light of the Lord.'¹¹⁷ Instead of causing further antagonism with his Christian colleagues, Rabbi Danglow took the high road when he responded that 'We are sorry you cannot join us in our respect for all religions, which respect is inculcated by your Faith.'¹¹⁸

¹¹² St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 'Rabbi Danglow.'

¹¹³ St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 'Rabbi Danglow.'

¹¹⁴ Levi, 'Danglow, Jacob (1880-1962).'

¹¹⁵ John S Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow: The Uncrowned Monarch of Australian Jews* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1995), 58.

¹¹⁶ *Herald*, 23 May 1913, as quoted in Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, 58.

¹¹⁷ *Jewish Herald*, 4 July 1913 (letter dated 19 June 1913), as quoted in Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, 59.

¹¹⁸ *Jewish Herald*, 11 July 1913, as quoted in Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, 59.

This discussion illustrates his many involvements that bridged the Jewish/non-Jewish divide and showed that he truly believed in integrating into the wider society as much as possible. By living his ethos of bridging the Jewish-non-Jewish divide as much as possible, he was widely acknowledged in the Jewish community for his service and also received numerous decorations from the non-Jewish establishment as well, such as the VD decoration in 1929, an OBE in 1950 and a CMG in 1956.¹¹⁹ Danglow was given a full military funeral¹²⁰ and Sir Robert Menzies stated in his condolence note: 'I knew Rabbi Danglow very well and admired him very much. He made an outstanding contribution to our community life.'¹²¹

Rabbi Raymond Apple stated that Danglow 'came to be regarded as a synthesis of all that was best in Jewish and British culture.'¹²² His position also mirrored the attitudes and background of his Sydney colleague, Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen.

4.3.3 Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen of Sydney

Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen (1862-1934) was minister at The Great Synagogue in Sydney from 1904 until his death in 1934.¹²³ Like his counterpart, Rabbi Danglow in Melbourne, he was of Anglo-Jewish heritage and staunchly committed to Anglo culture. Prior to his arrival in Australia, he had studied music at the University of London¹²⁴ and had served as minister in Dublin and at London's Borough Synagogue.¹²⁵ He was the first minister of the congregation qualified as a rabbi¹²⁶ and instrumental in Sydney Jewry's subsequent leadership and development.

Cohen was eloquent and much respected in Sydney's Jewish community. As the minister of the Great Synagogue, his opinions held considerable sway and his sermons were published on the front page of the *Hebrew Standard* for 29 years.¹²⁷ He spoke at length about all sorts of

¹¹⁹ Apple, 'Rabbi Jacob Danglow – A Profile.'

¹²⁰ Apple, 'Rabbi Jacob Danglow – A Profile.'

¹²¹ Apple, 'Rabbi Jacob Danglow – A Profile.'

¹²² Apple, 'Rabbi Jacob Danglow – A Profile.'

¹²³ Suzanne D Rutland, 'Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre for Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cohen-francis-lyon-5710/text9655>, published first in hardcopy 1981, accessed online 22 November 2015.

¹²⁴ Rutland, 'Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).'

¹²⁵ Raymond Apple, 'Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 12, Part 4 (1995), 669.

¹²⁶ Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1977), 69.

¹²⁷ Apple, 'Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,' 685.

matters, even political issues, such as in 1908 when he lamented the fact that observant Jews were not always given the opportunity to work on Sundays instead of Saturdays.¹²⁸ Furthermore, he was a much sought after speaker with other audiences as well. As a freemason, he frequently lectured on the Jewish dimensions of masonic ritual¹²⁹ and he lectured to Rotary Clubs and the League of Nations Union as well.¹³⁰

He also spoke about issues concerning Christians and Jews, using the pulpit (and presumably knowing that his sermons would be printed the following week) as a means to educate Christians about differences in Jewish understandings of the Scripture,¹³¹ including a Jewish perspective on the virgin birth of Jesus.¹³² As with Danglow, Cohen also passionately rebuked those Christian missionary organisations that were established with the purpose of targeting Jews for conversion.¹³³ He asked them to ‘leave your fellow-citizen of the Jewish persuasion to the lofty religious belief they already hold, and which they have no less right to hold than you have to hold your particular creed.’¹³⁴ Thus, he did not hesitate to voice his opinion on Christian theological issues, even if this caused controversy within his own community.¹³⁵

Cohen was involved in many Jewish communal philanthropic causes and headed many causes including the New South Wales Jewish Board of Education.¹³⁶ He was for most of his tenure the only qualified Rabbi in Sydney¹³⁷ and the Great Synagogue ‘was the only permanent synagogue until 1913.’¹³⁸ As such he wielded significant influence, also as the head of the local *Beth Din*.¹³⁹ Since in 1911 there were 7,660 Jews living in Sydney,¹⁴⁰ it is not hard to imagine how influential Cohen must have been in the Jewish community and how his opinion would have carried significant weight amongst the non-Jewish community since he was, at the time, the only identifiable leader of significance of Sydney’s Jewish community. Cohen was greatly concerned about the image of Sydney’s Jewish community amongst the wider non-Jewish

¹²⁸ *HS*, 4 December 1908, as cited in Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 687.

¹²⁹ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 688.

¹³⁰ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 727.

¹³¹ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 687.

¹³² *AJC*, 10 January 1924, as cited in Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 687.

¹³³ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 688.

¹³⁴ *HS*, 26 February 1909, as cited in Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 688.

¹³⁵ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 701.

¹³⁶ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹³⁷ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹³⁸ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 691.

¹³⁹ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹⁴⁰ Price, ‘Jewish Settlers in Australia, 1788-1961,’ 413.

population. He ‘emphasized synagogue dignity and decorum, and, to suit the Christian environment, he tried to modify Jewish observances with some practices unacceptable to more orthodox Jews.’¹⁴¹

Cohen considered service to the Empire to be of great importance as before his arrival in Australia he had served as the first Jewish chaplain in the British Army, where he initiated the annual *Hanukkah* services,¹⁴² the first of which was held at his Borough Synagogue in London in 1893, in the presence of the Chief Rabbi and the lord mayor of London.¹⁴³ He continued this tradition when he assumed the pulpit in Sydney and these services were initially well attended by congregants and military personnel.¹⁴⁴ Naturally, he served as chaplain in the Australian Military Forces from 1909 and throughout World War One.¹⁴⁵ He was eager to counter any negative stereotypes that existed of Jews both in Britain and Australia, which resulted from increased migration of poor Eastern European Jews.¹⁴⁶ He wanted to create an image of the patriotic Jew who did not shy away from participating in the Empire’s wars and thereby promoted Jewish patriotism for the Empire.¹⁴⁷ As a member of the Australian Defence League and vice-president of the Universal Service League he actively campaigned for conscription during World War One.¹⁴⁸ To him, there was no reason why Jews would not be able to be Jewish and serve the Empire. He was awarded the Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officers’ Decoration in 1929 for his services to the military.¹⁴⁹

Cohen cooperated with his Christian colleagues where possible, such as when he consecrated a scouts’ memorial chapel in Pennant Hills with other Christian clergymen.¹⁵⁰ His collaboration knew limits, however, and he declined an invitation by the Council of Churches to join them in 1931, writing that the Jewish representative who had previously attended ‘was no longer welcomed.’¹⁵¹ He continued that under ‘these circumstances, and as the present Council is

¹⁴¹ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹⁴² Joseph Jacobs and Edgar Mels, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon,’ accessed 22 November 2015, <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4473-cohen-francis-lyon>.

¹⁴³ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 678.

¹⁴⁴ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 73.

¹⁴⁵ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹⁴⁶ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 677.

¹⁴⁷ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 677.

¹⁴⁸ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹⁴⁹ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹⁵⁰ Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 700.

¹⁵¹ Francis Lyon Cohen to president, 12 February 1931, as quoted in Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 701.

sometimes more puritanical than Judaism justifies, I think it better to continue in friendly independence of action.’¹⁵²

His involvement in the military, active encouragement of patriotism for the Empire amongst the Jewish population won him the adoration of the non-Jewish establishment as well. As a British patriot he was critical of Zionism and actively hindered the growth of the Zionist movement in New South Wales.¹⁵³ Having been active in wider non-Jewish activities such as freemasonry, combined with his military endeavours, it is not surprising that he is credited to have significantly raised the status New South Wales Jewry in the wider community¹⁵⁴ and thus contributed to the harmonisation of Jewish and Christian relations in the post-depression era.

4.3.4 Rabbi Abraham Tobias Boas of Adelaide

Born and educated in Amsterdam, Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas (1842-1923) arrived in South Australia in 1870. By the time he died in 1923, 48 years later, he was the longest serving Jewish minister in the British Empire.¹⁵⁵ Prior to his arrival in Adelaide, he was minister at the Southampton congregation¹⁵⁶ from 1867 until Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler recommended him for the post in Adelaide.¹⁵⁷ In 1873, he married Elizabeth Solomon, who came from a well-established South Australian Jewish family.¹⁵⁸

The Jewish community in South Australia had been exceptionally well integrated from the time the first Jews arrived in 1836 onwards. One of the original commissioners of the colony was Jacob Montefiore, himself a wealthy London-based Jew. By 1899, the community had produced a premier as well as no less than four lord mayors of Adelaide. In 1845 there were only 25 professing Jews in Adelaide. This number grew to 435 by 1870 when Boas himself

¹⁵² Francis Lyon Cohen to president, 12 February 1931, as quoted in Apple, ‘Francis Lyon Cohen: The Passionate Patriot,’ 701.

¹⁵³ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹⁵⁴ Rutland, ‘Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862-1934).’

¹⁵⁵ State Library of South Australia, SA Memory, ‘Boas, Abraham Tobias, 1842-1923,’ accessed 1 April 2016, <http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=449&c=2387>.

¹⁵⁶ State Library of South Australia, ‘Boas, Abraham Tobias, 1842-1923’.

¹⁵⁷ Louise Rosenberg, ‘Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas: A Pioneer Jewish Minister 1842-1923,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 7, Part 2 (1972), 90.

¹⁵⁸ Rosenberg, ‘Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,’ 85.

laid a new synagogue cornerstone.¹⁵⁹ When an extension to the synagogue was dedicated, it was noted that over 200 members of other denominations attended the ceremony as well.¹⁶⁰

Boas once recalled:

I am thankful today that a good Providence has led me hither, and has spared me to reside until this day in a country blessed with heavenly favours, where the dwellers live in concord and peace, and to enjoy freedom of thought and action. I am proud of South Australia, the State in which I have spent so many happy years – let me hope of usefulness – and in pleasant intercourse with members of all denominations and all classes...¹⁶¹

Boas laboured tirelessly for his congregation and did not take a holiday from the time he assumed the pulpit until 1910. Up until then, he had travelled only for pastoral visits, lecture tours or to open schools and other community organisations,¹⁶² including visits as far as Perth and Coolgardie in Western Australia.¹⁶³ In 1910, in appreciation of his service, the congregation held a special thanksgiving service and gave him two months' leave, which he used to visit other Jewish communities in the Eastern states and New Zealand.¹⁶⁴

On the occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1912, a newspaper article was written about his life and works in Adelaide, describing him as follows:

He conducts Sunday and Sabbath day schools and is associated with almost ever Jewish and Christian charitable or educational institution in the city. [...] he performs an immense amount of practical good among people of all denominations without receiving anything like adequate public recognition; but by all with whom he comes into contact he is revered and honoured. He is one of the original committee of the Home of Incurables, and for 32 years has been chairman of the sub-committee of Eastcourt House. He has long been a member of the committee of the Philanthropic

¹⁵⁹ Rosenberg, 'Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,' 94-95.

¹⁶⁰ Rosenberg, 'Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,' 97.

¹⁶¹ Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas, as quoted in Rosenberg, 'Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,' 92.

¹⁶² Rosenberg, 'Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,' 98.

¹⁶³ State Library of South Australia, 'Boas, Abraham Tobias, 1842-1923.'

¹⁶⁴ Annual Report of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, as quoted in Hirsch Munz, *Jews in South Australia 1836-1936: An Historical Outline* (Adelaide: Thornquest Press, 1936), 72.

Society, Secretary of the Jewish Benefit Society, and intimately connected with other organisations that have allied objects. Mr. Boas is one of the most cultured men in the city, and his services, willingly given, have frequently been availed of by literary societies and similar bodies for lectures and papers, which he delivers attractively. He is Vice-President of the University Shakespearean Society, and one of the keenest and most sympathetic students of Shakespeare in Australia.¹⁶⁵

At a reception to mark the 45th anniversary of his assuming the pulpit, Boas said that ‘I have tried to be of some use to my fellow-men, Jew and Gentile, in the sphere of charity and benevolence, and in that of literature. My humble endeavours have been to render the name of Jew respected and I believe in this, my efforts have resulted in some measures of success.’¹⁶⁶

Boas was an authority on the works of William Shakespeare and frequently lectured at the various library societies in Adelaide. A contemporary obituary in the Adelaide press noted that he was ‘Broad-minded and eager to help any denomination. His interpretations of the various stories of the Old Testament were often used in the Christian Sunday schools.’¹⁶⁷ A Mr G Isaacs wrote the following piece of appreciation, published in the Sydney *Hebrew Standard*, on the occasion of his death: ‘In the general community he succeeded, by his ripe scholarship and genial manner, in commanding respect and esteem in the best circles and, incidentally, did much to advance and improve the public esteem of our people.’¹⁶⁸

In 1918 the Chief Rabbi designated Boas Rabbi Emeritus for his services.¹⁶⁹ The same year he was forced to resign due to continued bad health.¹⁷⁰ The Boas family legacy lived on in Australia as three of his sons made outstanding careers for themselves in the general society with one becoming a mayor of Subiaco in Western Australia, and another receiving an Order of the British Empire for services to town planning and architecture.¹⁷¹ As with the other rabbinical leaders of his time, he was the central force in Jewish-Christian relations in South Australia, and was very effective in building links with his fellow Christian clergy and lay leaders.

¹⁶⁵ As quoted in Rosenberg, ‘Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,’ 100.

¹⁶⁶ Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas, as quoted in Rosenberg, ‘Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,’ 103.

¹⁶⁷ As quoted in Munz, *Jews in South Australia 1836-1936*, 76.

¹⁶⁸ G Isaacs, as quoted in Munz, *Jews in South Australia 1836-1936*, 76.

¹⁶⁹ Rosenberg, ‘Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,’ 102.

¹⁷⁰ Munz, *Jews in South Australia 1836-1936*, 74.

¹⁷¹ Rosenberg, ‘Reverend Abraham Tobias Boas,’ 88.

4.3.5 Rabbi David Isaac Freedman of Perth

Rabbi David Isaac Freedman (1874-1939) was another significant leader of the Australian Jewish community based in Perth who played a similar role in building links between the Jewish and Christian communities. Born in Hungary but educated at the University of London and Jews' College, he came to Perth in 1897,¹⁷² the same year that the Perth Hebrew Congregation erected its synagogue building in Brisbane Street,¹⁷³ just as the population of Western Australia began to boom as a result of the Kalgoorlie gold rush. He possessed a great deal of energy and commitment to his ministry leading the Board of his congregation to note a little more than a year after he assumed his position: 'It is with satisfaction that that your Committee has noticed Mr. Freedman's attendance at the various Public Meetings and Gatherings tending in the direction of Benevolence and Social Advancement and the leading part he has taken therein.'¹⁷⁴

In the forty years that followed, Freedman successfully established himself and set out to enrich the state culturally. He became an active freemason, played cricket and tennis, lectured on literary subjects and history and lobbied the state government to establish a university in Perth. Furthermore, he established the Perth Hebrew Philanthropic Society and improved Jewish education through the Perth Hebrew School, where he became headmaster.¹⁷⁵ He had a tertiary background in mathematics and literature, was not a Talmudist and not conversant in either Hebrew or Yiddish, which suited his Anglicised congregation.¹⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly, Freedman was not just active in Jewish religious life but also presided over the Perth Hebrew Literary Society, Perth's premier secular Jewish institution, for many years. This society provided entertainment and speakers included non-Jewish notables such as government and judicial officials, the city librarian and the bishop of Perth,¹⁷⁷ attesting to Freedman's cordial relationship with fellow clergy and the Jewish community's harmonious integration with their Anglo surroundings. He approached the wider non-Jewish community without the religious

¹⁷² Philip Masel, 'Rabbi DI Freedman, OBE, BA, VD,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 1, Part 2 (1939), 50.

¹⁷³ David Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew: The History of the Jews of Western Australia* (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1990), 52.

¹⁷⁴ 'PHC Annual Report,' 1898, as quoted in Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 56.

¹⁷⁵ OB Tofler, 'Freedman, David Isaac (1874-1939),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/freedman-david-isaac-6242>, published first in hardcopy 1981, accessed online 31 January 2016.

¹⁷⁶ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 54.

¹⁷⁷ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 70.

reservations some of his colleagues had placed on themselves. He forged close ties both to Anglican Bishop Riley and Catholic Bishop Clune during his tenure.¹⁷⁸

Freedman was a moderate in religious terms. He advised the Board to purchase an organ and, as in other communities in Australia at the time, allowed a mixed choir consisting of men and women.¹⁷⁹ Such liberal sentiments won him mostly admiration from within his own community. Furthermore, Freedman tried to address the problem of intermarriage within his own community. A shortage of Jewish women had meant that many of his older congregants had married non-Jewish spouses, whose offspring were not Jewish as a result.¹⁸⁰ Freedman sympathised with these families and 'he believed that proselytization was justified in such cases'¹⁸¹ not least because some of his leading congregants were affected.¹⁸² It is, therefore, not surprising that Freedman took very liberal attitudes in religious matters and immersed himself in both Jewish communal activities and the wider non-Jewish community. This not only furthered his standing with his congregation which were clearly well integrated in Western Australian society but also gave him additional respect in the non-Jewish arena as he sought to find a middle ground between Jews and non-Jews and seeking ways in which they could integrate and create families without completely having to assimilate.

Conversions to Judaism are perhaps the cornerstone of interfaith relations between Christians and Jews in a society where Christians mark the majority of the population. The fact is that Christians were allowed to choose freely to leave their faith and convert to Judaism without any legal inhibitions and in Perth, the Jewish community and their minister facilitated this process liberally to ensure harmony within their own community where many members had married non-Jewish spouses. It shows how integrated the Jewish community was in their surrounding society and how culturally integrated they were that they felt comfortable marrying women of Anglo-Christian background. It also shows how keen the Jewish community was to show that they were just like everyone else but only differed in their faith, that they welcomed these non-Jewish spouses into their fold.

¹⁷⁸ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 78.

¹⁷⁹ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 56.

¹⁸⁰ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 60.

¹⁸¹ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 60.

¹⁸² Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 60.

Just like his colleagues in Melbourne and Sydney, Freedman was a chaplain. From 1915-1918 he served in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in Gallipoli, France and Egypt and he was mentioned in many dispatches and was well regarded by the British War Office, who made him chaplain to all Jewish men in the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in 1916. He was already active in Zionist causes prior to the war and as part of his service he visited Palestine and on his return to Perth, he became president of the Western Australian Zionist Association.¹⁸³ The war deeply affected Freedman and he lobbied for a Jewish War Memorial to be erected in Perth, which was approved and sits prominently in Kings Park.¹⁸⁴

Freedman saw the wider community of Western Australia as his ministry, not just the Perth Hebrew Congregation. He served organisations such as The Children's Protection Society and Institute for the Blind, was president of both the Returned Soldiers' League and the Repertory Club and served on the University of Western Australia Senate.¹⁸⁵ He was also part of the Perth Board of Education and served as chairman of the Literary Societies Union.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, he represented Australia as a delegate at the League of Nations in Geneva¹⁸⁷ in 1933 where he spoke on the German-Jewish question.¹⁸⁸ Such engagement and service to society was not unnoticed and he was awarded an Order of the British Empire.¹⁸⁹

Hundreds of people came to Freedman's funeral in 1939, including representatives of the many charitable organisations he was involved in, representative of the University and of course many from the community he led for so many years.¹⁹⁰ This remarkable man, made the whole of Western Australia his ministry, and sought to better the lives of all that lived around him, Jews and non-Jews alike. As the state grew in population and grander in the wake of the gold rush, he made it his mission to represent the tiny Jewish community in the best possible light, thereby actively fighting negative stereotypes by deeds and words together. He was involved in interfaith work and the 'representatives of the various Churches proved the success of his efforts to break down the traditional insularity [...] which has been characteristic of so many Jewish spiritual leaders.'¹⁹¹ Freedman was a tireless leader of his community in Western

¹⁸³ Tofler, 'Freedman, David Isaac (1874-1939).'

¹⁸⁴ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 90.

¹⁸⁵ Masel, 'Rabbi DI Freedman, OBE, BA, VD,' 52.

¹⁸⁶ Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew*, 77-78.

¹⁸⁷ Masel, 'Rabbi DI Freedman, OBE, BA, VD,' 52.

¹⁸⁸ Tofler, 'Freedman, David Isaac (1874-1939).'

¹⁸⁹ Masel, 'Rabbi DI Freedman, OBE, BA, VD,' 52.

¹⁹⁰ Masel, 'Rabbi DI Freedman, OBE, BA, VD,' 50.

¹⁹¹ Masel, 'Rabbi DI Freedman, OBE, BA, VD,' 50.

Australia and spoke for and on behalf of the community wherever possible. Under his stewardship, the community was mostly held together, and he immersed himself not just in religious matters but Jewish secular organisations and institutions of the wider non-Jewish community as well.

Thus, these key rabbinic figures were deeply involved with Jewish-Christian relations on an individual level and made significant contributions to the good relations between the two faith traditions. One notable feature of their reaching out to the general community was the involvement of Danglow, Cohen and Freedman in freemasonry, where key lay Jewish leaders were also members.

4.3.6 Reverend Nathan Levine of Brisbane

Reverend Nathan Levine was born in Poland in 1890¹⁹² and came to Brisbane from South Africa in September 1925 when he was installed as the minister of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation by no other than Sir Matthew Nathan, who was Jewish and at the time serving as governor of Queensland,¹⁹³ serving in this position from 1920-1925.¹⁹⁴ He was experienced and popular and had served as governor in numerous other colonies¹⁹⁵ prior to his ‘golden sunset’¹⁹⁶ posting to Queensland. Sir Matthew ‘took a keen interest in Jewish affairs’¹⁹⁷ and regularly attended services at the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation.¹⁹⁸ His installation of Rev Levine as the congregation’s minister shortly before his return to England in 1925¹⁹⁹ thus represented a passing of the baton on to the new minister to continue Sir Matthew’s work of bringing prestige to Queensland’s Jewish community.

Levine rose to this challenge and represented Queensland’s Jewish community at numerous events, including the state funeral of Queensland Supreme Court Justice Charles Stumm at

¹⁹² Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 30.

¹⁹³ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 29.

¹⁹⁴ Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 181.

¹⁹⁵ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 181.

¹⁹⁶ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 27.

¹⁹⁷ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 181.

¹⁹⁸ Morris S Ochert, ‘A History of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation 1865-1965,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 9, Part 7 (1984), 514.

¹⁹⁹ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 29.

Brisbane's Anglican St John's Cathedral in February 1929.²⁰⁰ Catholic Archbishop Sir James Duhig and other dignitaries from politics and academia were also present, as were thousands of ordinary Queenslanders who lined the streets outside the Cathedral.²⁰¹ The funeral clearly affected many in Queensland and Levine commented the following day in his sermon at the Margaret Street Synagogue that 'as a community they mourned with the rest of the citizens of Brisbane.'²⁰²

Until his own departure for Palestine in 1936,²⁰³ Rev Levine and his wife Evelyn served not only the community in Brisbane but Queensland Jewry at large. He introduced innovative approaches of engaging many of Queensland's remotely scattered and assimilating Jews by flying around the state to pay visits and he ensured that his *Yom Kippur* sermons were broadcast on the radio to regional Jewry.²⁰⁴ Historian Jennifer Creese noted that the Levine's were patrons of the National Council of Jewish Women, founders of Scouting groups as well as 'constant workers for interfaith cooperation.'²⁰⁵ This included his introduction of Hebrew language at the University of Queensland for divinity degrees.²⁰⁶ Levine reinvigorated Brisbane Jewry and established many of the 'communal institutions and organisations commonly found interstate and overseas.'²⁰⁷ The Levines organized a service for the jubilee celebrations of King George V²⁰⁸ on which occasion Nathan Levine was awarded the Silver Jubilee Medal by the governor for his services to the community.²⁰⁹ The Levines also organised the golden jubilee celebrations of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation in 1936 which was attended by many state dignitaries.²¹⁰ Given that Brisbane's Jewish community only numbered 15 in 1865,²¹¹ their achievements by 1936 and integration into the wider non-Jewish community are thus indeed remarkable. Nathan is remembered for 'his visionary talent in

²⁰⁰ Marett Leiboff, 'Theatricalising Law in Three: 1929-1939 (Brisbane),' *Lives Lived with Law* Vol. 20 (2016), 110.

²⁰¹ Leiboff, 'Theatricalising Law in Three,' 110.

²⁰² *The Brisbane Courier*, 4 March 1929, 4, as cited in Leiboff, 'Theatricalising Law in Three,' 111.

²⁰³ Ochert, 'A History of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation,' 514.

²⁰⁴ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 31.

²⁰⁵ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 31.

²⁰⁶ State Library of Queensland, 'Rabbi Levine and the Brisbane Synagogue,' accessed 6 December 2021, <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/blog/rabbi-levine-and-brisbane-synagogue>.

²⁰⁷ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 30.

²⁰⁸ Ochert, 'A History of the Brisbane Hebrew Congregation,' 1865-1965,' 513.

²⁰⁹ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 31.

²¹⁰ Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, 31.

²¹¹ David Bolot, 'Brisbane Jewry, 1865-1886,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 1, Part 4 (1940), 114.

representing the Jewish community [which] became evident on every civic platform; [he was] a frequent visitor at Government House, the Archbishop's residence and Parliament House.'²¹²

4.4 Jews and Freemasonry in Australia

Jewish involvement in freemasonry was an important indicator of the status that the Jewish community enjoyed in Australian communal life and many Jews were active not just in freemasonry but also other friendly societies such as the Australian Natives' Association, Oddfellows and Druids. Roland Wettenhall notes:

The relationship between the friendly societies and the Jewish community was so strong that when the St Kilda Synagogue was being renovated in the 1870s, services were held in the local Manchester Unity Hall. The significance of noting their membership of many societies is that the Jewish community saw civil and communal activity as being part of the high standards expected of them. Asher Barnard, secretary of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation was a founding member of the United Ancient Order of Druids. AI Cohen became Grand Secretary of the UAOD; Manchester Unity members included HJ Hart as Corresponding Secretary of the Order [and in...] the same MUIOOF lodge, Ephraim Zox was Grand Master, Louis Ellis, Grand Treasurer and Jacob S Hart, Grand Secretary.²¹³

Although freemasonry is not a religion, membership 'gave Jews an opportunity to demonstrate their active involvement in the wider society on an equal basis with Christians.'²¹⁴ It was seen by Jews as a mechanism to advance in society, to improve their image and 'provided a notable vehicle for Jewish integration, as it had done in England since the early eighteenth century.'²¹⁵ In Melbourne, the Jewish community even created their own friendly societies for mutual aid, such as the Jewish Mutual Aid Society, that looked after the sick as well as grieving widows.²¹⁶ There are many links between local Jewish communities and freemasonry, such as the fact that Jewish communities often used masonic halls to conduct services where no synagogues

²¹² State Library of Queensland, 'Rabbi Levine and the Brisbane Synagogue,' accessed 6 December 2021, <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/blog/rabbi-levine-and-brisbane-synagogue>.

²¹³ Roland Wettenhall, 'The Influence of the Friendly Society Movement in Victoria 1835–1920,' Unpublished PhD thesis, (University of Melbourne, 2019), 178.

²¹⁴ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 56.

²¹⁵ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 20.

²¹⁶ Wettenhall, 'The Influence of the Friendly Society Movement in Victoria,' 178.

existed.²¹⁷ One example of this is Broken Hill, where the local masonic hall hosted services for the local Jewish community from 1900 until 1910 when a synagogue was erected.²¹⁸ Another example is the town of Gympie in Queensland, where the local lodge was used by Jews for High Holy Day services.²¹⁹ Freemasons also assisted Jews with building synagogues, such as in Launceston, where the opening of the synagogue was celebrated by local masons with much fanfare.²²⁰ Many of the leaders of Melbourne's Jewish community were also prominent masons.²²¹ In fact, Hilary Rubinstein writes that 'Every original committee member of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation were prominent [masons].'²²² In 1858, the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's Reverend Moses Rintel became the inaugural master of Lodge Judah, which attracted a large Jewish membership.²²³ The Freemason's Arms was an inn in Parramatta owned by a Jewish publican, frequented by the local establishment and widely known for its high standard cuisine.²²⁴

Middle class Jews flocked to the craft in Australia, became masters of lodges and in some instances even grand masters, as was the case with Adolphus Marcus Hertzberg in Queensland in 1910²²⁵ and John Goulston in New South Wales in 1924.²²⁶ Goulston in fact represented the Grand Lodge of New South Wales in his capacity as past Grand Master at the installation of the Duke of Kent as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1939.²²⁷ Lodges were named after prominent Jewish members, and the Jewish merchant Philip Blashki of Melbourne, who by 1899 was also a past deputy grand master,²²⁸ 'held the monopoly on the manufacture of Masonic regalia in Australia.'²²⁹ Blashki was a particularly prominent Jewish mason. By the time of his death, he had been:

actively identified with the progress of the Melbourne community, Jewish and

²¹⁷ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 54.

²¹⁸ Leon Mann, 'Broken Hill Synagogue,' Jewish Australia, accessed 4 February 2021, jewishaustralia.com/?Pages=broken-hill-synagogue.

²¹⁹ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Vol. I, 19.

²²⁰ Levi and Bergman, *Australian Genesis*, 213.

²²¹ Lazarus M Goldman, *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*, (Melbourne: Excelsior Printing, 1954), 47.

²²² Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 54.

²²³ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 54.

²²⁴ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 13.

²²⁵ 'Grand Lodge Installation, Q.C.,' *The Brisbane Courier*, 11 August 1910, 4.

²²⁶ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 127.

²²⁷ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 150.

²²⁸ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 81.

²²⁹ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 81, and *Chosen*, 54.

otherwise, for a period of about half-a century,²³⁰ and in particular Worshipful Master of the Kent lodge, and first Worshipful Master and founder of the Lord Harrington Lodge, a District Grand Warden of the District Grand Lodge of Victoria... and when the United Grand Lodge of Victoria was formed he was selected as the first President of [the] Board of Benevolence... [He served as] chairman of the Masonic Almshouses... His funeral was attended by a very large concourse of co-religionists and Christian citizens, including ... special delegates from the Masonic confraternity.²³¹

Other prominent freemasons included Sir Isaac Isaacs, who was the first Grand Registrar of Victoria in 1889²³² as well as Rabbi Israel Porush of Sydney's Great Synagogue, who was initiated in Sydney in 1942 and became a master mason in August 1945.²³³ Rabbi Jacob Danglow, was also widely recognised as a leading freemason, 'having been Past Deputy Grand Master and a First Grand Principal.'²³⁴

Freemasonry attracted public attention in the contemporary press, possibly due to its secrecy and the fact that its membership comprised much of the elite of Australian society. The *Bulletin* magazine thought that the success of Jews, including in freemasonry, was proof of their 'perfidy.'²³⁵ However, for the most part press coverage of freemasonry in association with Australian Jewry was positive. A notable example was the Prussian Grand Lodge's refusal to admit Jewish members in 1846, which caused the Grand Lodge of England to withdraw its representative,²³⁶ something which even made news in far-away Tasmania.²³⁷ The Prussians had not withdrawn from this stand by 1867 as *The Brisbane Courier* reported on American freemasonry's opposition to the Prussian viewpoint.²³⁸ Jewish involvement in freemasonry continued to receive attention when in 1893, at least one leading freemason was crediting

²³⁰ 'Passing of A Prominent Communal Worker,' *Jewish Herald*, 3 November 1916, 6.

²³¹ 'Passing of A Prominent Communal Worker,' *Jewish Herald*, 3 November 1916, 6.

²³² Zelman Cowen, 'Isaacs, Sir Isaac Alfred (1855–1948),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/isaacs-sir-isaac-alfred-6805/text11773>, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 12 June 2016.

²³³ Master Mason Certificate Issued to Israel Porush 29 August 1945, RIP Collection, Box 8 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

²³⁴ Levi, *Rabbi Jacob Danglow*, 284.

²³⁵ 'When Israel Goes Home,' *The Bulletin*, 10 June 1920, 9.

²³⁶ 'Jewish Freemasons—Important Decision of the Grand Lodge of England,' *The Argus*, 24 November 1846.

²³⁷ 'Jewish Freemasons—Important Decision of the Grand Lodge of England,' *The Courier*, 12 December 1846, 4.

²³⁸ 'Freemasonry and Free Thought,' *The Brisbane Courier*, 1 March 1867, 3

freemasonry with the emancipation of Jews:

From time immemorial they have been included in the brotherhood. And it is a remarkable fact that in all countries wherever Free-masonry [*sic*] is established, there the Hebrew enjoys freedom with the rights of citizenship. When universal brotherhood shall rule the earth, the despised and persecuted Hebrew, even in non-Masonic lands, shall peacefully sit under his own vine, and under his own fig tree.²³⁹

Freemasonry, therefore, provided a vehicle for Australian Jews to network with the non-Jewish community, solidify their status in society and contribute to the harmonious relations between faiths as can be seen by ‘the ready acceptance of Jews in Masonic lodges.’²⁴⁰ Whilst not within the confines of this thesis, it should be noted that the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales consecrated a new Lodge Jerusalem in February 2020, which is dedicated to uniting and promoting harmonious relations between the three Abrahamic faiths.

While both religious leadership until later in the twentieth century, as well as freemasonry, were male domains, Jewish women were also involved in working towards improving Jewish-Christian relations, both in terms of contributions of individual movements and through the vision and activities of the National Council of Jewish Women, founded by Dr Fanny Reading.

4.5 Jewish Women and Involvement in Non-Governmental Organisations

The period between the end of World War One and 1933 was perhaps the most homogenous period in Christian-Jewish relations in Australian history. The victory of allied forces, with the Australian Imperial Force being ably led by Sir John Monash, transformed the opinion that non-Jews had of their Jewish minority. Monash’s continued involvement in the repatriation of returned soldiers and his efforts to remember those who did not return resonated with the society at large and earned him – and by default the Jewish minority he was associated with – much respect and admiration. Furthermore, many other prominent Jews such as Sir Isaac

²³⁹ Bro A Barrett, ‘Masonic Light,’ *Launceston Examiner*, 18 January 1893, 3.

²⁴⁰ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Vol. I, 474.

Isaacs, who during the 1930s even became Governor-General, contributed to this change in attitude towards Jews when compared to the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Yet, the transition in attitude and change of opinion towards the Jewish minority was not entirely due to the contributions of Sir John Monash, Sir Isaac Isaacs, and other leading Jewish personalities alone. Many others worked tirelessly for the benefit of their local communities and thereby contributed substantially and not all of these were male. Ida Cohen, Dr Fanny Reading and her Council of Jewish Women managed to influence their communities significantly and placed Jewish women in a position of leadership of interfaith relations by 1930.

Australian Jewish religious leaders expressed their love for king, country and the Jewish faith by openly and assiduously participating in both Jewish and non-Jewish organisations whilst actively and uncompromisingly practicing their Jewish faith. Their example did not go unnoticed and many of their congregants mimicked their efforts. Particularly noteworthy are the efforts of two important Jewish women, Ida Cohen and Dr Fanny Reading, who helped shape the image of Australian Jewry in a very positive light during the first half of the twentieth century.

4.5.1 Ida Cohen and the Red Cross

Ida Cohen (1867-1970) was a second generation Australian-born Jewess, born and raised in Tamworth, in country New South Wales, where she lived all her life.²⁴¹ She was religiously observant but attended St Dominic's Convent School, whose Old Gils' Union she was later foundation president and patron.²⁴² Her marriage to Victor Isaac Cohen was believed to be Tamworth's first Jewish wedding.²⁴³ Her entire life was dedicated to charitable works in her local town. She was a foundation member of the Tamworth Red Cross Society from 1914.²⁴⁴ Her biographer, Sheila Tilse, noted:

²⁴¹ Obituaries Australia, 'Cohen, Ida (1867–1970),' National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/cohen-ida-9777/text31792>, accessed 28 January 2017.

²⁴² Sheila Tilse, 'Cohen, Ida (1867-1979),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian Centre for Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cohen-ida-9777/text17277>, published first in hardcopy 1993, accessed online 31 July 2016.

²⁴³ Tilse, 'Cohen, Ida (1867-1979).'

²⁴⁴ Ann Standish, 'Cohen, Ida,' The Encyclopaedia of Women and Leadership, published 2014, accessed 28 January 2017, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0270b.htm>.

She was regularly to be seen on the post office corner—equipped with a small table, a chair and a large Union Jack suspended from the railing—gently urging passers-by to make donations, or to buy buttons, miniature tin hats or poppies.²⁴⁵

She continued to fundraise until age 89. Ida Cohen was also a Justice of the Peace, and involved in the Tamworth Ladies Benevolent Society, Tamworth and District Ambulance committee, Country Women's Association, Peel Valley Historical Society, Australian Jewish Historical Society and the women's guilds of Tamworth Hospital, and Returned Sailors,' Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia. At age 91 she gave the address at ANZAC Day commemorations in Tamworth.²⁴⁶

Ida Cohen's involvement in local charitable interests did not escape recognition. Tilse wrote that 'Her dignified, gracious manner, unfailing kindness, tolerance and genuine interest in the welfare of others won her the admiration and respect of her fellow citizens.'²⁴⁷ The RSL awarded her a certificate of appreciation²⁴⁸ and the Red Cross awarded her the long service medal and bar.²⁴⁹ Governor Sir John Northcott travelled to Tamworth in 1955 to personally invest her with an MBE.²⁵⁰

Ida Cohen left a positive influence on her local community in Northern New South Wales. She was duly recognised for her many charitable involvements and contributed to the good relations between Christians and Jews in her local rural environment, participating equally in both Jewish and non-Jewish organisations, thereby strengthening Jewish-Christian relations in rural New South Wales.

4.5.2 Fanny Reading and the Empowerment of Australia's Jewish Women

Another impactful women's leader was Dr Fanny Reading (1884-1974), who was born in Belarus but in 1889 migrated with her mother to Australia as a young child, joining her father

²⁴⁵ Tilse, 'Cohen, Ida (1867-1979).'

²⁴⁶ Tilse, 'Cohen, Ida (1867-1979).'

²⁴⁷ Tilse, 'Cohen, Ida (1867-1979).'

²⁴⁸ Tilse, 'Cohen, Ida (1867-1979).'

²⁴⁹ Standish, 'Cohen, Ida.'

²⁵⁰ Tilse, 'Cohen, Ida (1867-1979).'

who had left earlier and established himself in Ballarat.²⁵¹ She experienced Ballarat's Jewish community during its golden era and her distinct Orthodox Eastern European upbringing shaped her future endeavours. Reading later moved with her family to St Kilda, where she was involved in Jewish communal activities, including the St Kilda Hebrew School and Maccabean Union, from an early age.²⁵² She later went on to study first music and then medicine at the University of Melbourne, being one of the early women to complete a medical degree in 1919.²⁵³

After graduation, Dr Reading joined her brother's general practice in Sydney, treating mainly women and children.²⁵⁴ It was at this time that she started to progress her involvement in communal activities both Jewish and otherwise. Hilary Rubinstein wrote that:

In due course she became an honorary medical officer at St George Hospital, at the Rachel Forster Hospital for Women and Children and the Wolper Jewish Hospital, and she was appointed a life governor of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, the Dalwood Children's Homes, and the Women's Hospital, Crown Street.²⁵⁵

Her position as Honorary Organiser of the St George's District Hospital Appeal and Life Governor of the New South Wales Benevolent Society²⁵⁶ attest to her inclusive approach of indiscriminately supporting both Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

Reading's most significant contribution was the establishment of the Council of Jewish Women in 1923.²⁵⁷ Suzanne Rutland notes that Reading was aware of Jewish isolation as a result of her upbringing in Ballarat and that she was one of few communal leaders who originated from Eastern Europe.²⁵⁸ The aim of the Council was to combat assimilation among young Jewish women and to provide them 'with opportunities for social contact, with

²⁵¹ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 104.

²⁵² Hilary L Rubinstein, 'Reading, Fanny (1884-1974),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.au/biography/reading-fanny-8168/text14279>, published first in hardcopy 1988, accessed online 31 July 2016.

²⁵³ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 104.

²⁵⁴ Rubinstein, 'Reading, Fanny (1884-1974).'

²⁵⁵ Rubinstein, 'Reading, Fanny (1884-1974).'

²⁵⁶ 'Dr Fanny: A Biographical Sketch,' in *The Council Story 1923-1969*, A Publication of the National Council of Jewish Women – NSW Division (c. 1969), 4, NCJWA.

²⁵⁷ Interview with Dr Fanny Reading, Sydney 1971, and Council of Jewish Women (CJW) Minutes and Press Cuttings, 26 June 1923, cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

²⁵⁸ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

discussions, efforts to improve Jewish education, assist new arrivals, hospital visits, assistance in the reconstruction of Palestine and helping Jews in less fortunate places.²⁵⁹

Fanny Reading initially faced much opposition to her innovation as the established Jewish leadership saw the Council as a threat to the current order.²⁶⁰ The mission of the Council was originally 'Service to our religion, to our people and to the country in which we live.'²⁶¹ Her efforts, however, ensured that the Council became a national success and she became known as 'a dreamer of great dreams with the courage to implement them even in the face of strong opposition.'²⁶² In particular, as an ardent Zionist, and having visited Israel in 1925,²⁶³ Reading supported the struggle for Jewish independence in Palestine, which was viewed at critically by the established Jewish leadership.²⁶⁴

Reading continued to be involved in numerous activities throughout her life. She reached out to the general community, assisting in the efforts of World War Two and 'the Lord Mayor's Fund, the Benevolent Society of NSW and its hospitals, as well as aged care in nursing homes and through Meals on Wheels.'²⁶⁵ She also continued to lead the Jewish women's movement both in Australia and internationally.

Another facet of Reading's personality was that she cared deeply for those most neglected in society, an activity that often went unrecognised. One such example of her personal engagement is her indiscriminate treatment of patients in her home in Kings Cross, which seconded as her private surgery and where one visitor attested 'that her practice, and even her little apartment, was a haven for the dregs of humanity who haunted "The Cross" as much then as they do today.'²⁶⁶ Asked why she insisted on living and treating patients in that area she replied 'Where else will I find such need, such human tragedies?'²⁶⁷ Between her private practice at home, her brother's medical practice in Bondi Junction, and working as a consultant

²⁵⁹ Interview with Dr Fanny Reading, cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

²⁶⁰ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

²⁶¹ National Council of Jewish Women, 'Dr Fanny Reading,' accessed 31 July 2016, <http://www.ncjwa.org.au/who-we-are/dr-fanny-reading/>.

²⁶² CJW Minutes, 27 July 1923, cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

²⁶³ 'Dr Fanny: A Biographical Sketch,' in *The Council Story 1923-1969*, 4.

²⁶⁴ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 159.

²⁶⁵ State Library of New South Wales, Jewish Community and Culture, 'Fanny Reading,' accessed 31 July 2016, <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/australian-jewish-community-and-culture/dr-fanny-reading>.

²⁶⁶ Morris S Ochert, 'Dr Fanny Reading v Smith's Weekly,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 13, Part 2 (1996), 310.

²⁶⁷ Ochert, 'Dr Fanny Reading v Smith's Weekly,' 310.

for several hospitals, Reading very much personified not just the tenets of her Council of Jewish Women but also served as a bridge to improve the image of Jews within the non-Jewish community, particularly that of Jewish women.

Fanny Reading thus became a Jewish communal leader and managed to unite Australia's Jewish women across Australia through her founding of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). She was one of the first Jewish laypersons to unite a significant portion of Australia's Jewish community for a cause unconnected to the observance of Jewish religious rituals. Unsurprisingly, the established Jewish leadership of the time, notably Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen of Sydney's Great Synagogue, felt threatened by her innovations and initially opposed it. Despite such obstacles, her spirit contributed to the esteem of the Jewish community in the eyes of the non-Jewish majority, through the many charitable organisations in which she was visibly active and her committing the NCJW to general as well as Jewish causes.

Through her numerous efforts Reading became well known throughout Sydney and not just within the Jewish community. In 1933, the *The Sun* newspaper wrote a short tribute to her, outlining some of the many achievements she had accomplished including the fact that 'few women in Sydney have greater organizing abilities.'²⁶⁸ Her contributions to both Jewish leadership and involvement in general charitable activities, were acknowledged by the King George V Jubilee (1935) and the King George VI Coronation (1937) medals. In 1961 she became a Member of the Order of the British Empire.²⁶⁹

In addition to her various personal contributions, by far her most significant contribution was the creation of the Council of Jewish Women in 1923, and through her efforts the creation of a national body in 1929. One of the key platforms of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was to contribute to the general public, and its activities did much to strengthen Jewish-Christian relations.

²⁶⁸ *The Sun*, 19 November 1933, 35.

²⁶⁹ Rubinstein, 'Reading, Fanny (1884-1974).'

4.6 The National Council of Jewish Women

The Council of Jewish Women of New South Wales (later the NCJW) was established in Sydney at the initiative of Fanny Reading in 1923.²⁷⁰ Prior to its establishment, only the Jewish Maternity Society, the Help-in-Need Society, and the Jewish Girls' Guild had represented the interests of Jewish Women in New South Wales.²⁷¹ Its establishment and subsequent success testify to the Council's ability to fill a much needed void within the Australian Jewish community in the early 1920s. Modelled on similar organisations in the United States, Fanny Reading established the Council first in New South Wales at the behest of visiting Zionist emissary Bella Pevsner with over 100 members joining in the first days alone.²⁷² By the end of that year, the Council had attracted 377 members.²⁷³

Unsurprisingly, the Council staunchly and unapologetically held as one of its three pillars the support of Zionist causes abroad, in particular 'assisting female migrants [to British Mandate Palestine] and the protection of the interests of women and girls engaged in agricultural work.'²⁷⁴ The other two pillars were support of local Jewish causes and support of local charities for the general population, reflecting both a particularistic and a more universal perspective to Jewish charitable endeavours. It was the outreach to non-Jewish charities, which was very important in the development of Christian Jewish relations in the 1920s. This more universal focus of its work can be seen with the emergence of the National Council in 1929, as well as their work with Jewish immigrants.

The growth of the Council's popularity made it one of the leading organisations within the Jewish community, it being one of the first major lay-led organisations to be established. The Council thereby marks the shift in the 1920s from communal leadership by religious figures to communal leadership by lay-led figures. Suzanne Rutland wrote that 'leaders feared that the movement would interfere with congregational activities and lead to the abandonment of such traditions as the segregation of the sexes.'²⁷⁵ Indeed, many leaders in the Jewish were sceptical of the organisation, fearing that the women would exert pressure on congregational affairs.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁰ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*. Vol. I, 11.

²⁷¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

²⁷² Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Vol. I, 12.

²⁷³ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 5.

²⁷⁴ HS, 13 July 1923, as quoted in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Vol. I, 12.

²⁷⁵ AJC, 26 July 1923, cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 159.

²⁷⁶ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 5.

Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen, minister of the Great Synagogue at the time, was initially opposed to the movement as ‘he was aware of the Chief Rabbi’s warning against American innovations.’²⁷⁷ In essence, the traditional male and religious led leadership of the Jewish community noticed the potential for change that could be brought about by a successful Council of Jewish Women and initially struggled to adjust. In addition, most of the criticism of the Council was due to its Zionist activities that were seen contrary to the interests of Anglicised Jews in Sydney.

Although the Council experienced some initial criticism from the established communal leadership, by the mid-1920s it had become integral to communal affairs²⁷⁸ and the Jewish community’s leadership praised its achievements. Hilary Rubinstein wrote that the success of the Council meant that ‘the Jewish Press and male communal leaders warmly praise[d] its aims and achievements and admit[ted] that in the pursuit of the important communal matters women now seemed to be leading the way.’²⁷⁹ Another reason why the Council was eventually accepted by the established Jewish communal leadership would have been their monetary support of local Jewish charities. In December 1926, the *Council Bulletin* called for donations for their Council House and announced that should their needs be surpassed, ‘the surplus shall be allocated to our various local Jewish charities.’²⁸⁰ Such generosity allowed the activities of the Council to continue almost unopposed. The 1927 annual report in fact disclosed that Newcastle Synagogue Building Fund, Montefiore Homes, Hebrew Benevolent Society, Jewish Girls’ Guild, Jewish Board of Education and Maccabean Hall were but some of the New South Wales based Jewish charities that benefited from moneys received from the Council.²⁸¹

The essence of the idea behind the establishment of the Council was never to threaten or relieve the established leadership of its responsibilities. Instead, Reading designed a comprehensive program for the Council in a way that as many activities as possible would occur at any given time, thereby allowing each woman to choose where she wishes to partake, based on her interests.²⁸² This explains the success of the Council in attracting new members and ensuring Jewish women found a group where they could belong to and volunteer in a social setting.

²⁷⁷ Great Synagogue Minutes, 9 April 1930, quoted in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

²⁷⁸ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 159.

²⁷⁹ *AJH*, 25 February 1926; *HS*, 21 August 1931, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Vol. I, 12.

²⁸⁰ *The Council Bulletin (CB)*, December 1926, Vol. 1, No. 4, NCJWA.

²⁸¹ *CB*, August 1927, Vol. 2, No. 1, NCJWA.

²⁸² Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

4.6.1 Non-Jewish Philanthropic Activities

The NCJW had several tenets but that of involvement with the non-Jewish community is the most important from the point of view of Jewish-Christian Relations, the focus of this thesis. By 1930 its tenets were religion, education, philanthropy and social gatherings,²⁸³ where philanthropy was directed at both Israel and local causes.²⁸⁴ Marlo Newton wrote that for Reading 'it was obvious that Jews needed to work for the community in which they lived, as well as for their co-religionists, but this was a radical viewpoint in 1923.'²⁸⁵ Therefore, the philanthropic aims of the Council were for both Jewish and non-Jewish charitable causes from the beginning.²⁸⁶ This included the struggle for full equality of women. In 1926 the *Council Bulletin* wrote that it 'affirms its support for women candidates for Parliament'²⁸⁷ and in 1930 the organisation 'took part in a deputation to the Attorney-General of New South Wales concerning important laws for women and children'²⁸⁸ most notably the rights of deserted wives.²⁸⁹ Reading reflected in 1948 as follows: 'Through our organisation we have given splendid service to our country, and to our race. We have created for ourselves a glorious chapter in Australian Jewish history.'²⁹⁰

In the 1920s, philanthropic activities in the non-Jewish sphere of the New South Wales branch of the NCJW included volunteering with non-Jewish organisations such as the Benevolent Society, 'which ran the Women's Hospital in Paddington, the Food for Babies Fund and the Scarba Children's Home.'²⁹¹ The Victorian division was equally active in non-Jewish causes by donating to the Shrine of Remembrance War Memorial, Blind Hostel, Foundling Hospital, Women's Hospital and the Austin Hospital.²⁹² The Council of Jewish Women of Queensland only numbered 65 members in 1929 yet managed to raise £400 of which £44 went to the Cancer

²⁸³ NAA: File 43-2-3378. See Aims of the organisation, 6-7, cited in Newton, *Making A Difference*, 16.

²⁸⁴ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 16.

²⁸⁵ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 6.

²⁸⁶ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 6.

²⁸⁷ *CB*, Vol. 1, No. 2, October 1926, quoted in Newton, *Making A Difference*, 29.

²⁸⁸ *CB*, Vol. 5, No. 1, August 1930/Av 5690, quoted in Newton, *Making A Difference*, 30.

²⁸⁹ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 30.

²⁹⁰ Dr Fanny Reading, 'Past, Present and Future,' vinyl recording, 1948, as quoted in Newton, *Making A Difference*, 7.

²⁹¹ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 214.

²⁹² 'Report of Council of Jewish Women of Victoria,' *First Jewish Women's Conference Booklet* (Sydney: OM Selig Printer, 1929), 21, NCJWA.

Appeal and £14 to the Help-in-Need Society.²⁹³ As a result by 1934, one of the ‘Council Ideals’ had become ‘To be Leaders in the community, i.e. to train ourselves to be leaders in the Jewish and non-Jewish community (i.e. to make us big-hearted women and girls).’²⁹⁴

The success of the Council became evident by 1926 when a monthly *Bulletin* started to be published ‘In order to enable every woman to keep her finger on the pulse of the movement.’²⁹⁵ Noteworthy is the fact that the first editorial of the *Bulletin* mentioned that the forthcoming session was inaugurated with a donation to the Cancer Research and Treatment Fund.²⁹⁶ The editorial commented:

The ‘Sydney Morning Herald’ of the 10th of August [*sic*], in acknowledging the first instalment of £50, wrote the following: ‘Among the women’s organisations actively interesting themselves in the work of the Cancer Campaign may be cited that of the Council of Jewish Women of NSW, whose letter to Dr Constance D’Archy, Hon Treasurer of the Fund, points out that, as women are more liable to cancer than men, the various women’s organisations in the State should be actively interested in the campaign.’²⁹⁷

It is obvious that Dr Reading made the donation on behalf of the Council as cancer research was one of her keen interests as a medical practitioner. Thus, the first editorial of the initial edition of the *Bulletin* started with a reference to a donation to a non-Jewish charity, with the editor stressing that this donation was acknowledged in the general press. This attests to there being a certain element of pride in donating to non-Jewish causes on behalf of the Council and being noted for it.

The Council did not just donate to cancer research at the behest of Reading. Other members concerned themselves with the Rachel Forster Hospital for women and children. When a new wing was added to the hospital, the Council of Jewish Women, in cooperation with other women’s organisations, managed to build the wing and keep the hospital out of debt.²⁹⁸ One

²⁹³ ‘Report of Council of Jewish Women of Queensland,’ *First Jewish Women’s Conference Booklet*, 23, NCJWA.

²⁹⁴ NCJW, *Council Ideals* Pamphlet, 1934, NCJWA.

²⁹⁵ *CB*, September 1926, Vol. 1, No. 1, NCJWA.

²⁹⁶ *CB*, September 1926, Vol. 1, No. 1, NCJWA.

²⁹⁷ *CB*, September 1926, Vol. 1, No. 1, NCJWA.

²⁹⁸ *CB*, September 1926, Vol. 1, No. 1, NCJWA.

of the members of the Council ‘arranged a musicale [*sic*] in the Hunter’s Hill Town Hall on June 30th [1926], paying all expenses incurred. In spite of inclement weather, the gratifying sum of £58 was remitted to the committee.’²⁹⁹ In 1926, the Council endowed a bed in the Crown Street Hospital paying £30 per annum for its upkeep. A photograph of the bed was published in the *Council Bulletin*’s July 1927 edition and clearly showed a sign on it that read ‘Bed endowed by Council of Jewish Women of NSW’³⁰⁰ which ensured that all non-Jewish beneficiaries were aware of the organisation’s benevolence. Another non-Jewish beneficiary of Council donations was the Children’s Hospital.³⁰¹

4.6.2 The Eastern Garden Fete

The Eastern Garden Fete held at Sydney Town Hall in March 1927, was organised by the Council in aid of Palestine Maternity work as well as the objectives of building a hostel and aiding local charities.³⁰² One of the tenets of the Council was its open assistance to Zionist causes in British Mandate Palestine. The Fete was organised for this purpose and the *Council Bulletin* announced that the Lord Mayor of Sydney would open the festival and that many other distinguished guests would also be in attendance.³⁰³ The Lord Mayor was quoted by Reading as having said that ‘If more efforts such as ours, viz., helping the fellow on the other side (referring to our Maternity work in Palestine) were carried out, a universal peace and brotherhood would reign amongst the peoples of the earth.’³⁰⁴ Memorable is the fact that the Council secured the site of the Sydney Town Hall for this Fete, thereby ensuring that many non-Jews would have been aware of its existence, working together with the local authorities to secure their aims and thereby bridging the interreligious divide between Christians and Jews, bringing both further together through combined charitable efforts.

Reading never missed an opportunity to advocate for her cause in the general non-Jewish community. The conference and Eastern Garden Fete attest to her ability to draw in dignitaries from state and local government in support of her causes. As an affiliate of the NCJW Australia, Reading represented the New South Wales Council of Jewish Women at their annual meeting,

²⁹⁹ *CB*, September 1926, Vol. 1, No. 1, NCJWA.

³⁰⁰ *CB*, July 1927, Vol. 1, No. 11, NCJWA.

³⁰¹ *CB*, August 1927, Vol. 2, No. 1, NCJWA.

³⁰² *CB*, March 1927, Vol. 1, No. 7, NCJWA.

³⁰³ *CB*, March 1927, Vol. 1, No. 7, NCJWA.

³⁰⁴ *CB*, April 1927, Vol. 1, No. 8, NCJWA.

where ‘a resume of work of the Council of Jewish Women’ was read and attained ‘profound admiration.’³⁰⁵ She also represented the Council at another NCJW event, namely the reception of Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of York, at the University³⁰⁶ and represented the Council at a Garden Party hosted by Her Excellency, Lady Stonehaven, at Admiralty House.³⁰⁷ These events were an important part of the Council leadership’s work as they ensured the Council’s activities were known in the Jewish as well as non-Jewish population. Publication of these activities would inevitably draw in new members and donations. In fact, no sooner had the annual report published in the *Council Bulletin* in August 1927 reported on these events, then the following month the *Bulletin* was honoured by an address by Millicent Preston-Stanley MLA, at the Council’s regular Monday night meeting at the Maccabean Hall.³⁰⁸ Thus, the activities of the NCJW sought to build links with politicians and other key non-Jewish leaders through its philanthropic efforts.

4.6.3 Philanthropic Activities in other States

A similar situation existed in satellite councils in other states where considerable sums were donated to non-Jewish local charities. The theme set in New South Wales of donating to medical causes such as hospitals and cancer research seems to have resonated with Jewish women throughout the country. As mentioned above, the Queensland division of the Council donated considerable sums in 1928 to the the Help in Need Society, District Nursing Home and Cancer Appeal.³⁰⁹ Similarly, the Victorian Council of Jewish Women had by 1930 donated to the Queen Victoria Hospital, Eye and Ear Hospital, Foundling Hospital, Women’s Hospital, Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society and Traveller’s Aid Society.³¹⁰

On 3 November 1927, the ferry boat, *Greycliffe*, sunk when it collided with another ship in Sydney Harbor killing 40 people with a further 50 taken to hospital.³¹¹ Needless to say this shocked the entire city deeply and the Council of Jewish Women promptly raised and donated over £10 for the disaster.³¹² Whether or not this donation was meant to bridge the religious

³⁰⁵ *CB*, August 1927, Vol. 2, No. 1, NCJWA.

³⁰⁶ *CB*, August 1927, Vol. 2, No. 1, NCJWA.

³⁰⁷ *CB*, August 1927, Vol. 2, No. 1, NCJWA.

³⁰⁸ *CB*, October 1927, Vol. 2, No. 3, NCJWA.

³⁰⁹ *CB*, October 1928, Vol. 3, No. 3, NCJWA.

³¹⁰ *CB*, January 1930, Vol. 4, No. 6, NCJWA.

³¹¹ *SMH*, 4 November 1927, 14.

³¹² *CB*, August 1928, Vol. 3, No. 11, NCJWA.

divide or whether it was simply a random act of kindness by the Council to help others of their local community in times of need is unknown. The Council also contributed over £5 to the Tasmanian Relief Fund³¹³ for the Tasmanian National Disaster of April 1929, where 22 people died due to floods and 40 were injured.³¹⁴ Donations were received from organisations across the country.³¹⁵ This suggests a desire by the Council to ensure they are seen to actively support *ad hoc* disaster relief not just locally but Australia wide. It is noteworthy that the Victorian Council of Jewish Women contributed £10 to the Tasmanian relief fund.³¹⁶

4.6.4 The 1929 Conference of Jewish Women

One of the most notable successes of the Council was the convening of a conference in 1929 in Sydney, attended by delegates from the various Councils in each state and New Zealand.³¹⁷ The themes of the conference included issues facing Australian Jewry, Zionism, intermarriage and migration amongst many others.³¹⁸ Subsidiaries of the Council of Jewish Women of New South Wales had by this time formed around the country with much success so that the National Council of Jewish Women was inaugurated at this conference.³¹⁹ The conference also improved communication between the various sections across the country as the *Council Bulletin*, first inaugurated in 1926, became a national publication by 1929.³²⁰

The conference ran from 21-27 May 1929 and was a rousing success. The Address of Welcome was delivered on the opening evening personally by the Attorney-General of New South Wales, who said:

You ladies are met in an all-Australian Conference, to devise means, not only for the benefit of Jewish Women but for all women everywhere and, of course, every man must give you his blessing. As representative of the Government, I feel a double pleasure in offering you our congratulations and our message of goodwill to you and your

³¹³ *CB*, June 1929, Vol. 3, No. 1, NCJWA.

³¹⁴ Siobhan Maiden, 'Remembering the 1929 Launceston Floods,' ABC Northern Tasmania, accessed 25 February 2017, <http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2009/06/04/2589538.htm>.

³¹⁵ *The Examiner*, 4 March 1944, 4.

³¹⁶ *CB*, January 1930, Vol. 4, No. 6, NCJWA.

³¹⁷ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Vol. I, 295.

³¹⁸ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History*, Vol. I, 295.

³¹⁹ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 14.

³²⁰ Newton, *Making A Difference*, 14.

Conference and hope that all your deliberations will be for those who seek to benefit themselves and for the benefit of Australia altogether.³²¹

In her reply, Reading thanked the New South Wales government for their generosity:

I have to thank the Hon Mr Boyce for his presence to-night. We desire him to convey to the Government of this State which, like all other Governments under the British flag, tries to make every citizen feel that beautiful freedom in Australia, we desire him to take this message to his Government that we are deeply appreciative of what the Government has done for us for this Conference [...].³²²

Such praise of the Empire was heard frequently at the conference and attests to the patriotism that was present among its activist leaders. Dora Abramovich gave a paper entitled 'Paper on Co-operation and Programme of Future Council Work' in which she proudly stated:

Now we see the legacy of that Ghetto spirit by the desire of many of our Jews to sink the question of their Jewish Nationality in their Australian and British nationality. They fear to see the word Jewish in print and hasten to deprecate publicly. I am proud of my Australian and British citizenship. I would rather live under the British Flag than be a citizen of any other Power [...].³²³

Mrs Levine of Brisbane, (most likely Evelyn Levine, wife of Brisbane Synagogue's minister Nathan Levine)³²⁴ gave a remarkable 'Paper on Civic Responsibilities' acclaiming that as 'citizens of a State we must take our proper share in its welfare.'³²⁵ She went on to give wise advice to those in attendance on the merits of working with the surrounding non-Jewish community:

³²¹ FS Boyce, 'Address of Welcome,' *First Jewish Women's Conference Booklet* (Sydney: OM Selig Printer, 1929), 9-10, NCJWA.

³²² Fanny Reading, 'President's Address,' *First Jewish Women's Conference Booklet*, 13, NCJWA.

³²³ Dora Abramovich, 'Paper on Co-operation and Programme of Future Council Work,' *First Jewish Women's Conference Booklet*, 69, NCJWA.

³²⁴ State Library of Queensland, 'Rabbi Levine and the Brisbane Synagogue,' accessed 6 December 2021, <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/blog/rabbi-levine-and-brisbane-synagogue>.

³²⁵ (Evelyn) Levine, 'Paper on Civic Responsibilities,' *First Jewish Women's Conference Booklet*, 85, NCJWA.

As members of the same community we unite in working for the welfare of the whole body; and as members of another community, our respect for their religious community feelings will deepen their respect for us. Our prosperity depends upon the prosperity of the country in which we live.³²⁶

By saying this, she was clearly referring to a fact that may have seemed self-evident to many of those in attendance, particularly those from Eastern Europe, that Jews are often blamed for the economic woes of any given age and that prosperity of the larger non-Jewish community inadvertently secured the Jewish minority within it. She went on to call on all present 'to take an active part in the life of the Cities in which we live by belonging to various organisations'³²⁷ and that they 'must uphold the dignity of our King and observe 100 per cent loyalty.'³²⁸ Her call did not go unheeded and the conference adopted in one of its resolutions a section on civic responsibilities, which acknowledged a 'duty of the councils to develop a civic consciousness in all Council members'³²⁹ as well as a resolution 'that the Council be affiliated with Associations existing for the benefit of their State and City.'³³⁰

4.6.5 Eastern European Jewish Immigration

The Council was also particularly active in absorbing and integrating Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe. This aspect took precedence in many Council proceedings as there was a negative perception in the general non-Jewish population of poor Eastern European Jewish migrants. The Council devoted much time and resources to this issue in an attempt to alleviate the negative image these migrants had. Rutland wrote that Fanny Reading's own Eastern European background may have been a driving factor in her Council actively assisting in the migration of Eastern European Jewry and their absorption upon arrival in Australia.³³¹ These migrants generally were not welcomed by the established Australian Jewish leadership, which supported the government's introduction of quotas on European immigrants in 1928. Such quotas were not a novel idea in Australia. A ban on Russian immigration, which included Russian Jews, existed in Queensland until 1922³³² as a response to the Bolshevik revolution

³²⁶ Levine, 'Paper on Civic Responsibilities,' 85, NCJWA.

³²⁷ Levine, 'Paper on Civic Responsibilities,' 86, NCJWA.

³²⁸ Levine, 'Paper on Civic Responsibilities,' 85, NCJWA.

³²⁹ 'Resolutions and Recommendations,' *First Jewish Women's Conference Booklet*, 102, NCJWA.

³³⁰ 'Resolutions and Recommendations,' *First Jewish Women's Conference Booklet*, 87, NCJWA.

³³¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 158.

³³² Creese, 'Negotiating "Russian-ness",' 74.

and Brisbane's clashes between Russian migrants and returned ex-servicemen known as the red Flag Riots. This was a result of general 'Russophobia'³³³ and 'inflamed popular prejudices',³³⁴ which continued throughout the 1920s. Sympathetic to the plight of Russian Jews who were caught in this, and perhaps due to her own background with her family arriving as refugees from the Russian pogroms, Reading rebuked Australia's Anglo-Jewish establishment for this:

Who are we to say that we are pleased that certain immigration restrictions will be placed on the admittance of our brethren into our country? That we are glad our task will be made lighter while our brethren languish for freedom and the right to live?³³⁵

Other more sympathetic voices within the community lamented the overwhelming challenge of integrating these migrants successfully into Australian society, admitting that 'to make them Australian whilst keeping them Jews is no mean problem.'³³⁶

In November 1926, Reading decided to put words into action and used her 'President's Message'³³⁷ in the *Bulletin's* third edition to stress the urgency for 'the establishment of a home in this City for those who arrive here weekly from far distant lands, driven here by force of adverse circumstances.'³³⁸ The aim was:

To give Jewish immigrants a home amongst their own people, amongst us their sincere friends at the time of their arrival, to house them, teach them the language, customs, mode of living of this new country, assist them in every possible direction, is the aim of this effort. In this way those people will the sooner become accustomed to the new conditions and so much quicker, absorb the characteristics of citizenship to mutual advantage.³³⁹

³³³ Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, 207.

³³⁴ Evans, *The Red Flag Riots*, 207.

³³⁵ *CB*, Vol. 3, No. 4, November 1928, quoted in Rutland, 'Australian Responses,' 7, quoted in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 151.

³³⁶ *AJH*, 2 June 1927, quoted in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 151.

³³⁷ *CB*, November 1926, Vol. 1, No. 3, NCJWA.

³³⁸ *CB*, November 1926, Vol. 1, No. 3, NCJWA.

³³⁹ *CB*, November 1926, Vol. 1, No. 3, NCJWA.

In May 1927, Reading reiterated her call to find a place to house new immigrants as ‘the longer this is delayed, the greater the loss this will be to the community.’³⁴⁰ The Council had introduced English classes for migrants in 1925 and in 1928 opened the Men’s Hostel, which operated for two and a half years assisting hundreds of migrant Jewish men by providing refreshments and free accommodation free until they found work.³⁴¹ Whether deliberately or inadvertently, the hostel’s purpose very much focused on ensuring positive and harmonious relations between Christians and Jews through provision of services to poor Eastern European migrants, which were seen by many non-Jews as problematic and by many Jews as a strain on their reputation amongst the Christian majority. Fanny Reading took her stewardship of the Council of Jewish Women very seriously and not just spoke in favour of Eastern European Jewish migration but ensured her Council actively assisted in their absorption and integration through their Welfare Committee.³⁴² By 1928 the Council was even represented on the Board of the Employment and Welfare Bureau which the Council supported financially, and which thanked them for this ‘assistance in the care of our immigrants and others.’³⁴³

The Men’s Hostel in Sydney provided poor Eastern European migrants a first place to call home in Australia and thereby alleviated some of the concerns in both the established Anglo-Jewish and non-Jewish communities that these poor migrants were a strain on society. The government of New South Wales also acknowledged the Council’s role assisting Jewish migrants. At the 1929 conference, Dr Reading thanked the Attorney-General of New South Wales, who had mentioned the Council in a radio speech given on Empire Night and had apparently called them ‘Empire Builders’³⁴⁴ for their work migrant welfare work.³⁴⁵ As with many of her endeavours, Reading did not settle for mere words, noting complaints or calls that others should do something about what they considered as a problem, that is, poor Eastern European migrants blighting the image of the established Jewish community. Instead, she preferred to take an active hands-on approach to combating problems thereby ensuring results.

Council volunteers advocated on behalf of Jewish migrants throughout Australia, assisting with English language difficulties and liaising with customs officials.³⁴⁶ In fact, as early as 1926

³⁴⁰ *CB*, May 1927, Vol. 1, No. 9, NCJWA.

³⁴¹ ‘46 Years of Service,’ in *The Council Story 1923-1969*, 11, NCJWA.

³⁴² Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 159.

³⁴³ *CB*, August 1928, Vol. 3, No. 1, NCJWA.

³⁴⁴ Dr Fanny Reading Responding to (Evelyn) Levine, ‘Paper on Civic Responsibilities,’ 87, NCJWA.

³⁴⁵ Dr Fanny Reading Responding to (Evelyn) Levine, ‘Paper on Civic Responsibilities,’ 87, NCJWA.

³⁴⁶ H Cohen, ‘Paper on Immigration,’ *First Jewish Women’s Conference Booklet*, 57, NCJWA.

rostered Council volunteers greeted new migrants and returning co-religionists at the docks and offered their assistance.³⁴⁷ These volunteers assisted with customs as well as arranging for transport and even accommodation if needed.³⁴⁸ By securing housing, work and a livelihood for these migrants, the Council actively contributed to a strengthening of Christian-Jewish relations by ensuring that the image migrants had in the general society was improved. As a result of the Council's work with migrants, less attention was drawn to these migrants as a drain on government resources as the Council tried to show that Australian Jewry took care of their own poor.

4.7 Conclusion

As can be seen the efforts of key rabbis in the different Australian states sought to build positive Christian-Jewish relations through dialogue with their Christian counterparts. Lay leaders such as Sir John Monash and Sir Isaac Isaacs also influenced the perception that the Christian majority had of the Jewish minority in Australia. They did this through exemplary civic engagement, such as political and military involvement and activities in friendly societies, especially the Freemasons. The work of Ida Cohen, however, showed that small acts of public generosity in a local community had a profound and important impact on the perception of Jews. Similarly, Fanny Reading managed to expand this and improve the perception of Jews through charity and generosity through her personal work as a physician and the activities of her Council of Jewish Women. Her involvement with the non-Jewish National Council of Women and mingling with high dignitaries made the work of her Council known in the non-Jewish community and earned her much respect and admiration. In doing so, Reading successfully bridged the Jewish and non-Jewish divide through philanthropy and ensured that by the 1930s Jewish women were the driving factors in improving relations between Christians and Jews in Australia.

However, the onset of the depression in 1929, and the rise of Nazism, creating a severe Jewish refugee problem, was to lead to the re-emergence of antisemitism in Australia. For the first time in Australian history, political organisations emerged with a clear antisemitic agenda, ranging from the Social Credit movement, to Australia First, to a local branch of the Nazi Party.

³⁴⁷ *CB*, September 1926, Vol. 1, No. 1, NCJWA.

³⁴⁸ *CB*, September 1926, Vol. 1, No. 1, NCJWA.

These developments strained Christian-Jewish relations and will be discussed in the next chapter. They were a motivating factor in the decision to form the NSW Council of Christians and Jews in 1942.

CHAPTER 5

THE 1930S: INCREASING CONCERNS ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

5.1 Introduction

The increase of antisemitism and the emergence of organised antisemitic movements in Australia during the 1930s created new challenges. These pressures generated complex responses across Jewish and Christian communities and, indeed, between them. In their responses, we see the seeds of what will eventually result in new, formal structures, both within the Jewish community and across these communities to combat antisemitism. To contend with the emergence of explicitly antisemitic groups, as well as the more subtle but often institutionalised forms of antisemitism, some Jewish and Christian leaders forged new connections and began to openly advocate for their communities in novel ways and through alternate forums. This chapter will discuss these increasing pressures and developments, which ultimately laid the basis for the formation of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews in 1942.

5.2 Australia and the Jewish Migration Issue in the 1930s

The rise to power of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi movement in Germany in 1933 marked the beginning of a significant shift in Jewish-Christian relations in Australia and indeed throughout the world. Australian Jewish-Christian relations up until 1933 can be described as cordial but slowly deteriorating as a result of the migration of poor Eastern European Jews in the late 1920s. Despite the best efforts of the local Jewish communities to accommodate these migrants, the attitude of the general public towards their migration became increasingly critical. Throughout the 1930s, as the Nazi's antisemitic agenda became increasingly entrenched and violent in Germany, Australia's attitudes towards Jewish refugee migration also became increasingly hostile if not outright antisemitic.

Attitudes of Australia's general public changed during the 1920s according to Paul Bartrop, as a result of having fought a war in Europe against different nationalities. Bartrop wrote that

Australians were traditionally concerned about issues of race, but rejecting everything outside the anglo-Australian [*sic*] world demonstrated that racism based on colour alone

was no longer the sole standard by which Australians measured the desirability or undesirability of peoples. Australians now became quick to stereotype by nationality in order to make sense of what was happening in the world.¹

As a result of the negative Jewish stereotypes propagated in the media and by nationalistic organisations, foreign Jews were seen as a separate, undesirable category.

The issue of migration became increasingly important even handing victory to the conservative United Australia Party in 1932, which remained in power until 1941. They campaigned on a platform of severely restricting migration.² Despite the emergence of hostility towards foreigners and the establishment of some antisemitic and Nazi movements in Australia, Bartrop argues that 'Australia was on the whole not an anti-Semitic society; any apparent manifestation of hostility towards Jews sprang from minds not in tune with the majority of the population.'³

Australians reacted to the Nazi rise to power with caution and seemed to be aware of what was happening in Europe in the early 1930s. In Sydney, the Lord Mayor organised a protest in 1933 against the Nazi boycott of Jewish shops with the Premier of New South Wales as the key speaker.⁴ As well, newspaper cartoons depicted the brutality of the Nazi regime.⁵ Nevertheless, in an effort to curb mass migration and the economic effects this would have in the aftermath of the Great Depression, only a few Jewish refugees were allowed into Australia prior to 1936. This was due to restrictive immigration policies that virtually excluded all migrants unless a landing fee of £500 was paid or one was to be reunited with existing close family members already living in Australia.⁶ This was in spite of the lobbying by Jewish groups both in Australia and London after Hitler's rise to power in 1933.⁷

The increasing brutality of the Nazi movement was keenly felt by Jewish communities throughout the world, including Australia. In New South Wales, the German Jewish Relief

¹ Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 4.

² Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45*, 5.

³ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45*, 15.

⁴ Suzanne D Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' *Menorah: Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Issue 3) (December 1988), 79.

⁵ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' 79.

⁶ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' 79.

⁷ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' 79.

Fund was established in 1936⁸ as a result of a change in government policy that reduced the landing fee from £500 to £50 provided the Jews were sponsored by family members or a Jewish organisation.⁹ Once again, the local Jewish community took it upon themselves to fund as much as possible the resettlement of Jewish migrants in Australia. Following instructions from the Jewish leadership in London to keep the funds raised in Australia to assist in the integration of the refugees, the German Jewish Relief Fund was replaced by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in 1937¹⁰ to better coordinate efforts. In response to the crisis created by the *Anschluss* of Austria in March 1938, the government introduced a quota for Jewish refugees up to 15,000 over three years¹¹ and the number of Jewish arrivals in Australia increased from circa 150 in 1936 to 5,080 in 1939.¹²

The Evian Conference was convened in 1938 to discuss political refugees from Austria and Australia participated along with the United States, Britain and Canada. In total, 32 nations attended the conference. Australia's representative was clearly charged with the mission that 'no special facilities can be granted for the admission of groups of Jewish migrants whether from Germany or Austria [... but] we are ready to receive applications for permits from non-Jewish Austrians.'¹³ Needless to say, Australia did not allow for any large scale Jewish migration arguing that 'It will no doubt be appreciated also that, as we have no real racial problems, we are not desirous of importing one by encouraging any scheme of large-scale foreign migration.'¹⁴

The increase in Australia's refugee intake in 1938 caused significant concern within the government and the wider Australian public. Despite the liberalisation, antisemitism increased with the onset of the depression, followed by fears of Jewish refugees flooding Australia, affecting Jewish and non-Jewish relations. The Jewish leadership was very concerned about

⁸ Anne Andgel, *Fifty Years of Caring: The History of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, 1936-1986* (Sydney: Australian Jewish Welfare Society and AJHS, 1988), 3-10; and Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' 80.

⁹ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' 80.

¹⁰ Andgel, *Fifty Years of Caring*, 10-11.

¹¹ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' 80.

¹² Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict,' 81.

¹³ AA: A461, File M349/3/5 Part 1, 'Jews – Policy Part 1,' Cablegram from J.A. Lyons to SM Bruce, 8 April 1938, as cited in Paul Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' *Menorah: Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 2, No. 1 (Issue 2) (June 1988), 67.

¹⁴ AA: A433, File 43/2/46, 'Refugees (Jewish and Others) – General Policy File,' Interior Memorandum for Cabinet (*Immigration*) prepared by VC Thompson (Assistant Minister for the Interior), 17 August 1938, as cited Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 69.

these developments and issued instructions to refugees to ensure that they did not attract attention from the general public. Furthermore, even though the Australian government seemed aware of the plight of the Jewish communities in Germany and Austria, it was not prepared to do more than the minimum necessary to meet the requests to increase its Jewish quotas on humanitarian grounds from within Australia's small but vocal Jewish community and the mother country, Britain, which still exerted immense influence on Australia's foreign policy. The fact that up to one-fifth of Australia's approximately 10,000 internees during the war were of German-Jewish origin attests to this public and governmental distrust of the Jewish refugees.¹⁵

Given that the Lyons government was elected on an anti-immigration platform, the 1938 migration quota introduced before the Evian Conference concerned other members of his ministry who were worried about the number of 'undesirable' Jewish migrants landing on Australian shores. As a result, Bartrop argues that the language of migration policies was tweaked such as to not to refer to German or Austrian Jews as refugees¹⁶ but rather as 'Jewish residents in Europe.'¹⁷ Consequently, they were not seen as refugees but migrants like any other from the continent.¹⁸ Victor Thompson, Assistant Minister of the Interior, clarified that 'existing safeguards over an influx of Jews were holding firm'¹⁹ as 'under present conditions... only about one in ten applications can be approved.'²⁰

The increase in Jewish migration also led to an increase in attacks in the antisemitic press, particularly the *Bulletin* and *Truth*,²¹ warning that Jews would 'soon gain control'²² of the already overpopulated Sydney and Melbourne.²³ *Truth* even 'demanded that all Jewish

¹⁵ Konrad Kwiet, "'Be Patient and Reasonable!'" The Internment of German-Jewish Refugees in Australia,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1985-04), 61.

¹⁶ Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 70.

¹⁷ AA: A433, File 43/2/46, 'Refugees (Jewish and Others) – General Policy File,' Interior Memorandum for Cabinet (*Immigration*) prepared by VC Thompson (Assistant Minister for the Interior), 17 August 1938, as cited in Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 70.

¹⁸ Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 70.

¹⁹ Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 71.

²⁰ Victor Thompson, as cited in Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 71.

²¹ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?,' 82.

²² Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?,' 83.

²³ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?,' 82.

refugees be refused admission into Australia.²⁴ Its editor stated that ‘As a racial unit [the Jews] are a menace to our nationhood and standards.’²⁵ Rutland wrote that the professional organisations, in particular those of lawyers, doctors and dentists, were opposed to Jewish migration for fear of competition,²⁶ with doctors even succeeding in 1938 in changing the New South Wales *Medical Practitioners Act* to limit the admission of Jewish practitioners who came from overseas to no more than eight per annum.²⁷ The New South Wales branch of the British Medical Association continued to apply a quota of eight even after the war.²⁸

This practice of excluding professionals was not universal as some professional associations were more liberal than others, especially architects, accountants and engineers.²⁹ For example, the president of the New South Wales chapter of the Royal Institute of Architects welcomed the refugees believing that just as Australian architects have benefitted from learning in Europe so, too, the refugees can now learn from and contribute to the Australian architectural landscape.³⁰ Similarly, the New South Wales Institute of Accountants even suggested to accept German accounting qualifications without the need for further examination³¹ and the New South Wales Trades and Labor Council even ‘recommended the admission of European refugees in Australia to membership of its constituent unions.’³²

Opposition to Jewish refugee migration was also expressed strongly in the various state parliaments as well, with a most noteworthy example being that of the President of the Victorian Legislative Council, Sir Frank Clarke, who made a virulently antisemitic speech before the Australian Women’s National League in Malvern in May 1939.³³ These comments were greeted with thanks by the leader of the Victorian opposition.³⁴ Opposition to refugees

²⁴ Rutland, ‘Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?’, 83.

²⁵ As cited in Suzanne D Rutland, ‘Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?’, 83.

²⁶ Suzanne D Rutland, *Take Heart Again: The Story of a Fellowship of Jewish Doctors* (Sydney: Fellowship of Jewish Doctors, 1983), 4.

²⁷ Rutland, *Take Heart Again*, 5-6.

²⁸ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 268.

²⁹ Suzanne D Rutland, “‘An Example of Intellectual Barbarism’: The Story of Foreign Doctors in Australia,” *Yad Vashem Studies* Vol. 18 (1987), 235.

³⁰ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 175.

³¹ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 176.

³² *SMH*, 6 May 1939, 16, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 176.

³³ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 179-180.

³⁴ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 181.

was also voiced in federal Parliament during debates by Tom Green, Member for Kalgoorlie,³⁵ and Senator Joseph Silver Collings from Queensland.³⁶

There was a direct correlation between the increase in Jewish migrants and the rise in antisemitic sentiments in Australia. The established Anglo-Jewish communal leadership was very concerned about this deterioration in relations between the established community and the wider, non-Jewish, Australian population. Their response was to try to appease the opponents of Jewish migration. Sir Samuel Cohen, the first president of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society even stated in *Smith's Weekly*, another publication strongly opposed to Jewish migration, that his organisation favours an 'even more rigorous hand-picking than the government [...] has seen fit to impose'³⁷ and that in his personal opinion 'only young migrants – who are likely to become true Australians – should be admitted.'³⁸

Similarly, in Melbourne, the president of the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board Isaac Herbert Boas, unequivocally and publicly opposed 'anything in the nature of mass migration.'³⁹ Rutland explained the behaviour of the Anglo-Jewish establishment as an attempt to thwart 'the development of antisemitism'⁴⁰ as:

The established [Jewish] community was obsessed by the fear that any foreign behaviour would arouse hostility to all Australian Jews. The refugees were considered inferior by the establishment, even though they came from the centres of European culture and were generally well educated.⁴¹

In fact, new arrivals were met at the docks by officials from the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, who instructed them how to behave in public⁴² reminding them that 'the welfare of the old-established Jewish community in Australia as well as of every migrant depends on your

³⁵ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 185-186.

³⁶ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 187.

³⁷ Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 185.

³⁸ Sir Samuel Cohen in *Smith's Weekly*, 1 July 1939, as cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 185.

³⁹ IH Boas in *Herald*, 19 April 1938, as cited in Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria, 1835-1985* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 165.

⁴⁰ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?', 85.

⁴¹ Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?', 85.

⁴² Rutland, 'Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?', 85.

personal behaviour. Jews collectively are judged as individuals.’⁴³ It is important to appreciate that up until 1939 the official Australian immigration policy was that it should be 98 per cent Anglo-Celtic,⁴⁴ which meant that the admission of Jews, particularly Eastern European Jews, challenged not just this policy but represented a significant shift in the government’s immigration strategy.

Konrad Kwiet rightly suggested that ‘even if the Jews had overcome their own misgivings and shortcomings, internal disputes and differing attitudes, this would by no means have meant that the way was clear of all external barriers’⁴⁵ to admit large scale Jewish migration into Australia. Indeed, opposition to large-scale Jewish migration was strong both by the public and the government and even within the Jewish community. As Godfrey Lee states:

In Australia, as in Britain, the elites felt duty bound to be the paradigms of Anglo values and traditions. They had little social contact with the foreign-born elements with their broken English and pro-Zionist inclinations and whose very presence was a source of embarrassment. Xenophobia was only part of the problem. More fundamental was a resentment at the prospect of the newcomers having any role in decision-making or, worse, wresting control of the reins of governance from the hands of the Anglo clique.⁴⁶

Kristallnacht, the Nazi pogrom of November 1938, added to the pressures for Australia to increase its Jewish refugee quota. The review of the Australian government’s migration policy in light of *Kristallnacht* was speculated in the Australian press and created controversy within the government⁴⁷ particularly after the London *Daily Telegraph* reported that ‘The Cabinet of Mr JA Lyons has decided to review sympathetically the whole question of Jewish migration in view of the sharp rise in the number of applications from Austria and Germany.’⁴⁸ Indeed,

⁴³ *Herald*, 13 May 1939, as cited in Rutland, ‘Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933-1945: Consensus or Conflict?’, 85.

⁴⁴ Suzanne D Rutland, ‘Intermeshing Archival and Oral Sources: Unraveling the Story of Jewish Survivor Immigration to Australia,’ in *Speaking to Immigrants: Oral Testimony and the History of Australian Migration*, eds. A James Hammerton and Eric Richards (Adelaide: Flinders University Press, 2002), 129.

⁴⁵ Konrad Kwiet, ‘Responses of Australian Jewry’s Leadership to the Holocaust,’ in *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, ed. William D Rubinstein (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 202.

⁴⁶ Godfrey S Lee, ‘Rescue or Rhetoric? Australian Jewry’s Reactions During the Holocaust,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 10, Part 4 (1988), 282.

⁴⁷ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 110.

⁴⁸ *SMH*, 24 November 1938, 10, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 111.

Kristallnacht changed the landscape entirely as the *Argus* quoted the Interior Minister John McEwen who in the wake of *Kristallnacht* said:

Increasing numbers of refugees are approaching people in authority in an endeavour to persuade them to use their influence to gain their admittance to Australia. People are coming to Canberra to speak to members on behalf of refugees, and large numbers are endeavouring to see me personally or speak to me by telephone.⁴⁹

This proved that the local Jewish community was well aware of the situation inside Germany and managed to lobby the Australian government through persistence to change their stance.

After *Kristallnacht*, Stanley M Bruce, Australia's High Commissioner, lobbied the Minister for the Interior, John McEwen, to admit more Jewish refugees into Australia by doubling the quota of 5,000 per annum over three years to 30,000 over three years. In response, the secretary of the Australian Department of the Interior prepared a memorandum advising McEwen to reject this figure. He recommended retaining the quota 15,000 'and of watching the Jewish position very carefully in order, as far as practicable, to strike a balance,' and McEwen announced the quota of 15,000 over three years to parliament on 1 December 1928.⁵⁰ Bartrop argues that this 'was the clearest illustration yet of the Department's unacknowledged antisemitism.'⁵¹

In addition, the bureaucratic implementation of the 15,000 refugee quota over three years further in fact reduced the number of Jews allowed to enter Australia as migration was subdivided into refugee and ordinary migration.⁵² This is evidenced by the fact that of the 5,000 annual refugee places available, only 4,000 were given to Jews and the other 1,000 to non-Aryan Christians (that is Jews who had converted and their families).⁵³ The majority of the Jewish landing permits had to be guaranteed either by family members or the Australian Jewish

⁴⁹ *Argus*, 26 November 1938, 9, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 114.

⁵⁰ AA: A461, File M349/3/5 Part 2, 'Jews – Policy Part 2,' Secret Interior Memorandum (*Refugees*) addressed to the Minister, prepared by JA Carrodus (Departmental Secretary), 24 November 1938, as cited in Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 73.

⁵¹ Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 73.

⁵² Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 77.

⁵³ Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?,' 78.

Welfare Society stating that they would not become a charge on the state for five years. It was also noted that whilst ordinary migration policies remained largely unchanged,⁵⁴ policies for Jewish migration were continuously refined so as to exclude as many Polish Jews as possible, as they were not, strictly speaking, considered refugees and they were considered to be of a lower standard than Central European Jews.⁵⁵

The public announcement of the Australian quota was greeted with mixed reactions in the Australian press. Whilst the *Argus* welcomed the announcement it was quick to stress that only such refugees would be admitted who can contribute constructively to the local labour market,⁵⁶ indicating that the initial resentment towards migration which brought the Lyons government into power came from the aftermath of the Great Depression and memories of mass unemployment were still fresh in Australian minds. The last thing the government wanted was to allow for mass migration of Jews who would become a burden upon the state.

Yet, the labour press did not support the government's decision because they were concerned that large scale migration would undermine workers' conditions. The *Labor Call* wrote that in admitting these refugees 'it is the intention of that Government to go to the limit in undermining the living standards of the workers in Australia in the interests of an exploiting capitalist class...'⁵⁷ *Smith's Weekly* reacted by coining the term 'Refu-Jews'⁵⁸ and the *Bulletin* subtly warned the established Australian Jewish community that it was incumbent upon them to assimilate the refugees quickly lest antisemitism was to rise within the general Australian populace.⁵⁹ Many Australians also took to pen and paper and expressed their concern at the proposed number of Jewish migrants, some of these based in economic reasons and others on virulently antisemitic views.⁶⁰

By 1939 the public outcry had become such that Thomas Hugh Garrett, the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior, was sent to Australia House in London, to prepare a detailed

⁵⁴ Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?', 79.

⁵⁵ Bartrop, 'The Australian Government's "Liberalisation" of Refugee Immigration Policy in 1938: Fact or Myth?', 80.

⁵⁶ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 117.

⁵⁷ *Labor Call*, 8 December 1938, 4, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 121.

⁵⁸ *Smith's Weekly*, 10 December 1938, 4, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 122.

⁵⁹ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1939*, 122.

⁶⁰ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 122-123.

report on the refugee situation and to make recommendations, which would later form the basis of Australia's refugee policy for years to come.⁶¹

After his arrival in London in 1939, Garrett travelled to the continent to see first-hand the plight of European Jewry. He toured both western and eastern Europe and made preliminary recommendations to Joseph Aloysius Carrodus, the Departmental Secretary in Canberra, that:

applications, which are considered suitable be approved by Australia House and landing permits issued

- (i) in the case of Jews who can introduce at least £3,000 capital and there is no doubt they can be absorbed in Australia without detriment to Australian workers or industry; and
- (ii) in the case of Aryan and non-Aryan Christians, who can introduce at least two £200 capital and there is no doubt they can be absorbed in Australia without detriment to Australian workers or industry.

all other applications be classified into the following groups and submitted to Canberra for consideration:

- (i) Jews (by religion),
- (ii) Aryan and non-Aryan Christians who are Catholics,
- (iii) Aryan and non-Aryan Christians who are not Catholics.⁶²

The fact that the landing money for Jews should be increased to £3,000 whilst everyone else would only have to pay £200 is noteworthy and was aimed at significantly restricting Jewish refugee migration. Furthermore, the practice of not just singling out Jews but also Catholics is significant because it implies that they are also not seen as desirable migrants for Australia. Lastly, it confirms Paul Bartrop's argument that bureaucrats within Australia's immigration establishment at the time held antisemitic tendencies which influenced their formulation of official Australian immigration policies, even after they had seen first-hand the plight of European Jewry. Particularly disturbing was the fact that Garrett's recommendations were

⁶¹ Paul Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People': The Garrett Report of 1939 and Plans for Jewish Immigration to Australia in the 1940s," *Menorah: Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 4, Nos. 1 & 2 (Issue 6) (December 1990), 28.

⁶² NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett, 'White Alien Immigration to Australia from Europe, Establishment of Organisation at Australia House, Final Report,' 15 August 1939.

made after he had ‘visited several ghettos [in Poland].’⁶³ He even acknowledged that ‘the conditions under which they live are almost indescribable and unbelievable to a westerner. They are undoubtedly as low a class of white people as we have seen.’⁶⁴ His recommendations after his visit to Poland were that Polish Jews ‘generally speaking, have not been integrated into the general community [... and] is unsuitable for emigration to the British Dominions.’⁶⁵ He further stated that ‘the greatest care should be exercised in the selection of Polish Jews’⁶⁶ and that the ‘Polish Jews is the worst, the come the Hungarian and the Rumanian in that order.’⁶⁷

Whether or not Garrett deliberately sought to imbue his personal antisemitic sentiments into official departmental practices is unclear. It is obvious, however, that by limiting the intake of Jewish refugees into Australia as much as possible, he failed to assist them in their desperate situation. He even expressed the views that the ‘Jews in Hungary are not to be relied upon. They are smart but crooked.’⁶⁸

Whilst Garrett was particularly ill disposed towards Eastern European Jews, his impression of German Jews was only slightly more favourable ‘as time goes on, the refugees, especially in Germany, Austria and Czecho [*sic*], will deteriorate from the point of view of quality; speaking generally, the best have already left those countries.’⁶⁹ He believed many of those German-Jewish refugees he had met in London to be of questionable character and that these had already ‘created an unfavourable impression when they called for visas’⁷⁰ at the British Embassy in Berlin. He concluded thus that most German-Jewish refugees ‘would not be regarded as suitable for Australia.’⁷¹

⁶³ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett and Major RH Wheeler, ‘Brief Notes of Tour of the Continent by the Assistant Secretary,’ 1 August 1939.

⁶⁴ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett and Major RH Wheeler, ‘Brief Notes of Tour of the Continent by the Assistant Secretary,’ 1 August 1939.

⁶⁵ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett and Major RH Wheeler, ‘Brief Notes of Tour of the Continent by the Assistant Secretary,’ 1 August 1939.

⁶⁶ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett and Major RH Wheeler, ‘Brief Notes of Tour of the Continent by the Assistant Secretary,’ 1 August 1939.

⁶⁷ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett and Major RH Wheeler, ‘Brief Notes of Tour of the Continent by the Assistant Secretary,’ 1 August 1939.

⁶⁸ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett and Major RH Wheeler, ‘Brief Notes of Tour of the Continent by the Assistant Secretary,’ 1 August 1939.

⁶⁹ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett, ‘White Alien Immigration to Australia from Europe, Establishment of Organisation at Australia House, Final Report,’ 15 August 1939.

⁷⁰ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett and Major RH Wheeler, ‘Brief Notes of Tour of the Continent by the Assistant Secretary,’ 1 August 1939.

⁷¹ NAA: A659, 1947/1/2109, Item ID: 635912, TH Garrett, ‘White Alien Immigration to Australia from Europe, Establishment of Organisation at Australia House, Final Report,’ 15 August 1939.

Bartrop argues that Garrett's reports were widely read and accepted within the department in Canberra, and as such contributed significantly to Australia's limited response to the refugee crisis.⁷² The outbreak of the war gave the impetus for Garrett to restrict Jewish migration even further, stating that the event has 'absolved the Commonwealth from its commitment to receive up to 15,000 refugees over the three year period, in view of the fact that the great majority of refugees had become enemy aliens.'⁷³ In addition, he stated that the 'Jews in Europe who are at present eligible, under the Commonwealth's immigration policy, to enter Australia, are not as good a type as those who are ineligible on account of their being enemy aliens.'⁷⁴ He prepared a memorandum to the minister that advocated the exclusion of practically all types of Jewish migrants to Australia, including those from the United Kingdom and those residing elsewhere in the world, with the exception of those who already have close and established relatives in Australia⁷⁵ and those Jews who 'would be of benefit to Australia's internal economy or culture, or in which exceptional circumstances exist.'⁷⁶

The department was clearly aware of the conditions European Jews faced and the threat that existed to their lives. In addition, Garrett's reports from Europe did reveal the difficult conditions facing Jews despite his negativity to Jewish refugee migration and his memorandum was approved by Carrodus, the Departmental Secretary.⁷⁷ Senator Hattil Foll, the Minister for the Interior, simply stated 'I agree with these recommendations. This is the policy we are adopting now'⁷⁸ thereby sealing the fate of Jewish refugee migration to Australia and closing all doors.

As a result of this decision, the department declined the Australian Jewish Welfare Society's request to speed up the process for approving applications for landing permits. In their letter they urged the Minister to do this 'on account of the tremendous number of individuals who

⁷² Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People'", 34.

⁷³ Memorandum produced by TH Garrett, 28 September 1939, as cited in Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People'", 36.

⁷⁴ Memorandum produced by TH Garrett, 28 September 1939, as cited in Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People'", 36.

⁷⁵ Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People'", 36.

⁷⁶ Memorandum produced by TH Garrett, 28 September 1939, as cited in Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People'", 36.

⁷⁷ Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People'", 37.

⁷⁸ AA: A461, File M349/3/5 Pt 2: TH Garrett, 'Jews... Policy Part 2' Interior Memorandum 8 December 1939, as cited in Bartrop, "'A Low Class of White People'", 37.

have died either in the Concentration Camp or otherwise while waiting for the issue of a permit, or any advice that a permit will not be granted.’⁷⁹ Therefore, because of antisemitic views both within the government and the public servants in the Department of the Interior, the policy was further restricted.

The antisemitic sentiments within the Australian government were not confined to the Department of the Interior. Inspector DRB Mitchell from the Commonwealth Investigation Branch of the Attorney-General’s Department openly lamented the system of having the Australian Jewish Welfare Society guarantee migrants, stating that ‘The whole system of the administration leans towards the cunning liar. Letters are obtained to say the intending migrant will be given employment, but for what duration?’⁸⁰ He stated further that the system ‘is designedly an official camouflage, a show of discrimination and enquiry to further a policy of alien immigration.’⁸¹ He believed the selection should be ‘selective and discriminatory, not haphazard, and dependent upon lying statements supporting applications for unwanted migrants.’⁸²

The bias against Jews took on a new dimension, when all migrants to Australia were required to state whether or not they were Jewish, commonly referred to as the Jewish race clause in Form 47, which according to Bartrop was introduced either in 1938 or early in 1939.⁸³ This was at a time when European Jews grew increasingly desperate, and the workload of the department undoubtedly increased due to the volume in applications. Whilst most of the reports hitherto discussed, such as the Garrett report, were secret and only seen by the senior members of the government, the bias exerted by the Department of the Interior against Jews did not go unnoticed within the Australian Jewish community and within the wider community as well. When presiding at the Zionist Federation of Australia’s Annual Conference in Melbourne in 1939, Dr Leon Jona stated: ‘It is pathetic, indeed, and tragic to a degree to note the efforts of

⁷⁹ AA: A1, File 38/23138, ‘Australian Jewish Welfare Society – Proposal re Control of Jewish Migration,’ Harry Lesnie to Senator HS Foll, 22 May 1939, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 159.

⁸⁰ AA: A373, File 3075, ‘Alien Migration Policy,’ confidential memorandum from Inspector DRB Mitchell to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 7 June 1937, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 35.

⁸¹ AA: A373, File 3075, ‘Alien Migration Policy,’ confidential memorandum from Inspector DRB Mitchell to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 7 June 1937, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 35.

⁸² AA: A373, File 3075, ‘Alien Migration Policy,’ confidential memorandum from Inspector DRB Mitchell to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 7 June 1937, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 35.

⁸³ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 150-151.

great countries with millions of populations to keep out a few thousand of these unfortunate expatriates.’⁸⁴

Roland S Browne, an inspector within the Commonwealth Investigation Branch, even went one step further, charging ‘the Department of the Interior with unjustifiable Discrimination.’⁸⁵ Referring to Form 47 for employer sponsorship which asked whether the applicant was of the ‘Jewish Race’, he stated ‘I should think even the most ardent Nazi will praise the author of this form, who, modest in the fame which his work brings, may desire to add a new line such as “Roman Catholic or not”, or “Salvation Army or not.”’⁸⁶

The Commonwealth Investigation Branch took this report seriously and suggested that the Department of the Interior change the wording of ‘Jewish Race’, which it eventually did by removing the word ‘race’ but continuing to ask the question of whether someone was Jewish. This continued even after the war.⁸⁷ The Australian Jewish Welfare Society on behalf of the Victorian and New South Wales Jewish communities protested against this wording, stating that ‘They are most emphatic in their protests and wish to point out that they are BRITISH SUBJECTS of JEWISH FAITH, and the word “RACE” especially, is most obnoxious to them.’⁸⁸ Note the use of capital letters to highlight that the Jews of Victoria and New South Wales saw themselves as loyal British subjects of the Jewish faith and not as a separate race. This was, indeed, the policy of just about all established Jewish organisations in the Commonwealth to always espouse their loyalty to the Empire and their adherence to the Jewish faith not as a category of differing nationality. The fact that this distinction was an issue not just in Germany but increasingly also in Australia, exacerbated the Jewish community’s concerns about antisemitism in Australia in the 1930s.

⁸⁴ Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand Papers (Melbourne), Presidential address delivered by Dr J Leon Jona at the opening of the Eighth Zionist Conference at Melbourne, 5 March 1939, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 150.

⁸⁵ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 151.

⁸⁶ AA: A367, File C3075, ‘Miscellaneous: Admissions of Aliens, Forms, Instructions, etc.,’ Inspector Roland S Browne to Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, 19 April 1939, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 151.

⁸⁷ Suzanne D Rutland, “‘Are You Jewish?’ Post-war Immigration to Australia 1945-54,” *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1991), 37.

⁸⁸ AA: A445, File 235/5/8, ‘Alleged Discrimination against Admission of Jews [question of Jewish or not on Dep. I Forms],’ Frank Silverman to AR Peters, 21 April 1939, as cited Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 152.

Those who were fortunate enough to have been accepted as refugees into Australia faced a mixed response from the Australian public. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that ‘some of them have found it difficult to obtain accommodation because of the prejudice against them in certain areas.’⁸⁹ This suggests that the sentiments espoused by certain papers such as *Truth*, *Smith’s Weekly* and the *Bulletin* as well as the Department of the Interior, were more widespread than initially anticipated by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society. Furthermore, the department issued a memorandum to the minister which stated that:

Newspapers recorded, almost every week, that several hundred refugees had arrived; publicity was given to many of the newcomers who usually were described as prominent men in their trades, professions or business and thus easily evoked fear of competition. The appearance of a growing number of foreign-looking and differently dressed (long overcoats and attaché cases) men in the principal city streets quickly tended to reverse the initial feeling of pity and interest into one of concern.⁹⁰

As discussed previously, many refugees ‘have had a wretched time since arrival in Sydney – rebuffed and insulted when they seek employment, treated with suspicion and resentment, and often not a single friendly door has been held open to them.’⁹¹ The memorandum to the minister nevertheless noted their rapid assimilation and the good English skills espoused by the children of refugees.⁹² This was also noted by the Victorian Department of Education, which published in the monthly *School Paper* an article encouraging Australian schoolchildren to help refugee classmates ‘to become good Australians by assisting them with their work and by welcoming them to the happy world of the school.’⁹³

The refugees in turn formed the Migrants’ Consultative Council in Sydney in April 1939 and Walter Hirst, the chairman himself, stated that ‘We take sincere interest in all vital problems

⁸⁹ ‘Refugees in Sydney, Australians in the Making,’ *SMH*, 14 July 1939, 10.

⁹⁰ AA: A433, File 40/2/520, ‘Absorption in Australia of Refugees from Central Europe,’ unsigned memorandum written by ‘an alien resident qualified to express a reliable opinion,’ forwarded to Senator Foll by Colonel Harold Jones (Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch), 2 February 1940, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 170.

⁹¹ ‘Lonely Immigrants,’ *SMH*, 13 July 1939, 4.

⁹² AA: A433, File 40/2/520, ‘Absorption in Australia of Refugees from central Europe,’ unsigned memorandum (*The Absorption, in Australia, of Refugees from Central Europe*) written by ‘an alien resident qualified to express a reliable opinion,’ forwarded to Senator Foll by Colonel Harold Jones (Director, Commonwealth Investigation Branch), 2 February 1940, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 170.

⁹³ *School Paper* (Victoria), 1 August 1939, reprinted in ‘Welcome to New Australians – School Paper’s Fine Article,’ *Westralian Judean*, 1 September 1939, 42.

of Australia, [and] we wish to take part in its life, to share citizenship and responsibilities.⁹⁴ He stressed further that ‘we shall stand to Australia [*sic*] and shall do all in our power to strengthen her cause, as loyal and active members of her community.’⁹⁵ Australia offered the Jewish refugees freedom in a democratic country, despite the difficulties and restrictions they experienced in the migration process and they wanted to express their loyalty to their adopted country. This corresponded with the policy of the established Anglo-Jewish community to always highlight their loyalty to Australia and the British Empire whenever and wherever possible. Hirst clearly decided to use his first address as the Migrant Council’s president to stress the refugees’ sense of appreciation and not highlight the discrimination faced by migrants because this would have fuelled antisemitic feelings with accusations of Jewish ingratitude.

As the desperation of European Jews increased, the local Jewish leadership was inundated with appeals to assist in securing passage to Australia for European Jews. At this time, local rabbis still acted as the unofficial leadership of the Australian Jewish community and rabbinical leaders such as Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk, acting senior minister of the Great Synagogue, were at the frontline for such appeals although a number of Christian lay leaders and clergymen tried to assist as well.⁹⁶ This included Anglican Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher and German Lutheran minister Rev Dr William Janzow, as will be discussed later.

One such example of these direct appeals to clergy was that of Dr Laszlo Roth, a Hungarian Jewish doctor, who petitioned Rabbi Falk of Sydney’s Great Synagogue for help securing passage to Australia.⁹⁷ Chief Rabbi Simon Hevesi of Budapest wrote directly to Falk,⁹⁸ who responded hesitantly that ‘our community cannot yet find suitable employment for him.’⁹⁹ He added that ‘Jews from Hungary do not come under the category of Refugees [*sic*],’¹⁰⁰ but that a possibility of gaining admission could arise if ‘you could assure me that [Roth] is capable of acting as a teacher of Hebrew and religion. It would not mean that it is necessary for him to

⁹⁴ AA: A433, File 39/2/402, ‘AJWS Sydney. Large numbers of Jewish Migrants desire to enlist in Militia,’ Address of Mr W Hirst, 16 April 1939, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 173.

⁹⁵ AA: A433, File 39/2/402, ‘AJWS Sydney. Large numbers of Jewish Migrants desire to enlist in Militia,’ Address of Mr W Hirst, 16 April 1939, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 173.

⁹⁶ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 160.

⁹⁷ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 160.

⁹⁸ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 160.

⁹⁹ AJHSA, Rabbi Falk Correspondence File (File 832), Rabbi Falk to Chief Rabbi Simon Hevesi (Budapest), 17 April 1939 as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 161.

¹⁰⁰ AJHSA, Rabbi Falk Correspondence File (File 832), Rabbi Falk to Chief Rabbi Simon Hevesi (Budapest), 17 April 1939 as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 161.

speak Hebrew.’¹⁰¹ This correspondence occurred in 1939, just after the second anti-Jewish law was passed in Hungary, which limited the ability of Jews to practice in the professions. Whilst Hungary was not yet under full Nazi control at this stage, it seems that the local Jewish leadership was aware that their plight was destined to worsen in years to come and therefore already tried to secure passage out of the country for the more prominent members of their community.

The case of Laszlo Roth was not an isolated incident, each case providing further insight to Rabbi Falk and others of the situation in Europe. Rabbi Falk staged in ‘fervent personal intervention’¹⁰² in many instances, not just the case of Lazlo Roth. This was due to his ‘disillusionment’¹⁰³ with the Australian Jewish Welfare Society as he believed ‘they were more concerned with amount of capital that refugees possessed than their character.’¹⁰⁴ Another example of Falk’s intervention is the case of Professor Rabbi Moritz Bauer from Vienna and Ernst Rosenmann, the son of Dr Moritz Rosenmann, who was the Chief Rabbi of Vienna.¹⁰⁵ The combination of the efforts by the Australian government to limit Jewish refugee migration, the blatant antisemitic tone of many general papers, particularly ‘the yellow press’, and the anti-refugee stance of the general public, were issues of concern for the local, well-established Jewish community.

Falk also appealed to David Drummond, Minister of Education in New South Wales, who was another noteworthy defendant of Jewish refugees in the state parliament. He sought to arrange a meeting between John McEwen, the Minister for the Interior, and Falk, in order for him to better understand the plight of Jewish refugees in Europe.¹⁰⁶ He wrote to McEwen that:

I am sure you would be doing something to help us to get citizens of the right type into our country and at the same time relieve the agony of many who have no fault at their door other than belonging to the same race as John Monash, our ex-Governor General

¹⁰¹ AJHSA, Rabbi Falk Correspondence File (File 832), Rabbi Falk to Chief Rabbi Simon Hevesi (Budapest), 17 April 1939 as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 161.

¹⁰² Anne F Thompson, “‘Dear Sir Rabbi’: The Correspondence of Rabbi LA Falk, 1939-1939,” *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 23 (2020), 179.

¹⁰³ Thompson, “‘Dear Sir Rabbi,’” 179.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from DH Drummond to John McEwan, 13 April 1939, Correspondence File of LA Falk, AJHSA, Sydney, as cited in Thompson, “‘Dear Sir Rabbi,’” 179-180.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, “‘Dear Sir Rabbi,’” 179-180.

¹⁰⁶ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 160.

Sir Isaac Isaacs, and my late esteemed friend and ex-Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Judge J Cohen.¹⁰⁷

Thus, Drummond sought to remind McEwen of the immeasurable contribution the Australian Jewish community had made to the country and how, just a decade earlier, relations between Jews and Christian Australians were a high level of harmony, that had deteriorated since. He was one of a small group of non-Jewish lay advocates for taking a more liberal approach to Jewish refugee migration. Other key activists including Brian Fitzpatrick, Professor Ian Clunies-Ross and Camila Wedgewood.

Some organisations led by non-Jews were also established to campaign on behalf of the Jewish refugees. This included the Victorian Refugee Immigration Appeals Committee, established by the Labor-aligned Australian Council for Civil Liberties, which strongly opposed the vetting of potential migrants on racial grounds and made their opinions clear to the Department.¹⁰⁸

During the late 1930s, almost daily, fresh news reached Australian shores of new measures taken by the Nazis against the Jewish communities they controlled in Europe. The Australian Jewish community was justifiably alarmed at the rising threat that Germany posed not only to their brethren in Europe but also within Australia. Their growing concerns about the increased ‘anti-reffo’ hysteria due to rising levels of antisemitism were further reinforced with the emergence of Nazi movements and supporters in Australia in the 1930s, as well as locally grown organised antisemitic movements.

5.3 Nazi Activities and Nazi Movements in Australia in the 1930s

The 1930s saw the emergence of organised right-wing movements with a clear antisemitic platform, with Nazi movements supported by the Sydney-based German Consul-General, Dr Rudolf Asmis representing the German government. These developments included German publications such as *Die Brücke* [The Bridge], the increased activity of the local Nazi movements in Australia, and the emergence of home-grown fascist movements such as the New Guard and the Australia-First movements in the 1930s.

¹⁰⁷ AJHSA, Rabbi Falk Correspondence File (File 832), DH Drummond to John McEwen, 13 April 1939, as cited in Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 160.

¹⁰⁸ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-1945*, 153.

From as early as 1934, the NSDAP had a presence in Australia, when the Sydney *Stützpunkt* was officially established.¹⁰⁹ Dr Walter Hellenthal was a prominent member¹¹⁰ as was Dr Johannes Heinrich Becker, the first Nazi organiser in Australia.¹¹¹ In 1933, Arnold von Skerst became a member of the party¹¹² and was made *Schulungsleiter* (propaganda leader) by the *Stützpunkt* in 1934.¹¹³ In this role, von Skerst became the editor of the local Nazi propaganda publication, *Die Brücke*,¹¹⁴ first issued in February 1934.¹¹⁵ The content of *Die Brücke* was bilingual and was closely screened by Asmis so that the Australian government would not withdraw permission for its publication.¹¹⁶ The paper probably received some funding from the German foreign office and local German organisations¹¹⁷ and concentrated on painting ‘the positive aspects of ‘New Germany’’¹¹⁸ ‘aimed at bringing Germans and Australians of German heritage under the influence of National Socialism.’¹¹⁹ Whilst publication of pro-Nazi media would have been anticipated by the local Jewish establishment, the Nazis were not content with mere publication of their opinions but instead sought to bring change through their actions in Australia.

The Consul-General, Asmis, adhered to a policy of *Deutschtumspolitik*,¹²⁰ ‘a careful balancing act in regard to the promotion of German culture in Australia designed to meet the demands of the Third Reich without alienating the Australian government.’¹²¹ At the same time, from 1933 he sought to justify Nazi policies towards the Jews in letters to the press and other activities. In general, Asmis ‘tried to play down the persecution of German Jews in his public

¹⁰⁹ NAA: A367, C67248 Part 1, as cited in Barbara Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ in *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect and Aftermath in Germania Pacifica Vol. 4*, eds. Emily Turner-Graham and Christine Winter (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2010), 52.

¹¹⁰ NAA Sydney: SP1714/1, N39593, as cited in Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 52.

¹¹¹ Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 50.

¹¹² Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 51.

¹¹³ NAA Sydney: SP1714/1, N39593, as cited in Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 52.

¹¹⁴ Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 52.

¹¹⁵ Emily Turner-Graham, *Never Forget That You Are a German: Die Brücke, “Deutschtum” and National Socialism in Interwar Australia* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011), 13.

¹¹⁶ Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 53.

¹¹⁷ Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 53.

¹¹⁸ Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 53.

¹¹⁹ Winter, ‘Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,’ 55.

¹²⁰ Christine Winter, ‘The NSDAP Stronghold in Finschhafen, New Guinea,’ in *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect and Aftermath in Germania Pacifica Vol. 4*, eds. Emily Turner-Graham and Christine Winter (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2010), 33.

¹²¹ Winter, ‘The NSDAP Stronghold in Finschhafen, New Guinea,’ 33.

declarations'¹²² and even complained to the Australian government on several occasions about anti-German protests, which he blamed on the Australian Jewish community.¹²³ In one such example, Asmis' influential connections within the government and broader business community ensured that Eric Baume, a popular newspaper editor and broadcaster in late 1930s Australia, was removed from the air after Asmis complained about his critical stance towards Germany.¹²⁴ Such increased and targeted propaganda would certainly have disturbed the local Jewish leadership. In July 1935 Asmis went to Germany for nine months and his deputy, Dr Walter Hellenthal, abandoned his policy, taking instead a more aggressive pro-Nazi *Deutschtum* stance together with the Australian head of the NSDAP, Dr Becker, and other sympathetic local Germans.¹²⁵ This new policy was specifically targeted at local Germans and those of German ancestry who were British subjects in an effort to reconnect them to their German heritage.¹²⁶

In 1938, the Nazi emissary Count Felix von Luckner, a naval hero of the World War One, was sent to Australia and New Zealand among much controversy and publicity.¹²⁷ The Nazis actively promoted the Count's two year pleasure trip around the world, which was designed to disseminate German propaganda and understanding of National Socialism amongst both German and non-German communities overseas.¹²⁸ Evoking nationalist sentiments within the German-born emigrants and those of German ancestry was essential to the Nazi regime's ultimate goal of world domination as local German communities would play a vital part achieving this goal.

Barbara Winter wrote that the outbreak of the war and Australia's participation on Britain's side undermined *Die Brücke's* purpose.¹²⁹ Already in early 1939 the Nazi government was aware of this possibility and in 'May 1939 SS officer Alfred Henschel arrived from Germany

¹²² Konrad Kwiet and Olaf Reinhardt, 'A "Nazi" Assessment of Australian Racial Policy from 1935,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 34 (3) (1988-12), 390.

¹²³ Kwiet and Reinhardt, 'A "Nazi" Assessment of Australian Racial Policy from 1935,' 390.

¹²⁴ Suzanne D Rutland, 'The Jewish Community in New South Wales 1914-1939,' Unpublished MA thesis (The University of Sydney, 1978), 158.

¹²⁵ Winter, 'The NSDAP Stronghold in Finschhafen, New Guinea,' 33.

¹²⁶ Turner-Graham, *Never Forget That You Are a German*, 9.

¹²⁷ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 196.

¹²⁸ James N Bade, 'Count Felix von Luckner's 1938 "Propaganda" Visit to New Zealand and its Consequences,' in *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect and Aftermath in Germania Pacifica Vol. 4*, eds. Emily Turner-Graham and Christine Winter (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2010), 19.

¹²⁹ Winter, 'Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,' 55.

to take over management of the Party, to reorganize it and prepare to take it underground.¹³⁰ This indicated that the Nazi party in Australia was well connected and prepared. In fact, *Die Brücke* was not the only pro-Nazi publication in Australia; the *Queensländer Review* was the preferred mouthpiece of the NSDAP.¹³¹ Local German organisations were often led by local Nazis, such as the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Frauen im Ausland*, the German women's organisation in Sydney, which was led by Walter Hellenthal's wife.¹³² The *Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland* was another organisation, with which Asmis was associated.¹³³

Such meticulous organisation of the German community is not surprising. The Nazis did their homework and found that in 1931, some 16,829 Australians were born in Germany¹³⁴ and that according to the census, some 3,672 *Reichsdeutsche* lived in Australia.¹³⁵ As well, hundreds of thousands of Australians traced their ancestry to Germany, with many more showing an interest in German language and culture.¹³⁶ This was in stark contrast to the 23,533 Jews who lived in Australia in 1933.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, of the 3,672 German citizens living in Australia who were eligible for membership of the Nazi Party, authorities estimated that only 170-180 either joined or were on a waiting list to join,¹³⁸ indicating that most German-Australian's were not as enthusiastic about Nazism as was commonly believed. The Commonwealth Investigation Branch concluded in 1936 that the majority of members of the German Concordia Club in Sydney 'do not subscribe to the Nazi movement, and although they may raise the hand in the Nazi salute when attending functions, the obvious main reason for their attendance is purely entertainment.'¹³⁹ However, Emily Turner-Graham argues that the local Nazi Party 'created and made good use of "front" organisations which were off-shoots of the Party itself and also sympathetic non-Party groups, both of which often possessed a much larger membership than the Party itself and provided excellent opportunity through which to disseminate information.'¹⁴⁰

¹³⁰ Winter, 'Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,' 55.

¹³¹ Winter, 'Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,' 53.

¹³² Winter, 'The NSDAP Stronghold in Finschhafen, New Guinea,' 33.

¹³³ NAA: A367, C67248 Part 1, as cited in Winter, 'Arnold von Skerst: Servant of Two Masters,' 52.

¹³⁴ Carl Rühen, *The Sea Devil: The Controversial Cruise of the Nazi Emissary von Luckner to Australia and New Zealand in 1938* (Singapore: Kangaroo Press, 1988), 16.

¹³⁵ Rühen, *The Sea Devil*, 11.

¹³⁶ Rühen, *The Sea Devil*, 16.

¹³⁷ Charles A Price, 'Jewish Settlers in Australia,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 5, Part 8 (1964), 413.

¹³⁸ Konrad Kwiet, 'Inter-War German Community Life,' in *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins*, ed. James Jupp (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 375.

¹³⁹ Kwiet, 'Inter-War German Community Life,' 374.

¹⁴⁰ Turner-Graham, *Never Forget That You Are a German*, 1-2.

The official dealings of the local Nazi establishment and the support they received from the German government through their local representatives were yet another reason for the Australian Jewish leadership to be concerned. Hearing of experiences overseas, combined with increased local Nazi activities and the failure of the government to act, the Jewish community in Australia had ample grounds for concern by the late 1930s. Further to this, the emergence of Australian home-grown fascist movements added to their predicament.

The New Guard was the most prominent of the fascist movements in Australia. Founded in February 1931¹⁴¹ it initially hoped 'to unite all loyal citizens, irrespective of creed, party, social or financial position.'¹⁴² The New Guard was founded to counter the radical socialism of the New South Wales Labor government led by Jack Lang (1930-1932), which fostered further social insecurity and unrest due to the impact of the Great Depression. The movement was popular and counted 87,000 members by the end of 1931,¹⁴³ including many leading 'professionals, businessmen and churchmen.'¹⁴⁴ Antisemitism was not part of New Guard's initial platform but this changed drastically after its leader, Eric Campbell, visited Germany in 1933,¹⁴⁵ and was evident through the increasingly antisemitic rhetoric found in its newspaper *Liberty*.¹⁴⁶ For example, in June 1933 *Liberty's* editor 'claimed that there was no substantial proof of atrocities committed against Jews [in Germany].'¹⁴⁷ This was in contrast to pre-1933 articles when the New Guard even claimed prominent Jews were part of their support base.¹⁴⁸

As a paramilitary organisation, the New Guard aimed to be 'a body of loyal citizens capable of managing essential services during a period of mass strikes, or in defiance of socialization of industry.'¹⁴⁹ It was vehemently anti-communist and openly advocated for the removal of the New South Wales premier, Jack Lang, to the extent that some federal politicians claimed

¹⁴¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 197.

¹⁴² Phyllis Mitchell, 'Australian Patriots: A Study of the New Guard,' *Australian Economic History Review* Vol. 9, No. 2 (September 1969), 156.

¹⁴³ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 197.

¹⁴⁴ Mitchell, 'Australian Patriots: A Study of the New Guard,' 156.

¹⁴⁵ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 197.

¹⁴⁶ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 198.

¹⁴⁷ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 198.

¹⁴⁸ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 197.

¹⁴⁹ Eric Campbell, *The Rallying Point: My Story of the New Guard* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), 4.

Lang's Labor 'was a subversive movement.'¹⁵⁰ The electoral loss of Lang's government in mid-1932 meant that 'the New Guard's paramilitary vigilance and strident imperial patriotism became increasingly redundant.'¹⁵¹ This contributed to its decline and explains why the government saw no need to take further steps to curtail it.

Eric Campbell's visit to Europe in 1933 seems to have been a turning point for the movement with the rhetoric becoming increasingly antisemitic, following his visits and meetings with fascist movements in London, Germany and Italy. He returned to Australia and quickly incorporated many European fascist elements into his movement,¹⁵² which ended up hurting the New Guard more than assisting it as 'many Anglo-Australians regarded fascism's "foreignness" as a major demerit point.'¹⁵³ The New Guard continued its decline throughout the 1930s but relations with the staff of the German Consulate in Sydney remained cordial and frequent.¹⁵⁴ Campbell also became known throughout New South Wales for his appearances at social events, clubs and societies, broadcasts. There are a number of references to his activities in *Die Brücke*.¹⁵⁵ Despite all this publicity, Campbell was increasingly seen as a maverick by the Australian society by the late 1930s and most had abandoned him by the outbreak of the war in 1939.

An additional cause for Jewish concern was the emergence of the Social Credit Movement and their related antisemitic publications. Founded in the wake of the depression by British Army Major CH Douglas, the movement initially blamed the depression on banks and the 'monopoly over credit.'¹⁵⁶ The movement 'developed anti-Semitic undertones'¹⁵⁷ which was disseminated in Australia by newspapers close to the movement, such as *New English Weekly*, *New Era* and the *New Times*. Blaming global finance, in particular the Jews such as the Rothschild's,¹⁵⁸ who

¹⁵⁰ Parliamentary Debates, Commonwealth of Australia, Vol. 145, 15 November 1934, 312-26, as cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 197.

¹⁵¹ Andrew Moore, 'The Nazification of the New Guard: Colonel Campbell's Fascist Odyssey, 1933-1938,' in *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect and Aftermath in Germania Pacifica Vol. 4*, eds. Emily Turner-Graham and Christine Winter (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2010), 97.

¹⁵² Moore, 'The Nazification of the New Guard,' 101.

¹⁵³ Moore, 'The Nazification of the New Guard,' 102.

¹⁵⁴ Moore, 'The Nazification of the New Guard,' 103.

¹⁵⁵ Moore, 'The Nazification of the New Guard,' 104-106.

¹⁵⁶ *The New Era: Advocating the Douglas Credit Proposals Throughout Australasia*, 7 June 1932, as cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 198.

¹⁵⁷ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 198.

¹⁵⁸ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 199.

allegedly controlled the global financial systems through their banking activities, antisemitic articles by Major Douglas were published as well as the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion.'¹⁵⁹

As the war progressed, and some of the Australian fascist movements finally collapsed, a new threat to the Jewish community emerged in November 1941, when the Australia First Movement was formed, ironically by three former communists: Percy R Stephensen, Adela Pankhurst Walsh and Leslie Kevin Cahill.¹⁶⁰ The movement emerged from strong anti-British feelings and Australian nationalism expressed through the publication of *The Publicist*, established by Percy Stephenson in 1936 and funded by William Miles. It became increasingly fascist in its orientation and continued publication until 1942.¹⁶¹ Following Pearl Harbour and accusations of collaboration with the Japanese, the leadership was interned in March 1942, which meant the end to 'a movement that barely had time to recruit more than eighty members.'¹⁶² The movement 'adopted anti-Semitism as a significant part of their platforms'¹⁶³ and was 'concerned with the development of a spirit of nationalism in Australia and was distinctly anti-British.'¹⁶⁴ Rutland stated that unlike 'the Right-wing movements which developed in Australia as a response to the Depression, the Australia First Movement was open about its racist policies which were a direct challenge to Australian Jewry.'¹⁶⁵

It follows, that antisemitic publications during the 1930s were steadily increasing and open and public antisemitism permeated the press and government. A similar rise in antisemitism was noted during the depression of the 1890s, except that in the 1890s this did not lead to any organised political and paramilitary movements but was limited to a few newspapers and some individual politicians. The rise of Hitler and Mussolini and their initial success in transforming Europe from poverty to economic and military superpowers gave increasing momentum to local fascists and antisemites to unite in order to orchestrate a similar transformation in post-depression Australia. The antisemitism espoused by these movements would seem to have been a by-product copied along with other European fascist beliefs and adapted to local needs. All

¹⁵⁹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 199.

¹⁶⁰ Georgina Fitzpatrick, "'A Fellow of Slogans and Attitudes': Leslie Cahill, National Socialism and the Australia First Movement," in *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of its Effect and Aftermath in Germania Pacifica Vol. 4*, eds. Emily Turner-Graham and Christine Winter (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 2010), 115.

¹⁶¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 200.

¹⁶² Fitzpatrick, "'A Fellow of Slogans and Attitudes': Leslie Cahill,' 115.

¹⁶³ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 200.

¹⁶⁴ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 200.

¹⁶⁵ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 201.

this was seemingly done under the watchful eyes of the Lyons government which nevertheless did not wish to intervene as these movements were seen as a bulwark against communism.

5.4 The Beginning of Jewish Communal Organisation

The Australian Jewish community was poorly organised to meet these various challenges. There was no national body to represent the Jewish community, and even at state level there was little effective representation. The 1920s can be characterised as a period of cordial and harmonious relations between Australia's small Jewish community and their Christian counterparts, but this was to change in the 1930s. In the 1920s, the Jewish community enjoyed status within society having produced widely respected public figures such as Sir John Monash and Sir Isaac Isaacs. Lesser-known personalities such as Dr Fanny Reading worked tirelessly to improve the image the Jewish community enjoyed in Australian society. Despite this, there was an awareness of the dangers of antisemitism and the established, conservative Anglo-Jewish leadership welcomed immigration restrictions introduced in 1928. With the impact of the Great Depression, beginning in 1929, and the emergence of Nazi ideology, this situation changed in the 1930s.

As discussed earlier, up until the 1920s, Australia's Jewish community was almost entirely represented by the rabbis of the individual congregations. By the end of the 1920s, this communal leadership role had shifted initially towards lay personalities such as Dr Fanny Reading and Sir John Monash and later by lay Boards of Deputies, not always to the pleasure of the rabbis who felt their power was threatened. In Victoria, the Melbourne Jewish Advisory Board was already formed in 1921 to facilitate and co-ordinate 'religious, educational, social and cultural activities,'¹⁶⁶ aiming to represent 'the community as a whole.'¹⁶⁷ Initially, the Melbourne Jewish Advisory board only consisted of representatives of Melbourne's three main congregations and therefore did not accurately represent the community as a whole. In fact, it seemed to consolidate power within the congregations rather than anything else so that two years later, in 1923, the Judean League was formed seeking 'to combine all the main Jewish organisations in Melbourne.'¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation resigned from the Melbourne Jewish Advisory Board in 1930 as it felt that too much power

¹⁶⁶ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 164.

¹⁶⁷ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 164.

¹⁶⁸ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 165.

was given to the two congregations south of the Yarra River, thereby highlighting the fractured nature of Melbourne Jewish community.¹⁶⁹

A similar attempt to form an umbrella body for the Jewish community failed in Sydney in the 1920s.¹⁷⁰ The idea was first floated by the Great Synagogue in 1921 and conferences were held in 1923 and 1927 but the attempt failed because ‘the suburban congregations believed the proposed constitution would give the Great Synagogue undue influence.’¹⁷¹ Therefore, whilst the Jewish community in Australia was growing and diversifying, its representation to the non-Jewish world mostly remained the domain of the individual congregations and their religious ministers during the 1920s. Despite the emergence of openly antisemitic movements, the increased antisemitic rhetoric in the press and the lack of interest by the Australian government in these Jewish problems, there was little change in the limited form of representation in the 1930s. However, the Anglo-Jewish leadership was very conservative in its approach to the government and believed in maintaining a low profile.

In the early years of the war, the narrow, Anglo-Jewish representation of the community prompted demands for change from East European Jews and refugees. They were increasingly alienated from the leadership of the Jewish community, which in the 1930s in both Sydney and Melbourne was still largely dominated by the established Anglo-Jewish leadership from the Great Synagogue and the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.

This sense of alienation was expressed most strongly in the ‘Open letter to the Jews of New South Wales’ by the 18 signatories published in March 1942. The signatories were highly critical of the unrepresentative nature of the New South Wales Jewish Advisory Board, and strongly advocated constitution changes to bring the Advisory Board into line with the Board of Deputies in Britain and South Africa. They wrote: ‘It is now clear that a democratically elected Jewish body, based on universal Jewish franchise, is the only means of awakening our people to the responsibilities and obligations that face them.’¹⁷² This letter proved controversial but following further meetings and the emerging evidence of the catastrophe facing European Jewry by late 1942, the Advisory Board finally agreed in March 1943 to establish a Jewish

¹⁶⁹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 165.

¹⁷⁰ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 165.

¹⁷¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 165.

¹⁷² *Australian Jewish Forum*, April 1942, as cited in Suzanne D Rutland and Sophie L Caplan, *With One Voice: A History of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies* (Sydney: AJHS, 1998), 13.

Board of Deputies. This was only achieved in 1945 after the war. East European Jewish personalities were central to the organisational changes that took place in Sydney in the 1940s, with Dr Maurice Laserson being one of the central figures. In addition to the campaign for the democratisation of the Jewish Advisory Board, the East European Jewish leaders, such as Dr Maurice Laserson, still turned to their Christian colleagues for help in responding to the catastrophe of European Jewry.

5.5 Australian Christian Responses to the Rise of Nazism in Germany

Christian responses included both those of the general public, given its Christian majority, and also those of the specific churches. In response to the Nazi rise to power in Germany in 1933 and their treatment of Jews, protests were held in Sydney and Newcastle, which were attended by both Jews and non-Jews alike.¹⁷³ One such mixed meeting of Jews and non-Jews hosted by the Jewish community was held a few weeks after Hitler's accession to power in 1933. The assembly, numbering some 2,000 people,¹⁷⁴ protested against the treatment of Jews in Germany, adopting a proposal that the conduct of the German Government 'arrested the attention and, demanded the moral judgment of mankind [...] The very conscience of civilisation was appalled at [Germany's] exhibition of racial and religious hatred in the punitive measures employed against the hapless Jewish community in Germany.'¹⁷⁵ Speakers at that meeting included the President of the Council of Churches, Reverend JH Cain, and messages of sympathy were read out from church leaders including Melbourne's Catholic Archbishop Mannix, and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly, Right Reverend RW McLean.¹⁷⁶ In attendance were also the President of the Baptist Union of Victoria and the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne.¹⁷⁷ The meeting heard reports that the:

Declared object of Nazi policy [was to] eliminate Jews from intellectual economic and political life of Germany. Official decrees and administrative acts have resulted in deprivation of appointments and professional status of a large number of doctors, lawyers, civil servants, university and other teachers. Jews are being driven by

¹⁷³ AA: ACT CRS A 981, Germany 43 old part II, Resolutions dated 5 May 1933 and 18 May 1933, as cited in Kwiet, 'Responses of Australian Jewry's leadership to the Holocaust,' 203.

¹⁷⁴ 'Persecution of German Jews,' *HS*, 5 May 1933, 4.

¹⁷⁵ 'Persecution of German Jews,' *HS*, 5 May 1933, 4.

¹⁷⁶ 'Persecution of German Jews,' *HS*, 5 May 1933, 4.

¹⁷⁷ William D Rubinstein, 'The Attitude of the Australian Jewish Community and of non-Jewish Opinion Leaders to the Rise of Nazi Germany and Nazi Anti-Semitism in 1933,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 12, Part 1 (1993), 109.

administrative pressure from all positions: — business journalism, sport. [There were] Wholesale dismissals [of] Jewish employees.¹⁷⁸

Similar meetings were held in Sydney, where the Anglican Bishop Coadjutor, Sydney James Kirby, moved that a resolution condemning the Nazi's persecution of Jews should be forwarded to the government.¹⁷⁹ In Brisbane, the Jewish community organised a protest meeting with the support of the Lord Mayor which 'filled Brisbane's City Hall to capacity with Jews and non-Jews alike',¹⁸⁰ and where Catholic Archbishop, James Duhig, stated that Nazi antisemitism was a 'disgrace to a barbaric age.'¹⁸¹ The Church of Christ condemned Germany's treatment of Jews with a unanimous resolution passed at its convention in Hobart in April 1933.¹⁸²

Even before World War Two, the situation of Jews in Germany was well-known in Australia, and churchmen such as Melbourne's Archbishop Daniel Mannix were supportive of Jewish refugees. Mannix 'pledged his support for "any scheme that will help the refugees and wipe out a stain upon our common humanity"'¹⁸³ Indeed, Hilary Rubinstein wrote that 'Some of Australian Jewry's staunchest friends have been Christian clergymen, particularly during the Nazi period when outstanding figures such as Reverend Burgoyne Chapman, Bishop Pilcher and Archbishop Mannix championed the cause of the refugees.'¹⁸⁴ Mannix was a member of the Victorian chapter of the Australia-Palestine Committee, along with Victorian Premier Sir Albert Arthur Dunstan and Melbourne's Lord Mayor Thomas Nettlefold.¹⁸⁵ Mannix welcomed the announcement by the Australian government in December 1938, that 15,000 would be admitted to Australia in the years following, hoping these would 'integrate smoothly',¹⁸⁶ and be treated 'kindly'.¹⁸⁷

¹⁷⁸ 'Persecution of German Jews,' *HS*, 5 May 1933, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Hilary L Rubinstein, 'William Cooper and Kristallnacht: Setting the Record Straight,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 24, Part 1 (2018), 124.

¹⁸⁰ Jennifer Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland*, (Brisbane: Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies, 2016), 36

¹⁸¹ *HS*, 16 May 1933, as cited in Rubinstein, 'The Attitude of the Australian Jewish Community and of non-Jewish Opinion Leaders to the Rise of Nazi Germany and Nazi Anti-Semitism in 1933,' 110.

¹⁸² Rubinstein, 'William Cooper and Kristallnacht: Setting the Record Straight,' 119-120.

¹⁸³ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria*, 171.

¹⁸⁴ See: EV Collocott 'Sons of the Dispersion,' *Australian Quarterly*, September 1947, as cited in Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 243.

¹⁸⁵ Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 234.

¹⁸⁶ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume I* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 506.

¹⁸⁷ *Advocate*, 8 December 1938, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 506.

Mannix's support for Jewish refugees was not entirely aligned with the stance of the Catholic Church at the time. Indeed, after the announcement, the *Catholic Advocate* warned in an editorial that 'if the present policy of admitting large numbers of Jewish immigrants is continued, we are likely to be confronted with a rapid increase in antisemitism.'¹⁸⁸ It went on to say that the characteristics of Jewish culture, such as Jews being not just a religion but a culture on to their own, was the source of 'friction between the Jew and his hosts throughout the ages, and which has constantly brought tragedy to the Jews...'¹⁸⁹ Mannix's sympathy also extended to the idea of establishing a Jewish refugees' colony in the Kimberley region. In a letter to Dr Steinberg, the initiator of the Kimberley Scheme, Mannix stressed:

I share your distress and horror at the treatment to which the Jewish people have been subjected and I sympathise with you in your effort to do something for the thousands of refugees scattered over Europe I hope that the people and the Government of Australia recognising the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man will give sympathetic consideration to the proposals which you have been authorised to place before them. You have all my good wishes for the success of any scheme that will help the refugees and wipe out a stain upon our common humanity.¹⁹⁰

Mannix also repeated similar views in public addresses. He told participants at a Church fete of reading 'harrowing accounts of the dreadful treatment meted out to the Jews in more than one country in Europe,'¹⁹¹ and emphasised that 'all Catholics were in complete sympathy with the Jews in their sufferings, and were anxious to see whatever could be done to mitigate their sufferings.'¹⁹² He welcomed moves for the Commonwealth Government to receive 'some thousands of the Jewish and other refugees within the next two or three years,'¹⁹³ in a way which would not lead to local white unemployment or worsened local economic conditions.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ *Advocate*, 24 November 1938, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History Vol. I*, 506.

¹⁸⁹ *Advocate*, 24 November 1938, as cited in Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History Vol. I*, 506.

¹⁹⁰ 'Jewish Colony,' *The Argus*, 19 December 1939, 4.

¹⁹¹ 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Age*, 3 December 1938, 32; 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Argus*, 3 December 1938, 7.

¹⁹² 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Age*, 3 December 1938, 32; 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Argus*, 3 December 1938, 7.

¹⁹³ 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Age*, 3 December 1938, 32; 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Argus*, 3 December 1938, 7.

¹⁹⁴ 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Age*, 3 December 1938, 32; 'Dr Mannix's Sympathy,' *The Argus*, 3 December 1938, 7.

No comments were found that could be attributed to Cardinal Norman Gilroy, who became Sydney's Catholic Archbishop in March 1940, but who had been coadjutor to Archbishop Michael Kelly from 1937.¹⁹⁵ Anna Rosenbaum wrote that in Australia, the *Catholic Press*' main concern 'was stopping the advance of communist ideology'¹⁹⁶ and that events, such as the crisis in Czechoslovakia in September 1938, were not even mentioned by the Catholic Archbishops; nor did they mention any other of 'Nazi Germany's aggression.'¹⁹⁷ Indeed, the *Catholic Press* 'did not condemn Nazi Germany.'¹⁹⁸ On the other hand, Australia's leading Catholic newspaper, the *Catholic Freeman Journal*, 'condemned Hitler's treatment of Jews, pointing out that Nazism, fascism and communism denied people their personal freedom.'¹⁹⁹ Rosenbaum concluded that 'on the whole, the Catholic Church in Australia was limited in its appraisal of the international situation and failed to recognize the threat posed by Hitler in the initial stages of his conquest of Europe.'²⁰⁰ William Rubinstein agreed that 'the Catholic church notably failed to oppose Nazism with all its vigour and only fitfully condemned Nazi anti-Semitism.'²⁰¹

Rachael Kohn argued that during the 1930s 'Among Australian Catholics, the tendency to see the Jews as the chief trouble makers was very pronounced,'²⁰² because Jews were associated with communism,²⁰³ control of global finance²⁰⁴ and freemasonry.²⁰⁵ At times, Anglicans also shared these beliefs as well but they were most pronounced amongst Catholics,²⁰⁶ which may explain the lack of reporting on Jewish issues in Europe as well as the tardiness in the Church's response during this period. In fact, the Catholic press was much more concerned to emphasise the suffering of Catholics in Europe rather than the suffering of Jews.²⁰⁷

¹⁹⁵ TP Boland, 'Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gilroy-sir-norman-thomas-10308/text18241>, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed online 1 October 2021.

¹⁹⁶ Anna Rosenbaum, *The Safe House Down Under: Jewish Refugees from Czechoslovakia in Australia 1938-1944* (New York: Peter Lang: 2017), 114.

¹⁹⁷ Rosenbaum, *The Safe House Down Under*, 114.

¹⁹⁸ Rosenbaum, *The Safe House Down Under*, 114.

¹⁹⁹ *Catholic Freeman Journal*, 8 September 1938, as cited in Rosenbaum, *The Safe House Down Under*, 115.

²⁰⁰ *Catholic Freeman Journal*, 13 October 1938, as cited in Rosenbaum, *The Safe House Down Under*, 116.

²⁰¹ Rubinstein, 'The Attitude of the Australian Jewish Community and of non-Jewish Opinion Leaders to the Rise of Nazi Germany and Nazi Anti-Semitism in 1933,' 109.

²⁰² Rachael Kohn, 'The Catholic Press in Victoria and Jewish Issues, 1933-45,' *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1991), 61.

²⁰³ Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 9.

²⁰⁴ Kohn, 'The Catholic Press in Victoria and Jewish Issues, 1933-45,' 61.

²⁰⁵ Kohn, 'The Catholic Press in Victoria and Jewish Issues, 1933-45,' 62.

²⁰⁶ Kohn, 'The Catholic Press in Victoria and Jewish Issues, 1933-45,' 62.

²⁰⁷ Kohn, 'The Catholic Press in Victoria and Jewish Issues, 1933-45,' 65.

Mannix was thus a rare exception amongst Catholic clergymen in his pro-refugee sentiments. Some Protestants echoed these, such as Constance Duncan, a Wesleyan who, in the course of an address at Melbourne's Wesley Church, made an appeal for those refugees who had decided to settle in Australia. He noted that many of them had found it difficult to obtain employment, despite being 'people of high calibre [who] would prove loyal, hard-working citizens.'²⁰⁸ These sentiments were also echoed by Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Howard Mowll²⁰⁹ and Reverend AR Ebbs of St Matthew's Anglican Church in Manly even went as far as asking the Commonwealth government to accept 100,000 Jewish refugees over five years.²¹⁰

5.6 Conclusion

The responses of Australia's Christian denominations to the rise of Nazism in Germany were, therefore, mixed. It cannot be denied that genuine concern existed in the various churches for the safety of Europe's Jewry, but the full extent of the danger seems to have alluded all but a few notable exceptions, such as Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher. The Catholic church in particular, seemed disinterested for the most part in the plight of European Jewry during this time. The lacklustre response of Australia's Christian leaders to the growth in popular antisemitism that emerged in Australia fuelled by European fascism, combined with the increasingly combative attitude of the government towards Jewish migration, gravely concerned the Australian Jewish community. This was one of the first times that Australian Jewry seemed to be almost on their own in combating a rise in antisemitism. In previous instances, philosemitic gentiles would come to their assistance, as was evidenced during the period of the *Church Acts*. This was not a slow, but a rapid decline in relations given that the Jewish community celebrated the peak of its harmonious integration successes a decade earlier, in the form of the key roles of Sir John Monash in the AIF and Sir Isaac Isaacs being appointed as the first Australian-born Governor General.

Despite this mixed picture of the Christian churches' reaction to the plight of European Jewry, efforts were made to bring the Christian churches more formally on board in terms of combatting the antisemitism and Nazi movements in Australia, as well as creating better awareness of what was happening to European Jewry during the war years. This was

²⁰⁸ 'IN THE CHURCHES,' *The Age*, 24 Jul 1939, 13.

²⁰⁹ 'Vulnerability to Invasion,' *AJH*, 2 May 1940, 3.

²¹⁰ Lee, 'Rescue or Rhetoric? Australian Jewry's Reactions During the Holocaust,' 283.

spearheaded by the newly appointed chief minister to the Great Synagogue, Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, who assumed this position in 1940. The Anglican Church was more open to dialogue with the Jewish leadership, particularly through the efforts of Bishop Pilcher. The urgency of emerging knowledge of the Holocaust meant that Pilcher and Porush were involved in the same forums due to their shared interest in combating antisemitism. This eventually led to the arrangement of a major protest meeting in Sydney in 1942 organised by Laserson, when the decision to form the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

THE CREATION OF THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

6.1 Background to the Council's Establishment

The establishment of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews was a result of the impact that increasing antisemitism had on Australia's Jewish community and of the Holocaust. Its founding was no simple matter, however, but rather the result of the unprecedented effort and the commitment of a diverse array of individuals and groups within the Jewish and Christian communities. As this chapter will demonstrate, within each community, the establishment of such a Council had both its supporters and detractors. It was not a given that these communities could come together, but the confluence of increased political and popular antisemitism alongside the determination of key individuals and groups to address these concerns, would ultimately ensure its establishment.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the friendship between Rabbi Dr Israel Porush and Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher would prove central to its success. Porush, one of the key persons involved in the Council, commented that:

The violent manifestations of anti-Semitism, especially in Germany during the Hitler regime, stirred the conscience of many righteous Christians and led, at first in the United States, then in Great Britain, and some years later on the European Continent, to an organized corporate interfaith-voice to denounce this scourge of humanity and to work for greater understanding between Christians and Jews, to the end of preventing a resurgence of this evil in the future.¹

On the one hand, Rabbi Porush's personal philosophy of striving to live within the modern and predominantly non-Jewish world as an Orthodox Jew and to foster cordial relations with the non-Jewish community was a key factor. On the other hand, there was a movement within the Jewish community to seek assistance in combating antisemitism from non-Jews, which led to the establishment of the United Emergency Committee at the same time as the idea of creating

¹ Israel Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 6, Part 4 (1968), 181.

a Council of Christians and Jews was first endorsed publicly in November 1942.² These factors contributed to Rabbi Porush's initial push to establish a Council in early 1942.

Whilst Porush admitted that for the most part, the Jewish experience in Australia 'was a happy one,'³ he recognised that:

.... in the early years of the Second World War, partly as a result of constant anti-Semitic propaganda from outside, notably from Nazi and Fascist quarters [...] and partly because of the adverse military situation of the Allies, a critical attitude emerged against the European newcomers to Australia, who were then mostly Jews.⁴

Depictions of Jews drew on antisemitic stereotypes, highlighting their so-called undesirable traits as 'unpleasant or objectionable'⁵ as well as the economic consequences of the arrival of Jewish refugees.⁶ This antisemitism manifested itself in some popular newspapers as well as in some government policies, notably the strict quota affecting the number of Jewish refugees permitted to enter Australia and, with the outbreak of war, the prohibition of refugees joining the military.⁷ Rutland stated that 'the government's fears obscured its ability to perceive the possible beneficial contribution of the refugees.'⁸ As a result of the anti-Jewish refugee hysteria and these discriminatory policies, 'the Jewish community was rather perturbed at these signs of intolerance.'⁹ The hysteria of the community was further fuelled with the internment of German and Austrian Jewish refugees in 1940, alongside German and Italian fascists.¹⁰

With this increase in antisemitism, the period in the early 1940s marked a low-point in Christian-Jewish relations in Australia. It coincided with news of the Holocaust gradually emerging, thereby amplifying the need to act. The establishment of the Council as well as various other organisations, such as the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry

² Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 222.

³ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

⁴ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

⁵ Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust: 1933-45* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 81.

⁶ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust: 1933-45*, 81.

⁷ Israel Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi* (Melbourne: Special Publication of the AJHS (Vic), 1992), 47.

⁸ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 179.

⁹ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

¹⁰ Konrad Kwiet, "'Be Patient and Reasonable!'" The Internment of German-Jewish Refugees in Australia,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1985-04), 64.

(UECEJ), was designed to turn the tide and enlighten the Australian public with the aim to 'combat religious and racial intolerance.'¹¹ Its establishment filled a void that existed at this time, with the Christian-Jewish leadership united in its aim to protect the vulnerable Jewish minority from antisemitism.

6.2 Formation of the Council

There were various factors that led to the formation of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) in 1942, even though Rabbi Israel Porush's early efforts did not meet with success. Porush was one of the founders of the CCJ and he wrote a tribute to it, published in 1968. He attributed his belief for the need of such a Council to various factors that existed in Australia during the course of World War Two. In particular, he noted 'constant anti-Semitic propaganda [and] the adverse military situation of the Allies'¹² which contributed to a 'critical attitude'¹³ towards refugees, notably Jewish refugees, through the press.¹⁴ Porush mentioned that whilst certain political groups and Church leaders did sympathise with the increasingly distressed Australian Jewish community, most notably Bishop Pilcher, it was nevertheless necessary to establish a more formalised channel, 'a body that would represent and further the spirit of brotherhood so badly needed, and would, whenever confronted, denounce collectively the iniquity of racial or religious intolerance.'¹⁵ This notion of brotherhood was strongly promoted by Porush in his sermons and public addresses.

According to his account, in early 1942 he approached 'several Church leaders suggesting the formation of an inter-denominational Council. The response was at that time not encouraging, not for lack of sympathy but because of the novelty of the proposition, and the matter was dropped.'¹⁶ Indeed, Sydney's Catholic Archbishop, Cardinal Norman Gilroy was noted as 'not able to see [his] way to agreeing to the formation of such a Council.'¹⁷

¹¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 222.

¹² Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

¹³ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 47.

¹⁴ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 47.

¹⁵ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

¹⁶ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

¹⁷ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, undated but definitely prior to October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

It was only after a similar Council was established in Britain in September 1942, comprised of high ranking Church leaders, that Porush renewed his quest for the establishment of a similar council, this time with more success.¹⁸ He stressed that the existence of such a Council in Britain with its membership representing a broad spectrum of Christian denominations, as well as the publicity this generated internationally, was indicative of the needs for such a council to be formed in New South Wales. This council was to be inter-denominational and ‘for the purpose of making joint pronouncements from time to time on matters of general religious and public interest.’¹⁹ Porush also advocated for the establishment of the Council with other church leaders in addition to the Anglican and Catholic denominations, such as Reverend Mark Alston McAlpine, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church.²⁰

Gilroy seemed to require the most convincing on this issue as a follow-up letter was sent by Porush soon after, advising him of a ‘mass meeting’²¹ to be held at Sydney Town Hall on the 1942 anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. This rally was organised through the initiative of Dr Maurice Laserson, the representative of the World Jewish Congress in Sydney at the time, as well as the first director of the Bureau of Jewish Affairs, which had been established in July 1942 by the New South Wales Jewish Advisory Board, the roof body of the state’s Jewish community, to combat antisemitism.²² Laserson worked hard for a period of two months to ensure that the rally was effective.²³ He influenced²⁴ Sydney’s Lord Mayor, Alderman Stanley Sadler Crick, to convene and preside over this meeting,²⁵ who in turn sought widespread denominational support for the rally. Porush’s letter hinted to Gilroy that this was an opportunity for him to gain mass publicity and somewhat forced his agreement to attend since the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Howard Mowll, had already agreed to be a speaker.²⁶ Porush further advocated to Gilroy the proposition of forming a Council and attached a

¹⁸ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 183.

¹⁹ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, undated but definitely prior to October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁰ Israel Porush, Letter to Mark Alston McAlpine, 17 November 1942. RIP Collection Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²¹ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, 21 October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²² Suzanne D Rutland, ‘1942: What was known Down Under, at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?’ in *The End of 1942: A Turning Point in World War II and Comprehension of the Final Solution?* eds. Dina Porat and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Yashem, 2017), 266-268.

²³ Dr Maurice Laserson, Letter to Rabbi Irving Miller, New York, 15 November 1942, and Dr Nahum Goldmann, 11 December 1942. ‘WJC,’ File AB134, AJHSA.

²⁴ Dr Maurice Laserson, Letter to Rabbi Irving Miller, New York, 15 November 1942, and Dr Nahum Goldmann, 11 December 1942. ‘WJC,’ File AB134, AJHSA.

²⁵ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, 21 October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, 21 October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

memorandum of a proposed draft constitution for the Council in his letter. The pressure worked and although he did not attend,²⁷ Gilroy agreed to be one of the two conveners of the rally along with Mowll²⁸ and to become a member of the Council albeit he later decided that the Catholic Church was to be represented by a delegate, Father Noel Hehir, then rector of St Ignatius College, Riverview.²⁹

The rally was a success, attracting an audience of 2000,³⁰ and attended by many prominent dignitaries from all ranks of society.³¹ Messages of support were received from the Prime Minister, John Curtin, and the Minister of External Affairs, Herbert Vere Evatt.³² The Premier of New South Wales was represented by state parliamentarian Carlo Camillo Lazzarini.³³ In attendance were also the Consul-General for Poland and various members of parliament.³⁴ Speakers included Camilla Wedgeworth, a passionate advocate for the Jewish refugees and Jewish rights in Palestine.³⁵ It was this rally, which ultimately convinced all the key persons involved, that a Council was necessary, desirable and in the interests of all major denominations and a resolution was moved by Mowll and seconded by Porush to establish the Council of Christians and Jews.³⁶ The resolution referred to both Jews and Christians, but it specifically condemned ‘the treatment of the Jewish people by the Nazis’ and stressed that:

Hitler has made it his goal to exterminate the Jewish people, and has turned the Jewish centres of habitation in Europe into vast concentration camps, scenes of untold anguish and instruments of death to thousands of defenceless human beings.³⁷

The resolution appealed to the United Nations to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes would face trial and appropriate punishment, expressed its opposition to antisemitism, and

²⁷ Rutland, ‘1942: What Was Known Down Under at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?’, 269.

²⁸ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 49.

²⁹ Norman Gilroy, Letter to Israel Porush, 31 October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰ Dr Maurice Laserson, Letter to Rabbi Irving Miller, New York, 15 November 1942, and Dr Nahum Goldmann, 11 December 1942. ‘WJC,’ File AB134, AJHSA.

³¹ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 186.

³² Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 49.

³³ Rutland, ‘1942: What Was Known Down Under at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?’, 268.

³⁴ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 186.

³⁵ See Charlotte Car-Gregg and Pam Maclean, “‘A Mouse Nibbling at a Mountain’: The Problem of Australian Refugee Policy and the Work of Camilla Wedgwood,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1985), 49–60.

³⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 49.

³⁷ ‘Public Protest Meeting: Preliminary Report,’ *HS*, 12 November 1942, 5.

supported 'the building of a Jewish homeland in Palestine in conformity with the just claims of equal rights for all peoples.'³⁸

The decision to establish the CCJ at the rally was an important development and Mowll took credit in the press coverage of the event for inviting 'representatives of all churches to form a council to combat religious and racial intolerance'³⁹ in the wake of the Town Hall rally. Porush's first attempt to form a Council in early 1942 may have failed to gain sufficient momentum because the true extent of the genocide occurring in Europe was not widely reported in Australia at that time. This changed over the course of 1942 leading many Christian leaders to sympathise with the plight of European Jewry as a result of Hitler's policies.⁴⁰ Whilst Australians, as elsewhere, were ill informed about the Holocaust in the early years of the war, from '1942 onward readers in Australia were informed about the persecution and murder of the Jews at regular intervals'⁴¹ and Porush made his congregants aware of the extent of the calamity in his *Tisha B'Av* sermon in 1942⁴² with eerie accuracy as will be discussed in Chapter 7. In June 1942, Melbourne's *Argus* newspaper first mentioned gas chambers and reported comprehensively that 'More than 700,000 Polish Jews have been slaughter by the Germans in the greatest massacre in history.'⁴³ The persecution of Jews in Europe was indeed widely reported throughout 1942 in Australia,⁴⁴ both in the Jewish and non-Jewish press and the atrocities were confirmed to the Australian government by the British Foreign Office.⁴⁵ The rally at the Sydney Town Hall organised by Dr Laserson and supported by Mowll on the anniversary of *Kristallnacht* 1942 can, therefore, be seen as a tipping point for Australian clergy that something needed to be done, leading to the establishment of the CCJ as a formal communication channel to advocate on behalf of refugees. Thus, the decision to establish the Council in November 1942 was motivated by concerns relating to the plight of European Jewry. As well, as a result of the Australian government's refugee policies, there was a need

³⁸ 'Public Protest Meeting: Preliminary Report,' *HS*, 12 November 1942, 5.

³⁹ 'Nazi Brutality Condemned,' *SMH*, 11 November 1942, 10.

⁴⁰ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 181.

⁴¹ Rutland, '1942: What was known Down Under, at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?,' 257.

⁴² "'It's a Time of Trouble Unto Jacob": From a Sermon by Rabbi Dr Porush on Shabbat Last,' *HS*, July 23 1942, 4, as cited in Rutland, '1942: What Was Known Down Under, at the Edge of the Diaspora?,' 260.

⁴³ *The Argus*, 26 June 1942, 3, as quoted in Rutland, '1942: What was known Down Under, at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?,' 257.

⁴⁴ Rutland, '1942: What was known Down Under, at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?,' 258.

⁴⁵ Rodney Gouttman, 'Not our Problem: Australia and the Genocide of European Jewry,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 24, Part 2 (2019), 363.

for a united Christian-Jewish voice in the face of increasing antisemitism and the difficulties experienced by Jewish refugees and internees in Australia.⁴⁶

The same meeting also established the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry.⁴⁷ This committee was led by Dr John Machover, chairman of the Political Department of the Zionist Federation of Australia and of the United Emergency Committee (1942), which 'sought to enlighten public opinion on the Jewish tragedy in Europe and the need to build a Jewish Homeland to rescue the survivors.'⁴⁸ Machover had also been active in the organisation of the protest meeting and sought to continue his role as a Zionist leader. Many such organisations were created during the war to assist European Jewry and others, including the Australian Federation of Polish Jewry, the Jewish People's Fund, the Jewish People's Clothing Fund and the United Jewish Overseas Relief Fund (UJORF).⁴⁹ Importantly, the committee included many prominent advocates of European Jewry and refugees,⁵⁰ both Jewish and non-Jewish. Porush was involved in its publicity-subcommittee and Professor Julius Stone was another activist 'whose intellectual gifts added great weight to the Committee's campaign of radio broadcasts, newspaper articles and intercession sermons.'⁵¹ Suzanne Rutland claimed that the creation of the CCJ at the behest of Porush was 'One outcome of this movement.'⁵² The other prominent member of the UECEJ and the CCJ was Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher.⁵³

Just like the UECEJ, the Council was a channel with high-profile representation and was much needed at the time since the lack 'of any Jewish roof body or other group specifically responsible for the reception of Jewish refugees'⁵⁴ meant that the press coverage which the plight of European Jewry received did not sway the 'traditional attitude of Australia'⁵⁵ towards refugees. It was only in August 1944 with the establishment of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry⁵⁶ that Australia's Jewish community was able to present a united voice

⁴⁶ William Simpson, 'Note of conversation with Rabbi Dr Israel Porush (Chief Rabbi of Sydney, Australia),' 28 June 1955. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁴⁷ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 221.

⁴⁸ Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press: 1977), 181.

⁴⁹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 221.

⁵⁰ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 222.

⁵¹ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 222.

⁵² Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 222.

⁵³ UECEJ Minutes, 4 February 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

⁵⁴ William D Rubinstein, 'Australia and the Refugee Jews of Europe, 1933-1954: A Dissenting View,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 10, Part 6 (1989), 514.

⁵⁵ Rubinstein, 'Australia and the Refugee Jews of Europe, 1933-1954: A Dissenting View,' 514.

⁵⁶ Rubinstein, 'Australia and the Refugee Jews of Europe, 1933-1954: A Dissenting View,' 514.

regarding key issues facing the Jewish community, particularly the issues of post-war Jewish immigration and the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, to the attention of the federal government. Prior to this, community representation at the federal level was left to the individual Jewish ministers, led by Rabbi Porush in his capacity as chief minister of Sydney's Great Synagogue. Porush's push for the establishment of the CCJ was as a result of his recognition:

... that the age-old teaching of the Church concerning the guilt of the Jewish people had indoctrinated many with a hostile attitude upon which more hateful propaganda could be built. There was a debt to be paid, and the first step was to denounce the scourge of racial and religious hatred, and then to work together for greater understanding to the end of preventing a resurgence of this evil in the future.⁵⁷

Given the lack of a united Jewish community representation at the federal level, it is evident that Porush, as a member of the clergy, turned to his colleagues in other denominations for assistance. The CCJ's high profile members (such as Archbishop Mowll) gave it credibility and Porush referred to them as 'righteous Christians.'⁵⁸ The fact that the Council of Christians and Jews united both the Jewish Orthodox and Reform communities also meant that, unwittingly, it was perhaps the first time that an organised body had come into existence that represented all Jewish community interests. Porush enjoyed good relations with Sydney's Reform Rabbi Schenk, but this was not the case with Schenk's successor, Rabbi Rudolf Brasch,⁵⁹ who assumed the position in 1949 when Schenk and his wife Faye decided to return to the United States.

It is clear that Porush recognised and valued the importance of his contacts with the Christian clergy. He wrote that 'Many of my contacts were with the Christian clergy'⁶⁰ indicating that he always enjoyed cordial relations with his Christian colleagues as 'Personal acquaintance with the Church leaders was of the utmost importance in those days and the Rabbi's public role was much more pronounced.'⁶¹ This is further evidence that he actively leveraged his contacts

⁵⁷ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 160.

⁵⁸ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 160.

⁵⁹ Suzanne D Rutland, 'The History of the Jews in Australia, 1945-1960,' Unpublished PhD thesis, (The University of Sydney, 1990), 255.

⁶⁰ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 185.

⁶¹ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 185.

with Christian leaders to advance Jewish community interests during this period of intense need for the Jewish people. He also leveraged his position in the media as a rabbi's 'views on matters of public interest were much more frequently sought by the Press, Radio and TV than today.'⁶² In the context of the early 1940s, this is evidence that the position of the clergy in society was much more pronounced and that despite the CCJ's establishment at a time of great need for the Jewish community – and arguably at a low-point in Jewish-Christian relations in Australia – the banding together of high profile Christian and Jewish leaders for the establishment of the Council actually shows that the Jewish community in Australia could count on its Christian counterparts for help at a time of crisis and great need that threatened its very existence in Europe.

The New South Wales CCJ modelled itself on the successful Council of Christians and Jews that was formed in Britain in September 1942 and both Councils had many similarities. The British Council, which still operates as of 2022, is the successor organisation of various lay-led societies that existed prior to its establishment, such as the Society of Christians and Jews created in 1927⁶³ and its precursor, the London Society for the Study of Religion founded in 1904.⁶⁴ Anne Summers wrote that the British Council of Christians and Jews was created as a result of various key personalities who consistently engaged with one another in the many refugee-support organisations that existed in Britain in the late 1930s. She wrote that

The multiplication of Jewish and Christian refugee organisations [during the 1930s] was ultimately seen as a drawback to efficiency; but inevitable overlaps in membership and function had the unintended beneficial consequence of bringing together like-minded Jews and Christians, and creating networks which would further the Society's [...] aspirations.⁶⁵

According to the historian of the British Council, Marcus Braybrooke, it was created 'largely due to the fact that Chief Rabbi Hertz, who had previously expressed strong opposition to any such venture, got on splendidly with [Anglican] Archbishop Temple when they met, at the

⁶² Porush, *The House of Israel*, 185.

⁶³ Marcus Braybrooke, 'Children of One God: A History of the Council of Christians and Jews,' *Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 46 (1-2) (1995), 334.

⁶⁴ Anne Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2014), 828.

⁶⁵ Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' 844.

latter's invitation.'⁶⁶ Similarly, the NSW Council was also created by the willpower of two of its dominant personalities, Rabbi Porush as chief minister of Australia's oldest Jewish congregation, and Archbishop Mowll in his capacity as Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.

Methodist minister, Rev William Wynn Simpson, served as the first secretary of the British CCJ. He recalled that it was established during a time of a great influx of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany as well as the publications of several books on the causes of antisemitism,⁶⁷ factors which also contributed to the foundation of the CCJ in Sydney. Simpson argued that the formation of the British CCJ was a result of 'The cooperation established between Jewish and Christian refugee organisations and the impact of the earliest reports of Hitler's implementation of his "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem" now combined to bring about the establishment of the Council of Christians and Jews.'⁶⁸ Whilst Simpson recounted that Cardinal Hinsley, the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster was eager to 'do anything he could to cooperate in the checking of anti-Semitism and racial persecution'⁶⁹ he did not wish to be one of the joint presidents of the British Council.⁷⁰ This mirrors similar hesitation expressed by Cardinal Gilroy when the Sydney CCJ was established.

According to Anne Summers, Simpson was an 'enthusiastic and peripatetic organiser.'⁷¹ He was one of the persona involved in refugee-advocacy who Summers referred to as he was also the secretary of the Christian Council for Refugees⁷² and had been a member of the Society of Christians and Jews.⁷³ He was instrumental in the establishment of the British CCJ as he assisted in organising the initial meeting between Hertz and Temple in 1941 that eventually led to the creation of the CCJ a year later.⁷⁴ Unlike the Society of Christians and Jews, the British CCJ was led by joint-presidents who included the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council⁷⁵ and was thus no longer a lay-led organisation.

⁶⁶ Braybrooke, 'Children of One God: A History of the Council of Christians and Jews,' 334.

⁶⁷ William W Simpson, 'Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' *Transactions & Miscellanies (Jewish Historical Society of England)* Vol. 28 (1981-1982), 90.

⁶⁸ Simpson, 'Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' 91.

⁶⁹ Simpson, 'Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' 89.

⁷⁰ Simpson, 'Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' 89.

⁷¹ Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' 848.

⁷² Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' 844.

⁷³ Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' 843.

⁷⁴ Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' 846.

⁷⁵ Summers, 'False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians, 1924-44,' 848.

The first meeting of the New South Wales CCJ was held on 24 March 1943 but in the months prior to this, there was much correspondence between the various denominational leaders regarding Porush's proposed constitution. In particular, Mowll insisted on an amendment that, in Porush's view, would 'make it clear that missionary propaganda among the Jews by the Christian Churches is not to be regarded as coming under the category of intolerance.'⁷⁶ Indeed, Mowll had used his address at the previously mentioned rally at Sydney Town Hall to voice 'his hope that the Jewish people would one day find their way to the truths of Christianity'⁷⁷ which had provoked the ire of the Jewish press at the time.⁷⁸ Alfred Harris, the editor of the *Hebrew Standard*, wrote that 'The effect produced was a direct negation to the proposed insistence on tolerance and the right to freedom of thought.'⁷⁹ A frank exchange of correspondence followed between Porush and Mowll, in which Mowll accused Porush of pushing a 'narrow interpretation'⁸⁰ since Mowll's amendment would also allow for Jewish propaganda to be disseminated amongst Christians. Indeed, he noted this was already done by the Zionist and Reform Jewish movements 'many of whose aims I find myself out of sympathy.'⁸¹ Mowll asserted that his phrasing of the amendment was designed to ensure freedom of speech.⁸² A compromise was eventually agreed to in February 1943, with the insertion of a clause that allowed all denominations to assert their truths whilst fighting intolerance together.⁸³

The primary purpose and objectives of the CCJ were eventually agreed after prolonged negotiations and primarily served to ensure cohesion amongst the Council members and clarity as to its common goals, rather than specifically combating antisemitism or referring to the emerging catastrophe of European Jewry. These objectives were noted as follows:

⁷⁶ Israel Porush, Letter to Howard Mowll, 13 November 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁷ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 186.

⁷⁸ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 186.

⁷⁹ Alfred Harris, 'Editorial: The Protest Meeting and its Results,' *HS*, 12 November 1941, 4, as cited in Rutland, '1942: What Was Known Down Under at the Edge of the Jewish Diaspora?,' 269.

⁸⁰ Howard Mowll, Letter to Israel Porush, 25 November 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸¹ Howard Mowll, Letter to Israel Porush, 25 November 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸² Howard Mowll, Letter to Israel Porush, 25 November 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸³ Israel Porush, Letter to Howard Mowll, 10 February 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

- (a) Promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews;⁸⁴
- (b) Promote fellowship between Christians and Jewish Youth organisations in educational and cultural activities;⁸⁵
- (c) Foster Christian and Jewish co-operation regarding post-war reconstruction;⁸⁶
- (d) While admitting the rights of all to propagate their own definite religious and political convictions, we shall unite in a determined effort to check all intolerance, persecution and unworthy recrimination.⁸⁷

Only one of the objectives referred to the world conflict and this was in terms of post-war reconstruction. The last object was later amended at the behest of Mowll⁸⁸ to read as follows in the official invitation for the inaugural meeting:

- (d) While conceding the normal civil rights of all to advocate their own definite religious and political convictions, we shall unite in a determined effort to check all intolerance, persecution and unworthy recrimination.⁸⁹

The inaugural meeting of the CCJ continued the discussion of these objectives and amended them further, indicating that suspicion existed amongst its members and there was a desire to be very specific about the boundaries of the Council's activities. Object (b) was amended to read 'Promote as far as practicable fellowship...'⁹⁰ and object (d) was amended in line with Mowll's wished to read as above as opposed to Porush's preferred version.

A slightly amended version of these four objectives was later recorded in the 1950s by the British CCJ in the following terms:

- (a) To combat religious and racial intolerance.
- (b) To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews in all sections of the community, especially in connection with problems arising from conditions created by the war.

⁸⁴ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 48.

⁸⁵ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*. 48.

⁸⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 48.

⁸⁷ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 187.

⁸⁸ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 187.

⁸⁹ Howard Mowll, Letter to Noel Hehir, 13 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

⁹⁰ CCJ Minutes, 24 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

- (c) To promote fellowship between Christian and Jewish youth organisations in educational and cultural activities.
- (d) To foster cooperation between Christians and Jews in study and service directed to post-war reconstruction.⁹¹

Porush insisted in his article that Bishop Pilcher was a ‘most persistent advocate’⁹² for the CCJ and hinted that Pilcher was possibly the mediator between himself and Mowll. Their differences never seemed to be such that the formation of the CCJ was at risk, and both seemed to be overall enthusiastic about the CCJ’s establishment and convinced of its need. In fact, Mowll offered to chair its meetings, which Porush agreed to, and it was decided to have the inaugural meeting at Diocesan House on 24 March 1943. Mowll sent invitations for the inaugural meeting to all concerned, including Porush⁹³ and Hehir as delegate of Gilroy⁹⁴ and included in his invitation the amended objects clause of the Council. Bishop Pilcher chaired meetings in Mowll’s absence and was noted as a ‘foremost advocate for transforming the Council into a virile constructive instrument of fellowship.’⁹⁵ Porush certainly appreciated Pilcher’s support since in his 15-page memoir of the CCJ published in 1968, he reserved one whole page so as to be able to include a picture of Pilcher,⁹⁶ which speaks to the important role Pilcher had in the early success of the Council. Pilcher was by this time already known for making ‘Jewish causes his own and did so in a manner that would put most Australian Jews of his time to shame.’⁹⁷

At the inaugural meeting, Mowll, Pilcher and Porush were elected to lead the executive committee along with representatives from the Jewish Reform movement, Salvation Army and Methodist Church.⁹⁸ The executive was notably small and did not include any laymen as was advocated by Hehir. The Anglican Canon, Thomas Chatterton Hammond, principal of Moore College, acted as recording secretary throughout the CCJ’s existence,⁹⁹ bringing Anglican

⁹¹ William Simpson, ‘Note on history of relations between the British CCJ and between groups and individuals in Australia, and on the relations between the Society of Jews and Christians and the Council of Christians and Jews in England,’ undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹² Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 184.

⁹³ Howard Mowll, Letter to Israel Porush, 16 March 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹⁴ Howard Mowll. Letter to Noel Hehir, 13 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

⁹⁵ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 187-188.

⁹⁶ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 185.

⁹⁷ Rodney Gouttman, ‘The Pilcher Conundrum,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 11, Part 1 (1990), 81.

⁹⁸ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

⁹⁹ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

representation to three members and thereby indicating the Church's strong support for the Council. Present were also representatives of the Presbyterian Church, Baptist Union and Congregational Church. The inaugural meeting enabled a frank discussion between all present as to what the purposes of the CCJ were and what it hoped to achieve. This meeting also amended some of the draft objects further.¹⁰⁰ Representatives of the various organisations paid close attention to the objectives of the Council¹⁰¹ and the ensuing debate is an indicator as to the suspicion that existed between the various denominations. This may be a result that the objects of the Council as well as the 'General Ethical principles agreed on prior to the discussion of the topics'¹⁰² were circulated before the inaugural meeting under the heading 'Council for Better Relations Between Jews and Christians,'¹⁰³ a slight diversion from its eventual official name but aptly describing its purpose. Other suspicion was voiced in the form of cautioning that interdenominational fellowship between Christian and Jewish youth should be done carefully.¹⁰⁴ Despite this, a certain momentum did seem to exist at the inaugural meeting as a nation-wide council was discussed, which was cautioned against by the Presbyterian Church.¹⁰⁵

6.3 The Influence of Migration Issues on the Council's Activities

As discussed in Chapter 5, the issue of migration, particularly Jewish migration to Australia, was an increasing concern to the local Jewish community. This is evidenced by the many desperate pleas for help received by Rabbi Falk as well as others. The Council decided not to consider the issue of Jewish immigration to Australia in its meetings, which it could have entertained under the Council's second objective to 'Foster Christian and Jewish co-operation regarding post-war reconstruction.'¹⁰⁶ Jewish migration to Australia before, during and after World War Two, has already been explored by numerous other scholars. Paul Bartrop wrote that despite the challenges of the war, Australia relaxed its usually stringent migration policy in some instances to address a skills shortage.¹⁰⁷ Schemes were developed to admit Swiss

¹⁰⁰ CCJ Minutes, 24 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁰¹ CCJ Minutes, 24 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁰² Council for Better Relations Between Jews and Christians, undated, potentially authored by Howard Mowll. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁰³ Council for Better Relations Between Jews and Christians, undated, potentially authored by Howard Mowll. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁰⁴ CCJ Minutes, 24 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁰⁵ CCJ Minutes, 24 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁰⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 48.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 227.

skilled workers to Australia from July 1939, as well as migrants from the Netherlands under a scheme that was agreed to prior to the war but which excluded Jews.¹⁰⁸ Czech engineers were sought under another scheme in July 1940¹⁰⁹ and Greek immigrants were entertained by December 1941.¹¹⁰ Jews continued to be excluded from these schemes during most of the war by virtue of them being resident in enemy-occupied territories as well as for reasons of ‘unassimilability and foreignness.’¹¹¹ One exception that was actively pursued by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society between 1939 and 1943 was to bring Jewish orphans to Australia. Initial approval was given for 50 orphans of German and Austrian origin in 1939, which was gradually increased to 300 and Dutch as well as Belgian orphans were also eventually deemed permissible.¹¹² However, none were ever brought to Australia during the war years due to the problems of securing ships for transportation, although New Zealand managed to bring some 750 non-Jewish orphans of Polish origin to their shores.¹¹³

One of the reasons why migration was not a major issue under consideration for the CCJ may have been the Catholic Church’s reluctance to engage with the subject as it felt that ‘Jews had attracted more sympathy than persecuted Catholics.’¹¹⁴ In 1939, the Catholic press lamented at length a ‘discriminatory Australian attitude’¹¹⁵ favouring Jewish refugees over Catholic ones. Thus, given these sentiments the Council chose to focus its energy on combating antisemitism and leaving more controversial topics such as migration to other bodies such as the Board of Jewish Affairs and the United Emergency Committee.

Furthermore, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society was an existing community organisation which focussed feverishly ‘on immigration and the integration of refugees’¹¹⁶ and was thus much more equipped to deal with Jewish migration issues than the Council was. The Catholic Church had its own agenda in terms of immigration as early as 1944 which was expanded in

¹⁰⁸ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45*, 227.

¹⁰⁹ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45*, 228.

¹¹⁰ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45*, 229.

¹¹¹ Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45*, 230.

¹¹² Suzanne D Rutland, ‘A Distant Sanctuary: Australia and Child Holocaust Survivors,’ in *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime: Migration, the Holocaust and Postwar Displacement*, eds. Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian, (London: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, 2016), 73.

¹¹³ Rutland, ‘A Distant Sanctuary: Australia and Child Holocaust Survivors,’ 73-74.

¹¹⁴ Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 73.

¹¹⁵ Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 74.

¹¹⁶ Anne Andgel, *Fifty Years of Caring: The History of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, 1936-1986* (Sydney: Australian Jewish Welfare Society and AJHS, 1988), 28.

the wake of Gilroy's visit to Italy's refugee camps in 1946.¹¹⁷ A Federal Catholic Migration Committee was established in April 1947 which established Catholic Migration Offices in each state capital to assist with the European refugee problem and to facilitate the migration of clergy to minister to their own national groups in Australia.¹¹⁸ Gilroy was 'conscious that the high Catholic component of the [post-War] migrants was boosting the Catholic population of Australia.'¹¹⁹ He occasionally intervened personally on behalf of migrants with success, such as in the case of 'a Palestinian woman, Rose Hokeidonian and her sons, whose application to emigrate to Australia had been refused.'¹²⁰ Hokeidonian changed her name to Hockey in Australia and became grandmother to Joe Hockey,¹²¹ who was federal treasurer from 2013-2015.

Michael Blakeney wrote that in general, the Catholic Church

was not as enthusiastic in championing the persecuted Jews. Unlike the Anglican leadership, none of the Catholic hierarchy was prepared to condemn the Nazi atrocities. [...] The Catholic hierarchy in Australia emulated the Pope's notorious silence, throughout the war, on the destruction of the European Jews.¹²²

As will be seen in later chapters, the underlying urgency that invigorated the early activities of the Council of Christians and Jews lost traction towards the end of the war undermining the need for the Council. This meant that the issue of post-war Jewish migration to Australia did not become a topic of discussion due to the Council effectively ceasing to exist in 1946. Instead, this issue was championed by others, notably the Methodist Reverend Benjamin Burgoyne Chapman, who from 1943 onwards 'initiated a virtual crusade appealing to the Australian government and people for the rescue of Jewish sufferers from Hitler's Europe and their admission into Palestine and elsewhere.'¹²³ Chapman published extensively on the topic of antisemitism and at least one of his pamphlets, which he wrote at the request of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, was distributed with the help of the Council of Christians and

¹¹⁷ John Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy: An Obedient Life* (Strathfield: St Pauls Publications, 2017), 201-202.

¹¹⁸ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 201.

¹¹⁹ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 202.

¹²⁰ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 203.

¹²¹ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 203.

¹²² Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 199.

¹²³ *SMH*, 21 August 1947, as cited in Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 203.

Jews.¹²⁴ Chapman was a vocal advocate for a Jewish homeland in Palestine¹²⁵ and presented at numerous meetings throughout Australia which he had organised ‘travelling to [these] at his own expense.’¹²⁶

6.4 Christadelphian and Lutheran Attitudes During World War Two

Two small Christian denominations in Australia, the Christadelphians and Lutherans, were notably absent from the founding meeting of the CCJ and did not participate directly in its committee meetings or activities during the duration of the existence of the CCJ. Given that the majority of the Christian denominations were represented on the CCJ, it is necessary to examine the role of these two smaller denominations in Australia. Both were Protestant minorities but their attitudes to Jews differed significantly due to their underlying opposing theological beliefs, despite the fact that in the recent course of history both had been the subject of persecution themselves. The small but vocal Christadelphian community ardently supported the Zionist agenda; in contrast the Australian Lutheran community opposed Zionist concepts. A standard Australian high-school text notes the development of smaller denominations thus:

...in the 19th century, some Christians particularly in England and the United States of America sought to develop churches which reflected the beliefs and structures of the early church. However, there were differences in opinion as to what were the beliefs ...of the early church and the movement gave rise to several new denominations. Among these were the Brethren, the Christadelphians...¹²⁷

The small Christadelphian community in Australia assumed a strong position in support of Zionism, seeing the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine as the fulfilment of their interpretation of Christian prophecy. Rabbi Louis Rubin-Zacks, at the time the minister of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, was invited to address Christadelphians in his city in the mid-

¹²⁴ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 194.

¹²⁵ Serge Liberman, ‘Gentile Champions of Jews in Australia,’ in *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, ed. William D Rubinstein (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 91.

¹²⁶ Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*, 204.

¹²⁷ National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies Australia, ‘Understanding the Multifaith Classroom in a Secular Society’ (Melbourne: National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies Australia at The University of Melbourne, 2008) 52, accessed 29 July 2021, https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1882621/NCEIS_Multifaith_Classrooms_ResourceKit.pdf.

1930s and a Christadelphian adherent quoted the Prophet Isaiah¹²⁸ in a letter to his local newspaper, in rural South Australia, thus:

And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people — and He shall set up an ensign for the Nations and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.¹²⁹

He then suggested that the arrival of Jewish refugees and their activities in Palestine at that time meant that the prophecy was being fulfilled.¹³⁰ Other comments on citations from Christian texts, common in Christadelphian publications included Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Paul, in his retelling of John's Gospel, reports Jesus as saying that salvation would come from the Jews and not the Samaritans.¹³¹ On another occasion, when a Phoenician woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter, Paul, in his retelling of Matthew's Gospel, quotes Jesus as telling his disciples that he 'was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.'¹³² These were the biblical foundations upon which Christadelphians based their support for Jewish migration to Palestine.

Other Christadelphian brethren preached similar messages. Even though they claimed to rise above participation in political affairs, they sometimes took quite an interest in politics. Wilson notes that '[t]his was particularly the case with the issue of the Jews'¹³³ return to Palestine, seen as a precursor to the Second Coming. This was preached about well before World War One and the Balfour Declaration but was particularly evident between the wars.'¹³⁴

¹²⁸ Holy Bible, New International Version (English), 'Isiah 11:11,' accessed 29 July 2021, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MAT.15.NIV>.

¹²⁹ DT Hicks, 'Letter to the Editor,' *Burra Record*, 3 November 1936, 3.

¹³⁰ DT Hicks, 'Letter to the Editor,' *Burra Record*, 3 November 1936, 3.

¹³¹ Holy Bible, New International Version (English), 'John 4:22,' accessed 29 July 2021, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MAT.15.NIV>.

¹³² Holy Bible, New International Version (English), 'Matthew 15:24,' accessed 29 July 2021, <https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MAT.15.NIV>.

¹³³ Elisabeth K Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes to Authority and Government with Particular Reference to Pacifism,' Unpublished MHum thesis (University of Tasmania, 1994), 27.

¹³⁴ Wilson, 'Brethren Attitudes to Authority and Government with Particular Reference to Pacifism,' 27.

Following Hitler's ascension to power in Germany in 1933, the emerging Jewish refugee problem exacerbated the conflict in Palestine and thus became an issue for Britain.¹³⁵ It also became a concern for Christadelphians. Even prior to Hitler being elected as *Reichskanzler*, his progress was noted in a 1932 lecture to members of that faith, entitled 'The Impending break up of civilisation and what succeeds it':

A startling picture had recently been drawn...that we are living in a civilisation that is rapidly going to pieces. We are certainly living in a much more dangerous world than the Victorian. The capitalistic system is collapsing, and while man has increased production, half the world is threatened with famine.... The chosen nation was disobedient and rebellious, and was scattered into all nations as at this day. The Gentiles have also failed, and civilisation is a mockery. God has declared His purpose with the Jews, and as Jesus said, 'Salvation is of the Jews.'¹³⁶

There is evidence on more than one occasion of Jews giving lectures at Christadelphian meetings. For example, in 1927, the Zionist emissary, Dr Alexander Goldstein, toured Eastern and Western Australia, speaking on the topic 'Home for the Jews - Rebuilding of Palestine.'¹³⁷ He told crowds, including gatherings of Christadelphians, that he had seen with his own eyes how for 'seven years now [since the commencement of the British mandate] a work of staggering magnitude has proceeded which aims at the creation of a Jewish national home'¹³⁸ in Palestine. He explained: 'The main difficulty consisted in the complete economic ruin of the majority of the Jewish people who were living in Eastern Europe, and whence nearly all the immigrants into Palestine came. The second difficulty consisted in Palestine having been neglected and ruined during the centuries of the Turkish regime.'¹³⁹ Goldstein lectured at the Christadelphian Hall in Perth nine days after this article was published.¹⁴⁰

Subsequently, advertisements for similar meetings, albeit with different speakers, appeared frequently in other cities as well.¹⁴¹ Four years later, under the heading, 'Palestine For The

¹³⁵ Teresa Yu, 'Australia and the Palestine Question, 1947–1949: A New Interpretation,' Unpublished BA (Hons) thesis (The University of Sydney, 2012), 20

¹³⁶ 'Christadelphian,' *The Telegraph*, 21 May 1932, 3.

¹³⁷ 'Home for the Jews,' *Daily News*, 17 October 1927, 1.

¹³⁸ 'Home for the Jews,' *Daily News*, 17 October 1927, 1.

¹³⁹ 'Home for the Jews,' *Daily News*, 17 October 1927, 1.

¹⁴⁰ 'Home for the Jews,' *Daily News*, 17 October 1927, 1.

¹⁴¹ See *SMH*, 17 May 1930, 24; and *The Argus* 31 August 1946, 32, and *SMH*, 10 January 1942, 1.

Jews,' the *Adelaide Advertiser* reported that a film illustrating Jewish accomplishments in Palestine had been screened at the local Christadelphian Temple.¹⁴² That film demonstrated that more than 170,000 Jews were developing the economic possibilities of Palestine, with the purchase of land allowing the development of industries including exports of oranges, wine, alcohol, soap, and cement.¹⁴³ The report noted that:

... the waters of the Jordan powered hydro-electric turbines ... Schools were being built, and children taught in the Hebrew tongue, and a university had been established on Mount Scopus. The Jews looked upon these signs as heralding the emancipation of their race.¹⁴⁴

Christadelphian lecturer Bruce Philp, in a national Australian tour in 1946, suggested that 'Palestine is the burdenstone of all nations; and it is the Middle East from whence will yet spring great international distress and finally world peace.'¹⁴⁵ For Christadelphians, he said, it was necessary for the Jew to return to Palestine, to give effect to a re-birth of the land. 'This was a grand fulfilment of prophecy... The solution [to the Palestinian crisis] in the return of Christ and the re-establishment of the Jewish state will be both Divine and final. Peace will only come this way.'¹⁴⁶

This solution was all the more important after the war as the Christadelphian community had already warned of the impending destruction of European Jewry in November 1938, just days prior to *Kristallnacht*. In an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, Mr Ermington of Sydney's North Shore Christadelphian Ecclesia had warned that 'the Fascist Powers would endeavour to reach the Jews in Palestine in a final attempt to destroy them. Britain would accept the challenge to defend the Jews, and this would result in the battle of Armageddon.'¹⁴⁷ Britain's defence of world Jewry was not to be. Mr Ermington further stated in March 1939 at Chatswood Town Hall that 'No one wanted the Jews'¹⁴⁸ and that 'The only place they could go was Palestine and even there they had no arm [*sic*] to protect themselves.'¹⁴⁹ He went on to say that 'History will

¹⁴² 'Palestine for the Jews,' *Advertiser and Register*, 21 April 1931, 10.

¹⁴³ 'Palestine for the Jews,' *Advertiser and Register*, 21 April 1931, 10.

¹⁴⁴ 'Palestine for the Jews,' *Advertiser and Register*, 21 April 1931, 10.

¹⁴⁵ 'Palestine problem,' *West Australian*, 1 February 1946, 5.

¹⁴⁶ 'Palestine problem,' *West Australian*, 1 February 1946, 5.

¹⁴⁷ 'Armageddon Forecast,' *DT*, 7 November 1938, 5.

¹⁴⁸ 'Calls Jew-Baiters "Modern Pharaohs",' *DT*, 20 March 1939, 9.

¹⁴⁹ 'Calls Jew-Baiters "Modern Pharaohs",' *DT*, 20 March 1939, 9.

repeat itself, and the Jews in Palestine will be so ringed with enemies that they will despair of their individual and national safety.¹⁵⁰

Christadelphians were, for religious reasons, particularly concerned for the welfare of Jews in Palestine. In response to the emerging situation in Europe, the North Shore Christadelphian Ecclesia held a 'huge gathering'¹⁵¹ of up to 1,000 people at Chatswood Town Hall¹⁵² in January 1942, where guest speaker Dr Michael Traub, a representative of *Keren Hayesod* and the Jewish Agency, updated the community on the topic of 'Palestine as a Keypoint in the Battle Against Nazism.'¹⁵³ In Melbourne, the Christadelphian community responded by donating £100 towards the rescue of Jewish children from Germany to England,¹⁵⁴ a generous sum at the time. The article noted that this donation was made 'Without any publicity or appeal to non-Jews, donations from Christian friends.'¹⁵⁵ It also commented 'The Christadelphians are great friends to our people and their co-operation is very precious to us.'¹⁵⁶

In Australia, Christadelphians seemed to have had cordial relations with the Jewish community in Adelaide in particular. In 1939, the Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia contributed 'considerable amounts'¹⁵⁷ to the Jewish National Fund to plant trees in Palestine. The minutes of the UECEJ recorded in September 1943, that the Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia had contacted them and suggested to publish a pamphlet in their name on the situation in Europe, clearly seeking assistance from the UECEJ. It was resolved that the matter should be forwarded to Adelaide and be handled by Rabbi Alfred Fabian of the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation.¹⁵⁸ This shows that the Christadelphian community did not just offer words of sympathy but also intended to act on behalf of Jewish refugees.

The attitudes of Australian Lutherans towards Jews contrasted with the Christadelphians and was divided into two different approaches. This could also account for their lack of participation in the CCJ's organisational structure. During the 1930s and 1940s, most

¹⁵⁰ 'Calls Jew-Baiters "Modern Pharaohs",' *DT*, 20 March 1939, 9.

¹⁵¹ 'Crowded Meeting at Chatswood,' *HS*, 29 January 1942, 2.

¹⁵² 'Crowded Meeting at Chatswood: Nearly 1,000 People Hear Dr Michael Traub,' *Jewish News*, 30 January 1942, 6.

¹⁵³ 'Crowded Meeting at Chatswood,' *HS*, 29 January 1942, 2.

¹⁵⁴ 'From Christian Friends,' *AJH*, 18 March 1943, 3.

¹⁵⁵ 'From Christian Friends,' *AJH*, 18 March 1943, 3.

¹⁵⁶ 'From Christian Friends,' *AJH*, 18 March 1943, 3.

¹⁵⁷ 'Non-Jews Help in Adelaide,' *AJH*, 16 November 1939, 2.

¹⁵⁸ UECEJ Minutes, 23 September 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

Lutherans in Australia were first or second German generation migrants. Indeed, the church only transitioned from German to English in its liturgy during the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁵⁹ This means, that there still was a strong connection between the German Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in Australia,¹⁶⁰ although this was changing rapidly. Noteworthy is the fact that in 1933, 61,000 people identified as Lutherans in Australia¹⁶¹ but not all of these were of German origin and of the 71 United Evangelical Church's pastors, only 35 per cent were of German origin, although most had received their training in Germany.¹⁶² This attested to a familiarity with the German language and culture. The German Consul-General Dr Rudolf Asmis estimated that 'Only 12 per cent of all pastors had the reputation of being "pro-German", which in the language of the Consul-General meant "pro-Nazi"'.¹⁶³

In Germany, some elements of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church objected to Nazi instructions to 'eliminate allusions to Nazareth and Bethlehem,'¹⁶⁴ and to impose a state-bound 'German Christianity,'¹⁶⁵ including the Nazi dogma that Christ was not a Jew.¹⁶⁶ Pastor Martin Niemöller¹⁶⁷ most notable in his 'uncompromising resistance'¹⁶⁸ to the Nazis although later he felt that he had not done enough to assist the Jewish victims. Some bodies of the Lutheran church in Australia, under the leadership of the general president of the Evangelical-Lutheran Synod, Dr William Janzow, were critical of the Nazis' antisemitic campaigns and even raised money for Jewish migration to Australia.¹⁶⁹ Janzow stated that he 'could not understand how a civilized nation could perpetrate such horrors.'¹⁷⁰ One German pastor in Australia even wrote to German Jews in 1938 'deploring the views of the Nazis and inviting them to settle in Australia with the support of local Lutheran communities.'¹⁷¹ Yet, in other instances, the Australian Lutheran church 'often published German propaganda against

¹⁵⁹ Lutheran Church of Australia, 'Our History,' accessed 15 January 2021, lca.org.au/about-us/our-history/.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany* (Unley, SA: Australian Humanities Press, 2005), 35.

¹⁶¹ Konrad Kwiet, 'Inter-War German Community Life' in *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins*, ed. James Jupp (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 373.

¹⁶² Konrad Kwiet, 'Inter-War German Community Life,' 374.

¹⁶³ Konrad Kwiet, 'Inter-War German Community Life,' 374.

¹⁶⁴ 'The State and the Soul,' *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁶⁵ 'The State and the Soul,' *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁶⁶ 'The State and the Soul,' *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁶⁷ Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, 42.

¹⁶⁸ Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, 42.

¹⁶⁹ 'Lutheran Churches' Aid,' *West Australian*, 18 November 1938, 27; 'Germans in Australia,' *Herald*, 17 November 1938, 3.

¹⁷⁰ Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, 1.

¹⁷¹ Nick Smart, 'Lutheran Apology for Views on Jews,' *Adelaide Advertiser*, 25 October 1996.

Jews'¹⁷² during the war. Janzow said that 'Australian Lutherans should never forget that the British people came together to aid in the time of their own distress... The congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church are combining in the assistance scheme.'¹⁷³

Peter Monteath relates an incident where in 1938, just after *Kristallnacht*, Janzow was approached by a Jewish couple, Robert and Marcelle Elsasser (later Ellis) temporarily located in Geneva. They were desperate not to be deported back to Germany and the couple sought assistance from him, a German Lutheran pastor in Adelaide, in their desperate attempt to find refuge anywhere but Germany.¹⁷⁴ Monteath reasoned that the desperate and unusual letter was sent by Elsasser to Janzow because of the article published in the *London Times* shortly after *Kristallnacht*, in which the

correspondent reported that the two Lutheran synods in Australia were combining in a plan to bring Jewish refugees to Australia. Janzow had appealed to a long-standing tradition in South Australia of offering help to the persecuted: 'Australian Lutherans would never forget how the British aided them at the time of their own distress. The Australian and British Governments had given them religious and civil freedom, which was denied them in their own land.'¹⁷⁵

All in all, 73 letters reached him, mostly from Germany and Austria,¹⁷⁶ leading to the establishment of the Lutheran Immigration Aid Society led by prominent members of the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Australia, such as Pastors Karl Mützelfeld and Julius Stolz.¹⁷⁷ As with Janzow, Pastor Stolz voiced his concerns about antisemitism within the German Lutheran Church and even personally wrote to Hitler about his concerns.¹⁷⁸ Stolz's views did not go unnoticed and he came under surveillance by the Australian authorities during

¹⁷² Nick Smart, 'Lutheran Apology for Views on Jews,' *Adelaide Advertiser*, 25 October 1996.

¹⁷³ 'Lutheran Churches' Aid,' *West Australian*, 18 November 1938, 27; 'Germans in Australia,' *Herald*, 17 November 1938, 3.

¹⁷⁴ Peter Monteath, 'Robert Elsasser/Ellis: Refugee and Teacher,' *Journal of the South Australian Historical Society* No. 44 (2016), 51.

¹⁷⁵ 'Australian Germans and the Jews,' *Times*, 18 November 1938, 15, as cited in Monteath, 'Robert Elsasser/Ellis: Refugee and Teacher,' 52.

¹⁷⁶ Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, 1.

¹⁷⁷ Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, 39.

¹⁷⁸ Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, 43.

the war. The report noted that ‘theologically Stolz “was always opposed to Nazism, and in justice to him this should not be overlooked.”’¹⁷⁹

On the other hand, many Lutherans remembered that in 1543 Martin Luther himself had published a thesis called ‘*Von den Juden und ihren Lügen*’¹⁸⁰ (On the Jews and their lies) which of course exacerbated the antisemitic tendencies within the Church. It was only in 1983 that the Lutheran Church stated that ‘it cannot accept or condone the violent verbal attacks that the Reformer made against the Jews.’¹⁸¹ The ‘Aryan Clause’¹⁸² of the Nazis’ ‘German Christianity’¹⁸³ was supported by German Bishop Joachim Hossenfelder, who conducted a Christian meeting whilst wearing a Nazi uniform.¹⁸⁴ As reported in the *West Australian*, at that meeting, ‘Dr Krause demanded that the Evangelical pastors should be combed for Jewish blood’¹⁸⁵, that the crucifix should give place to the Swastika of the Nazis, and the Hebrew Bible replaced by more ‘Western’ mythology.¹⁸⁶

It is outside the scope of this thesis to note the extent to which Australian Lutherans followed the so-called ‘German Christians’, but even in 1934, the Australian Newman Society, a Catholic grouping, was complaining in the *Catholic Advocate* magazine that eugenics and race theory had become part of Lutheran theology.¹⁸⁷ According to Peter Barnes, writing in the *Australian Presbyterian*, it was common for the ‘German Christians’ to attack the ‘remaining’ Lutherans as ‘Jewish.’¹⁸⁸ He went on to write that persons such as Hossenfelder and Krause:

...often claimed, following the lead of the religious philosophers Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Emanuel Hirsch, that Jesus was not Jewish, and that John 4:22

¹⁷⁹ Recommendation for Ministerial Detention Order under Regulation 26 of National Security (General) Regulations, with A Brief Survey of Lutheranism in Australia. Pastor Johannes Julius Stolz President-General of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia. South Australia, 30 October 1943. NAA: A6119 at 25, as cited in Monteath, *Dear Dr Janzow: Australia's Lutheran Churches and Refugees from Hitler's Germany*, 51.

¹⁸⁰ Dorothea Wendebourg, ‘„Gesegnet sei das Andenken Luthers!” Die Juden und Martin Luther im 19. Jahrhundert,’ *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* Vol. 65, No. 3 (2013), 243.

¹⁸¹ Lutheran Fellowship Dialogue with International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, Stockholm, 1983, ‘Luther, Lutheranism and the Jews,’ in *When Jews and Christians Meet: Australian Essays Commemorating Twenty Years of Nostra Aetate*, ed. John W Roffey, (Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches, 1985), 101

¹⁸² ‘The State and the Soul,’ *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁸³ ‘The State and the Soul,’ *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁸⁴ ‘The State and the Soul,’ *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁸⁵ ‘The State and the Soul,’ *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁸⁶ ‘The State and the Soul,’ *West Australian*, 29 December 1933, 14.

¹⁸⁷ ‘The Newman Society,’ *Advocate*, 15 February 1934, 10.

¹⁸⁸ Peter Barnes, ‘Liberal Fascism,’ *The Australian Presbyterian* No. 537 (May 2002), 9.

(‘salvation is of the Jews’) was not authentic. Hirsch rejected the virgin birth, and considered that Jesus probably was not of Jewish blood. In 1942 the German Christian bishop of Bremen concluded: ‘Today every German can learn the freedom from the law, for example, from Nietzsche; he does not need a Paul for that, and thereby avoids the danger of being infected by dreaded Jewish-rabbinical doctrines.’¹⁸⁹

Historian Samuel Koehne comments on Hitler’s propagandist Alfred Rosenberg as advocating, before the split in German Lutheranism:

While arguing that those advocating ‘Germanic faith’ had not developed their religion beyond the theoretical, he also believed that their ‘research... in the field of Nordic religious history’ would certainly ‘form the leaven, which will permeate the former Catholic and former Lutheran components of the German Church. Then the Nordic sagas and fairy-tales will take the place of the Old Testament stories of pimps and cattle-dealers.’¹⁹⁰

There is some indication of a split in the theology of Australian Lutherans on the Jewish question, well before the publication of *Mein Kampf*, and well before the publication of *The Myth of the 20th Century*, evident from the meeting of the Australian Lutheran Synod of 1924:

Having served their purpose, and Christ having come... Israel was no longer distinguishable and Judah was alone left... the Jews were no longer and never again would they be a nation. [Previous scriptural passages concerning the Jews] were not intended to be permanent: The Lamb of God is come, the veil of the Temple was rent.¹⁹¹

This position cannot be distinguished from that taken by Julius Streicher, publisher of the antisemitic newspaper *Der Stürmer* in Germany, at his trial in Nuremberg in 1946:

¹⁸⁹ Barnes, ‘Liberal Fascism,’ 9.

¹⁹⁰ Samuel Koehne, ‘Were the National Socialists a “Völkisch” Party? Paganism, Christianity and the Nazi Christmas,’ *Central European History* Vol. 47, No. 4 (2014), 760.

¹⁹¹ ‘Lutheran Synodical Convention,’ *Bunyip*, 21 March 1924, 2.

If Martin Luther were still alive he would be in the dock beside him, Julius Streicher, Nazi Jew-baiter No 1, declared before the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal...Luther had written that Jews were snakes that should be burned to the ground and destroyed.¹⁹²

Research for this thesis has not been able to uncover any further links between Jews and Lutherans in Australia or of Lutheran involvement in interfaith relations that pertained to Jews during the period of the World War Two. This stands in stark contrast to the efforts of the Anglican Church, particularly those of Bishop Pilcher, as well as smaller denominations such as the Christadelphian community, even though the latter did not officially join the CCJ, perhaps because of its minority status within the Australian Christian denominations.

The Council's failure to build a wide base of support from various religious leaders and to include smaller denominations such as the Christadelphians and the Lutherans contributed to the Council of Christians and Jews' club-like status and ultimately to its demise. Christadelphians in particular, were very supportive of the Jewish community both financially and in public, as were many Lutherans, whose support and connections could have enhanced the Council's work on combating antisemitism. It is unclear why these groups were not involved in the Council's activities or whether they had even been invited or knew of the Council's existence. The exclusion of Lutherans may potentially have been justified on the grounds that they were too closely associated with the Nazi regime, especially since the Sydney congregation, which was located on Goulburn Street, just a few blocks away from Porush's Great Synagogue, 'opted to become part of the Nazi-oriented "Reich Church" in Germany.'¹⁹³ On the other hand, other small denominations, notably Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Methodists, were invited to join the Council *ab initio*.

6.5 Conclusion

With its establishment in March 1943, the CCJ created for the first time a formal joint mechanism for Jews and Christians to collaborate and fight antisemitism in Australia and to advocate for better relations between the two major faiths. This was an unprecedented effort and reflected the urgency and danger that the increasing importation of European antisemitism

¹⁹² 'Nazi Jew-Baiter No. 1 Quotes Luther,' *The Argus*, 30 April 1946, 5.

¹⁹³ Konrad Kwiet, 'Inter-War German Community Life,' 374.

presented to Australia's Jewish community. While officially the formation of the CCJ was to be a broad-based organisation, representing the different denominations in both Judaism and Christianity, the activities of the CCJ were dominated by its two leading personalities: Rabbi Porush and Bishop Pilcher. Without doubt Porush had been the moving force in the creation of the CCJ and continued to dominate its activities. In order to understand the factors which motivated him to take on this role, the next chapter will discuss his background and the ideology that drove him through an analysis of his sermons in London, before his Sydney appointment, and his press statements after his arrival in Sydney and through the period of the CCJ's existence.

CHAPTER 7

RABBI DR ISRAEL PORUSH: THE DRIVING FORCE OF THE COUNCIL

7.1 The Vibrant Personality of Israel Porush

Rabbi Israel Porush was one of the two most influential personalities in the Council of Christian and Jews and one of the key leaders of Australian Jewry during his tenure as chief minister at Sydney's Great Synagogue. His life has already been detailed in various works, including his autobiography *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*,¹ and will therefore not be explored in detail in this chapter. His dedication to Jewish-Christian relations, however, has not yet been explored at length, a gap in the scholarship which this chapter aims to rectify.

As indicated in the previous chapter, it was Porush's drive and determination to foster productive relations between the two faiths that forged the foundations of the CCJ, alongside his desire to do whatever he could to help his persecuted European brethren. Indeed, these two factors were mutually reinforcing throughout Porush's career in both Britain and Australia. Embodying the foundational beliefs of Modern Orthodoxy imbued in him during his education in Germany, Porush firmly believed that it was not only possible to live both as an observant Jew and a loyal citizen of the Commonwealth, but that it was essential to do so both from a Jewish perspective and for the overall good of society. His experiences in Germany at the end of the Weimar Republic and during his first ministry in Britain led him to understand the importance of not just educating the Christian majority about Jewish issues but also to work with his Christian colleagues on improving Jewish-Christian relations. He arrived in Australia with this understanding and found an equally passionate friend and partner in Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher.

During his 30-year tenure as senior rabbi at Sydney's Great Synagogue from 1940 to 1973, Rabbi Porush established himself not just as the leader of Australian Jewry during wartime, but also as a respected *halakhic* authority and pioneer of formal interfaith relations between Christians and Jews. His position as member of the Sydney *Beth Din* and senior rabbi of the Great Synagogue certainly opened many doors for him with the leaders of other faiths that were unavailable to rabbis at smaller congregations. Combined with his forceful personality,

¹ Israel Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi* (Melbourne: Special Publication of the AJHS (Vic), 1992).

‘rabbinical learning, general scholarship and exceptional leadership,’² Rabbi Porush leveraged his position and effectively led Australian Jewry through World War Two, reformed the Sydney *Beth Din*, democratised Jewish communal leadership³ and initiated formal institutions of cooperation amongst Australia’s rabbis.⁴

Arriving in Australia at the beginning of World War Two, Rabbi Porush dedicated himself to addressing ‘the public relations challenges [of Australia’s Jewish community], which required a firm but dignified rabbinic voice.’⁵ He quickly gained respect not just amongst Australia’s elite and politicians but also amongst Christian clergymen as he embarked on a mission ‘to gain Christian understanding and sympathy’⁶ for the plight of European Jewry. He enlisted the help of his Christian colleagues to help with the fight against European antisemitism which had been transplanted into the local society and thereby revived some of the stagnated relations between Christians and Jews in Australia. It is in this regard, as intermediary between Australian Jewry and Australian politicians, Christian leaders, that current accounts of his life have not done him justice and that this chapter seeks to remedy by exploring select episodes of his early life, his rabbinical approach to interfaith relations and the wider Christian world as demonstrated by his sermons in London, and his work in Australia after arrival in Sydney.

7.2 Formative Education in Germany and *Hashgafa*

By the time Rabbi Porush arrived in Australia in 1940, he had already lived through cosmopolitan experiences in his formative years that would be uncommon even in modern times. Born in Jerusalem in 1907 into a well-educated but strictly Orthodox family, his early education was gained at the Etz Chaim *Yeshiva* in Jerusalem until at age 15, when his father sent him to Germany to continue his education⁷ in what was considered by some to be one of the world’s most advanced civilisations at the time. Rabbi Porush’s father was a follower of the Modern Orthodox ideology of integrating a religious lifestyle whilst receiving a secular

² Raymond Apple, *Yismach Yisrael: Historical Essays to Honour Rabbi Dr Israel Porush* (Sydney: AJHS, 1988), 5.

³ Raymond Apple, *The Great Synagogue: A History of Sydney’s Big Shule* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008), 98.

⁴ Suzanne D Rutland, ‘Porush, Israel (1907-1991),’ Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/porush-israel-15194/text26388>, published online 2014, accessed online 28 August 2020.

⁵ Apple, *The Great Synagogue*, 98.

⁶ Apple, *The Great Synagogue*, 98.

⁷ Rutland, ‘Porush, Israel (1907-1991)’.

education and working in the medical profession as an administrator.⁸ This value of *Torah im Derekh Eretz* (literally: ‘Torah with the way of the land’, implying the combination of secular and religious knowledge as advocated by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch) remained with his son, Israel, for the remainder of his life. Porush consistently endeavoured to educate others, both Christians and Jews alike, even if ‘[his] sermons were sometimes above people’s heads.’⁹ His time in Germany was one of learning and personal development and was religiously formative. He adopted a particular *hashgafa* (outlook) facilitating acculturation and integration into the Christian world, without compromising on Jewish religious integrity, which shaped him and his ministry for the remainder of his life and set the foundation for his interactions with the Christian world. In this way he supported Jewish acculturation and integration into the general society while advocating that Jews remain true to their religious beliefs and practices.

In 1922, Rabbi Porush was sent to Germany to continue his education at the age of 15. At first, he enrolled in the *yeshiva* of Rabbi Solomon Breuer in Frankfurt but he left after six months as ‘it was a closed, inflexible, self-centred and snobbish community which did not suit my nature.’¹⁰ This decision already illustrated his independence of mind. Instead, he travelled to Berlin to enrol in the prestigious and ‘much more cosmopolitan Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary,’¹¹ a bastion of Modern Orthodoxy at the time.¹² Indeed, Berlin had a Jewish community of 170,000,¹³ which suited young Porush much better as he was able to frequently attend ‘the theatre, opera and the concert hall; I joined tours of the mixed youth organisation; and I never regarded shaking hands with a lady as a sin’¹⁴ attesting to his now prominent and formed Modern Orthodox *hashgafa* of *derech eretz* [integrating and behaving as one of the land without compromising one’s Jewish faith] and involvement in mixed (men and women) and secular activities. This philosophy was designed to stem the tide of assimilation at a time where many ‘German Jews, who were constantly reminded of their Jewishness, increasingly wondered why, and for what purpose, they were and remained Jews.’¹⁵ It was in contrast to the experience of most Ultra Orthodox Jews in Eastern Europe. He also managed to learn German,

⁸ Benjamin Elton, ‘Rabbi Dr Israel Porush: The Religious Thought of Australia’s Uncrowned Chief Rabbi,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 25, No. 2 (2021), 230-231.

⁹ Apple, *The Great Synagogue*, 98.

¹⁰ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 18.

¹¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 18.

¹² Elton, ‘Rabbi Dr Israel Porush,’ 230-231

¹³ Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 53.

¹⁴ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 23.

¹⁵ Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, 69.

English and French in order to complete his high school studies,¹⁶ and matriculate in both mathematics at the University of Berlin and the Seminary in 1927.

In his memoirs, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, Rabbi Porush wrote at length about the Hildesheimer Seminary and his experience there, describing the impact that the *yeshiva's Weltanschauung* had on him and admiring the intellectual rigor of the institution that demanded of its students that they seek both a religious and secular university education in order to serve modern communities most effectively.¹⁷ He wrote that he 'always had an aversion to extremism, be it in the form of demonstrative shows of religiousness – see how *frum* I am! – by long *peyot*, special garments, or opinions, or in regard to the judgment of fellow men and their frailties.'¹⁸ At the seminary, he learned alongside *chassidim*, *haredim*, and Modern Orthodox¹⁹ Jews and those that would either leave the religious world altogether or affiliate with the Reform movement.²⁰ This was a formative experience for him, as he also experienced that the 'standards among the Modern Orthodox in Germany were different from the stringent standards among their contemporaries in eastern Europe'²¹ as it 'was not customary, for example, for people in the auditoria of the university, or professionals in their offices, to wear *kippot*.'²² Michael Brenner wrote that 'Germany's three rabbinical seminaries [...] flourished in the Weimar period'²³ as evidently did its students, such as Porush. He thereby lived and experienced a lifestyle in Germany, where being a religious Jew could be reconciled with living in a modern world, where faith and involvement in the secular non-Jewish world did not have to be mutually exclusive. This approach of living the best of both worlds without compromising one's integrity using a diplomatic middle-ground approach remained with him as he embarked in his future career in the ministry. It furthermore shaped his approach to Jewish-Christian relations.

Porush's decision to study at the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin was an ideological one as instruction was based on 'broad education, showing how [Orthodox] Judaism remained relevant to the times and opposing Reform Judaism.'²⁴ The seminary was

¹⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 18-19.

¹⁷ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 20.

¹⁸ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 22.

¹⁹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 23.

²⁰ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 26.

²¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 23.

²² Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 23.

²³ Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany*, 63.

²⁴ Elton, 'Rabbi Dr Israel Porush,' 231.

founded by Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer in 1873 and followed the ideology of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the founder of Modern Orthodoxy, both of whom Porush considered ‘major influences on his religious outlook.’²⁵ Porush’s outlook was shared by his fellow student, Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits, who served as rabbi of Sydney’s Central Synagogue from 1946-1950.²⁶ As a result of their shared training at the Hildesheimer, the two rabbis shared many things in common in terms of their religious outlook but also had many tensions between them during Berkovits’ tenure.²⁷ These tensions were mostly in terms of prestige as both the Great Synagogue and Central Synagogue were vying for predominance in Sydney’s Jewish community life.²⁸

Porush’s experience in Germany was not limited to interactions with other branches of Judaism. He also experienced both positive and negative interactions with the non-Jewish German speaking population that shaped his future memories of the country even during and after the Holocaust. From his account, Berlin’s high schools were rather cosmopolitan even in the roaring 1920s, as his fellow student ‘a friendly migrant of mixed race from a French colony’²⁹ assisted him with obtaining his homework on Saturdays. Porush remembered that in ‘deference to me most teachers tried to avoid written work in the class on Saturdays, except the anti-Semitic French teacher who held many of his tests on Saturday.’³⁰ He recollected how the caretaker of the school would also assist with his schooling on Saturdays, thereby enabling him to both participate fully in the high school curriculum and live a religious lifestyle. This was despite the fact that he ‘was the only Jew in the class of sixteen, and most teachers and students were correct and even friendly towards the “foreign Jew”, but at least two students [...] could not hide their hostility towards me.’³¹ This showed that from the very beginning of his arrival in Germany, he not just immersed himself in the secular German way of life but made positive experiences with Germans for the most part, as they seemed to have accommodated his religious needs despite that fact that he was the only Jew in the class. It imbued in him the knowledge that not all Germans were antisemitic but that some antisemitism was certainly present.

²⁵ Elton, ‘Rabbi Dr Israel Porush,’ 231.

²⁶ Elton, ‘Rabbi Dr Israel Porush,’ 233.

²⁷ Elton, ‘Rabbi Dr Israel Porush,’ 233.

²⁸ Suzanne D Rutland, ‘The History of the Jews in Australia 1945-1960,’ Unpublished PhD thesis (The University of Sydney, 1990), 243-245.

²⁹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 18.

³⁰ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 18.

³¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 18.

Porush graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in mathematics from the University of Marburg in 1931³² and from the Seminary with rabbinic ordination as a *dayan* (rabbinic judge) in 1932.³³ In his description of his time in Germany, he reflected on both the good and bad experiences and took heed of warnings from his mentors of the dangers of antisemitism. One such example came from his professor at the University of Berlin, who, despite being a brilliant mathematician, was refused a promotion in the pre-Weimar years, unless he was baptised.³⁴ Another example Porush discussed was his former teacher, Professor Biberbach, who revealed himself as an antisemite under the Nazis and made a career by writing extensively on the *Verjudung* of German mathematics by distinguishing ‘between “Aryan” mathematics and “inferior Jewish” mathematics.’³⁵ Nevertheless, despite these warnings, Porush wholeheartedly embraced the modern, cosmopolitan and multicultural lifestyle that Germany offered in the 1920s, experiencing a world where a religious lifestyle can be reconciled with the modern secular world. Rabbi Apple noted that this ‘symbiosis of Jewish and western culture [...] expressed itself in the observation that Rabbi Porush was a particularly civilized man and rabbi.’³⁶ Porush took note of the dangers and latent antisemitism but also saw how Jews could be integrated modern members of the non-Jewish community without compromising their religious or cultural integrity, by actively participating in and contributing to the nation in which they live. This *hashgafa* remained with him for the remainder of his life and formed the basis for his dialogue with Christians in Australia.

7.3 Early Career and Experiences in Britain

Porush’s graduation from the seminary coincided with Hitler’s rise to power in Germany and meant that remaining in Germany was no longer an option for him. Clearly influenced by and strongly committed to Modern Orthodoxy, Porush recognised his ideology meant that a return to Israel was not feasible because at ‘that time there were no active rabbis in *Eretz Israel* who came from a ‘Modern Orthodox’ school. Only products of the one-sided, intensive *yeshiva* could attain a rabbinic position.’³⁷ This quote from his journal shows that the time spent in

³² Rutland, ‘Porush, Israel (1907-1991)’.

³³ Elton, ‘Rabbi Dr Israel Porush,’ 233.

³⁴ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 24.

³⁵ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 24.

³⁶ Apple, *The Great Synagogue*, 96.

³⁷ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 27.

Germany had a profound impact on the young rabbi's world outlook and that he favoured a modern approach to extreme religious observance, being mindful of the fact that diaspora Jewry lives alongside non-Jewish peers in Western societies and, thus, need to adapt to these realities.

It seems evident from his writings that he initially favoured remaining in Germany as he considered an offer to be the 'second rabbi in a large community in Germany'³⁸ but within weeks of Hitler's rise to power his work permit was repealed and he had to expedite his plans for immigration, which he had already prepared. Under the guise of intending to become a research student in Hebrew literature at the British Museum in London, he succeeded in obtaining a work visa to the United Kingdom. Once in London, he immediately made plans on how to adapt to yet another new country, language and culture. He made contact with the local Jewish community and managed to obtain work as a tutor which in turn enabled him to attend lectures and courses with the aim 'to perfect my knowledge of the English language.'³⁹ This was once again proof that he was committed to the Modern Orthodox approach of working with and living in both the local Jewish and non-Jewish communities and he began skilled in the English language and was known as a powerful orator.

Porush recognised the importance of networking in Anglo-society, and he proceeded to establish important contacts as soon as he arrived in England. This effort proved fruitful since within a year of arriving in London, he was asked to be the rabbi for the small but fast growing suburban Finchley congregation in 1934.⁴⁰ This congregation consisted of mostly young Jewish families at the time.⁴¹ He continued to network at Finchley and managed to expand the community from 100 to 650 members by the time he left for Sydney in 1940 through discovering and persuading new Jewish residents in the area to join.⁴² It was at Finchley that Porush learned early in his career how to practically apply the learning he received at the seminary to everyday situations. For example, it was here that both Rabbi and Rebbetzin Bertha Porush (nee Link) committed themselves to assisting some of the 70,000 Jewish refugees that

³⁸ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 26.

³⁹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 27.

⁴⁰ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 28.

⁴¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 28.

⁴² Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 28.

arrived in Britain prior to the war,⁴³ thereby gaining a clear understanding of the increasing gravity of the situation European Jewry in during the 1930s.

This is clearly demonstrated in Rabbi Porush's pre-war sermons in London. There are five of Porush's sermons that were found in the archives dating prior to *Kristallnacht* which highlight Porush's concerns about the worsening situation for Jews in Europe. Through these sermons, Porush ensured that his congregation could not turn a blind eye to the situation. In one of his first sermons at Finchley in April 1934, he talked at length about the plight of German Jewry, with increasing restrictions and persecution in the short time since Hitler came to power. Since many of his congregants were themselves German refugees this would have resonated and aided the new rabbi in consolidating his position within the congregation. These sermons were not given as a career move but rather came from the heart as the fiery words therein reflected his personal and emotional experience in Germany and his disappointment with both Jews and Germans.

His April 1934 sermon set the tone not just for his ministry in Finchley but his future engagements with other Jewish communities and non-Jews alike. He berated Anglo-Jewry for not reacting more strongly in awakening their 'spiritual and inner Jewish life, or in our attitudes towards our non-Jewish fellow citizens.'⁴⁴ He explained to them, that since Hitler's rise to power:

We saw half a million Jews who for many centuries formed a valuable and devoted part of the population, who shared the language, the culture, and the duties, the happiness, and the misfortune of the country, who fought for it with the noblest patriotism; we saw that these Jews of all the Jews in the world had to face the greatest disappointment of their German-Jewish *Weltanschauung*.⁴⁵

This sermon was meant as a wake-up call to his congregation that what was happening in Germany, could also happen in Britain. He warned that 'there are political parties in England

⁴³ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 30.

⁴⁴ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 April 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁴⁵ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 April 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

which are waiting for scandals in England in order to have a good propaganda for their cause.⁴⁶ He repeatedly drew analogies between Jewish life in England and Jewish life in Germany and that English Jewry ought not to have a false sense of security due to their high level of assimilation in general society since ‘Germany has been the country where the word assimilation was the first to be employed and practiced in life by Jews’⁴⁷ and that ‘Germany owed to a good extent her amazing development in industry and commerce to the enterprise of Jewish men of business. Also her spiritual life has been enriched by Jewish writers, scientists and artists.’⁴⁸ The central theme of his sermon was that no level of assimilation and integration into non-Jewish society will protect Jews from antisemitism. ‘Just the opposite: The hatred against the Jew is influenced by envy, fear of Jewish competition, but also by the endeavour not to let the Jew gain too great an influence in the cultural life.’⁴⁹ He asked his congregation ‘Where was the gratitude of their country? What price did they receive for the indifference of their Judaism?’⁵⁰ Porush also argued that it was imperative that the Anglo-Jewish community effectively police itself by criticising their own faults so as not to give antisemites any opportunities.

Assimilation remained one of Porush’s key concerns throughout his career, particularly the belief that through assimilation, antisemitism would disappear alongside the loss of *Yiddishkeit* [a Jewish way of life]. In the second remaining sermon from his time at Finchley from June 1934, he preached at length about the need for parents to fight assimilation and imbue their children with a strong sense of belonging within Jewish culture. He stated in one of his sermons:

There are many Jews to whom the mere idea that Israel should live and has a right to live a life of its own, is inconvenient. It is fear that dictates this attitude. They preach adjustment to the environment and think that the solution of the Jewish problem lies in assimilation of the Jew to the outside world. [...] But history at large, and in particular

⁴⁶ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 April 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁴⁷ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 April 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁴⁸ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 April 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁴⁹ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 April 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁵⁰ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 April 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

the events of the last two years, have shown us clearly that this way must lead to catastrophe [*sic*].⁵¹

Furthermore, he believed that those who favour assimilation ‘preach adjustment to the environment and think that the solution of the Jewish problem lies in assimilation of the Jew to the outside world.’⁵² He warned that ‘not only will the Jew then feel himself uprooted, also the outside world, as we have seen in Germany, will oppose the penetration of the Jew into their life.’⁵³ These principles continued to guide his ministry, that it was imperative for Jews to retain their own civilisation whilst they were in exile living within foreign civilisations so as not to cause feelings of envy, hatred and fear amongst their hosts.

The remaining three sermons by Porush predating *Kristallnacht* also deal with the complex relationship he had with the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. His Remembrance Day sermon from November 1934 again mentioned the plight of Jews in Germany and Eastern Europe, spoke of the horrors and suffering of World War One, and the relative peace that ensued, which was then once again under threat.⁵⁴ It read almost as a prediction of things to come noting that ‘Even the character of armistice day is not any more a day of victory but a day of memorial and much more a day of anxiety that those fallen in the last war may have fallen in vain and that the danger of another war is not over.’⁵⁵

Throughout his time in England, the themes of his ministry were consistently the threat of Germany, the threat of assimilation, a return to Judaism and the Jewish position within the greater non-Jewish society. He permeated these by constantly drawing analogies between England and Germany. A fine example of this was found in his address on the anniversary of the King’s Jubilee in March 1935:

⁵¹ Israel Porush, Guest Preacher Sermon at St John’s Wood Synagogue, 30 June 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁵² Israel Porush, Guest Preacher Sermon at St John’s Wood Synagogue, 30 June 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁵³ Porush, Israel, Guest Preacher Sermon at St John’s Wood Synagogue, 30 June 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁵⁴ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 10 November 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁵⁵ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 10 November 1934. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

As Jews and as British Jews, in particular, we owe thanks to our gracious Sovereign and to his noble people. When we look around us and survey the position of our brethren in other countries we cannot but feel affection and gratitude to our country and to its head. Never can we forget that we are privileged to be among peoples who are placed under the sceptre of righteousness, freedom and humanity.⁵⁶

He went on to say: 'The loyalty of the English Jews is more or less recognised by England, not because the Jews so often speak about it and emphasise their patriotism at the expense of their Jewishness, but because the English are fair and just, and because the Jews know their place within the commonwealth.'⁵⁷ He went on at to talk about the importance of Jewish loyalty to the King and empire.

The year following, in a civic service at Finchley Synagogue, which was attended by the local mayor and other dignitaries, he used the opportunity to continue this theme of loyalty and talk about the concept at length. 'I need not apologize for introducing the subject of loyalty this morning. As a Jewish community of loyal citizens, we are enjoying, for the first time in the history of our congregation, the honour and privilege of welcoming in this House of God, His Worship the Mayor (and Mayoress) [etc.]'.⁵⁸ He impressed on his visitors and congregation that 'This civic visit is a striking testimony to the bond of sympathy and good will that subsists between the members of the Jewish Fraternity and others in the Borough.'⁵⁹ He went on to state that 'Civic loyalty, is characteristic of the Jew wherever he happens to reside, and to enjoy to a greater or lesser degree the rights of citizenship.'⁶⁰ Clearly this indicates that he had learned from his experience in Germany, that was as important to him to promote Jews as loyal citizens and not enemies of the state and as integrated and contributing to society. It also shows that he welcomed the opportunity to interact with the non-Jewish society even within his own

⁵⁶ Israel Porush, Sermon or Address at the Anniversary of the King's Jubilee at Finchley Synagogue, May 1935. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁵⁷ Israel Porush, Sermon or Address at the Anniversary of the King's Jubilee at Finchley Synagogue, May 1935. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁵⁸ Israel Porush, Address (presumably at Finchley Synagogue) at a Civic Service, 12 December 1936 in the presence of the mayor. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁵⁹ Israel Porush, Address (presumably at Finchley Synagogue) at a Civic Service, 12 December 1936 in the presence of the mayor. RIP Collection Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁶⁰ Israel Porush, Address (presumably at Finchley Synagogue) at a Civic Service, 12 December 1936 in the presence of the mayor. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

congregation and remind both of the importance of loyalty and the contributions some famous Anglo-Jews have made in the proceeding decades.⁶¹

This emphasis on loyalty as a theme throughout his British ministry was a deliberate attempt to warn his congregants against a false sense of security which he felt was contributing to the decimation of German Jewry at the time. In his Passover sermon from 1937, with Passover presumably being one of the two most attended services of the year, he highlighted incidents of antisemitism in the United Kingdom and brewing anti-Jewish feelings within the broader society. This shows he was aware of antisemitism throughout Europe and at home in England and made a conscious effort to alert his congregation to these threats.⁶² He knew from his German experience that Jews had to be extra vigilant in their conduct within the broader society as ‘All the charity in the world that Jews may give for general causes and all the services that they may render their fellow-men will not outweigh the ill feelings, the jealousy and the enmity that a careless or dishonest or showy daily conduct in the street, in business and in private life are bound to provoke.’⁶³

Having witnessed the contributions that German Jews have made to broader German society and seen their integration (and in many instances their assimilation) prior to 1933, Porush struggled to understand how German society could turn on its Jewish citizens so quickly without remembering the good that Jews had contributed. His sermon on Armistice Day 1938 seems to try to find a logical answer. The address talked about the actions taken by the victorious powers at Versailles, which he reasoned caused Hitler to rise to power in a humiliated society that needed a scapegoat for its perils. He alluded to this in his sermon:

We realise to-day [*sic*] more than ever that not the arrangements of 20 years ago made by men intoxicated with victory who could not free themselves from petty vengeance and the passion of the hour, will establish peace among the nations, but the education of the new generation in the way of the Lord to do justice and righteousness.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Israel Porush, Address (presumably at Finchley Synagogue) at a Civic Service, 12 December 1936 in the presence of the mayor. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁶² Israel Porush, Passover Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 27 March 1937. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁶³ Israel Porush, Passover Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 27 March 1937. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁶⁴ Israel Porush, Address presumably at Finchley Synagogue for Armistice Day 1938. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

The themes of Jewish loyalty to the state and the plight of world Jewry in general also marked his speeches at non-Jewish events such as the lecture he delivered at the North Finchley Brotherhood in 1938. It seems this brotherhood was a local organisation of Christians and Jews. He said:

I conceive your invitation as a gesture of good will extended to me as the representative of local Jewry on the part of the many Christians united in this Brotherhood, and also as a move towards a perfect understanding between Christians and Gentile. You have chosen a simple yet meaningful name for your society: Brotherhood.⁶⁵

The theme of brotherhood continued to be the centrepiece of many of Porush's sermons and broadcasts later in Australia. He talked at length about the concept of brotherhood and how it united religions. It would not at all be surprising if the encounter with the North Finchley Brotherhood in 1938 spurred his endeavours in Australia to form the CCJ and also to be the namesake for Sydney's Brotherhood Week introduced in 1945. In this lecture he also talked at length about the plight of world Jewry, discrimination based on racial grounds 'the crazy and sick world in which we are living to-day [*sic*]'⁶⁶ as well as the situation of Jews in Russia, Germany, Poland and Palestine, using facts and figures to reinforce his message.

7.4 The Year 1938 and the Influence of *Kristallnacht* on Porush

The year 1938 seems to have been a turning point in his understanding of the relationship between world Jewry and the non-Jewish world. In January 1938, he preached, or rather educated his congregation on the decline of the rights of Jews in fascist Italy. The sermon was a watershed moment for him as it solidified his view that the dangers Jews faced were not just confined to Germany but were in fact present throughout Europe, if not throughout the world. He stated that 'Only a few months ago they were assured that racialism was not compatible with Italian Fascism, and now they experience the most cruel degradation.'⁶⁷ He continued to

⁶⁵ Israel Porush, Lecture delivered at North Finchley Brotherhood, 27 March 1938. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁶⁶ Israel Porush, Lecture delivered at North Finchley Brotherhood, 27 March 1938. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ

⁶⁷ Israel Porush, Passover Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 22 January 1938. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

warn his congregation that even a well-integrated Jewish community could face danger in a non-Jewish country:

[Until recently] There was no Jewish problem in Italy because there were few Jews and these were very assimilated. The Jewish community produced many great men who have dedicated themselves to the well-being of the country and have furthered the interests of the land as well as its culture. A Jewish author wrote about a year ago: 'In modern times it may be said that Anti-Semitism has never established a foothold in Italy and the Italian Jews have entered into the life of the country to a singularly comprehensive extent, having occupied positions of highest authority in the State, including that of Prime Minister.' But all this has changed and we Jews are now faced with an increased number of refugees after whom we have to look, because there is no-body else to do this.⁶⁸

This quote set Porush's agenda not only for the remainder of 1938 but for the remainder of the Nazi period. The idea that Jews have to look after each other because non-Jews would not became central to his work in advocating for Jewish refugees in Britain and Australia. The sermon also imbued in the reader with the sense that he believed that no amount of goodwill or charity will ultimately keep a Jewish community safe in a non-Jewish society, as the examples of Italy and Germany had shown.

In 1938, Porush was offered the chief minister's position in Melbourne by Britain's Chief Rabbi Hertz but declined as he believed that his prospects would be better in England.⁶⁹ He changed his mind during the course of 1938, especially after *Kristallnacht* which had a tremendous impact on his perception of the world, as reflected in the three sermons he gave regarding *Kristallnacht*, which he had saved, and which have been preserved in the Archive of Australian Judaica. The *Anschluss* of Austria and the subsequent 'rape of Czechoslovakia'⁷⁰ further led him to believe that war was imminent and that perhaps the distant shores of Australia would provide better protection than those of England, especially for his wife Bertha and two young daughters, Judy and Naomi.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Israel Porush, Passover Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 22 January 1938. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁶⁹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 30.

⁷⁰ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 31.

⁷¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 31.

In the sermon that followed *Kristallnacht*, he highlighted some of the suffering of Jews in Germany and Austria, showing that English Jews were very much aware of what was happening in Nazi Germany at the time. Porush lamented the decline of relations between Germans and Jews in a civilised country such as Germany stating that ‘We cannot believe that such things can happen in a country that lies in the heart of civilized humanity, that produced a Lessing and a Herder, a Kant and a Beethoven.’⁷² *Kristallnacht* was claimed according to Nazi propaganda to be German revenge for the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a German diplomat in Paris, by the young Jewish refugee, Hershel Grynszpan. Rabbi Porush asked his congregation in the wake of the events: ‘Are we Jews not permitted to have among 16,000,000 people one mad-man or even murderer. Is murder indeed the privilege of the Aryan race?’⁷³ He alerted his congregation that in response to the attack, ‘Never in the history of mankind has a pogrom so officially and so openly, so generally and so efficiently and so brutally consumed [so many].’⁷⁴ He draws a further analogy of note: ‘I wonder what Germany would say if the Dutch government would blame the whole German people for the attack made on one of her subject during these two days of riots?’⁷⁵

A further opportunity arose in November 1938 to espouse his views and concerns at the Hendon Synagogue during a pulpit interchange commencing with the words: ‘These days we have been the witnesses of the most outrageous and heart-rendering tragedy that has befallen a Jewish Community in modern times.’⁷⁶ This time he also warned the Hendon community of the new and peculiar danger that German Jewry faced. He believed that German Jewry ‘suffer because they happen to belong to the Jewish people and not because they profess certain ideals.’⁷⁷ He stated that in previous persecutions Jews could have been spared if only they converted but this new type of persecution in Germany would continue even if the Jews converted. Identifying

⁷² Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue after *Kristallnacht* November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁷³ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue after *Kristallnacht* November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁷⁴ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue after *Kristallnacht* November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁷⁵ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue after *Kristallnacht* November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

⁷⁶ Israel Porush, Sermon at Hendon Synagogue (Interchange) November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁷⁷ Israel Porush, Sermon at Hendon Synagogue (Interchange) November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

this new type of persecution as an existential threat based on race not religion was to imbue in his congregants a sense of urgency and danger.⁷⁸

He relentlessly continued his quest to educate his congregants on the suffering of German Jewry in the wake of *Kristallnacht*. In a further sermon he said:

When a few months ago a Special Intercession Service was held at this Synagogue on behalf of German Jewry we all thought that the persecution of that unfortunate Community had reached its summit in those written and unwritten laws of the ruling party of Germany which not only established a complete segregation of the Jews from the life of their fellow country-men, a segregation wrought with the stigma of eternal damnation into the status of outcasts, but which had also condemned them to penury and misery. Within the short spell of five years we saw a proud, creative and highly cultured Community, and loyal and ever-ready-to-serve group of citizens, one that had lived in Germany for over 16 centuries, that had made such valuable contributions to the cultural, commercial and political life of their fatherland and that had brought such great sacrifices on behalf of the land of their birth, we saw this community hurled down from the heights of their achievements, deprived of their civic rights, ousted from the universities and professions, excluded from the life of the nation, degraded by all kinds of hateful regulations, given over to the whims of miserable vindictive party officials, insulted on every possible occasion, deprived of the protection of the law, ill-treated without mercy and dispossessed of the fruit of their hard labours. It is true we became accustomed to the idea that the outrages against the German Jews and their elementary human rights were a government policy and not a momentary outburst of a revolutionary crowd; we realized that there was an extensive programme for the suppression of the Jews in order to force their emigration to other countries; we knew that there was no hope whatsoever under this Regime for the Jews of Germany... But we thought that a people that still claimed to be recognized as a civilized member of the family of nations could not go any further in its devilish policy of strangulation pursued already with such great efficiency, vigour and cruelty against a powerless and defenceless Community.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Israel Porush, Sermon at Hendon Synagogue (Interchange) November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁷⁹ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

These powerful words are worth reflecting on and would most certainly have made an impact on his congregation. They were written in haste and with emotion as attested by the long sentences, with numerous syntax mistakes, which was unusual for Porush since he always was very careful to proof-read his sermons and made hand-written changes to any errors of expression. He also did so in this sermon, as seen in the type-written script, but clearly not to the same extent that he normally did. He continued his sermon in a quest for answers as to how Germans could change so suddenly in their treatment of Jews. He believed that ‘A mob bred for years on the doctrines of hate and cruelty – from the cradle to the grave – can be worse, much worse than the beast, which although it knows no mercy, makes a halt when its needs have been satisfied. We have these days been the witness of the most heart-rending and horrible tragedy that has ever befallen a Jewish Community in modern times.’⁸⁰

Porush recognised that the *Kristallnacht* pogrom was government endorsed and organised, despite Nazi claims that it was a spontaneous uprising. He must have worried what the effect of these policies have on young Germans especially, since he noted that ‘What have we to expect of a nation that teaches its young people to burn Synagogues, to burn holy books, to chase old men in the streets, to beat and to slay human beings, to ruin wantonly other people’s property, to loot and to rob?’⁸¹ He deduced from this additional worries: ‘These events have been an eye-opener to the world. We Jews have lately felt in a most uncomfortable position in relation to world politics.’⁸²

This sermon was powerful in many ways, not just because it was perhaps his most personal, emotional and comprehensive sermon on the topic of German Jewry to date, but also because of its eerie accuracy of data given the times and difficulty of obtaining information from Germany. He said:

... it was generous of Germany that only 50.000 [*sic*] Jews were arrested and led away to places unknown to the prisoners [*sic*] families. Hundreds of Jews have been driven to

⁸⁰ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁸¹ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁸² Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

such despair that they have sought peace in suicide [*sic*]. Almost all the Rabbis of Germany are in concentration camps. All the officials of the various Congregations with only a few exceptions, are taken into protective custody – a term which is to cover the greatest lie of the German authorities.⁸³

He made a point of noting that ‘Thousands of children are left without their parents and families without their bread-winner. Even the doctors of the Jewish Hospitals have been arrested,’⁸⁴ thereby highlighting that even the highest and noblest of professionals had not been spared. In a handwritten annotation in the sermon, he noted that ‘Whatever you read in the daily press or even in the [Jewish press] is much understated in comparison to the personal reports that I have had the opportunity to hear from refugees who have arrived in this Community during the last 3 days.’⁸⁵ This showed his keen awareness of the true scale of the devastation and his concerns and involvement with refugees.

Nevertheless, despite the grim message of this sermon, Porush concluded that ‘We must refuse to believe that the whole German nation approves of this inhumanity, though we know that at present the better elements of Germans are frightened and silenced.’⁸⁶ This shows that despite all the events that had occurred in Germany, he refused to believe that all Germans were complicit in this as this would presumably have gone contrary to his personal experience during his studies there. It also meant that he was aware that relations ought to be sought with non-Jews who were philosemitic in their outlook.

The belief that even amongst the cruelty of Nazi-Germany, there might be good gentiles willing to help the Jews, albeit silenced, underpinned his future efforts to seek relations with Christians. He expanded on this belief in his 1939 *Shabbat Va’era* sermon when he said that:

There is to-day [*sic*] hardly a country where the presence of a Jewish elements in the population is not being used by interested parties from within and from without as a basis

⁸³ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁸⁴ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁸⁵ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

⁸⁶ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue sometime after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, undated. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

for putting forward their political ideas and aims, because they know that it is easier to unite people in common hate than in common love, and because century-old prejudices have sown the seed of hatred which the manure of ruthless propaganda has little difficulty in bringing to fruition. The absurdity of the arguments, the insanity of their theories, the harmfulness of their programme to all men, the untruth of their allegations are no deterrent in the pursuit of their objective; they are obsessed by racial hatred and prejudice and they mean to instil this aversion into others, as a means to the attainment of power. Anti-semitism is a passion with many of them and they do not wish to be enlightened and taught. You will not convince an Anti-semite through argument or statistics or history of the folly of his creed. But these staunch blind haters are in a minority. The great majority of people, at least in this fair and enlightened country, will lend a willing ear to argument and proof and it is therefore the duty of every Jew to acquaint himself with the manifold accusation raised against him, to be prepared to refute the lies and calumnies which bear his name.⁸⁷

This powerful sermon seems to have been the culmination of a number of weeks of considering what could be done to protect British Jewry from the calamities that have affected the German Jewish community. It seems that his answer was for Jews to engage with non-Jews and to educate mainstream Britain on antisemitism, a very appropriate and Jewish response given his personal fondness of education as a means to better oneself. He practised his own advice, especially later in Australia, and presumably this explains why he was eager to be not just involved in but also to be leading driver of the CCJ in New South Wales, while also ensuring that key Christian leaders such as Archbishop Mowll, were involved.

His final remaining sermon from his time in London is from *Rosh Hashana* 1939. Once again, he used a major holiday sermon, presumably a well-attended service, to point to the dangers of war. *Rosh Hashana* 1939 was on 14-15 September 1939 and World War Two had broken out on September 1. He advised his congregation that *Rosh Hashana* ‘has been set aside for honest and merciless self-scrutiny. To-day [*sic*] we must endeavour to interrupt the stream of prejudicial judgement against friend and foe alike, and pause for a while to allow our

⁸⁷ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue, 21 January 1939. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

conscience to regain a more impartial position.’⁸⁸ He then launched into an attack on Germany: ‘Germany has become a fortress of evil, strangling within all who differ from the ruling party in race and opinion.’⁸⁹ He mentioned the atmosphere that existed at the beginning of the Great War and compared it to the contemporary atmosphere and mood that he perceived at the time of his sermon and concluded that there ‘is instead the quiet, solemn resolve of sobered men and women who have set themselves a task in the cause of humanity knowing very well the terrible implications of their undertaking, the sorrow that will follow in their wake, and the tragedy of the necessity of this fight.’⁹⁰

Porush attempted to provide his congregation with comfort and an uplifting mood given that they were well aware of the formidable capabilities of the German military and the danger this posed to their existence in England. He stated:

We are to-day [*sic*] nearer than ever before the time when all peoples will realize that war is the worse means for settling the affairs of the nations [...] we have every reason to hope that the world that will emerge from the ruins of this battle will be nobler than the one we shall leave behind, that the new order will be rooted in righteousness and brotherhood, and that we shall not sow the seed of new conflict when peace will be concluded.⁹¹

Porush went on to say:

The war between religion and paganism, between law and chaos, between justice and violence, between freedom and oppression has been going on now for a number of years, though not everybody recognized the real meaning of Nazi-rule. We Jews have been the first and the worst victims. It was the Jews against whom the attack was first directed.

⁸⁸ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue *Rosh Hashana* 1939. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3 Folder 1, AAJ.

⁸⁹ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue *Rosh Hashana* 1939. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3 Folder 1, AAJ.

⁹⁰ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue *Rosh Hashana* 1939. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3 Folder 1, AAJ.

⁹¹ Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue *Rosh Hashana* 1939. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3 Folder 1, AAJ.

But in fact it was humanity and decency that was trodden upon, and no one is safe from the arrogant and destructive ambitions of the tyrant.⁹²

This quote shows that not only the Jews were in danger now that Germany was at war with most of Europe, but humanity itself, and that Porush believed that an attack on Jews was an attack on all humans. This was an attempt to gain support from non-Jews for the war against German intolerance by stating that all decent humans are at risk and not just Jews.

The beginning of the war had once again brought the danger of Nazi-Germany closer to him and his family as England was potentially no longer safe in the long-term. In his memoir, published towards the end of his life, he reflected on the fact that the outbreak of the war influenced his decision to move to Australia⁹³ so that he and his family could be safer. His experiences and his sermons have shown that he was deeply concerned about the deterioration of relations between Christians and Jews and that in his opinion, dialogue and education were the most effective means to fostering cohesive coexistence and understanding. It was these beliefs, clearly enunciated in his London sermons discussed above, that motivated his efforts to reach out to the Christian clergy, and that led to his initiation of the CCJ.

7.5 Arrival in Australia and Jewish-Christian Relations at the Time

Prior to Porush's departure from Britain after his appointment to the Great Synagogue, the secretary of the Conjoint Fund for Refugee Children, Golda Offenheim, sent him a letter, wishing him well for his new endeavours. She praised Porush as a pacifist lamenting his departure as his "peaceful" influence⁹⁴ was much welcomed between board members, because he was said to have been a moderating and diplomatic voice on the Fund's committee.⁹⁵ His membership on the committee also provides further evidence that he was active in refugee advocacy prior to coming to Australia and explains why he made refugee advocacy one of his three tenets during the early years in Sydney. The other tenet that he concentrated on was opposing mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews and matters of

⁹² Israel Porush, Sermon at Finchley Synagogue *Rosh Hashana* 1939. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 3 Folder 1, AAJ.

⁹³ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 30.

⁹⁴ Golda Offenheim, Secretary of the Conjoint Fund for Refugee Children, Letter to Israel Porush, 12 March 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 2, AAJ.

⁹⁵ Golda Offenheim, Secretary of the Conjoint Fund for Refugee Children, Letter to Israel Porush, 12 March 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 2, AAJ.

conversion as well as generally representing the Jewish community of Australia, such as through radio broadcasts. It is this last focus that includes his activities in the Council of Christians and Jews. His wife, Bertha, who was also very involved in refugee work at Finchley, strongly supported her husband's Jewish refugee advocacy and further fostered both their interest in continuing this work in Australia.⁹⁶

Interestingly, Porush's recommendation for the chief minister's position in Sydney came about when John Goulston visited England in his capacity as Past Grand Master of New South Wales Freemasons at the installation of the Duke of Kent as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1939.⁹⁷ Goulston was also directed by the Board of the Great Synagogue to find a new minister,⁹⁸ following their decision not to renew the contract of Rabbi Ephraim M. Levy, which caused considerable tensions in the Sydney community.⁹⁹ It may well be that as a result of this, Porush was not just introduced to the position in Sydney but also to Freemasonry, an order he joined in 1944 in Sydney.¹⁰⁰ His appointment to the Great Synagogue received attention in the press both in England and in Australia. The London *Jewish Chronicle* reported on this decision in March 1940 and included in their report a short excerpt of his resume, such as the fact that 'he was born in Jerusalem'¹⁰¹ and that 'he obtained his Rabbinical Diploma at the Hildesheimer Seminary, Berlin [and he] studied at Berlin and Marburg Universities and gained his doctorate (PhD) with first-class honours, in 1931.'¹⁰² Both the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph* also published a short excerpt about him in July 1941 when he applied for naturalisation.¹⁰³ The article from the *Jewish Chronicle* seems to have assisted in his naturalisation application, despite the time he had spent in Germany, because it was included in his application materials. It corroborated his claims and was noted by the Australian government inspector in charge of considering his application.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 30.

⁹⁷ Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press: 1977), 150.

⁹⁸ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 150.

⁹⁹ Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 296-7.

¹⁰⁰ Master Mason Certificate Issued to Porush, 29 August 1946. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁰¹ NAA: A659, 1941/1/4735, Item ID: 1771854, "'Call' to Australia – Rabbi Dr Porush to Sydney,' *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 March 1940.

¹⁰² NAA: A659, 1941/1/4735, Item ID: 1771854, "'Call' to Australia – Rabbi Dr Porush to Sydney,' *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 March 1940.

¹⁰³ NAA: A659, 1941/1/4735, Item ID: 1771854, Excerpts from *SMH* and *DT*, 3 July 1941.

¹⁰⁴ NAA: A659, 1941/1/4735, Item ID: 1771854, 'Report on Application for Naturalisation by Israel Porush-Mandel'.

One of the first interfaith activities that Porush was involved with occurred prior to his arrival in Australia, when, as the only clergyman on board his vessel to Australia, he was asked to ‘organise a non-denominational National Intercession Service’¹⁰⁵ after the debacle of Dunkirk. In his inauguration address to the Great Synagogue, he promised that he would continue his efforts to ‘act as an ambassador of his people’¹⁰⁶ which he believed was one of the essential functions of a Jewish minister, a ‘vital function which he has to fulfil, one which takes him outside the arena of the Jewish community.’¹⁰⁷ He commented that a rabbi ‘will regard himself happy to be able to serve the weal of his fellow citizens and to labour with gladsome devotion in every cause that tends to enhance the country’s welfare and strength.’¹⁰⁸ He believed that a rabbi must be a loyal citizen that performs ‘a signal service to the country’¹⁰⁹ of his residence when he fights against hatred. This aptly summarised his beliefs with regard to non-Jewish engagements from Finchley and set the scene for his forthcoming ministry in Australia, especially as head of Australia’s largest Jewish congregation. He said that ‘There is no greater patriotic service, I think, than to help the country to remain civilized in the noblest sense of the word and not to fall victim to the gospel of race-hatred and intolerance which destroy the soul of a people.’¹¹⁰

7.5.1 Advocacy on behalf of Australian Jewry and Refugees

Apart from congregational matters and the issues of mixed marriages, conversions and other matters pertaining to the Sydney Beth Din, Porush sought to again network in the local community and to develop key contacts. He was quick to acquaint himself with local traditions and noted that ‘For many years a tribute was paid to Sir John Monash from the pulpit of the Great Synagogue on the Sabbath preceding his *yahrzeit*.’¹¹¹ He kept the tradition and reminded those assembled that Monash’s achievements ‘form also a source of deep gratification to Australian Jewry.’¹¹² He quoted, Sir Isaac Isaacs, the Governor-General’s tribute to Monash, describing him as ‘a loyal servant of King and Country, distinguished alike in peace and

¹⁰⁵ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 32.

¹⁰⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 33.

¹⁰⁷ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 33.

¹⁰⁹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 33.

¹¹⁰ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 33.

¹¹¹ Israel Porush, General Sir John Monash Yahrzeit Memorial Address, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

¹¹² Israel Porush, General Sir John Monash Yahrzeit Memorial Address, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

war.’¹¹³ Porush also reminded the congregation of their duty that with ‘the greatest and most humane of all Empires we Jews stand and fall.’¹¹⁴ These statements reflected his interest in Australian Jewish history, and he quickly became involved with the newly established Australian Jewish Historical Society, later serving as its president from 1948 to 1974.

Porush also involved himself at times in the secular Zionist activities of Sydney’s Jewish community, but throughout the 1940s until Israel’s creation, especially with the end of the war and the growing tensions between the *Yishuv* (Jewish residents in Palestine) he was careful to do so diplomatically. For example, in 1945, he offered the invocation on the day of prayer for Palestine and the prayer for Israel at the Zionist Conference meeting in 1947. The language he used was appealing all sides of the Zionist divide without taking too strong a political stance. He prayed for ‘the restoration of Zion and the building of a National Home for the Jewish people’¹¹⁵ but also ‘to guide the Councils and assemblies of the United Nations when they gather together in judgment over the future of the Holy Land.’¹¹⁶ He prayed especially for those ‘concerned with the destiny of the Holy Land, the British and the Arabs’¹¹⁷ that they may have a ‘spirit of fairness and a brotherly understanding for the needs of our bleeding people.’¹¹⁸ With his extended family in Mandated Palestine, and his belief in Zionism, he supported Bishop Pilcher, as strong believer in the Zionist endeavour, but was careful to show his support with his careful, diplomatic approach.

During the war years, Porush continued to convey the messages that he had focused on in London. He constantly stressed the dangers facing European Jewry and conveyed this message not only to the Jewish community through his pulpit, but also to the broader community through radio broadcasts. One of the first sermons he delivered at the Great Synagogue continued on his theme of highlighting the perils of the war to his congregation and this is a theme which kept recurring during the war years. A National Day of Prayer was arranged

¹¹³ Israel Porush, General Sir John Monash Yahrzeit Memorial Address, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

¹¹⁴ Israel Porush, General Sir John Monash Yahrzeit Memorial Address, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, Folder 2, AAJ.

¹¹⁵ Israel Porush, Prayer for Israel written for Zionist Conference Meeting 1947. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹¹⁶ Israel Porush, Prayer for Israel written for Zionist Conference Meeting 1947. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹¹⁷ Israel Porush, Invocation on Day of Prayer for Palestine, 21 October 1945. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹¹⁸ Israel Porush, Invocation on Day of Prayer for Palestine, 21 October 1945. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

‘which the King has asked to be observed’¹¹⁹ by all including the Jewish community, as was mentioned in a telegram received by Porush from Prime Minister Robert Menzies in 1940. Porush replied to the Prime Minister advising that his wish would be adhered to given and Menzies later replied that the ‘Commonwealth Government greatly appreciates your kind message of sympathy.’¹²⁰ This indicates that despite having been in New South Wales for just a few months, Porush had already successfully established direct communications with the Prime Minister of Australia through his position as chief minister of the Great Synagogue and informal leader of Australian Jewry. Porush stated at the start of his intercession sermon that it was ‘at His Majesty’s command’¹²¹ and he talked about the state of Australian Jewry twelve months after the outbreak of war, continuing his theme of preaching about the perils of war as he had done at Finchley Synagogue. Porush continued to communicate with the Australian government ‘on behalf of citizens of Jewish faith’¹²² when he sent a telegram with sympathies to Prime Minister John Curtin for the relatives of the crew of HMAS *Sydney*, which was sunk in December 1941.

Another aspect of Porush’s ministry was advocacy on behalf of Jewish refugees, particularly those in internment camps throughout Australia. He did this along with his colleagues, Rabbis Falk, Gurewicz, Freedman and Danglow.¹²³ Of the roughly 10,000 people interned in Australia during World War Two it is estimated that some 2,000 were of German-Jewish origin.¹²⁴ The correspondence uncovered in the archives mostly dates from 1940, thus the first six months after his arrival in Australia and shows that he was immediately and widely involved in various activities that advocated for Jewish refugees and internees. The correspondence also shows that he was held in high regard by government officials and that he understood the power of his position as chief minister of the Great Synagogue, and therefore as chief advocate and representative of Australian Jewry, to petition on behalf of the community. Apart from the fact that Porush had enjoyed a cordial exchange of words with Prime Minister Menzies in 1940 as

¹¹⁹ Robert Menzies, Prime Minister, Telegram to Porush, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹²⁰ Robert Menzies, Prime Minister, Telegram to Porush, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹²¹ Israel Porush, Intercession Sermon, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 6 IP Shelf List 64, File 6, AAJ.

¹²² NAA: A1608, S51/1/6, Item ID: 206864, Israel Porush, Telegram to Prime Minister John Curtin, 1 December 1941.

¹²³ Konrad Kwiet, “‘Be Patient and Reasonable!’ The Internment of German-Jewish Refugees in Australia,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1985-4), 71.

¹²⁴ Kwiet, “‘Be Patient and Reasonable!’,” 61.

discussed,¹²⁵ the very first correspondence saved in his archives is from the New South Wales Minister for Education, dated 7 July 1940. This letter was sent within the first month of his arrival in Australia and requested that Porush, presumably in his capacity as chief representative of Australian Jewry, appoint someone to represent him on a committee caring for the Jewish children brought to Australia.¹²⁶ In this regard, Ronald Macintyre, chairman of the Overseas Children Citizens' Committee sent a list of Jewish children to Porush in November 1940 which would require care¹²⁷ and which Porush agreed to attend to.¹²⁸ He presumably liaised with Walter Brand, general secretary of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society about this request.

For the most part, however, Porush was also the intermediary between Jewish refugees, their families and the government. In a letter from WM Gore in July 1940, Porush was informed that 15 Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria were interned in a camp at Orange for reasons 'absolutely unknown to us.'¹²⁹ The letter went on to plead for assistance because internees were kept together with German and Italian internees and that this was causing significant unpleasantness to the Jewish internees who 'demand to be considered as friendly aliens not as enemy aliens' and that 'the Authorities have interned us together with Nazis and Italian Fascists, our mortal enemies.'¹³⁰ The Agudas Israel World Organisation also called on Porush and the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation to assist Orthodox Jewish refugees in Australian internment camps and included a long list of names they thought were presently interned.¹³¹

The Jewish community's concerns over conditions in Australian internment camps obviously had reached the Australian government as the Royal Australian Air Force liaised with Porush in August 1940. These letters state that Rabbi Gurewicz of Melbourne has already inspected internment camps in Victoria and that a similar inspection should take place in New South

¹²⁵ Robert Menzies, Prime Minister, Telegram to Porush, 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹²⁶ David Drummond, NSW Minister for Education, Letter to Porush, 2 July 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹²⁷ Ronald Macintyre, Letter to Porush, 1 November 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹²⁸ Israel Porush, Letter to Macintyre, 4 November 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹²⁹ WM Gore at Orange Internment Camp, Letter to Porush, 16 July 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹³⁰ WM Gore at Orange Internment Camp, Letter to Porush, 16 July 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹³¹ Agudas Israel World Organisation in London, Letter to Porush and St Kilda Hebrew Congregation, 29 July 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

Wales and asked for Porush's assistance in this regard.¹³² It was noted that this should be carried out by an army chaplain of the Jewish faith rather than Porush himself.¹³³ Porush continued to press the matter and enlisted the help of Archie Michaelis, a Victorian Member of Parliament for St Kilda, who took up the matter with the military authorities.¹³⁴ Clearly, Porush interceded with Michaelis on behalf of the internees to try to ensure that the Jewish internees were separated from Nazis.¹³⁵ Michaelis replied this has only happened in some cases and that return passage to Europe would be more comfortable than the journey to Australia.¹³⁶

Whilst Michaelis may have been a sympathetic voice for refugees in Victoria's legislature, other members of Victoria's state parliament were not well-disposed towards Jewish refugees and made their opinions known publicly. For example, Sir Frank Clarke, president of the Victorian Legislative Council, in 1938 publicly described the Jewish refugees as 'shrinking, rat-faced men' and thought it 'was horrible to think that such people would want to marry Australian girls or even bring their own under-nourished and underdeveloped women, and breed a race within a race...'¹³⁷ These were the kind of attitudes that Porush and others tried to fight against with their public advocacy.

The Jewish internees did not just request assistance regarding the conditions in the camps and their confinement with fascists but also requested help in obtaining religious objects. Two refugees wrote to Rabbi Dr Herman Sanger of the Liberal Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne, who in turn forwarded this to Porush. This letter states that Sanger had spoken to Rabbi Danglow of the neighbouring Orthodox St Kilda Hebrew Congregation and that both had received requests from two rabbis in the internment camps seeking help in the form of scrolls, shofars and prayer books.¹³⁸ It is interesting that interned rabbis wrote to both the Orthodox and Liberal rabbis and that these rabbis cooperated in the matter. It seems that this was highly

¹³² Royal Australian Air Force, Letter to Porush, 22 August 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹³³ Royal Australian Air Force, Letter to Porush, 31 August 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹³⁴ Archie Michaelis, MP for St Kilda, Letter to Porush, 17 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹³⁵ Archie Michaelis, MP for St Kilda, Letter to Porush, 17 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹³⁶ Archie Michaelis, MP for St Kilda, Letter to Porush, 20 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹³⁷ Sir Frank Clarke, 'Menace of the Refugees – Sir F Clarke is Outspoken,' *The Age*, May 1939, as cited in Cyril Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1983), 115.

¹³⁸ Herman Sanger of Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne, Letter to Porush, 27 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

unusual and the situation in the camps must have been desperate. Porush did coordinate with his colleagues in this matter as is evidenced in a letter of response to Rabbi Ehrentreu's request for help on the part of some internees, including Herbert Baev.¹³⁹ It confirms that Porush sent Hebrew books on loan (he underlined this) to the camp. He also stated that religious items such as phylacteries [*tefillin*] are difficult to obtain¹⁴⁰ and he mentioned that he had cabled relatives of a number of internees.¹⁴¹

On some occasions, Porush was called upon to personally assist a particular internee, as was the case of Herbert Baev, a 16-year-old, who requested help from Porush as relatives of his from London had sent him money, which he was anxious to receive.¹⁴² Porush obliged and sent the money to the camp commander to distribute to Baev in accordance with the regulations.¹⁴³ All of this assistance which was provided by Porush and his colleagues did not go unnoticed. The Jewish internees from the camp in Hay sent a telegram to Porush wishing him and the Jewish community a happy new Jewish year.¹⁴⁴ This was signed 'Camp Spokesmen Hay Internment Camp'¹⁴⁵ and given the cost of this telegraph it is evident that the internees appreciated all his efforts as they scraped together enough money to send it. It also shows that the Jewish refugees felt 'very isolated on a sparsely populated plain'¹⁴⁶ but that they had organised themselves effectively, creating a constitution and electing representatives to a council, an ode to the liberal democracy that many internees experienced in Britain and firmly believed in.¹⁴⁷ They even created their own currency to efficiently conduct their own affairs within the camp.¹⁴⁸

¹³⁹ Israel Porush, Letter to Rabbi Ernst Ehrentreu, 27 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁴⁰ Israel Porush, Letter to Rabbi Ernst Ehrentreu, 27 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁴¹ Israel Porush, Letter to Rabbi Ernst Ehrentreu, 27 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁴² Herbert Baev, Letter to Porush, 7 October 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁴³ Israel Porush, Letter to Lt-Col. Thane, Commandant of the Internet Camp at Hay in NSW, 4 November 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁴⁴ Telegram to Porush from Hay Internment Camp, 2 October 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁴⁵ Telegram to Porush from Hay Internment Camp, 2 October 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁴⁶ Ben Zion Patkin, *The Dunera Internees* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1979), 68.

¹⁴⁷ Ken Inglis, Seumas Spark, Jay Winter, Carol Bunyan, *Dunera Lives: A Visual History* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2018), 127.

¹⁴⁸ Paul Bartrop and Gabrielle Eisen (ed), *The Dunera Affair: A Documentary Resource Book* (Melbourne: Schwartz and Wilkinson, 1990), 22.

The internment camp at Hay was particularly significant as the majority of internees from the HMT *Dunera* were incarcerated there from September 1940 until their release between 1941 and 1942.¹⁴⁹ Hans Hammerstein recalled that the commandant of the Hay camp was ‘a very nice man who refused to believe, however, that [...] the internees had no clothes except those they were wearing, and no soap or towels’¹⁵⁰ attesting to the difficulty the internees had in convincing the Australians of their plight. The German-Jewish internees at Hay were particularly astute and petitioned not only Rabbi Porush but other authorities including the Earl of Lytton, who was in December 1940 president of the British Advisory Council established to deal with the position of interned refugees.¹⁵¹ They stated that it was ‘paradoxical to regard them as having German nationality [and] no doubt existed as to their loyalty to England [since] they were racial or political refugees from Nazi oppression.’¹⁵² Bartrop stated that the internees ‘believed so powerfully in the idea of British fair play.’¹⁵³

Porush also had a personal link to the internees at Hay through Robert Kahn, for whom he had previously organised a transit-visa to England when he was a member of the Conjoint Fund for Refugee Children during his tenure at Finchley.¹⁵⁴ Kahn visited Porush in Sydney when he was on leave and credited Porush with ‘saving my life.’¹⁵⁵ It is conceivable that Kahn personally informed Porush of the internees’ difficult conditions within the camp, although there is no documentary evidence for this. Kahn did note, however, that the Australian soldiers at the various camps were themselves the ‘undesirables’¹⁵⁶ of the Imperial forces and presumably unhappy that they were forced to protect internment camps in central Australia rather than being deemed fit to fight for the Empire in Europe.

Other matters of advocacy that concerned Porush in the early months of his Australian ministry included writing letters to those who disseminated antisemitic content in the public. For example, in September 1940, Porush sent a letter to AG Eastman at 2UW radio station asking

¹⁴⁹ Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, 63.

¹⁵⁰ Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, 66.

¹⁵¹ Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal*, 125.

¹⁵² Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal*, 125.

¹⁵³ Bartrop and Eisen (ed), *The Dunera Affair: A Documentary Resource Book*, 23.

¹⁵⁴ Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, 6.

¹⁵⁵ Patkin, *The Dunera Internees*, 79.

¹⁵⁶ Robert L Kahn, *Chapters from my Past*, 103-04, as cited in Ken Inglis, Seumas Spark, Jay Winter, Carol Bunyan, *Dunera Lives: A Visual History*, 67.

for an informal meeting to ‘help eliminate prejudices’¹⁵⁷ regarding lectures and broadcasts made by Eastman which were anti-Jewish. No response was found in the files.

Porush also contributed to various committees concerned with Jewish refugees. An organisation known as the Alien Citizens Volunteer Movement was established in July 1940 and they wrote to Porush.¹⁵⁸ The movement sought to deal with the welfare of internees and asked for Porush’s assistance and support, attaching a charter of the organisation to their letter.¹⁵⁹ The charter listed Bishop Venn Pilcher as a consultant and listed representatives of both Australian citizens and refugees.¹⁶⁰

Pilcher was already known to Porush by this early stage of his Australian ministry, and it would not be unsurprising if the two men became friends as a result of their commitment to many of their shared causes and organisations. Their friendship is evidenced by the letter from Pilcher to Porush in August 1940, after he had asked for help in translating a Hebrew poem. He stated that ‘it was good of you to write marginal notes. Some of it I can translate, but, before I put it into English, I shall have to have a little help from a Jewish friend.’¹⁶¹ The letter was signed ‘With all good wishes’¹⁶² and the informal tone of the letter, when compared to the rest of the correspondence in the file, shows a form of friendship. The two men clearly bonded over language and poetry as well as refugee issues. Porush remembered Pilcher as ‘a great friend of the refugees and a champion of the Council [of Christians and Jews in New South Wales]’¹⁶³ regarding him as the ‘moving spirit’¹⁶⁴ of the Council. In his memoirs, Porush devoted considerable praise to Pilcher for his work in advocating for refugees and educating the public.¹⁶⁵ According to this, Pilcher was instrumental in pushing for the establishment of a Council of Christians and Jews in New South Wales so that there be a vehicle for dealing with ‘issues affecting morality, justice, tolerance and anti-Semitism.’¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁷ Israel Porush, Letter to AG Eastman, 3 September 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁵⁸ Albert Date, Provisional Chairman of the Alien Citizen Volunteer Movement, Letter to Porush, 19 July 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁵⁹ Albert Date, Provisional Chairman of the Alien Citizen Volunteer Movement, Letter to Porush, 19 July 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁶⁰ Albert Date, Provisional Chairman of the Alien Citizen Volunteer Movement, Letter to Porush, 19 July 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁶¹ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Porush, 23 August 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁶² Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Porush, 23 August 1940. RIP Collection, Box 8 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁶³ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 161.

¹⁶⁴ Evelyn Rothfield, Letter to William Simpson, 1 December 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁶⁵ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 47.

¹⁶⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 49.

Unfortunately, no further correspondence was found in the archives for the period after 1940, with the exception of a letter written by Rabbi Astor from the Auckland Hebrew Congregation in 1947, seeking Porush's assistance in resettling a *Talmud Chakham* currently living in a camp in Europe and who had written to Astor seeking help with resettlement.¹⁶⁷ Astor disclosed that he received many such letters requesting his help from Europe but that this particular person stood out.¹⁶⁸ This does suggest that Porush continued to be actively involved throughout and after the war in refugee advocacy and that his position as official representative of Australian Jewry did not diminish during this time but rather extended even to New Zealand.

7.5.2 Public Radio Broadcasts

During the early part of his tenure at the Great Synagogue, Rabbi Porush also made various public speeches through radio broadcasts, eight transcripts of which survive and provide an insight into his early ministry in Sydney. These broadcasts were usually made on the occasion of a major Jewish festival, such as Passover and *Rosh Hashana*, and were intended not just for the Jewish community but also as a medium of interaction and education to the Christian majority. Porush was thus aware of his position as the informal leader of Australian Jewry and used the opportunity of these broadcasts to educate the Christian masses. He believed that as 'the Chief Minister of the "Great" he was recognised as the representative of the Jewish Ministry and of the Jewish Faith who, together with the heads of other faiths, was given due honour at state and civic occasions.'¹⁶⁹ The 1940s 'were such that the "external affairs" of the Community, the relationship to the non-Jewish world, were a vital aspect of all Jewish activity'¹⁷⁰ and thus of Porush's ministry. This explains his dedication to the CCJ but also his numerous impassionate public radio broadcasts.

Sadly, the earliest transcript that was found dates from Passover 1944 although broadcasts were made on the ABC as early as 1942.¹⁷¹ This 1944 radio address was intended to highlight to the listener the gravity of the situation for the Jews of Europe and contained details of chilling

¹⁶⁷ Rabbi Alexander Astor of Auckland, Letter to Porush, 21 January 1947. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, File 5, AAJ.

¹⁶⁸ Rabbi Alexander Astor of Auckland, Letter to Porush, 21 January 1947. RIP Collection, Box 3 IP Shelf List 64, File 5, AAJ.

¹⁶⁹ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 147.

¹⁷⁰ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 148.

¹⁷¹ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 163.

accuracy. It shows that even in far-away Australia, the local Jewish community was well aware of the extent of the Holocaust as Porush exclaimed that ‘No less than 4,000,000 Jews have already been put to death, in circumstances, if known, would make your blood freeze in your veins.’¹⁷² The address went on to state:

The other day we read that the German army had occupied Hungary and Rumania. What did this convey to the average Australian? With a shrug of the shoulder he probably said: ‘Well that was to be expected, and anyhow it serves them right,’ and with little thought did he pass over the few lines in the press which said that this occupation brought yet another 1,200,000 Jews under the cruel sway of Hitler and his Gestapo. Do you realise that almost overnight over a million human beings – beings like you and I, have been handed over to the German hangman who will do his cruel job with the same efficiency which he has applied to the destruction of so many others.¹⁷³

This address mirrored his sermon from *Tisha B’Av* in 1942, which was published in the *Hebrew Standard* and eerily accurately stated the calamity that was occurring in Europe at the time, proving that he was aware of the scale of the destruction. His sermon stated that ‘the pinnacle of our modern calamity was reached after the advent of Nazism in Europe, particularly since the outbreak of the war.’¹⁷⁴ He went on to say that:

Of the little that filters through from countries occupied by Germany one can gauge the extent of the martyrdom which our flesh and blood is suffering. Over a million Jews were massacred in the most brutal manner by the Gestapo and its henchmen. Some 6 million Jews are now under the heel of Nazidom; they all face utter annihilation if God forbid, salvation does not come soon.¹⁷⁵

The accuracy of Porush’s predictions indicate his understanding of the situation in Europe and motivation for his creation of the Council of Christians and Jews.

¹⁷² Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast 1944. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁷³ Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast 1944. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁷⁴ “‘It’s a Time of Trouble Unto Jacob’: From a Sermon by Rabbi Dr Porush on Shabbat Last,’ *HS*, July 23 1942, 4, as cited in Suzanne D Rutland, ‘1942: What Was Known Down Under, at the Edge of the Diaspora?’ in *The End of 1942: A Turning Point in WWII and in the Comprehension of the Final Solution?* eds. Dina Porat and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2017), 260.

¹⁷⁵ “‘It’s a Time of Trouble Unto Jacob’: From a Sermon by Rabbi Dr Porush on Shabbat Last,’ *HS*, July 23 1942, 4, as cited in Rutland, ‘1942: What Was Known Down Under, at the Edge of the Diaspora?’, 260.

Six months later in his *Rosh Hashana* broadcast, Porush sought to address not only a Jewish audience but he also kept in mind non-Jewish listeners, as he stated: ‘But I should like to feel that my words to-day [*sic*] will carry a message not only to my coreligionists here and at the various battlefronts further away, but also to my Christian fellow citizens everywhere.’¹⁷⁶ This could be as a result of his involvement with the CCJ. The mention of Christian fellow citizens is notable, indicating his awareness that Jews feel as equal citizens with Christians in Australia. The broadcast had as its central theme brotherhood, which as discussed was a theme of many of Porush’s sermons: ‘Mankind as a single band of brothers, united in the service of Right and Justice... surely this is the noblest aim the world can set itself at any time, but particularly in our own troubled day.’¹⁷⁷

He also talked about ‘this vision of a united humanity’¹⁷⁸ of brothers that was espoused by Judaism. He noted that in recent times this changed ‘the finest instincts of men are perverted by monstrous doctrines into inhumane savageries, when even the best stand perplexed at the extent of man’s inhumanity to man displayed in the heart of the civilized world thousands of years after the proclamation of the Divine Law of Love and Mercy.’¹⁷⁹ One cannot help but think this is a swipe at Christians who proclaimed a message of love and mercy, yet they are committing atrocities towards Jews and do very little about it. Porush once again spoke of the death of some four million Jews and the atrocities of the Germans clearly taking the opportunity to highlight the plight of European Jewry to the Australian audience every time he spoke. He was obviously aware of the concentration camps and what was happening there. He also offered an olive branch to the churches and perhaps kept in mind his friend Bishop Pilcher when he said that ‘The world no doubt stands aghast at these barbarities... and we Jews must be grateful for the expressions of sympathy and comfort we have received from so many quarters, especially the Christian Churches.’¹⁸⁰

The Passover broadcast in 1945 coincided with the end of the war and the first Brotherhood Week initiated by the CCJ in Sydney. In this broadcast, Porush appropriately talked about freedom from slavery, liberty and the imminent end of the war as well as describing Hitler as

¹⁷⁶ Israel Porush, New Year Broadcast 5705 (1944). RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁷⁷ Israel Porush, New Year Broadcast 5705 (1944). RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁷⁸ Israel Porush, New Year Broadcast 5705 (1944). RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁷⁹ Israel Porush, New Year Broadcast 5705 (1944). RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁸⁰ Israel Porush, New Year Broadcast 5705 (1944). RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

a new Pharaoh and stressing the common bond of brotherhood that exists between Christians and Jews: 'The terrible legacy of this war must not benumb our faith in and our urge to strive for a better world-order, one in which the ideals of our Bible, FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND BROTHERHOOD, will guide the relationships of all men.'¹⁸¹ He went on to say that 'Within our communities we must cherish a spirit of service to the common good and a sense of fellowship which will bridge over the sectional differences that may exist.'¹⁸² He clearly called on all Christians and Jews to work together in harmony and unite over common shared ideals.

By the time the *Rosh Hashana* broadcast came about on 4 September 1945, World War Two in both the European and Pacific arenas had ended and he thus spoke of the need to heal and rededicate one another to living together in brotherhood: 'When we envisage the world as it would have been had our enemies prevailed, then we realise the tremendousness of our victory, and that the world has providentially been given a new chance to rededicate itself to Righteousness and Brotherhood.'¹⁸³ Noteworthy is the timeslot allocated to his talk, which was 9.30pm to 10pm, a full half hour during prime time, stressing the value of the broadcaster to his message.

No transcripts survive from 1946 but some do for 1947, 1948 and 1949, all of which build on the previous theme of brotherhood that had hitherto underpinned most of the messages from Porush when addressing non-Jews. By 1947 the issues facing the Jewish community had clearly changed dramatically and he believed it as necessary to inform both Jewish and Christian listeners alike of the war refugee crisis. His message was diplomatically worded so as not to affront the Australian authorities whilst highlighting the urgency of the situation to provide the survivors with new hope of a new home. This broadcast talked about liberation and liberty as well as refugees in Australia, notably those who arrived from Shanghai and local opposition to their arrival:

In recent months, a few hundred of the surviving remnants of the Jewish people arrived in this country from Shanghai and Europe. The Government in its simple humanity had granted Australian residents a limited number of permits for their relatives who had lived during the war years in the nightmarish hell of enemy countries. The reception they were

¹⁸¹ Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast 1945. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁸² Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast 1945. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁸³ Israel Porush, New Year Broadcast 5705 (1945). RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

accorded in Australia from some quarters was none too friendly, though one is happy to say that the more responsible agencies of public opinion have tried to be fair and sympathetic. There are forces at large which try to sow from the outset the seed of suspicion and hostility against these immigrants. Instead of receiving them as prospective co-builders of this vast land which is crying out for new settlers, a vocal minority, for reasons of their own, leave no opportunity unused to poison the minds of citizens with doubt and distrust.¹⁸⁴

The issue of Jewish war refugees continued to occupy his following address for *Yom Kippur* in 1947. Once again, he talked about brotherhood but also about prejudices: 'To my non-Jewish friends I therefore say, "Righteousness exalted a nation;" injustice against whomsoever will ultimately shatter the foundation of peace.'¹⁸⁵ He went on to say: 'Let us discard all talk of war and the pernicious propaganda of nation against nation, or community against community, or of the native against the immigrant. Brotherhood begins at home in the daily contacts of neighbours, and then it overflows into the wider fields of international relations.'¹⁸⁶ Clearly he is talking about Australia's intake of war refugees, and he aims at encouraging good relations between Christians and Jews.

The issue of Jewish refugees had somewhat abated by 1948 when Porush made his Passover broadcast just one month prior to Israel declaring independence. By this time, the issues that the British government faced with Jews and Arabs in Palestine were widely documented in the media and posed a new challenge to Australian Jewry. His broadcast again focused on the Passover theme of freedom and liberty but also antisemitism and Palestine. He stated that:

It should not be necessary for me to remind my non-Jewish friends of the tragedy that has befallen the Jewish people. One third of Jewry, six million souls in all, has been cruelly exterminated by Hitler and his associates. Mark this, the sacrifice of the Jewish people in the last 10 years was incomprehensibly [*sic*] higher than that of the United States and the British Empire put together have brought in both the two world wars.'¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast 1947. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁸⁵ Israel Porush, *Yom Kippur* Broadcast 5708, 22 September 1947. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁸⁶ Israel Porush, *Yom Kippur* Broadcast 5708, 22 September 1947. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁸⁷ Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast, 19 April 1948 on 2BL Radio. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

He also talked about the Displaced Persons (DPs) in Europe ‘And so nothing has been done for these survivors of the concentration camp most of whom have lost their entire families under unspeakable tortures. To them the gates to freedom particularly Palestine wither so many yearn to go, are closed.’¹⁸⁸

The final broadcast transcript dates from Passover 1949 and again focused on his overarching theme of brotherhood and living together in harmony. In light of Israel’s independence, he talked about liberty and human rights as originating in the Bible as well as brotherhood: ‘Through the Fatherhood of God we are united with our fellowmen not by accidental facts, such as race and nationality, but in fellowship of Human Brotherhood.’¹⁸⁹

All of these broadcasts were designed to alert both the Jewish and non-Jewish listener to the major challenges facing the Jewish community but also how these challenges are essentially shared by all of society. Throughout, he stressed the unifying theme of brotherhood over and over again as though to say that the Jewish community, albeit small, is an essential part of Australian society and that their tragedies and challenges are shared by all Australians, regardless of religious affiliation.

7.6 Conclusion

Rabbi Israel Porush was, as discussed, one of the preeminent figures in Jewish life in Australia from his arrival in 1940 and he retained this stature throughout his tenure as chief minister of the Great Synagogue. Shaped by his experience as a student in Germany and his pre-war career at Finchley Synagogue in Britain, he effectively utilised his Jewish and secular Western education to become not just the representative and chief advocate of Australia’s Jewish community and the refugees both before and after the war, but also the link that facilitated harmonious relations between Australia’s Jewish community, government and other faiths. He tirelessly involved himself in many causes and activities that advanced the interests of Australian Jewry and exploited his position as chief minister to their advancement. His

¹⁸⁸ Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast, 19 April 1948 on 2BL Radio. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

¹⁸⁹ Israel Porush, Passover Broadcast, 11 April 1949 on 2BL Radio. RIP Collection, Box 10 IP Shelf List 64, File 3, AAJ.

unstinting efforts thus contributed to the harmonious relations that existed between Christians and Jews during the 1940s, as well as the formation and development of the CCJ during its short history.

Porush's close ties with his key Christian colleagues, particularly Bishop Pilcher, were instrumental in the formation of the CCJ and all its activities. The next chapter discussed the key Christian leaders, with a focus on Pilcher and also compares and contrast the position of the Anglican and Catholic leadership in terms of their approach to and support for the CCJ.

CHAPTER 8

CHRISTIAN FOUNDERS OF THE COUNCIL: DIVERSITY AND DEBATE

8.1 Overview of Important Personalities Involved in the Council

The arrival in Australia of Rabbi Israel Porush certainly reinvigorated a relationship between Christian and Jewish clergymen, which was driven by Porush's understanding that the threat posed by European fascism to Australian Jewry, could only be countered successfully if Christian leaders were partners in this fight. His zeal for combating antisemitism was shared by Sydney's Anglican Bishop Coadjutor Charles Venn Pilcher, and their common interests meant these men operated in many of the same organisations established to assist European Jews. The establishment of the Council of Christians and Jews can thus be attributed to the passion that Porush and Pilcher shared for combating antisemitism. Their ability to unite the Jewish and major Christian denominations to create the Council of Christians and Jews was a formidable achievement that needs to be recognised and examined.

The two major Christian denominations represented on the Council of Christians and Jews were the Anglican Church, at the time the dominant force in Christianity in Australia, and the Catholic Church. This meant that the CCJ acted not just as a formal channel of communication between the major faiths but had the ability to represent a common united voice of Australia's major faiths. This chapter analyses the major personalities associated with the two main Christian denominations and their representatives on the Council. The Anglican Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher played a prominent role not only in the affairs of the CCJ, but also on other key issues relating to Christian and Jewish relations and Jewish refugees from Nazism. His background and other activities will be discussed in this chapter in detail, followed by a discussion of his superior, Sydney's Archbishop Howard Mowll, who acted as the official chairman of the council but delegated most of the responsibilities to Pilcher.

This chapter will then discuss the role played by Sydney's Catholic Archbishop Cardinal (later Sir) Norman Gilroy and his representative on the Council, Father Noel Hehir. As was discussed in previous chapters, Gilroy initially struggled to see the need for a Council that represented

both Christians and Jews¹ mostly due to his reservations on the issue of Palestine.² Even though Gilroy eventually agreed to the establishment of the Council, his engagement with the Council's activities were delegated to his representative, Father Noel Hehir, whom he supervised closely. Whilst the Catholic representation on the Council meant it had the potential to speak on behalf of the majority of Christians and Jews in Australia, it was evident that the Catholic Church had little interest in it or its activities and lacked a shared passion for combating antisemitism.

Whilst the CCJ was certainly dominated by Porush and Pilcher, the roles played by Mowll, Gilroy and Hehir must be appreciated to understand the dynamic that existed between the main drivers of the Council during its brief existence. Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational and Baptist representation also contributed to the affairs of the Council. However, an exploration of the minutes of meetings clearly indicated that the passion of Pilcher and Porush, and the reservations by the Catholic Church, overshadowed the ability of these other Christian denominations to contribute more substantively to the Council's affairs.

8.2 Anglican Representation: Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher

A key figure in the Council of Christian and Jews was Anglican Bishop Dr Charles Venn Pilcher, one of the neglected personalities in terms of the story of Jewish refugees, Australia and the Holocaust. Pilcher served as Anglican Bishop Coadjutor of Sydney from his arrival in Sydney in 1936 until his death in 1961. Both before and during the Holocaust, Pilcher was a passionate supporter of Jewish causes. He was involved in a range of different activities in Australia on behalf of European Jews, Jews in British Mandated Palestine, and Jewish refugees in Australia. These included support for the Kimberley Scheme and advocacy for Palestine as a Jewish homeland. In their unpublished study 'Evangelical Christianity and the appeal of the Middle Ages: The case of Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher,' Graham Barwell and John Kennedy, argue that 'His sense of Christian duty [...] led him to become an active champion of Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe and a vigorous supporter both of a wartime campaign to establish

¹ Israel Porush, Letter to Norman Gilroy, undated but definitely prior to October 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

² Israel Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 6, Part 4 (1968), 193.

a Jewish colony in northern Australia and of the efforts to establish the Jewish State of Israel.’³ Bishop Pilcher was noted as one of Australia’s foremost philosemites during the period of World War Two and an ardent advocate for refugees.⁴ He was a Zionist but unlike many Christians, did not believe that the return of the Jews to Palestine would bring about their mass conversion to Christianity.⁵

To date, the main study of Pilcher’s contributions is the short biography written by social worker, Dr Maurice Laserson, who arrived from Europe in December 1940 and settled in Sydney. In January 1941, Dr Arie Tartakower invited Laserson to be the Australian representative of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), a position that he willingly accepted. He worked hard to develop an Australian branch, but faced many obstacles, not the least the lack of financial support, since the Zionist leadership opposed any fundraising for the WJC. In July 1942, Laserson accepted the position of director of the Bureau of Jewish Affairs but decided that he would also continue his work for the WJC because he believed that Australia would have an important post-war role as ‘an outpost for the homeless Jewish people.’⁶ Laserson worked closely with Bishop Pilcher during the war and therefore was in a good position to assess his contributions.

Laserson sought to foster a proactive approach to the growing antisemitism as well as the horrific news about the Jewish catastrophe in Europe. His short biography of Pilcher was published in 1949,⁷ but since then there has been little further academic research on Pilcher’s contributions to assist Jewish refugees from Nazism, to fight antisemitism and to advocate for the need for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, apart from a short article by Rodney Gouttman published in the *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal*.⁸ As a result, this chapter seeks to shed further light on the activities of Bishop Pilcher, which also help to explain his strong commitment to the aims of the Council and his centrality to its activities.

³ Graham Barwell and John Kennedy, ‘Evangelical Christianity and the appeal of the Middle Ages: The case of Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher,’ (Unpublished research paper, University of Wollongong, 2001), 39.

⁴ Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 243.

⁵ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 243.

⁶ Dr Maurice Laserson, Letter to Dr Nahum Goldmann, 25 August 1942. ‘WJC,’ File AB134, AJHSA.

⁷ Maurice Laserson, *Bishop Charles Venn Pilcher DD: A Bibliographical Study* (Sydney: AK Murray & Co, 1949).

⁸ Rodney Gouttman, ‘The Pilcher Conundrum,’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 11, Part 1 (1990), 79-81.

8.2.1 Pilcher's Early Life

From his arrival in Sydney in 1936, Charles Venn Pilcher served as a lecturer in church history at Moore Theological College, Sydney.⁹ An Oxford graduate, his father had been Rector of St. Clement's, Oxford¹⁰ and may have imbued in him his desire to pursue his many academic interests. In England he served both as curate of St. Thomas's, Birmingham, and as Domestic Chaplain to the Bishop of Durham, before moving to Canada. The parish of St Thomas in Birmingham was in fact at the centre of the local Jewish community, and it is perhaps here that Pilcher first got acquainted with the plight of European Jewry. He would routinely door knock throughout this parish only to 'find it opened by some unfortunate Hebrew refugee who had recently fled from pogroms in Russia.'¹¹ His duties in Canada included serving as lecturer in the Greek Testament at a college of the University of Toronto where he discovered 'an interest in Semitic studies.'¹² He was also canon precentor at the Cathedral Church of St James, Toronto, from 1931 to 1936.¹³ Pilcher supported the idea of working in unity with other Churches on matters of social services, so that wherever possible, churches might speak with one voice on social and moral issues.¹⁴ Barwell and Kennedy record that 'much of the 20 years until his retirement in 1956 saw him combining scholarly activities in the theological and Old Norse fields with a steady round of episcopal duties and a very active public role, particularly as a supporter of Jewish causes and the state of Israel.'¹⁵

The causes of Pilcher's philosemitism remain largely unknown but Dr Isaac Steinberg, who came to Australia to investigate the suitability of the Kimberley Scheme and thus regularly met with Pilcher, remembered a conversation he had with Pilcher in 1939. Pilcher said that his 'education was partially due to a Jew.'¹⁶ He recounted a story where as a young boy he sat for a scholarship to attend the Charterhouse School in England as his father lacked the means to send him there.¹⁷ Unfortunately, a Jewish boy also sat for the same scholarship and beat Pilcher

⁹ Laserson, *Pilcher*, 5.

¹⁰ 'Canon Pilcher,' *SMH*, 18 May 1936, 8.

¹¹ Laserson, *Pilcher*, 3.

¹² Laserson, *Pilcher*, 3.

¹³ Laserson, *Pilcher*, 5.

¹⁴ 'Canon Pilcher,' *SMH*, 18 May 1936, 8.

¹⁵ Barwell, and Kennedy, 'Evangelical Christianity,' 39.

¹⁶ Isaac N Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land: In Search of a Home* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1948), 54.

¹⁷ Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land*, 54.

in the exam.¹⁸ The father of the Jewish boy, whose surname was Seligman, did not need the money from the scholarship and was satisfied with the honour which winning the scholarship bestowed on his son, so he went to the headmaster and offered the scholarship to Pilcher instead.¹⁹ As a result of this generosity, Pilcher was able to attend the school and afterwards matriculate at Oxford University.²⁰ In a twist of fate, Steinberg informed Pilcher that Sir Charles Seligman, ‘probably a brother or nephew of [Pilcher’s] friend,’²¹ was the chairman of the London Kimberley Scheme Committee at the time.²²

8.2.2 Refugee Advocacy in Australia

Pilcher was passionate in his advocacy on behalf of Jewish refugees and his efforts did not go unnoticed within Australia’s Jewish community. He is remembered to have:

... worked tirelessly on behalf of Jewish refugees trying to obtain passports to Australia and he personally intervened to seek justice for the German Jewish lads (the ‘Dunera Boys’) interned in Australian camps, initially with Nazi sympathisers. Later he was an ardent advocate of the Zionist cause. Pilcher was known in some circles as ‘the Jewish bishop.’²³

Despite his earlier pro-German statements in the 1930s, as discussed later, ‘within a few months after the outbreak of the war he threw himself headlong into defending the civil rights of its victims.’²⁴ He did this through writing articles for the general press, in radio broadcasts and sermons, as well as political advocacy, which included the formation of various organisations. He even used a ‘Jewish phrase’ – ‘who has taken upon himself the sovereignty of God’²⁵ – to describe his idea of what a Christian is in the modern age. He drew attention to the plight of the classification of Jewish refugees as ‘enemy aliens’ and Jewish internees, including those who arrived on the HMT *Dunera*, where they had suffered from terrible conditions on board. In August 1940 ‘an appeal, signed by Jewish and non-Jewish prominent

¹⁸ Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land*, 55.

¹⁹ Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land*, 55.

²⁰ Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land*, 55.

²¹ Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land*, 55.

²² Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land*, 55.

²³ Raymond Apple, *The Great Synagogue: A History of Sydney’s Big Shule* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008), 294.

²⁴ Gouttman, ‘The Pilcher Conundrum,’ 79.

²⁵ Laserson, *Pilcher*, 7.

men including Bishop Pilcher, was addressed to the Australian Government not to treat the refugees who came to the country (mostly Jews) as enemy aliens to be interned.²⁶ In October 1940, he argued that:

Australians, who were foolish enough to spread anti-Semitism, should be reminded that it was 'the thin edge of the Nazi wedge.' After the Jew the attack would fall on the Christian church. The more [members of the audience] knew about Nazism the more they would loathe it... It had very much the elements of sheer diabolism...[it] was a very strange thing that some people believed that refugees who had been driven out of Germany wished to bring Hitlerism to Australia. Even if it were admitted that there might be one or two spies smuggled in with the refugees, was that any argument in favour of the whole of the refugees being interned?²⁷

Pilcher was also active in several refugee advocacy groups, such as the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry, which was proposed November 1942 at the Town Hall meeting and formally established in January 1943 under the leadership of John Machover.²⁸ This followed on from a conference called by the Zionist leadership on 29 December 1942 in face of the emergency faced by European Jewry.²⁹ In February 1943 the Committee sought a joint statement from Australian clergy in the light of the tragic situation of European Jewry, a task allocated to Pilcher by Archbishop Mowll.³⁰ Later, the United Emergency Committee expressed appreciation for Pilcher's efforts on their behalf.³¹ Pilcher also publicly advocated for refugees through publications in print media and delivered public broadcasts, not just on behalf of the UECEJ and the CCJ, but also for a variety of other of organisations as well. The Jewish Advisory Board sent him a letter of appreciation for his efforts on behalf of the Jewish community.³² He wrote that these broadcasts were done under in the name of the Council of

²⁶ Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press: 1977), 142.

²⁷ 'Thin Edge of the Nazi Wedge,' *The Age*, 23 October 1940, 8.

²⁸ John M Machover, 'Towards Rescue: The Story of Australian Jewry's Stand for the Jewish Cause, 1940-1948,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 7, Part 1 (1971), 16.

²⁹ Suzanne D Rutland, '1942: What Was Known Down Under, at the Edge of the Diaspora?' in *The End of 1942: A Turning Point in WWII and in the Comprehension of the Final Solution?* eds. Dina Porat and Dan Michman (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2017), 272.

³⁰ UECEJ Minutes, 4 February 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

³¹ UECEJ Minutes, 10 October 1946. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

³² Saul Symonds, Chairman of BJA, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 30 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

Christians and Jews ‘with right goodwill’³³ and expressed the hope that ‘it will achieve something in these dark days.’³⁴

Along with other groups, he also advocated for the right of refugees to join the Australian Military Forces and against their enlistment ‘alongside “Fascist sympathisers”’³⁵ in the Civil Aliens Corps. This was despite his belief, at least as it was expressed in 1913, that the British shared an allegiance to the Teutonic race which was closely intertwined with the British Royal family.³⁶ He had an ‘empathy with the German people [...which] had led him in 1938 to urge the return of New Guinea to the control of its former colonial master, Germany, as a means of securing for Australia the potential “help of a people kindred in blood, language, art, and ideals.”’³⁷ He also attributed Hitler’s rise to power to the punishing terms of the 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty, leading some members of the public to accuse him of being pro-German and anti-British.

Pilcher took the matter of refugee advocacy to another level, particularly concerning the *Dunera* internees, even pressing Prime Minister Menzies in June 1940 to establish an appeals tribunal for refugee matters in a lengthy letter written to Menzies in his capacity as chairman of the Inter-Church Committee for Non-Aryan Christian Refugees.³⁸ Pilcher also ‘inundated [...] with letters of appeal’³⁹ the Army Minister, Sir Percy Claude Spender⁴⁰ and the New South Wales government on the matter,⁴¹ but ultimately, despite his efforts, ‘Pilcher’s resolute crusade had failed and the politicians and brasshats [*sic*] were no longer to be irritated by this turbulent priest.’⁴²

Particularly in late 1940 and throughout 1941, Pilcher seemed to have annoyed politicians with his incessant refugee advocacy to the extent that it caused the authorities to become suspicious

³³ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to BJA, 3 December 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

³⁴ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to BJA, 3 December 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

³⁵ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume I* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 205.

³⁶ Charles Venn Pilcher, *The Passion-Hymns of Iceland* (London: Robert Scott, 1913), 6.

³⁷ Barwell and Kennedy, ‘Evangelical Christianity,’ 41.

³⁸ Cyril Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1983), 106.

³⁹ Konrad Kwiet, ““Be Patient and Reasonable” The Internment of German-Jewish Refugees in Australia,’ *Australian Journal of Politics and History* Vol. 31, No. 1 (1985-04), 65.

⁴⁰ Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal*, 107.

⁴¹ Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal*, 108.

⁴² Pearl, *The Dunera Scandal*, 131.

of his intentions. Two issues in particular concerned Pilcher: procedural justice for internees and separation of Jewish refugees from Nazis and their sympathizers in internment camps.

Pilcher first wrote to Percy Claude Spender, Minister for the Army, in December 1941, desiring ‘to draw your attention to certain ambiguity in the instructions given in the National Security Regulations with regard to Alien Tribunals.’⁴³ He then counselled the Minister on the fact that the regulations allowed the internment camp commander to send the refugee application to a tribunal situated anywhere in Australia, as convenient for the Army.⁴⁴ This meant that the refugees situated in New South Wales could have their matter heard in Melbourne or elsewhere, thereby severely limiting their ability to seek appropriate legal advice and hindering their efforts to have witnesses attend the hearing given these might need to travel interstate.⁴⁵ Pilcher requested that this injustice be remedied but received an unsatisfactory reply in January from Spender’s secretary, JT Fitzgerald.⁴⁶

In the meantime, and before having received a reply from his initial request to Spender, Pilcher also wrote to Prime Minister Robert Menzies on the same matter. He apologised ‘to have to trouble you during the Christmas Season but unfortunately matters have arisen which both Judge [Colin] Davidson, with whom I have talked them over, and myself feel ought to be referred to you immediately.’⁴⁷ Davidson was at the time a justice on the Supreme Court of New South Wales and mentioning his name in conjunction with this matter meant that Menzies could not ignore his request.

The records of Pilcher’s prodigious letter-writing campaigns in the National Archives show that the Australian government always took his requests seriously and gave them due consideration. Spender’s secretary, Fitzgerald, was tasked not just with replying to Pilcher’s letter to Spender but also his letter to Menzies and promptly prepared a report for both, which essentially just restated his earlier reply to Pilcher of 1 January 1941.⁴⁸ The difference was that

⁴³ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Percy Spender, 16 December 1940.

⁴⁴ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Percy Spender, 16 December 1940.

⁴⁵ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Percy Spender, 16 December 1940.

⁴⁶ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, JT Fitzgerald, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 1 January 1941.

⁴⁷ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Robert Menzies, 27 December 1940.

⁴⁸ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, JT Fitzgerald, Memorandum on Internees, 10 January 1941.

this report document was much more formal than a mere letter, and prepared by the Department of Defence Co-ordination and forwarded to the Minister for the Army and the Prime Minister, which is further evidence that Pilcher's letters were taken very seriously by the Australian government and caused a flurry of activity behind the scenes. The Acting Prime Minister then wrote to Pilcher in February 1941, informing him that the regulations were amended so that the Minister had the right to intervene and direct that any internee should have his trial heard in the state in which he was originally detained., thereby alleviating Pilcher's concerns.⁴⁹

In the meantime, Pilcher wrote to Spender again in mid-January 1941 regarding his letter of December 1941 which he either believed had hitherto been left unanswered or whose answer he ignored.⁵⁰ His impatience did not go unnoticed as internal memorandums from within the department reveal. They also reiterated that Pilcher's criticisms of the tribunal processes will be met once the regulations had been amended.⁵¹ Spender then personally wrote to Pilcher with this same message,⁵² rather than through his secretary, perhaps hoping that this would be the end of Pilcher's crusade on the matter.

In August 1941, Pilcher launched a second advocacy campaign on behalf of the refugees but this time, instead of writing directly to the relevant ministers, he first ensured cooperation from other relevant authorities connected to the internment camps. His friend, Justice Davidson, must have persuaded him to contact Justice Charles Gavan-Duffy of the Supreme Court of Victoria, who, along with Justice Norman Bryan, was one of the Official Visitors to the Internment Camps. Pilcher informed Gavan-Duffy that these 'unfortunate men pleaded, at the beginning of their internment over a year ago, not to be interned with Nazis'⁵³ advocating for the request of Jewish refugees to be separated from Nazis and their sympathisers. Gavan-Duffy promptly forwarded the matter to the secretary of the Military Board for comment⁵⁴ but before this could be done, Pilcher wrote to him again mentioning that these internees were already

⁴⁹ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, FG Shedden, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher on behalf of the Acting Prime Minister, 7 February 1941.

⁵⁰ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Percy Spender, 20 January 1941.

⁵¹ NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, Colonel James Chapman, Minute Paper, Department of the Army, 1 March 1941.

⁵² NAA: MP508/1, 255/702/913, Item ID: 384705, Percy Spender, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 6 February 1941.

⁵³ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Justice Charles Gavan Duffy, 20 August 1941.

⁵⁴ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Charles Gavan-Duffy, Memorandum to Secretary of Military Board, 26 August 1941.

classified as refugees by the Department of the Interior and accepted to Australia as such and that they should therefore be placed in refugee camps rather than internment camps as had already been done with internees at another camp in Tatura.⁵⁵

The matter was given due consideration by the Army and reports were issued to Gavan-Duffy. The report by the Military Board issued in October 1941 deemed it impractical to transfer the Jews as 'there is no evidence of victimisation of individuals.'⁵⁶ It further stated that 'It is presumed that there must have been some good reason for the internment of the persons referred to'⁵⁷ and 'The fact that certain persons assert that they are Anti-Nazi or Anti-Fascist in principle is no proof that they are so in actual fact.'⁵⁸

In the meantime, Pilcher decided not to wait for a reply from Gavan-Duffy and wrote to Spender in mid-September 1941 expressing his concerns to the Minister about the same issue as he perceived it as 'increasingly urgent.'⁵⁹ Frank Forde had by this time succeeded Percy Spender as Minister for the Army and gave the representation made by Pilcher 'full consideration.'⁶⁰ A decision was made to transfer the 30 men concerned to another camp of which Pilcher was informed.⁶¹ A jubilant Pilcher replied, thanking the Minister 'for this humane act'⁶² which 'brought great happiness to these unfortunate men.'⁶³

8.2.3 The Pilcher Dossier Investigated

Records found in the National Archives of Australia show that Pilcher's constant badgering of the authorities on behalf of refugees, especially the Prime Minister and Minister for the Army, drew the ire of these authorities and led to the Department of the Army opening an official

⁵⁵ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Charles Gavan-Duffy, 29 August 1941.

⁵⁶ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Australian Military Forces, Southern Command, Military Board, 'Nazi & Anti-Nazi Internees: Internment in the One Camp: No. 1 Camp,' 30 September 1941.

⁵⁷ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Australian Military Forces, Southern Command, Military Board, 'Nazi & Anti-Nazi Internees: Internment in the One Camp: No. 1 Camp,' 30 September 1941.

⁵⁸ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Australian Military Forces, Southern Command, Military Board, 'Nazi & Anti-Nazi Internees: Internment in the One Camp: No. 1 Camp,' 30 September 1941.

⁵⁹ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Percy Spender, 16 September 1941.

⁶⁰ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Minute Paper, Department of the Army, 26 September 1941.

⁶¹ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, FR Sinclair, Secretary to Frank Forde, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 15 October 1941.

⁶² NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Frank Forde, 18 October 1941.

⁶³ NAA: MP508/1, 255/715/294, Item ID: 380404, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Frank Forde, 18 October 1941.

investigation to probe his loyalty.⁶⁴ The Director of Military Intelligence himself wrote that the Minister wished to ascertain ‘the reason why he evinces such keen interest in the welfare of aliens who have found a refuge in this country.’⁶⁵ A thorough report was returned only ten days later, which indicates the authorities had already amassed evidence on Pilcher long before it was requested. Indeed, even a report on Pilcher had already been procured from his previous employer, Wycliffe Theological College in Toronto, Canada, in December 1940.⁶⁶ The earliest entry in his Police file dated from June 1940, this being an anonymous complaint made to Police that Pilcher was ‘pro-German and has a German maid who, so rumours hath it, is under suspicion.’⁶⁷ Other concerned citizens also complained to the Police about Pilcher for the remainder of 1940. One complained that in a sermon at St Andrew’s Cathedral, Pilcher made ‘pro-German utterances’⁶⁸ such as ‘We ought to give Germany her colonies back for the sake of peace.’⁶⁹

In September 1940, the police inspector in charge prepared an interim report that made it clear that Pilcher did not know he was being investigated despite having been questioned.⁷⁰ It stated that his maid was a German Jewish refugee, ‘who, the Bishop states, has very deep hatred of the Hitler Regime.’⁷¹ Pilcher also informed them ‘that through his association with refugees he has acquired a hatred of the Hitler Regime and a deep sympathy for the unfortunate refugees.’⁷² Interestingly, the Police did not seem to be aware of Pilcher’s previous employment in Canada until a Church official ‘who specially requested that he remain anonymous’⁷³ suggested ‘that it might be in the interests of the community if inquiries were made in Canada regarding Bishop

⁶⁴ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Director of Military Intelligence, Department of the Army, Letter to Base Headquarters Eastern Command, 2 April 1942.

⁶⁵ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Director of Military Intelligence, Department of the Army, Letter to Base Headquarters Eastern Command, 2 April 1942.

⁶⁶ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Report by Toronto Police Department to New South Wales Police Department Regarding Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 December 1940.

⁶⁷ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Report by Inspector Keefe, Police Headquarters, Regarding Pilcher, 10 June 1940.

⁶⁸ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Complaint by Robert Steward Regarding Pilcher, 9 September 1940.

⁶⁹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Complaint by Robert Steward Regarding Pilcher, 9 September 1940.

⁷⁰ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Inspector Keefe, Report on Charles Venn Pilcher, Police Headquarters, 30 September 1940.

⁷¹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Inspector Keefe, Report on Charles Venn Pilcher, Police Headquarters, 30 September 1940.

⁷² NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Inspector Keefe, Report on Charles Venn Pilcher, Police Headquarters, 30 September 1940.

⁷³ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Inspector Keefe, Report on Charles Venn Pilcher, Police Headquarters, 30 September 1940.

Pilcher's life and activities there.'⁷⁴ This suggests that certain church officials were uneasy with Pilcher's outspoken pro-refugee stance or even that he had certain enemies within the church.

The interim police report from September 1940 was consistently amended for the remainder of 1940 and early 1941. Additions included the report from Toronto police as well as newspaper clippings of Pilcher's various interests, such as the right of aliens to appeal the result of their hearing, which was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* on more than one occasion,⁷⁵ and his stance on internment as reported in *Honi Soit*.⁷⁶ Some of the more outlandish statements made by those displeased with Pilcher included the accusation that he was 'outwardly patriotic'⁷⁷ but 'has been for years decidedly pro-German'⁷⁸ and employed not just Italians on domestic staff but had a full-sized painting of the German *Kaiser* hanging in his bedroom.⁷⁹ The dossier also included statements from people who 'overheard'⁸⁰ Pilcher meeting with newspaper editors at cafés.

The Police Report from Toronto, which was received in December 1940, seems to have satisfied the Australian authorities that Pilcher posed no immediate threat as his dossier was not amended any further until March 1941. This was likely because the Toronto Report mentioned that Pilcher's activities in Canada were thoroughly checked but he 'does not appear to have come to our notice previously in any respect'⁸¹ instead noting that his former employer described him 'as a loyal subject of the Crown, a staunch defender of British institutions, and a man of outstanding humanitarian qualities.'⁸² It did note that Wycliffe Theological College believed Pilcher had been 'courageously outspoken and for this reason was sometimes

⁷⁴ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Inspector Keefe, Report on Charles Venn Pilcher, Police Headquarters, 30 September 1940.

⁷⁵ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, 'Aliens' Right of Appeal,' *DT*, 8 November 1940, and Charles Venn Pilcher, 'Aliens Appeal Tribunal Urged,' *DT*, 23 October 1940.

⁷⁶ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, 'Bishop Pilcher on Internment,' *Honi Soit*, 3 July 1941, 1.

⁷⁷ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Extract from CIB Letter, 19 November 1940.

⁷⁸ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Extract from CIB Letter, 19 November 1940.

⁷⁹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Extract from CIB Letter, 19 November 1940.

⁸⁰ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Captain Tyrrell, Intelligence Section, Eastern Command, 14 March 1941.

⁸¹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Report by Toronto Police Department to New South Wales Police Department Regarding Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 December 1940.

⁸² NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Report by Toronto Police Department to New South Wales Police Department Regarding Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 December 1940, and as quoted in Gouttman, 'The Pilcher Conundrum,' 80.

mistrusted.’⁸³ The report gave an example when in the wake of World War One, Pilcher advocated for the provision of starving German children from a humanitarian point, which ‘in some quarters might have created the erroneous impression that he was Pro-German [*sic*] in his sentiments.’⁸⁴

The final report prepared by the Eastern Command to the Department of the Army at the Minister’s request cleared Pilcher’s name, stating ‘his view is that of the average Churchman, who is more concerned with the alleviation of suffering rather than with other issues.’⁸⁵ The report concluded that ‘Bishop Pilcher is not in any way disloyal.’⁸⁶ Despite the exoneration, the Department of the Army did not seem entirely satisfied with the response and questioned the Eastern Command further as to whether Pilcher’s mail was or ought to be examined.⁸⁷ The response was that ‘it is not examined and at present it is not considered desired that it should be’⁸⁸ after which the Department must have been satisfied as no further requests were made.

Pilcher’s dossier, however, was not closed as it contained numerous materials post-1942. As previously mentioned, the swift and detailed report that was prepared for the Department showed that Pilcher was already under investigation and his dossier warrants further examination. It contains numerous statements from witnesses, clippings from newspaper articles on Pilcher and his stance on refugees as well as many letters Pilcher wrote on behalf of refugees to the military authorities. Indeed, the final report for the Department acknowledged that Pilcher had ‘frequently been in contact with officers of the Intelligence Section of this Command’⁸⁹ indicating to the Director of Intelligence that Pilcher’s pestering of the Minister was not unusual.

⁸³ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Report by Toronto Police Department to New South Wales Police Department Regarding Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 December 1940.

⁸⁴ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Report by Toronto Police Department to New South Wales Police Department Regarding Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 December 1940.

⁸⁵ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Eastern Command Report into Charles Venn Pilcher, 12 April 1942.

⁸⁶ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Eastern Command Report into Charles Venn Pilcher, 12 April 1942.

⁸⁷ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Department of the Army, Letter to General Headquarters, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, 24 April 1942.

⁸⁸ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, General Headquarters, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, Message to Department of the Army, undated.

⁸⁹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Eastern Command Report into Charles Venn Pilcher, 12 April 1942.

The dossier included many letters Pilcher wrote to various authorities on behalf of local refugees, not all of which can be discussed here. However, the sheer number of letters sent indicate that Pilcher must have had a reputation amongst refugees as someone who was not just willing to advocate on behalf of their personal grievances but also as someone who achieved favourable results.

In one such example he wrote a reference for a refugee named Horst Graff, at the behest of his wife, so that he could enlist in the service, attesting to his 'loyalty to Britain which is only natural considering the way in which the Nazi Regime has treated his father.'⁹⁰ In another example, Pilcher met with Colonel Powell from the Victoria Barracks in Paddington, to discuss the lessening of restrictions on those refugees, whose family members have been accepted into the Army. His common-sense argument was that these 'will be wearing, before long, the King's uniform. British experience has shown that admirable work has been done by the Pioneer Battalions composed of refugees.'⁹¹ Pilcher also advocated with Military Intelligence on behalf of refugees who were separated from their children, as in the case of Rose Stricker 'who has been refused permission to see her little son in the Montefiore Home more than once a month, while apparently other mothers are allowed to visit the Home.'⁹² Pilcher clearly had a knack for highlighting unfairness and inconsistencies in the authorities' handling of refugee issues and the matter was resolved favourably for Strickler the following day.⁹³

Pilcher also wrote to the authorities on behalf of individual refugees whose restrictions meant they were unable to get to work and thereby make a living⁹⁴ and refugees whose husbands were interned in Victoria rather than New South Wales. He pleaded with authorities to have the man interned closer to Sydney,⁹⁵ which was considered by the authorities.⁹⁶ He also drew attention to the authorities of inconsistencies in the wording of regulations concerning refugees. In

⁹⁰ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Statements Concerning Mr Horst Graff, undated.

⁹¹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Message to Colonel Powell at Victoria Barracks, 17 February 1942.

⁹² NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Captain Newman of Military Intelligence, 31 March 1942.

⁹³ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Captain Newman of Military Intelligence, Message to Charles Venn Pilcher, 1 April 1942.

⁹⁴ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to SG Taylor, Deputy Director of Security, 24 June 1942.

⁹⁵ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to Colonel Prentice of Victoria Barracks, Paddington, 6 July 1942.

⁹⁶ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Colonel Prentice, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 7 July 1942.

September 1942, he wrote to the Deputy Director-General of Security in Sydney on behalf of the Victorian International Refugee Emergency Council and sought to clarify, whether recent ‘modifications of restrictions on the movements of refugees in New South Wales were promulgated by you and refer only to New South Wales’⁹⁷ or whether these were made by the federal government and thus applied Australia-wide. This letter shows that Pilcher was involved with many refugee advocacy groups around Australia, and they sought his assistance when needed.

The final pages of Pilcher’s dossier contained newspaper clippings with headlines such as ‘Life Enriched by Jews – Bishop at Zionist Celebration’⁹⁸ as well as copies of various telegrams sent by Pilcher to Senator Robert Wagner of New York, informing him of the creation of the Australia-Palestine Committee and requesting a ‘powerful message’⁹⁹ from the Senator regarding the ‘Balfour Declaration, White Paper and Jewish tragedy.’¹⁰⁰ Given these were from 1943, as discussed above, it shows that the authorities were increasingly concerned with the Bishop’s Zionist interests and advocacy. The dossier also contained newspaper clippings from 1945, when Pilcher alerted the public to the fact that Jewish refugees and Nazis were interned in the same camps and advocated for segregation of these groups.¹⁰¹

It is also noteworthy that Pilcher’s dossier contains numerous letters from 1937 and 1938 between Dr Rudolf Asmis, Germany’s Consul-General in Sydney and William Farmer-Whyte, editor of the *Australian National Review*. Farmer-Whyte sent to Asmis an excerpt of Pilcher’s address in Launceston,¹⁰² which was printed in the *Launceston Examiner*, entitled ‘Return of New Guinea to Germany’¹⁰³ in which Pilcher advocated for the return of New Guinea to Germany in exchange for peace. The fact that Pilcher was mentioned favourably by the German Consul-General may well be the main reason why suspicion of his loyalty remained throughout the war and his dossier remained open until 1945.

⁹⁷ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to SC Taylor, 30 September 1942.

⁹⁸ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, ‘Life Enriched by Jews – Bishop at Zionist Celebration,’ *SMH*, 3 November 1942.

⁹⁹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Telegram to Robert Wagner, 13 October 1943.

¹⁰⁰ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, Charles Venn Pilcher, Telegram to Robert Wagner, 13 October 1943.

¹⁰¹ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, ‘Clashes of Aliens,’ *The Sun*, 9 January 1945, and ‘Conflicts Among Aliens – Segregation Move,’ *SMH*, 9 January 1945.

¹⁰² NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, W Farmer-Whyte, Letter to Rudolf Asmis, 23 February 1938.

¹⁰³ NAA: SP1714/1, N60262, Item ID: 448435, ‘Return of New Guinea to Germany,’ *Launceston Examiner*, 17 February 1938.

8.2.4 The Kimberley Scheme

The idea of a North Australian Jewish settlement in Western Australia's Kimberley region (also known as the Kimberley Scheme) was conceived in London in the 1930s as a project of the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation, which was founded in 1935 as a response to the Jewish refugee crisis.¹⁰⁴ The scheme envisaged settling some 50,000 Jewish refugees¹⁰⁵ fleeing Nazism in Europe in the sparsely populated North-West of Australia. The remote location of the Kimberley region aligned with previous proposals made in 1903 for Jewish settlements in Uganda and Argentina.¹⁰⁶ Similar proposals were previously made for Australia as part of Israel Zangwill's Jewish Territorial Organisation (ITO) in 1906,¹⁰⁷ where various parts of Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory were considered.¹⁰⁸

As a result of his concern for European Jews under Nazi rule and his understanding of their desperate plight, Pilcher became an advocate for the Kimberley Scheme. Together with Dr Isaac Steinberg, who represented the League for Jewish Territorial Colonisation and arrived in Australia in 1939 to investigate the suitability of the Kimberley region and campaigned for its support, Pilcher facilitated a meeting of leading churchmen at St Andrew's Cathedral in 1940.¹⁰⁹ The meeting resolved to assist the settlement plan. He was a prominent member of a group of eminent citizens of Sydney who supported the concept of the Kimberley Scheme.¹¹⁰ The group included a lord mayor, members of the federal and state parliaments, churchmen, and professional people, the chancellor of the University of Melbourne and former New South Wales Premier Sir Thomas Bavin.¹¹¹ The scheme as conceptualised by Pilcher had, by July 1940, gained the support of the Labor Council of New South Wales and trade union leaderships in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania; the National Council of Women of New South

¹⁰⁴ Alexandra Ludewig, 'Utopian Colonial Settlers: Dreaming of Jewish Colonies in Northern and Western Australia,' *Settler Colonial Studies* Vol. 10, No. 2 (2020), 178.

¹⁰⁵ David Carlos Muller, 'Doomed from the Start: Australia's Rejection of Dr IN Steinberg's Kimberley Plan,' *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 32 (2019), 125

¹⁰⁶ Ludewig, 'Utopian Colonial Settlers,' 176.

¹⁰⁷ Hilary L Rubinstein, 'The Three State Manifestos in Support of the Kimberley Scheme, 1939-1940: Texts and Signatories,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 15, Part 1 (1999), 55.

¹⁰⁸ Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 90.

¹⁰⁹ 'Jewish Colony Plan,' *SMH*, 11 January 1940, 10.

¹¹⁰ Dashiell Lawrence, 'To No Avail: Supporters and Opponents of the Kimberley Scheme,' *Melbourne Historical Journal* Vol. 42 (Issue 1) (2014), 207. See also Leon Gettler, *An Unpromised Land* (Fremantle, WA: Freemantle Arts Centre Press, 1993), 99.

¹¹¹ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. I*, 517-518.

Wales; and the Refugee Council of Tasmania.¹¹² The government of Western Australia also expressed support for the scheme provided the federal government gave its approval¹¹³ and an alternative option was also ‘warmly received’¹¹⁴ by the government in Tasmania to investigate the possibility of a colony there. In 1940, the Menzies government was initially sympathetic to the idea but too preoccupied with the war to give the Scheme attention.¹¹⁵ The most prominent supporters of this Scheme were in fact the trade union movement and churches.¹¹⁶ Pilcher was a great unifier, pressing church leaders of various denominations to speak a united voice. The Kimberley Scheme in fact enjoyed the support of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney and the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church.¹¹⁷ Even though there was some nationalist opposition to the scheme on the basis that a colony of foreigners would be created, Pilcher did not give up and battled against such ideas.

Despite this expression of support, the federal government rejected the proposal and Steinberg left Australia¹¹⁸ a deeply disappointed man. Pilcher continued to support the concept and in January 1943 he met with a group of 20 other prominent citizens who resolved to keep the Kimberley plan alive,¹¹⁹ pointing out that ‘Australia should acknowledge her increased moral and political responsibilities to the world at large, and extend all possible aid to persecuted peoples.’¹²⁰ However, with the eventual rejection of the Kimberley Scheme by the new Curtin government in 1944,¹²¹ Pilcher focused his energies to support other developments such as assisting Jewish refugees and other Jewish causes, particularly relating to the struggle to create a Jewish state in Palestine.

8.2.5 Advocacy for Palestine as the Jewish Homeland

The Australia Palestine-Committee was established in 1941 to rescue European Jews, following on from the British example.¹²² Pilcher agreed to co-chair the New South Wales

¹¹² Barwell and Kennedy, ‘Evangelical Christianity,’ 39.

¹¹³ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 171.

¹¹⁴ Rubinstein, *Chosen*, 171.

¹¹⁵ Muller, ‘Doomed from the Start,’ 126.

¹¹⁶ Lawrence, ‘To No Avail: Supporters and Opponents of the Kimberley Scheme,’ 209.

¹¹⁷ Lawrence, ‘To No Avail: Supporters and Opponents of the Kimberley Scheme,’ 209.

¹¹⁸ Steinberg, *Australia - The Unpromised Land*, 162.

¹¹⁹ ‘Settlement of Jews,’ *SMH*, 21 January 1943, 4.

¹²⁰ ‘Settlement of Jews,’ *SMH*, 21 January 1943, 4.

¹²¹ Muller, ‘Doomed from the Start,’ 126.

¹²² William D Rubinstein and Hilary L Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1849-1939* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999), 106.

committee together with Ian Clunies-Ross (later Sir), who headed the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.¹²³ The Australia-Palestine Committee succeeded in attracting many key political figures, including the Premier, William McKell (later Sir) and Clarence (Clarrie) Edward Martin, the Attorney-General, to become members.

The sinking of the MV *Struma* in the Black Sea on 25 March 1942, which led to the loss of 762 lives, created a significant controversy. It was an 'illegal' immigrant ship which had sought to land its passengers in Palestine but was turned back at Constantinople when it was learned that the British mandatory authorities had refused entry into Palestine.¹²⁴ The Zionist movement decided to hold a mass protest meeting against what Zionist leader, Max Freilich described as 'a terrible indictment of the MacDonald White Paper of 1939 restricting Jewish immigration into Palestine.'¹²⁵ At this time Pilcher gave a powerful sermon condemning the repudiation of the Balfour Declaration as a result of the White Paper and indicting the British authorities for their 'inhumane treatment of Hitler's victims.'¹²⁶

Pilcher's support of the Jewish people and his Zionist advocacy intensified as the tragic news of the destruction of European Jewry emerged. In June 1943 Pilcher was one of a group of dignitaries whose names were reported as being appended to a cable to British Prime Minister Churchill and British Foreign Secretary Eden. As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the cable supported the retention of Palestine as a country able to receive Jewish refugees who 'are at that moment streaming from Bulgaria in an attempt to avoid the fate of their Polish coreligionists, some 2 million of whom the cable reported as having been murdered at that time.'¹²⁷ Pilcher continuously urged 'the "appeasement" government [that] was in power in Great Britain'¹²⁸ to stop accommodating Arab demands as occurred with the 1939 White Paper policy, which in his opinion 'practically cancelled the Balfour Declaration.'¹²⁹ He argued that in light of the 'unspeakable persecution of the Hebrew people by the Nazis... the need for a country was supremely urgent.'¹³⁰ In January 1943, he wrote a separate letter of support to the

¹²³ Max Freilich, *Zion in Our Time: Memoirs of an Australian Zionist* (Sydney: Morgan Publications, 1967), 94. In 1949, the Council became known as CSIRO, the Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation.

¹²⁴ Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 298.

¹²⁵ Freilich, *Zion in Our Time*, 96.

¹²⁶ Freilich, *Zion in Our Time*, 96.

¹²⁷ 'Plea to help Jews,' *SMH*, 30 June 1943, 9.

¹²⁸ Charles Venn Pilcher, 'Jewish National Home, A Letter to the Editor,' *SMH*, 4 November 1942, 5.

¹²⁹ Charles Venn Pilcher, 'Jewish National Home, A Letter to the Editor,' *SMH*, 4 November 1942, 5.

¹³⁰ Charles Venn Pilcher, 'Jewish National Home, A Letter to the Editor,' *SMH*, 4 November 1942, 5.

Youth Aliyah rescue mission.¹³¹ He repeated his plea, this time in relation to Australia's commitment at the Evian Conference. In a sermon at Sydney's St Andrew's Cathedral on 19 March 1944, he asked his fellow Australians 'to admit the 7,000 promised admission before the war whose arrival was prevented by the outbreak of hostilities?'¹³² That sermon, reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*,¹³³ described the policy of appeasement by the British of the Arabs, particularly in limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine, as pandering to fascist minded Arab leaders.

These ideas built on those that he and his co-speakers had expressed when Pilcher presided at a public meeting in January 1944 when he claimed that General Montgomery's push against the fascists was supported by Palestinian Jewish troops, industrial and farmworkers totalling 250,000 persons – this was more than the total number of troops Rommel had amassed against the British.¹³⁴ He repeated his claims that more than one million Jews were fighting with the Armed Forces of the Allies by May 1944, when addressing a conference of trade union delegates organised by the Australian Council for Jewish Rights.¹³⁵ He joined with State Labor politicians in advocating for Jewish migration to Australia.¹³⁶

An example of Pilcher's advocacy is the publication of a pamphlet in the 1940s by the Australian Palestine Committee which, under Pilcher's chairmanship, aimed at promoting Palestine as a national home for the Jewish people. On its front page, the pamphlet drew attention to the promises made by the British government in the Balfour Declaration.¹³⁷ It went on to state that this was endorsed by the League of Nations and the United States of America, and aligned the Arab leadership, such Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti, with Hitler and the Fascists.¹³⁸ It then drew attention to the British government's White Paper, thereby drawing a link between the British government and Fascism.¹³⁹ This bold pamphlet was marketed as

¹³¹ 'Message to Youth Aliyah from His Grace C. Venn Pilcher,' *HS*, 21 January 1943, 6.

¹³² Brian Wimborne, 'A Land of Milk and Honey? A Jewish Settlement Proposal in the Kimberley,' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/essay/9/text29448>, originally published 22 May 2014, accessed online 15 December 2020.

¹³³ 'The Pulpit,' *SMH*, 20 March 1944, 4.

¹³⁴ 'New policy for Jews urged,' *SMH*, 21 January 1944, 7.

¹³⁵ 'Bishop Advocates Jewish Migration,' *DT*, 23 May 1944, 7.

¹³⁶ 'Bishop Advocates Jewish Migration,' *DT*, 23 May 1944, 7.

¹³⁷ Charles Venn Pilcher, *Palestine: A National Home for the Jews*. Australian Palestine Committee New South Wales Section (Sydney: Market Printery, 194?).

¹³⁸ Pilcher, *Palestine: A National Home for the Jews*.

¹³⁹ Pilcher, *Palestine: A National Home for the Jews*.

the ‘view of the author,’¹⁴⁰ this being no other than Pilcher himself. The purpose of the pamphlet was no doubt to raise awareness of the Jewish issues surrounding Palestine as well as the perceived double standard and injustice of British policy. The pamphlet ended with the troubling question: ‘Is it too much to suggest that Christians should support the Jewish people from among whom Christ himself came, in this hour of their supreme need and opportunity?’¹⁴¹

8.2.6 Post-War Advocacy

Pilcher’s views did not abate after the end of the war. The Australia-Palestine Committee which continued its activities including holding public meetings, such as one on 15 October 1945.¹⁴² Pilcher described it as a ‘privilege’¹⁴³ to be co-chairman of the Australia-Palestine Committee. He also continued in his advocacy for the Zionist endeavour to key figures such then-British Prime Minister Attlee and US President Truman¹⁴⁴ as well as the Australian Labor governments’ Minister for External Affairs, Herbert Vere Evatt, who was at the time working to set up the United Nations in New York,¹⁴⁵ in favour of continuing Jewish emigration to Palestine, pointing out both desperate Jewish need and ‘vast and empty Arab states.’¹⁴⁶

Pilcher and other Christian minister, such as the Methodist Reverend Burgoyne Chapman, continued his advocacy for Jewish rights and Zionism through other agencies after the war.¹⁴⁷ In December 1945 Pilcher was a founding member of the International Christian Conference for Palestine, which met in Washington DC.¹⁴⁸ That conference was attended by more than 1,000 delegates from 29 different countries, and demanded, *inter alia*, ‘the immediate transportation and the settlement in Palestine of the 100,000 Jews now in Europe who are the object of intercession by President Truman to the Government of Great Britain.’¹⁴⁹ Pilcher himself called the ‘Arab opposition’¹⁵⁰ to his proposals ‘wealthy Arab Fascists’¹⁵¹ and called

¹⁴⁰ Pilcher, *Palestine: A National Home for the Jews*.

¹⁴¹ Pilcher, *Palestine: A National Home for the Jews*.

¹⁴² ‘Australian-Palestine Mass Meeting,’ *DT*, 14 October 1945, 8

¹⁴³ Laserson, *Pilcher*, 6.

¹⁴⁴ See for example, ‘Mass Meeting On Palestine,’ *SMH*, 11 October 1945, 4.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Evatt And Palestine,’ *The Sun*, 25 October 1947, 3.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Australian Palestine Committee,’ *HS*, 30 October 1947, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Serge Liberman, ‘Gentile Champions of Jews in Australia,’ in *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, ed. William D Rubinstein (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 91-92.

¹⁴⁸ ‘International Christian Conference for Palestine,’ *HS*, 10 January 1946, 3.

¹⁴⁹ ‘International Christian Conference for Palestine,’ *HS*, 10 January 1946, 3.

¹⁵⁰ ‘International Christian Conference for Palestine,’ *HS*, 10 January 1946, 3.

¹⁵¹ ‘International Christian Conference for Palestine,’ *HS*, 10 January 1946, 3.

on the British Labour government not to yield to oppressors and torturers.¹⁵²

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* published in February, 1948, Pilcher criticised British policy of allowing Arabs to arm themselves, but limiting purchases of weapons by the Jewish defence force.¹⁵³ His efforts on behalf of Jewish causes both in Australia and abroad was praised at a public meeting of the World Jewish Congress, also in 1948.¹⁵⁴ He continued to attend Jewish and pro-Israel community events including the celebration of the first anniversary of Israeli independence at Sydney's Maccabee Hall in May 1949.¹⁵⁵ He also attended and spoke at meetings which opposed the Jordanian annexation of east Jerusalem.¹⁵⁶

Pilcher played a pivotal role in trying to raise consciousness in Australia about the plight of the European Jews under Nazi domination and the need to assist them by providing a refuge in Australia and also developing Palestine as the Jewish Homeland. Although Laserson's biographical study of Pilcher predated his death by nearly 12 years, what he wrote could have been almost a eulogy:

His untiring efforts helped to convince the Federal Government that the European victims of racial persecution would be suitable immigrants for this country. Although, technically speaking, these people, had to be regarded as nationals of an enemy country, the Bishop swayed the official attitude in their favour.¹⁵⁷

There is significant historical debate as to what motivated Pilcher to take such a strong stance in support of the Jewish people during their time of need. In his study of Jewish refugee migration to Australia, Michael Blakeney argued that there were four main reasons:¹⁵⁸ as discussed his early ministry in Birmingham, when he met many Russian Jewish refugees during his door knocking campaigns; his academic research and interest in Jewish texts particularly during his teaching at the University of Toronto; his basic humanity; and finally as commented by Dr John Machover from 'a deep sense of guilt for the age-long suffering inflicted on the

¹⁵² 'International Christian Conference for Palestine,' *HS*, 10 January 1946, 3.

¹⁵³ 'Arms for Palestine,' *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 28 February 1948, 5.

¹⁵⁴ 'Tribute to Bishop Pilcher,' *HS*, 30 September 1948, 12.

¹⁵⁵ 'Mass Rally for State of Israel,' *HS*, 5 May 1949, 2.

¹⁵⁶ 'Jerusalem Belongs to Israel - Protest Meeting at Town Hall,' *HS*, 22 December 1949, 3.

¹⁵⁷ 'A True Friend of the Jewish People, Biographical Study of Bishop,' *HS*, 16 June 1949, 4.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 200-1.

Jews by the Christian Church.’¹⁵⁹ Gouttman queries this last point made by Machover, stating that ‘While he (Pilcher) certainly made Jewish causes his own, and did so in a manner that would put most Jews of his time to shame, there is little direct evidence that corroborates Machover’s view as to Christian guilt.’¹⁶⁰ Gouttman argued that if Pilcher did feel that he had to extirpate a sense of guilt, ‘one could speculate... it had more to do with Pilcher’s previously long-held Germanophilia.’¹⁶¹ This is, indeed, speculation on Gouttman’s part. However, what is clear is that Pilcher was motivated by a sense of Christian duty, as argued by Barwell and Kennedy,¹⁶² as well as by his humanitarian qualities, which his previous employer, Rev Dr Armitage, described as ‘outstanding’.¹⁶³ He was one of the few churchmen and intellectuals who was prepared to stand up for the Jewish plight during the war years in Australia, and could certainly be considered the leading figure in the fight for Jewish rights at the time. Given his strong involvement in Jewish affairs, it is understandable that Archbishop Mowll delegated Anglican representation on the Council to Pilcher.

8.3 Anglican Representation: Archbishop Howard West Kilvington Mowll

Sydney’s Anglican Archbishop Howard West Kilvington Mowll (1890-1958) was the first chairman of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews, but his position was largely ceremonial as the Anglican Church’s day-to-day [*sic*] involvement with the Council was left to Pilcher as his representative. This was possibly either due to the pressures of the war or due to his lack of commitment to the issue. Nevertheless, Pilcher did a formidable job of representing the Archbishop in the Council and ensured that Mowll would be the presiding as the official representative of the Council at public events when needed.

One of the possible reasons that Archbishop Mowll does not appear as a major person of involvement in the Council of Christians and Jews may have been his conservatism. Whilst the precise nature of the doctrinal disagreement between Mowll and 30 of his clergymen is unknown, it was sufficiently important for 30 clergymen to write a memorandum to Mowll,¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Machover, ‘Towards Rescue,’ 36.

¹⁶⁰ Gouttman, ‘The Pilcher Conundrum,’ 81.

¹⁶¹ Gouttman, ‘The Pilcher Conundrum,’ 81.

¹⁶² Barwell and Kennedy, ‘Evangelical Christianity,’ 39.

¹⁶³ NAA: NA60262, Dossier 10401, 17 December 1940, as quoted in Gouttman, ‘The Pilcher Conundrum,’ 80.

¹⁶⁴ KJ Cable, ‘Mowll, Howard West Kilvington (1890-1958),’ Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mowll-howard-west-kilvington-11189/text19943>, published first in hardcopy 2000, accessed online 11 January 2021.

requesting a meeting,¹⁶⁵ which Mowll refused, to discuss Mowll's alleged 'monopoly of key diocesan positions.'¹⁶⁶

A hint is given in the conservative nature of the Archbishop's preaching. For example, on 4 April 1938, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Mowll preached that Jesus was crucified by a group of evil men under the domination of a higher power.¹⁶⁷ This was a common viewpoint at the time, possibly because of 'the source in St Matthew's Gospel which was the textual origin of the anti-Semitism, that fuelled the hatred of the Jews in Hitler's Germany.'¹⁶⁸ In the context of the times, the words spoken by Mowll carried the innuendo that the people who killed the Christian Messiah were Jews, thereby implying that they were evil.

Foye wrote of Mowll:

From 1933 to his death in 1958, Mowll was a conservative missionary Archbishop who worked to reform his diocese and counter the spread of a more liberal Anglicanism... Sydney Diocese turned decisively in a conservative direction under [his...] leadership... so much so that those in the diocese who were more open to contemporary scholarship felt sidelined.¹⁶⁹

Throughout his tenure, Mowll sought to prioritise Anglicanism in Australian public life. He appears to have not been supportive of non-British immigrants nor interested in actual constructive dialogue with other churches. Dundon writes that the Sydney Anglican Synod picked up on Mowll's 'elitist, pro-British, anti-Southern European and possibly racist vision'¹⁷⁰ for Australia's post war immigration plans in his 1949 presidential address to them. As such he took a very different position to Bishop Pilcher, with his strong advocacy for Jewish refugees. It is, therefore, not surprising that Mowll did not involve himself directly in the issue of Jewish refugees.

¹⁶⁵ 'A Plea for Liberty,' *SMH*, 22 August 1938, 11.

¹⁶⁶ Cable, 'Mowll, Howard West Kilvington (1890-1958).'

¹⁶⁷ 'Story of Crucifixion: St John's Account of Events,' *SMH*, 4 April 1938, 10.

¹⁶⁸ Jonathan Foye, 'Graving Another Testament: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Sydney Anglicans Under Peter Jensen 2001-2013,' Unpublished PhD thesis (Western Sydney University, 2016), 34.

¹⁶⁹ Foye, 'Graving Another Testament,' 168.

¹⁷⁰ Colin Dundon, 'Sydney Anglicans and Immigration, 1945-1988,' Unpublished MA thesis (University of New South Wales, 1990), 77.

That is not to say that Mowll was not active in the Council of Christians and Jews; nor did he stop those under him from being equally active, particularly Pilcher. However, no evidence was found to demonstrate that Mowll actually helped the position of Jews in a practical way either in terms of immigration to Palestine or immigration to Australia. As well, no evidence was located on whether or not he attended meetings with representatives of the Jewish community or any government officials to discuss the situation of Jewish refugees. This is surprising because for many years his official schedule, including all of the meetings he had with members of parliament, was published in newspapers.

Nevertheless, Mowll did fulfil his duties as the public figurehead of the Council of Christians and Jews. For example, at the protest meeting held in November 1942 he moved the resolution, passed unanimously, which did refer to both Jews and Christians. This resolution specifically condemned ‘the treatment of the Jewish people by the Nazis’¹⁷¹ and stressed that:

Hitler has made it his goal to exterminate the Jewish people and has turned the Jewish centres of habitation in Europe into vast concentration camps, scenes of untold anguish and instruments of death to thousands of defenceless human beings.¹⁷²

As discussed, the Sydney Town Hall protest meeting was attended by the main Jewish and non-Jewish dignitaries with speakers including the Lord Mayor, Mowll and Rabbi Porush.¹⁷³ It shows that whilst Mowll may have left most issues to do with interfaith relations and Jewish refugees to the enthusiasm of his representative, Bishop Pilcher, he nevertheless cared sufficiently to ensure that his church was represented by himself in his capacity as archbishop, when the occasion called for it. Further this shows that he valued his church being involved in the Council activities through his public demonstration of sufficient homage to and concern for the Jewish refugee issue.

An alternative explanation for Mowll’s lack of investment of time and effort into the issue of Jewish refugees may be that he believed that Pilcher already represented the Church with sufficient enthusiasm for both of them. There is no evidence for example, that Rabbi Porush enjoyed as close a relationship with Mowll as he did with Pilcher, which indicates that Mowll

¹⁷¹ ‘Public Protest Meeting: Preliminary Report,’ *HS*, 12 November 1942, 5.

¹⁷² ‘Public Protest Meeting: Preliminary Report,’ *HS*, 12 November 1942, 5.

¹⁷³ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 161.

was not actively involved in common activities concerning the Jewish community. It is also possible that Mowll did not wish to be seen to be too enthusiastic with respect to Jewish refugees or Zionism so that he and the Anglican Church would not fall into disfavour with the public or the government given the prevailing anti-Jewish refugee sentiments of the time. This approach gave Mowll the option of blaming Pilcher should this occur. It is noteworthy that there is no evidence that Mowll took issue with Pilcher's Zionism, refugee advocacy or Council activities, which were often carried out by Pilcher in the name of the archbishop.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 6, Porush had suspicions as to Mowll's personal agenda with regards to the Council as evidenced by their disagreement on whether or not Christian missionary propaganda disseminated amongst Jews should be counted as a form of intolerance when it came to debating the original objectives of the Council in March 1943.¹⁷⁴ Porush actively stifled any attempt by Mowll to use the Council as a forum to spread 'truths of Christianity'¹⁷⁵ amongst Jews. This would have contributed to the reasons why Mowll opted for a passive ceremonial engagement with the Council as its chairman and instead left the active involvement to Bishop Pilcher.

It is also noteworthy that Mowll afforded Pilcher a significant amount of freedom in representing him and the Anglican Church in matters of interfaith relations and refugee advocacy. Unlike Archbishop Gilroy, who kept a close watch on his representative, Fr Noel Hehir, Mowll does not appear to have intervened in Pilcher's activities. This may be explained by the fact that Mowll enjoyed a longstanding 'friendship'¹⁷⁶ with Pilcher who was described as one of Mowll's 'chief friends.'¹⁷⁷ Their relationship dated back to their time in Toronto, where both men worked at Wycliffe College as lecturers from 1916,¹⁷⁸ both being intellectuals with a cosmopolitan heritage and faith. Given Mowll's lack of experience when he was initially appointed as Archbishop of Sydney, he was originally assisted by Assistant Bishop Kirkby until the latter's sudden death in 1935, when Mowll 'invited'¹⁷⁹ his friend, Pilcher, to move to Sydney from Toronto. This invitation highlights the trust that Mowll had in Pilcher, who was

¹⁷⁴ Israel Porush, Letter to Howard Mowll, 13 November 1942. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁷⁵ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 186.

¹⁷⁶ Marcus L Loane, *Archbishop Mowll: The Biography of Howard West Kilvington Mowll, Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), 77.

¹⁷⁷ Loane, *Archbishop Mowll*, 129.

¹⁷⁸ Loane, *Archbishop Mowll*, 77.

¹⁷⁹ Stephen Judd and Kenneth Cable, *Sydney Anglicans: A History of the Diocese* (Sydney: Anglican Information Office, 2000), 229.

ten years his senior.¹⁸⁰ In his biography, Loane argued that Mowll's 'commitments as Archbishop meant that he was often compelled to speak on official occasions, and there was less exposition and more local material in his later sermons.'¹⁸¹ This attests to Mowll's ability to delegate matters and attend to the more official and formal matters himself in his capacity as archbishop. This is also evident in Mowll's general response to World War Two, when he did not hesitate to contribute to the war effort whatever the Church was able to afford. He 'saw what was needed and ordered that it be done with scant regard for available resources.'¹⁸² Mowll's support of Pilcher's approach both in terms of the work of the Council and in terms of his passionate Zionist advocacy contrasts with that of his Catholic colleague at the time, Cardinal Gilroy.

8.4 Catholic Representation: Archbishop Cardinal Norman Thomas Gilroy

Cardinal Sir Norman Thomas Gilroy (1896-1977) was the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney and played an important but minor role in the short-lived New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews during the 1940s. He was born in 1896 at Glebe, Sydney, the second of six children of native-born parents of Irish descent who were firmly Roman Catholic in their faith.¹⁸³ Gilroy attended convent schools but interrupted his brief schooling to work for an estate agent at the age of 12.¹⁸⁴ He not only made history as the first Australian-born Catholic cardinal; he was also the first cardinal since the reformation to be created a Knight Commander of the British Empire.¹⁸⁵

Gilroy's personality was such that he was always exact in observance but throughout his early years struggled to reconcile his various occupations with his faith. After his interest in the Marist Brothers was frustrated by his family circumstances¹⁸⁶ he joined the Postmaster-General's Department in 1909 as a telegraph messenger.¹⁸⁷ World War One found him volunteering for the transport service as a telegraphist and in February 1915 he sailed for Egypt

¹⁸⁰ Judd and Cable, *Sydney Anglicans*, 229.

¹⁸¹ Loane, *Archbishop Mowll*, 204.

¹⁸² Judd and Cable, *Sydney Anglicans*, 241.

¹⁸³ TP Boland, 'Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gilroy-sir-norman-thomas-1038/text18241>, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed online 13 January 2021.

¹⁸⁴ Boland, 'Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)'.

¹⁸⁵ Boland, 'Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)'.

¹⁸⁶ John Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy: An Obedient Life* (Strathfield: St Pauls Publications, 2017), 8.

¹⁸⁷ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 14.

as junior wireless officer on the transport, HMAT *Bulla (Hessen)*, which carried supplies, troops and horses.¹⁸⁸ His diary of the voyage showed a shrewd understanding of men, remarkable in a youth of 19. While maintaining his own strict standards of total abstinence, he mixed well with all types and developed an affectionate respect for Australian servicemen.¹⁸⁹

Gilroy's life was one of obedience to authorities – in church and state. From 1917 he was encouraged to continue his Catholic faith and he first attended St Columba's Seminary and Foreign Missionary College in Springwood, and later, from 1919, transferred to the Pontifical Urban College of Propaganda Fide in Rome,¹⁹⁰ where he was ordained as a priest in December 1923. This was followed by his completing a doctorate in theology in 1924.¹⁹¹

Gilroy returned to Australia in 1924 and quickly made a career within the Catholic Church, starting in the Apostolic delegation.¹⁹² At the time the Vatican was anxious to localise the Catholic Church in Australia by replacing Irish-born senior clergy, when they died or retired, with Australian-born ones.¹⁹³ This is supported by the fact that Gilroy was promoted to Cardinal in 1945 instead of Melbourne's Irish-born Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix, who surpassed Gilroy in the hierarchy's seniority.¹⁹⁴ Gilroy's obedient personality fitted in with the Holy See's wishes as implemented by the Apostolic Delegate in Australia, who was the link between the Vatican and the Australian archbishops and bishops – all of whom reported directly to the Holy See.¹⁹⁵

Australia's Protestant Christians similarly were not entirely welcoming of the papal choice with the United Protestant Association, NSW Loyal Orange Institution and the Protestant Action Society of Australia protesting the spending of federal funds on Gilroy's official welcome.¹⁹⁶ Gilroy had previously clashed with Protestant groups in September 1937 when several newspapers in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland published a false and highly anti-Catholic report that a 'secret meeting of Catholic guilds had been held'¹⁹⁷ at St Mary's

¹⁸⁸ Graham Williams, *Cardinal Sir Norman Gilroy* (Sydney: Alella Books, 1971), 12.

¹⁸⁹ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 15.

¹⁹⁰ Boland, 'Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)'.

¹⁹¹ Boland, 'Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)'.

¹⁹² Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 38.

¹⁹³ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 37.

¹⁹⁴ Williams, *Cardinal Sir Norman Gilroy*, 49.

¹⁹⁵ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 37.

¹⁹⁶ AA: A4651/9, Item AH332/1/1 as cited in Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 112.

¹⁹⁷ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 78.

Cathedral in Sydney to instruct men from various trade unions ‘on how to further the interests of Catholics and the Church within their workplaces.’¹⁹⁸ Gilroy took offence at this story, publicly rebuked its instigators in the press and leveraged his influence with various state and federal politicians to stop this story from being disseminated any further.¹⁹⁹ Gilroy’s Australian birth also assisted in responding to claims that Catholics were disloyal Australians due to their allegiance to Rome and predominant Irish cultural ties.²⁰⁰ Such experiences with Protestants may well have been part of the reason why Gilroy seemed reluctant to be personally involved in interfaith dialogue with other Christian groups let alone Jews. He may have perceived that there was potential for a pervasive anti-Catholic bias within any forum tasked to represent the interests of Christians and Jews such as the CCJ.

As the link with the Holy See, Gilroy was no doubt aware of the view Pope Pius X, expressed in his 1904 meeting with the founder of political Zionism, Theodore Herzl:

Either the Jews will retain their ancient faith and continue to await the Messiah whom we believe has already appeared – in which case they are denying the divinity of Jesus and we cannot assist them. Or else they will go there with no religion whatever, and then we can have nothing at all to do with them. The Jewish faith was the foundation of our own, but it has been superseded by the teachings of Christ, and we cannot admit that it still enjoys any validity. The Jews who should have been the first to acknowledge Jesus Christ have not done so to this day.²⁰¹

Gilroy worked in the Apostolic delegation for six years until in 1930 when he became secretary to Bishop John Carroll in Lismore. In 1934 he was nominated as bishop of Port Augusta, even though he had never been a curate or parish priest and thus had only limited pastoral experience.²⁰² Three years later, he became the coadjutor to the Archbishop Kelly of Sydney and succeeded him in March 1940.²⁰³

Boland wrote that ‘Gilroy did not often make the public statements expected of public figures

¹⁹⁸ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 78.

¹⁹⁹ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 78.

²⁰⁰ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 218.

²⁰¹ Gareth SG Grainger, ‘Holy Land and Holy See: Papal Policy on Palestine during the Pontificates of Popes Pius X, Benedict XV and Pius XI from 1903 to 1939,’ Unpublished PhD thesis (University of Divinity, 2017), 18.

²⁰² Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 52.

²⁰³ Boland, ‘Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)’.

[during wartime]. When he did, they were not always well judged.’²⁰⁴ For example, at the Town Hall rally in November 1942, which ultimately established the Council of Christians and Jews, Gilroy agreed to be one of the convenors but did not attend the rally, instead sending a short message restating ‘the words of Pope Pius XI from 1938, criticising antisemitism as being “an anti-pathetic movement.”’²⁰⁵ Dr John Machover, the founder of the United Emergency Committee, noted that he had requested a meeting between himself, Rabbi Israel Porush and Gilroy to discuss the plight of European Jewry but that this was delegated to the apostolic delegate, who showed little interest in the matter and instead raised the plight of Catholic priests and teachers in Europe.²⁰⁶ The delegate further requested them to advocate on their behalf with the Jewish influencers of the American press, thereby showing his own misguided understanding of Jewish influence.²⁰⁷

Despite Gilroy’s tensions with some protestant groups, he maintained ‘cordial and cooperative relationships with leaders of other denominations.’²⁰⁸ Whilst most Catholic leaders of the time held the view that the only form of ecumenism would be a return of the Protestants movement to the Catholic faith²⁰⁹ he nevertheless did join the other leaders of Sydney’s Christian denominations in 1943 in issuing the joint statement ‘A Christian Outlook in National Life.’ This was much to the surprise of some Anglicans in Sydney.²¹⁰ This document discussed post-war reconstruction in a just and charitable society which the signatories saw only in Christianity²¹¹ and it ‘represented goodwill and Christian cooperation rather than the older sectarian animosity.’²¹² It is possible that he saw the oppression of Jews in Europe as an affront to his Christian faith. He wrote to the World Jewish Congress’ representative on 2 March 1943:

The remarkable courage and fortitude of those who have been persecuted for their loyalty, adherence to their conscientious beliefs, or merely because of being members of a race not held in favour by their persecutors, must be a prayer to God that in His own

²⁰⁴ Boland, ‘Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)’.

²⁰⁵ Alfred Harris, ‘Editorial: The protest Meeting and its Results,’ *HS*, 12 November 1941, 4, as cited in Rutland, ‘1942: What Was Known Down Under, at the Edge of the Diaspora?’, 269.

²⁰⁶ Machover, ‘Towards Rescue,’ 39.

²⁰⁷ Machover, ‘Towards Rescue,’ 39.

²⁰⁸ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 219.

²⁰⁹ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 327–328.

²¹⁰ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 98.

²¹¹ Boland, ‘Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)’.

²¹² Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 98.

good time will produce abundant fruit...The Jewish people or Sydney may rest assured that the Catholic people of Sydney sincerely sympathises with them...²¹³

Gilroy also wrote a message of support to Porush before the meeting of opponents to antisemitism held at the Maccabean Hall in August 1943, although there is no report of him attending it, unlike his Anglican counterpart, Archbishop Mowll who was one of the organisers.²¹⁴ Further, Gilroy wrote in 1943:

I have read with increasing horror and indignation of the cruel tyranny exercised during the last few years over the Jews in Europe and elsewhere, the persecution, the incarceration, the wholesale massacre of innocent people for no other reason than that they were Jews... their persecutors have become ever more vile in the sight of mankind There still remains the problem of saving from annihilation those Jews who have so far escaped the dreadful fate.²¹⁵

The words were unsurprising, but neither was his absence at the meeting as this fitted with Gilroy's delegation of his Church's involvement at the inaugural meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews to Father Noel Hehir, a Jesuit and rector of St Ignatius Riverview College in Sydney.²¹⁶ There is no record of Gilroy attending any later meetings of the Council either. It seems that Gilroy had little interest in interfaith relations during the war, not just when it came to the Council of Christians and Jews. This is evidenced by Gilroy's absence at a meeting called by the Australian section of the World Jewish Congress,²¹⁷ which was organised by the Catholic President of the NSW Labor Council, and where Gilroy merely sent a message.²¹⁸ This absence was odd for someone who was used to sharing the limelight with Jews when it suited him. For example, at the opening of the Sir John Monash recreation centre in Hyde Park in September 1940, Gilroy shared a public platform with Porush. His attendance on that occasion could possibly be attributed to the fact that it involved little effort by him, apart from

²¹³ 'Letter from Archbishop Gilroy,' *HS*, 8 April 1943, 8.

²¹⁴ 'Council of Christians and Jews,' *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

²¹⁵ 'The Religious Motivation,' *HS*, 5 August 1943, 5.

²¹⁶ 'Council of Christians and Jews,' *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

²¹⁷ Beverley J Hooper, 'Australian Reactions to German Persecution of the Jews and Refugee Immigration, 1933-1947,' Unpublished MA thesis (Australian National University, 1972), 162.

²¹⁸ 'Council of Christians and Jews,' *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

socialising, since the Jewish community had paid both for the recreation centre and the celebration of its opening.²¹⁹

Beverley Hooper argues that the Victorian Archbishop, Daniel Mannix, believed that there was room for a greater degree of kindness towards the Jewish people, in contrast to Gilroy's views, and Mannix advocated for this approach in his *Catholic Weekly*.²²⁰ In fact, when questioned about his views on the Kimberley Scheme, Mannix openly supported 'any scheme that will help the refugees and wipe out a stain upon our common humanity.'²²¹

In early 1945, when the New South Wales Jewish Advisory Board wrote to him, Gilroy defended the Catholic record during the war, responding:

Jewish communities all over the world will ever be mindful of the acts of toleration and Christian charity... by which many of the persecuted Jews of Italy, France and Hungary, were saved from certain death... Our deepest, thanks are due to... the eminent Cardinals... some of whom have many times risked their own lives to give shelter to those persecuted by the oppressors.²²²

Gilroy's preference for focussing on anti-Catholic rather than antisemitic issues in Australia was further highlighted in his response to the Council of Christians and Jews' request to detail any antisemitic activities that may have come to his notice in the Sydney Archdiocese in mid-1945. Gilroy responded through his representative Noel Hehir that 'No anti-Semitic activity has come under my notice here but there is a great deal of anti-Catholic activity.'²²³

In 1946, Gilroy travelled to Rome by way of Palestine. His trip was widely reported in the press,²²⁴ but none of these reports actually mentioned what he did in Palestine. His public statements regarding the war were often controversial, such as his intervention in the controversy surrounding the bombing of Rome in July 1943, which was politically

²¹⁹ 'ANZAC Buffet,' *SMH*, 20 September 1940, 8.

²²⁰ Hooper, 'Australian Reactions to German Persecution of the Jews and Refugee Immigration, 1933-1947,' 163.

²²¹ As cited in Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria: 1835-1985* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), 171.

²²² 'Catholic Aid to Persecuted Jews,' *Catholic Weekly*, 4 January 1945, 6.

²²³ Norman Gilroy, Letter to Noel Hehir, 7 October 1945. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²²⁴ See for example 'Cardinal Gilroy to Leave on Tuesday,' *Northern Star*, 19 January 1946, 5; 'Cardinal Gilroy Leaves Next Tuesday,' *Border Morning Mail*, 18 January 1946, 1.

unpopular.²²⁵ Gilroy was outraged by the threat to the Vatican, and organised a protest to Churchill and Roosevelt as well as to the Australian government.²²⁶ Not all his fellow bishops concurred, and his outspokenness jarred the harmony of the Australian war effort.²²⁷ Gareth Grainger, writing his doctoral thesis at the University of Divinity in 2017, paints a picture of the Catholic Church at the time of Cardinal Gilroy as being antisemitic and anti-Jewish.²²⁸

It is clear that he was not as outspoken with respect to the various Jewish refugee and Holocaust survivor issues after the war, as he was about the Arab refugees from the 1948 war. This is not surprising since, at least in Grainger's view, the Catholic Church of the time was influenced by antisemitism, although Grainger also justifies the lack of enthusiasm of the Catholic Church for the Zionist endeavour by noting that many Ultra Orthodox Jews living in Israel at the present time do not support Zionism either.²²⁹ Referring to Rodney Gouttman, William Rubinstein wrote that 'during and just after the Second World War, there was some considerable irritation by Jews at the Catholic Church's stand over the future of Palestine [...]. The Australian Catholic Church notably and pointedly refused to endorse any Jewish claims to Palestine in this period.'²³⁰ Gouttman believes this refusal was due to a fear the Catholic Church had for the safety of Arab Christians and loss of control over Christian holy sites.²³¹ This was also consistent with the persistent fear the Catholic Church had of communism, which it frequently alleged to be a Jewish idea.²³²

Gilroy's contribution to the question of the interethnic conflict following Israeli independence seems to have been to support of Arab refugees, rather than Jewish refugees, as well as the safety of Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Adelaide's *Southern Cross* newspaper reported:

Apprehension is also felt lest the holy places of Palestine should cease to be treated as sacred. It is for these reasons that the Holy Father, some time ago declared that—

²²⁵ Grainger, 'Holy Land and Holy See,' 7.

²²⁶ Grainger, 'Holy Land and Holy See,' 7.

²²⁷ Grainger, 'Holy Land and Holy See,' 7.

²²⁸ Grainger, 'Holy Land and Holy See,' 6.

²²⁹ Grainger, 'Holy Land and Holy See,' 7.

²³⁰ Rodney Gouttman, 'Follow the Leader: The Australian Catholic Church and the Establishment of Israel,' *Menorah: Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Issue 1) (1987), as cited in William D Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume II* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 462.

²³¹ Gouttman, 'Follow the Leader,' 74.

²³² Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933-1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 9.

‘Territorial internationalisation of Jerusalem and its area under the sovereignty and the effective control of the Family of Nations’.... [Gilroy referred] to the prayers offered that day in every church of the Archdiocese for a just solution of the Jerusalem problem. [He went on to say] ‘Let it be said to the credit of the Government of Australia that its attitude in this matter has been genuinely Christian.’²³³

No acknowledgment could be found attributed to Gilroy about the fact that between 1948 and 1967, the old city, with its many places holy to Catholics, was under Jordanian control.²³⁴ This was despite an editorial in the *Catholic Weekly* which specifically states the fact.²³⁵ Instead, Gilroy favoured the internationalisation of the city. This ‘solution’ aimed to prevent the situation that inadequate attention would be paid to keeping Christian holy places intact,²³⁶ which Gilroy saw as a necessary development, were Jerusalem merely to be the national capital of Israel. The ‘Official Prayers’ that Gilroy organised for the Holy Land mention solely of places which were holy to Catholics.²³⁷

To explain this situation, Grainger wrote about a communication in 1929 from Cardinal Luigi Barlassina, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem:

Barlassina expressed the view that Britain would not change its position in Palestine because it was necessary for its global strategic interests; and concluded with a word of caution to the Holy See that any benevolent act on its part towards the Jewish community of Palestine was likely to be dangerous to the Catholics of Palestine because of possible adverse Muslim reaction.²³⁸

Fear of Muslim reaction is possibly the reason why Grainger reported that the Pope refused to meet the then head of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Chaim Weizmann, during the latter’s visit to Rome in April 1930.²³⁹

²³³ ‘Australia’s Creditable Stand on Palestine,’ *Southern Cross*, 9 December 1949, 7

²³⁴ Martin Gilbert, *Jerusalem in the Twentieth Century* (New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 1966), 254; Tamar Mayer and Suleiman A Mourad, *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 260.

²³⁵ ‘Bishop O’Brien goes to UN,’ *Catholic Weekly*, 21 September 1950, 1

²³⁶ ‘Australia’s Creditable Stand on Palestine,’ *Southern Cross*, 9 December 1949, 7

²³⁷ ‘Archdiocese of Sydney Official Prayers For Holy Land,’ *Catholic Weekly*, 17 November 1949, 3.

²³⁸ Grainger, ‘Holy Land and Holy See,’ 198.

²³⁹ Grainger, ‘Holy Land and Holy See,’ 202.

The establishment of the State of Israel did not change the conservative Catholic attitude. In 1951 Gilroy organised the Sydney Committee of the Pontifical Mission as part of an international effort which established 20 hospitals, 48 dispensaries, 24 separate pharmacies and educated over 25,000 refugee children in 325 schools for Arab refugees of the Israeli War of Independence.²⁴⁰

Cardinal Gilroy was appointed a Knight of the British Empire in 1969 and died on 21 October 1977.²⁴¹ His conservative approach regarding the admission of survivors to Palestine after the end of the war may well have been due to the fact that he himself was only trying to protect Catholic holy places from Muslim unrest. Alternatively, he may only have been following orders, by carrying out the policy of at least some of the advisers to the Holy See, since the earlier policy of Pius X (1903-1914) and subsequent popes was that, 'if large-scale Jewish immigration to Palestine was to occur, the Catholic Church would be ready with both churches and priests to greet and baptise the new arrivals'²⁴² and no evidence was found that Gilroy, at any time during his life, dissented from this view.

8.5 Catholic Representation: Father Noel Hehir

Father Noel Hehir was a Jesuit priest who played a small but important part in the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews' early existence. There is no evidence that he was instrumental in the Council's establishment nor is there any evidence that he was overly enthusiastic about the affairs of the Council. Nevertheless, his representation on the Council gave it legitimacy given the Catholic church's size and importance.

Hehir first served as rector of St. Aloysius and later as rector of St Ignatius' College Riverview in Sydney from 1940 to 1945.²⁴³ In 1945 he was appointed to Canisius' College, Pymble, and in 1946 he was appointed as the first rector of the Holy Name Seminary, a new Jesuit College established in Christchurch. At his requiem mass, in which Melbourne's Archbishop Mannix

²⁴⁰ 'Palestine Refugees,' *Southern Cross*, 26 January 1951, 9.

²⁴¹ Boland, 'Gilroy, Sir Norman Thomas (1896–1977)'.

²⁴² Grainger, 'Holy Land and Holy See,' 241.

²⁴³ Irish Jesuit Archives (IJA): IE IJA J/1438, 'Hehir, Noel, 1898-1947, Jesuit Priest,' accessed 12 March 2022, <https://www.jesuitarchives.ie/hehir-noel-1898-1947-jesuit-priest>.

himself gave the final absolution, the panegyric recited that Hehir had shown unusual promise as a student, and this was fulfilled in later years. Hehir died in 1947.²⁴⁴

Born in Melbourne, Hehir received his secondary school education from the Jesuits at Xavier College, Kew. He entered the Society of Jesus, and initially was a student at the old Jesuit College of Loyola, Watsonia (a suburb of Melbourne). He proceeded to Ireland, where he completed a Master of Arts in Classics. He then pursued his philosophical studies at the University of Louvain, in Belgium. Returning to Ireland, he taught at Clongowes Wood College whilst completing his theological studies in Dublin. On returning to Melbourne after his ordination, his first appointment was to be placed in charge of Jesuit students attending Melbourne University from the Jesuit College of Loyola.²⁴⁵

A contemporary, Leonard Charles Robson, a Protestant headmaster in Sydney, remembers Hehir's involvement in the Teachers' Guild, in the Classical Association, in public committees, in the headmasters' conference, and in the general life of what were quaintly known as the 'Great Public Schools.'²⁴⁶ He was the younger brother of Father Thomas Hehir, also a teacher at Riverview.²⁴⁷ It is noteworthy that there is no evidence that Hehir adopted the controversial views of his elder brother Thomas Hehir, also a Jesuit, that the Jew regarded the acquisition of moral leadership to be a stumbling-block in the way of physical and intellectual development and 'making his fortune in the world.'²⁴⁸ His statement is evidence of the negative stereotype about Jews, which may have impacted on Hehir's approach to the Council.

As the Catholic representative on the Council of Christians and Jews, he signed the memorandum prepared by Rabbi Israel Porush upon the Council's founding in 1943, which recognised that the:

doctrine of racial and religious intolerance...[was] one of the great evils of our time... largely responsible for the general demoralisation of a large portion of mankind ...[T]hough modern tyrannies begin with anti-Judaism, they never end with it. The persecution of other Faiths inevitably follows... Religion must raise its voice against this

²⁴⁴ 'Late Fr Noel Hehir, SJ,' *Catholic Advocate*, 25 June 1947, 5.

²⁴⁵ 'Father Noel Hehir, SJ, Noted Scholar, Dies in New Zealand,' *Catholic Weekly*, 19 June 1947, 5

²⁴⁶ 'Tribute to Late Headmaster,' *SMH*, 12 June 1947, 2.

²⁴⁷ 'Family Affair,' *The Sun*, 18 February 1940, 3.

²⁴⁸ 'St. Aloysius' College, Milson's Point,' *Freeman's Journal*, 26 December 1929, 7.

disease. But the voice of Religion will be heard best when it comes as a united call, conceived in a spirit of fraternity and co-operation, from all who hold its ideals sacred.²⁴⁹

It is noteworthy to mention that Gilroy evidently supported the Jesuits as he had himself contemplated joining the order as early as 1933.²⁵⁰ Since no correspondence was found to explain why Hehir was chosen by Gilroy to represent him on the Council of Christians and Jews, the Jesuit connection may have been one of the factors. Hehir is remembered as ‘a meticulous scholar with a profound respect for humane learning.’²⁵¹ He ‘was prominent in contributing papers to conferences, schools, etc. [and] was at one stage president of the Teachers’ Guild of New South Wales and the Classical Association [as well as a member] of the Headmasters’ Conference of Australia.’²⁵² He is further remembered ‘for his personal charm, his amazing industry, and great readiness to be of service to anyone at any time.’²⁵³ As an educator, he insisted on introducing technical and rural subjects into the curriculum when he was rector at St Ignatius Riverview, an independent Catholic boys’ school, since he firmly believed that education should be extended to the wider population and not just the upper classes that attended his elite private school.²⁵⁴ All of these traits speak to his character as a scholar and priest with experience in dealing with the wider non-Catholic population. Given that Bishop Pilcher and Rabbi Porush had equally impressive scholastic backgrounds, the fact that Hehir ‘was a highly respected lecturer’²⁵⁵ appears to have contributed to Gilroy’s reasons for choosing him as his representative. It can be argued that he wished to ensure that the Catholic Church could compete with the intellectual rigor of the remaining personalities that comprised the Council of Christians and Jews.

It is clear that Hehir did not have authority to act independently and consulted Gilroy on all decisions relating to the Council’s affairs. This is evidenced by the fact that Archbishop Mowll

²⁴⁹ ‘Council of Christians and Jews,’ *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

²⁵⁰ Luttrell, *Norman Thomas Gilroy*, 42.

²⁵¹ IJA: IE IJA J/1438, ‘Hehir, Noel, 1898-1947, Jesuit Priest,’ accessed 12 March 2022, <https://www.jesuitarchives.ie/hehir-noel-1898-1947-jesuit-priest>.

²⁵² IJA: IE IJA J/1438, ‘Hehir, Noel, 1898-1947, Jesuit Priest,’ accessed 12 March 2022, <https://www.jesuitarchives.ie/hehir-noel-1898-1947-jesuit-priest>.

²⁵³ IJA: IE IJA J/1438, ‘Hehir, Noel, 1898-1947, Jesuit Priest,’ accessed 12 March 2022, <https://www.jesuitarchives.ie/hehir-noel-1898-1947-jesuit-priest>.

²⁵⁴ IJA: IE IJA J/1438, ‘Hehir, Noel, 1898-1947, Jesuit Priest,’ accessed 12 March 2022, <https://www.jesuitarchives.ie/hehir-noel-1898-1947-jesuit-priest>.

²⁵⁵ IJA: IE IJA J/1438, ‘Hehir, Noel, 1898-1947, Jesuit Priest,’ accessed 12 March 2022, <https://www.jesuitarchives.ie/hehir-noel-1898-1947-jesuit-priest>.

corresponded directly with Hehir regarding the objectives of the Council in March 1943.²⁵⁶ Hehir forwarded the letter immediately to Gilroy via his private secretary, stating that 'I must confess that I am not quite clear as to how far we can go [...] If you have any instructions, I shall be glad to have them.'²⁵⁷ Hehir was particularly concerned regarding two of the objectives of the Council, the promotion of fellowship between Christian and Jewish youth organisations and providing a unified determined effort to combat intolerance and persecution.²⁵⁸

Hehir eventually attended the first official meeting of the Council as the Catholic representative of Sydney's Archbishop Norman Gilroy.²⁵⁹ This meeting adopted, as one of the objects of the Council, the following:

Whilst conceding the normal civil rights of all to advocate their own definite religious and political convictions, we shall unite in a determined effort to check intolerance, persecution and unworthy recrimination.²⁶⁰

Hehir agreed to the clause despite having earlier hesitations as he believed the term 'whilst' was liable to misunderstanding, which made known to Archbishop Mowll.²⁶¹ His hesitations were evidently addressed in conversation as per his suggestion when he replied to Mowll's invitation to attend the meeting as Gilroy's representative.²⁶²

Hehir and Porush worked together on a subcommittee to study the problem of antisemitism and the ways and means of counteracting the common fallacies concerning the Jews and Judaism.²⁶³ As part of that work, the Bureau of Jewish Affairs was established by the Public Relations Committee of the New South Wales Jewish Advisory Board with its aim of making known the Jewish contribution in public and patriotic activities, including both the Armed Forces and in the Civilian War Effort.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁶ Howard Mowll, Letter to Noel Hehir, 13 March 1943. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁵⁷ Noel Hehir, Letter to Norman Gilroy 17 March 1943. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁵⁸ Noel Hehir, Letter to Norman Gilroy 17 March 1943. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁵⁹ 'Council of Christians and Jews,' *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

²⁶⁰ 'Council of Christians and Jews,' *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

²⁶¹ Noel Hehir, Letter to Howard Mowll, 21 March 1943. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁶² Noel Hehir, Letter to Howard Mowll, 21 March 1943. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁶³ 'Council of Christians and Jews,' *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

²⁶⁴ 'Council of Christians and Jews,' *HS*, 1 July 1943, 1.

In late 1945, Hehir once again sought Gilroy's directions when the Council discussed the invitation to attend an international conference of Christians and Jews to be held in England in 1946.²⁶⁵ Hehir suggested a telephone call be held between him and Gilroy to discuss the matter, which was rebuffed by Gilroy who stated that 'No advantage can be derived from our discussing it'²⁶⁶ since the 'question of Catholic representation at an international conference is one for Rome to answer.'²⁶⁷

Two weeks later, Hehir again sought Gilroy's instructions on whether or not the Catholic Church would be willing to contribute to the cost of printing a pamphlet rebuffing antisemitism that was being published by the CCJ, a copy of which was attached to his letter.²⁶⁸ Despite the Jewish community offering to pay most of the cost, sufficient funding from the various constituent churches of the CCJ could ultimately not be secured and the idea was abandoned.²⁶⁹ It also shows that Hehir was not able to exert independent judgment in his dealings with the CCJ and had to seek instructions from Gilroy on most matters.

Hehir was diligent in adhering to the directives from Archbishop Gilroy in his execution as the Catholic representative on the Council. He carried out Gilroy's policies and when there was conflict over Jewish rights to settle in Palestine, as will be discussed in the next chapter, he resigned, creating problems for the coherence of the Council. Thus, the divergent positions between the Anglican and Catholic leadership on the Palestinian question led to challenges for the Council in terms of establishing a united voice on Jewish-Christian issues.

8.6 Conclusion

Whilst the successes of the Council can be attributed to the passion and personal drive espoused by Pilcher and Porush, it must be acknowledged that the aim of the Council was to represent a united voice for communicating issues pertinent to Christians and Jews in Australia. Given that the Anglican church dominated the Christian denominations at the time, as Sydney's Anglican

²⁶⁵ Noel Hehir, Letter to Norman Gilroy, 6 October 1945. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁶⁶ Norman Gilroy, Letter to Noel Hehir, 7 October 1945. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁶⁷ Norman Gilroy, Letter to Noel Hehir, 7 October 1945. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁶⁸ Noel Hehir, Letter to Norman Gilroy, 23 October 1945. NSW CCJ 1940s Correspondence, ASJ.

²⁶⁹ Marianne Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' (Unpublished research paper, The University of Sydney, 1990), 8.

Archbishop, the contribution made by Howard Mowll in his capacity as chairman of the Council, was crucial and added weight to the Council's activities.

Given that the Catholic Church was the second-most powerful Christian denomination at the time, their participation in the Council was equally essential as this afforded the Council the ability to assert that its activities were supported by the majority of Australia's Christians and Jews. However, unlike the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church never warmed to the idea nor the ideals of the Council. In addition, the political differences on the issue of Palestine between Pilcher and Porush on the one side and the Catholic Church's stance on the other side, further hindered the Council in realising its full potential and aim of acting as a united voice of Christians and Jews. Nevertheless, the Council did manage to accomplish some important achievements during its brief existence, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9

THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS

9.1 Overview of the Council's Activities and Achievements

This chapter will discuss the specific activities of the Council, highlighting the fact that in the first two years of its existence in 1943 and 1944 it introduced many innovative ideas, bringing a lot of energy and vision to its activities, but that this initial burst of energy faded by 1945. This discussion of Australia's first official, if short-lived channel for Jewish-Christian interfaith relations supports and gives substance to Porush's description of the Council as being 'of short duration, unspectacular but meaningful.'¹ The novelty of the Council in part contributed to its success as 'it served a significant purpose and achieved praiseworthy if limited results.'²

During its brief existence, the Council's main achievements can be categorised in its public awareness campaigns, including a series of radio broadcasts, establishing a National Day of Prayer and distribution of literature, as well as its efforts to host a Brotherhood Week in early 1945. The Council also participated in an international conference of councils of Christians and Jews held in England in 1946, before its unofficial demise. However, its significance is more than the sum of its parts. Despite their differing agendas, members of various Christian denominations and both the Orthodox and Liberal components of the Jewish faith, were able to meet regularly and make a meaningful impact on Australian society. The Council was able to educate the public through its numerous radio broadcasts, petition the Prime Minister, and liaise with community groups and other organisations that shared its objectives, despite their theological differences. The weight attached to the Council's statements and activities cannot be underestimated, given that any official communication or endeavour technically had the sanction of the two most powerful clergymen in Australia. As will be discussed, the fact that the Deputy Prime Minister took the time to reply to the Council's concerns, is evidence of this.

The Council's existence is a testimony to the power of cordial communication between the ministers of Jewish and various Christian denominations in ensuring harmonious relations between majority and minority groups in Australia. This tradition, which was prevalent in the

¹ Israel Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 6, Part 4 (1968), 182.

² Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

nineteenth century, waned during the early twentieth century and resulted in a loss of understanding between the two groups. The establishment of the Council once again ensured that ministers from the two faiths could communicate on shared issues and contribute to mutual understanding.

9.2 Activities in its Inaugural Year, 1943

Minutes of the Council meetings from 24 March 1943 onwards exist until 11 March 1946. These records suggest a flurry of activities and enthusiasm for the Council in its first two years of operation, given that the executive met seven times in 1943 and 11 times in 1944. Enthusiasm seemed to have waned as only four meetings took place in 1945, likely due to the end of the war. The last meeting occurred in August 1945 and then no meetings were held until the Council's last documented meeting in March 1946, just prior to the London conference, even though officially the Council continued to exist according to Porush until 1948. This supports Porush's theory that the Council was designed to assist at a point in time when relations between Christians and Jews were at an all-time low point and Jewry was facing its most tragic moments during World War Two, but that its purpose became superfluous once the war had ended and the immediate danger both to European Jewry and the Australian Jewish community subsided, ending the need for active Christian support for their causes.

The enthusiasm that was sparked by the inaugural meeting carried over into the Council's second meeting on 5 May 1943, which was well attended by Anglicans, Congregationalists, Wesleyans, Catholics and Methodists as well as having representation of both Orthodox and Reform Judaism.³ Discussion points were the expansion of the Council nationwide, in particular Melbourne, the idea of scheduling a series of radio lectures with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on the great civilisations as it was seen as the duty of every Australian to broaden their cultural understanding.⁴ It is interesting to note that they chose the great civilisations of Rome, Greece and Israel and not a series of lectures on the great religions. There was discussion about a youth movement and a publicity sub-committee was established to deal with the problem of antisemitism. This sub-committee constituted Hehir, as well as

³ CCJ Minutes, 5 May 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁴ CCJ Minutes, 5 May 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Porush and Pilcher⁵ who were already involved in publicity campaigns. Overall, the meeting seems to have been productive and upbeat.

Publicity and public information campaigns became one of the cornerstones of the Council's work. The next meetings held on 16 August 1943 and 26 August 1943 resolved to record four broadcasts of five to 15-minutes in length for a variety of stations as well as statements to be prepared by the Council on the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion'.⁶ Despite the earlier idea to focus on ancient civilisations, it was resolved to focus the broadcasts on the dangers of antisemitism instead, and that the first would be recorded by Anglican Archbishop Mowll, then a Catholic, followed by Methodists and finally Rabbi Porush.⁷ These broadcasts were to be recorded in the name of the Council⁸ and thus function as a public display of unity of the major religious denominations on matters of antisemitism. No time was lost on the matter as the Council discussed the broadcasts and the cost and the September meeting confirmed that timeslots with radio stations had been booked.⁹ The Council also discussed for the first time at that meeting writing a draft letter to Prime Minister John Curtin regarding the immigration of Jews.¹⁰ This swift action suggests not just enthusiasm for the Council but also that members agreed on the dangers that antisemitism posed to society.

The letter to Curtin on behalf of the Council marked the first active lobbying of politicians for its causes. Whilst the idea of a letter was first discussed at the 20 September 1943 meeting¹¹, the first draft of the letter was dated 31 August 1943¹² indicating it had actually been written much earlier. A second draft was prepared after the September meeting. The final letter informs the Prime Minister of the existence of the Council and the representatives as well as calls attention to the plight of European Jews.¹³ In particular, it calls attention to the Kimberley settlement scheme.¹⁴ It also reminds him of the Balfour Declaration and urges him to allow

⁵ CCJ Minutes, 5 May 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶ CCJ Minutes, 16 August 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷ CCJ Minutes, 26 August 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸ CCJ Minutes, 26 August 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹ CCJ Minutes, 20 September 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁰ CCJ Minutes, 20 September 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹ CCJ Minutes, 20 September 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹² Draft of Letter to be sent to Prime Minister on behalf CCJ, 31 August 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³ Howard Mowll, Chairman of CCJ, Copy of Letter to Prime Minister on behalf of CCJ, September 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴ Howard Mowll, Chairman of CCJ, Copy of Letter to Prime Minister on behalf of CCJ, September 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Jews to continue to migrate to Palestine.¹⁵ It was signed by the chairman on behalf of the Council.¹⁶

There seems to have been significant momentum in late 1943 amongst the Council members as they could see their objectives slowly coming to fruition. The Council was in contact with and received publications from the British and American Councils and thus was aware of their success and clearly tried to emulate the same in Australia.¹⁷ A copy of the American 'Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Joint Declaration on World Peace' from October 1943 was found in the files¹⁸ containing a note for Australian readers pointing to the significance of this document that all 147 signatories represent the combined religious views of almost all Americans¹⁹ and that it is the first time that such a joint statement on behalf of all churches had been made.²⁰ It was a united religious front against fascist ideas and proclaimed the fundamental principles of morality, tolerance and justice.²¹ Mowll also regularly communicated with the secretary of the British Council, requesting literature and information about its aims.²² Simpson always promptly responded, outlining the aims of the British Council including combating religious and racial intolerance, promoting mutual understanding between Christians and Jews especially during the war and promoting fellowship between youth of different religions.²³

The remaining two meetings of 1943 centred on the broadcasts and extending these by an additional four.²⁴ Expansion plans to Melbourne were also on the agenda and suitable conveners were discussed²⁵ indicating that enthusiasm was still present for the purpose of the organisation. The broadcasts by Pilcher and Porush received particularly favourable feedback

¹⁵ Howard Mowll, Chairman of CCJ, Copy of Letter to Prime Minister on behalf of CCJ, September 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁶ Howard Mowll, Chairman of CCJ, Copy of Letter to Prime Minister on behalf of CCJ, September 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁷ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 194.

¹⁸ 'Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Joint Declaration on World Peace,' 7 October 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁹ 'Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Joint Declaration on World Peace,' 7 October 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

²⁰ 'Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Joint Declaration on World Peace,' 7 October 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

²¹ 'Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Joint Declaration on World Peace,' 7 October 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

²² Howard Mowll (signed as Howard Sydney), Letter to William Simpson, 27 March 1944. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²³ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 28 April 44. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁴ CCJ Minutes, 11 October 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵ CCJ Minutes, 11 October 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

but that these were to be confined to New South Wales for the time being due to cost concerns.²⁶ Discussion amongst the executive became increasingly political, led by Porush around the British 1939 White Paper which would prohibit any further Jewish migration after 31 April 1944 and the fact that the current quota of 75,000 was not used to the fullest.²⁷ In this way, the Council initiated a number of activities and dealt with a number of concerns in its early years, although the issue of developing a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, became an increasing controversial one as will be discussed later.

From the very beginning, public awareness campaigns designed to combat misinformation and antisemitism were one of the key objects of the Council. Therefore, the organisation of a series of radio broadcasts was understandably one of the first key achievements of the Council, all of which seemed to have aired on 2GB radio.

The first broadcast aired on 3 October 1943 was delivered by the Council's chairman, Anglican Archbishop Mowll and entitled 'The Formation of a Council of Christians and Jews and the Appalling Plight of Jewry to-day [*sic*].'²⁸ This broadcast talked about the sister Council of Christians and Jews in Britain, why it was established and how it has drawn attention to the plight of European Jewry a year earlier and then proceeded to talk about the establishment of the Council in New South Wales, its key players and objectives.²⁹ Having introduced the listener to the Council's history and objectives, Mowll then spoke of the plight of Jewry in occupied Europe, particularly in Poland and the number of people killed, estimating this to be 250,000 in Poland alone by end of 1942.³⁰ He raised awareness of mobile Nazi death squads, Jews being round-up in France, forced onto trains, evicted from houses and businesses and German Jews losing their employment merely for being Jewish.³¹

The broadcast made it very evident that Australians, and in particular the members of the Council, knew quite well what was happening in Europe. The press had reported already in

²⁶ CCJ Minutes, 30 November 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷ CCJ Minutes, 30 November 1943. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸ Howard Mowll, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 3 October 1943, 'The Formation of a Council of Christians and Jews and the Appalling Plight of Jewry to-day [*sic*].' RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹ Howard Mowll, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 3 October 1943, 'The Formation of a Council of Christians and Jews and the Appalling Plight of Jewry to-day [*sic*].' RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰ Howard Mowll, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 3 October 1943, 'The Formation of a Council of Christians and Jews and the Appalling Plight of Jewry to-day [*sic*].' RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹ Howard Mowll, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 3 October 1943, 'The Formation of a Council of Christians and Jews and the Appalling Plight of Jewry to-day [*sic*].' RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

December 1942 that ‘more than a third of 3,100,000 Jews in Poland had been slaughtered’³² and Mowll updated the Australian listener in 1943 that ‘no less than two million Jewish men, women and children had been done [*sic*] to death in Occupied Europe since war broke out, and that the German Government has plans already in train [*sic*] to complete the annihilation of the surviving four or five million Jews, so that the United Nations are faced with the prapect [*sic*] of the destruction of Jewish men, women and children equal in number to the entire population of Australia.’³³ The broadcast serves as a reminder that Australians, although remote, had no excuse to argue that they were unaware of the Holocaust as details were widely reported in the press with eerie accuracy. In 1942 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that ‘3,000,000 to 4,000,000 [Jews] face ruthless extermination’³⁴ in Poland.

The second broadcast was conducted by a Catholic, Father Rumble, and entitled ‘The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism.’³⁵ This broadcast was essentially an exoneration of the Catholic Church as it talked at length about Pope Pius XII and his Encyclical Letter from 1939, which condemned antisemitism. The talk discussed at length how antisemitism is incompatible with Catholic belief mentioning ‘The first great champion and defender of the Jews against an oppression which had been traditional from the days of the pagan Roman Emperors was Pope Gregory the Great in 590 AD.’³⁶

Rumble stated that ‘it would be impossible in this brief talk to refer in detail to all the protective decrees issued by Rome to condemn injustices towards the Jews, and insisting that they be granted civil and religious liberty.’³⁷ Examples were given from the late Middle Ages but he then went on to say that ‘Pope Pius XII boldly spoke up on behalf of the Jews’³⁸ in our day.’ He gave examples of how the Pope personally intervened to help individual Jews in distress,

³² ‘Hitler’s Supreme Infamy,’ *SMH*, 17 December 1942, 4.

³³ Howard Mowll, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 3 October 1943, ‘The Formation of a Council of Christians and Jews and the Appalling Plight of Jewry to-day [*sic*].’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁴ ‘Persecution of Jews: Mass Slaughter Methods,’ *SMH*, 14 December 1942, 6.

³⁵ L Rumble, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, undated but likely October 1943, ‘The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁶ L Rumble, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, undated but likely October 1943, ‘The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁷ L Rumble, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, undated but likely October 1943, ‘The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁸ L Rumble, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, undated but likely October 1943, ‘The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

claiming that ‘The Catholic Church prays for the Jewish people, and the Apostolic See has protected Jews against oppression.’³⁹

He concluded the broadcast by mentioning how the Church itself is facing challenges with Nazism and how the Nazis have ridiculed the Pope in the press by calling him the ‘Chief Rabbi of the Christians.’⁴⁰ It was evident that Rumble used the opportunity of this public broadcast to try to exonerate the inaction of the Catholic Church. He did not mention anything about injustices caused by the Church towards Jews over the preceding centuries which contributed to the state of antisemitism at the time, nor did he mention the mass killings happening in Europe as Mowll had done in his broadcast.

The third broadcast was presented by Reverend Rupert J Williams,⁴¹ president of the Methodist Conference in 1943 and also an inaugural member of the Council’s executive.⁴² His talk was entitled ‘The danger to Christianity of the persecution of the Jews.’⁴³ He made a passionate plea to the listener that ‘Anti-Semitism founded a problem to all right-minded people to cooperate in the furtherance of those ideals which religions have in common – Justice, Truth, Peace and Brotherhood – without which the whole foundation of civilized society is threatened with destruction.’⁴⁴ This broadcast essentially combined the objects of the Council, promoting understanding between Christians and Jews, as well as providing some of the practical applications of the Council’s aim, namely combating antisemitism.

The fourth broadcast was delivered on 24 October 1943 by Porush.⁴⁵ Porush had the chance to give facts and figures, name and shame and even draw attention to the inaction of the Australian government concerning their previous commitments on European Jewish refugees, but he did not do this. Instead he decided to speak about peace and harmony, ‘the brotherhood of men and the dignity of the human personality.’⁴⁶ He talked about principles that unite humanity, how

³⁹ L Rumble, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, undated but likely October 1943, ‘The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁴⁰ L Rumble, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, undated but likely October 1943, ‘The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁴¹ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

⁴² CCJ Minutes, 24 March 1943. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

⁴³ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

⁴⁴ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

⁴⁵ Israel Porush, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 24 October 1943, ‘Anti-Semitism is Humanity’s Problem.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁴⁶ Israel Porush, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 24 October 1943, ‘Anti-Semitism is Humanity’s Problem.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

when ‘the terrible persecution of Jews and others commenced in Germany over 10 years ago, the onlooking [*sic*] world was no doubt shocked at the outrages which came to its knowledge.’⁴⁷ He also spoke of antisemitism being used as a political instrument in Germany warning that ‘Tyrants begin with the Jews, they never end with them’⁴⁸ and how antisemitism is incompatible with democratic values.⁴⁹ Given the detailed, and remarkably accurate, facts and figures that featured in Mowll’s earlier broadcast, this was a missed opportunity for Porush to add further detail on the plight of European Jewry.

The fifth broadcast was given by Rabbi Max Schenk,⁵⁰ the Council’s representative of Reform Judaism, followed by the sixth (of which no transcript survives) and seventh broadcasts delivered respectively by Bishop Pilcher⁵¹ and Professor Julius Stone, whose broadcast was entitled ‘Anti-Semitism and the rule of Law.’⁵² Stone’s broadcast was presumably designed not just to include eminent laymen in the activities of the Council but also to highlight the nature and superiority of the British legal system⁵³ and why it is important to acknowledge antisemitism as a risk to society. He stated that ‘The growth of anti-semitism is an unmistakable sign of the breakdown of ethical standards. The way people treat their Jewish fellow-citizens is a test of the whole people’s ethical standard.’⁵⁴ Pilcher’s broadcast topic was no surprise as he had previously argued for the establishment of a ‘Jewish National Home’⁵⁵ in a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* in November 1942, and he obviously used this opportunity to further spread his message via means of the radio.⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Israel Porush, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 24 October 1943, ‘Anti-Semitism is Humanity’s Problem.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁴⁸ Israel Porush, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 24 October 1943, ‘Anti-Semitism is Humanity’s Problem.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁴⁹ Israel Porush, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 24 October 1943, ‘Anti-Semitism is Humanity’s Problem.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁵⁰ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

⁵¹ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

⁵² Julius Stone, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 7 November 1943, ‘Anti-Semitism and the Rule of Law.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁵³ Julius Stone, Broadcast Transcript, 2GB Radio, 7 November 1943, ‘Anti-Semitism and the Rule of Law.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁵⁴ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 188.

⁵⁵ Charles Venn Pilcher, ‘Jewish National Home,’ *SMH*, 4 November 1942, 5.

⁵⁶ Charles Venn Pilcher, ‘Jewish National Home,’ *SMH*, 4 November 1942, 5.

9.3 The Council at its Peak: Developments in 1944

1944 was by far the most active year for the Council when it was at its peak even though the minutes of meetings became noticeably and progressively shorter. After a two-month break during the Summer, the Council resumed meetings in February 1944. Archbishop Gilroy asked to set aside a Sunday in Lent to consider the Jewish problem as well as to prepare brochures that could be published in various Church papers and Sunday, March 12, was selected for this.⁵⁷ This instance presents the only time that Gilroy made a concerted effort to be involved in the activities of the Council and shows that despite his initial scepticism he agreed overall with the principles and activities that had hitherto been performed. Arrangements were made to get in touch with the British Council of Christians and Jews as to their methods and procedures⁵⁸ possibly indicating the Council was slowly running out of ideas.

Even though the minutes became shorter and the list of apologies gradually increased, discussions continued, especially surrounding the White Paper, but no resolutions were proposed.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the broadcasts made by the Council were showing signs of success as one was heard in Canada and pamphlets were promptly sent there for distribution with more information.⁶⁰ Committee members discussed investigating whether or not the clergy had, indeed, raised the Jewish problem during Lent and it was suggested by the Archbishop (presumably Mowll because Gilroy did not attend meetings, but the name is not specified) that clergy be surveyed if they had noticed any sympathy with the Jews or any antisemitism.⁶¹ Father Hehir also suggested that the Council contact the editor of the *Bulletin* and inquire as to the source of their antisemitism.⁶² This initiative by the Catholic representative is further evidence that the Catholic Church had indeed accepted the value of the Council and understood the dangers of antisemitism in Australia.

The lack of reply from Curtin was noted at a number of meetings and it was not until May 1944, some eight months after the Council's letter was sent, that Frank Michael Forde, the Acting Prime Minister replied.⁶³ His response only addressed the British position on Palestine,

⁵⁷ CCJ Minutes, 4 February 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁵⁸ CCJ Minutes, 4 February 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁵⁹ CCJ Minutes, 16 March 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶⁰ CCJ Minutes, 4 April 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶¹ CCJ Minutes, 4 April 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶² CCJ Minutes, 4 April 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶³ CCJ Minutes, 22 May 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

mentioned the peculiar and dangerous position on the ground in Palestine and why the British are limiting immigration and not fulfilling their quota under the 1939 White paper.⁶⁴ He did not address Australia's responsibilities, stating instead that Australia will not get further involved.⁶⁵ The letter further failed to address the role Australia could play in resettling Jewish refugees.⁶⁶

Needless to say, the response was unsatisfactory to the members of the Council. Pilcher promptly pointed out that the British Labour Party (then in opposition) advocated for a repeal of the White Paper whilst the Australian Labor Party (then in government) simply reaffirmed the White Paper.⁶⁷ It was decided to wait with a reply until after the meeting of the Australian Council of Jewish Rights established in September 1943,⁶⁸ to which delegates including Pilcher were appointed to attend.⁶⁹ The Australian Council for Jewish Rights also aimed to combat antisemitism, rescue European Jews and resettle them in Australia⁷⁰ and to campaign for the acceptance of Jewish refugees after the war. Other members of its committee were well known activists in these areas such as Bishop Burgmann, Professor Clunies-Ross, Camilla Wedgewood, and politician, Hubert Peter Lazzarini. It was chaired by James Joseph Maloney, who was at the time president of the New South Wales Trades and Labour Council.⁷¹ This showed that Pilcher was even prepared to work with communists and socialists, such as Maloney,⁷² in order to achieve his aims.

From these various initiatives, it is clear that the leaders of the churches made proactive moves to express their concern about antisemitism, such as dedicating a Sunday in Lent, indicating that they increasingly sympathised with the plight of European Jewry.

⁶⁴ Frank Michael Forde, Letter from Acting Prime Minister to Howard Mowll, 29 April 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶⁵ Frank Michael Forde, Letter from Acting Prime Minister to Howard Mowll, 29 April 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶⁶ Frank Michael Forde, Letter from Acting Prime Minister to Howard Mowll, 29 April 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶⁷ CCJ Minutes, 22 May 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶⁸ 'Flight of Jews to Europe,' *HS*, 16 September 1943, 6.

⁶⁹ CCJ Minutes, 22 May 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁰ William D Rubinstein and Hilary L Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews 1840-1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 106.

⁷¹ Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees: 1933-1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), 211.

⁷² Phillip Deerey, 'Maloney, James Joseph (Jim) (1901-1982),' Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/maloney-james-joseph-jim-14672/text25809>, published first in hardcopy 2021, accessed online 26 July 2021.

The Archbishop's suggestion that the Council carry out a survey was implemented, and its findings provide important insights gained by the Council as to the state of antisemitism and sympathy with European Jewry in Australia at the time. Consequently, it was discussed at length and the Archbishop reported:

[on] receiving a large number of replies to the Questionnaire – some preached, some spoke at meetings, very few saw any trace of anti-semitism. Mr Wakely said the whole of the Churches of Christ were very much in sympathy with the Jewish People, but no definite addresses were given. Mr Stebbins for the Congregationalists said that he also could assure the Council of the sympathy of the Congregational Church and people, but few, if any, addresses were given on the day set apart.⁷³

Rabbi Schenck drew attention to the pledge made by congregations in America to judge every individual on their own merits and not to judge a whole group of people just by one delinquent member.⁷⁴ He also highlighted the Brotherhood Week in America,⁷⁵ a topic that was discussed in more detail subsequently in the year and copied by the Council in 1945. Pilcher and Hehir also reported on their attendance at a Labor Party meeting to gauge Labor's position on Jews and Pilcher said that 'the meeting had been very sympathetic.'⁷⁶ Rabbi Schenck suggested approaching Prime Minister Curtin upon his return from Europe to see if he was more sympathetic after his visit and again raise the question of what role Australia would play in the rescue of Jews after the war.⁷⁷ In the meantime, Hehir had met with editor of the *Bulletin* to discuss roots of paper's antisemitism but he reported that he had not received a satisfactory answer.⁷⁸ Subsequently Porush suggested publishing further pamphlets with information refuting the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion'⁷⁹ to counter some of the antisemitic arguments made in the press.

All of these developments were discussed during the June meeting, indicating an upsurge in the Council's activities that included making more direct political approaches rather than just letter writing. It also shows that the whole Council essentially just concerned itself with the

⁷³ CCJ Minutes, 21 June 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁴ CCJ Minutes, 21 June 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁵ CCJ Minutes, 21 June 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁶ CCJ Minutes, 21 June 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁷ CCJ Minutes, 21 June 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁸ CCJ Minutes, 21 June 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁷⁹ CCJ Minutes, 21 June 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Jewish problem and little else. The Council started to take more direct action in confronting antisemitism by speaking to editor of the *Bulletin* and it seems as though the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion’ were seen as the root cause of much of the antisemitism in Australia. Hitherto, this meeting seemed to reflect the fact that this period had been the most active of Council because virtually every representative reported on tasks they completed. Many articles were also published by the Council in the daily press as well as in denominational newspapers.⁸⁰ As well, pamphlets published by other organisations which supported the aims of the Council were distributed, ‘for example, 10,000 copies of the Victorian pamphlet, “Australians All,” were distributed among over 1,000 church organisations throughout New South Wales.’⁸¹

The survey was discussed in more detail at the subsequent meeting in July further indicating its importance (see Appendix I, and the Council’s analysis of the responses to the survey in Appendix II). The Bishop of Grafton sent a reply letter to the survey stating that several ministers in his diocese had preached on the topic and that those who had, identified a deepening of the sympathy with the Jewish people as a result.⁸² Porush summarised results from the Sydney diocese from information he received from the Archbishop [he did not specify which],⁸³ which indicated that Porush must have been in contact with the Archbishop directly, apart from the Council. He stated that 60 of the 94 ministers surveyed preached on the topic of antisemitism⁸⁴ either through special sermons or special prayers⁸⁵ and overall there was a favourable response but evidence of some antisemitism was also found.⁸⁶ This was mostly in the form of a wide-spread opinion that Jews influenced money markets and some opposition to refugee Jews was noted in the eastern suburbs.⁸⁷ The vast majority stated that they did not notice an increase in antisemitism or any antisemitism at all.⁸⁸ The general reaction of

⁸⁰ Israel Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi* (Melbourne: Special Publication of the AJHS (Vic) (1992), 51.

⁸¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 50.

⁸² CCJ Minutes, 17 July 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸³ CCJ Minutes, 17 July 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸⁴ CCJ Minutes, 17 July 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸⁵ “‘Analysis of the Replies to Archbishop’s Questionnaire Regarding March 12 [1944]’ for the National Day of Prayer.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸⁶ CCJ Minutes, 17 July 1944. RIP Collection Box, 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸⁷ CCJ Minutes, 17 July 1944. RIP Collection Box, 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁸⁸ “‘Analysis of the Replies to Archbishop’s Questionnaire Regarding March 12 [1944]’ for the National Day of Prayer.’ RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

congregations was one of indifference with few exceptions.⁸⁹ Regarding Palestine, most reported that congregations had heard of the stress of the Arab side but not of the Jewish side.⁹⁰

The meeting also received a report from the Presbyterian church that their general assembly had resolved to 'do its best to combat Anti-semitism and that the Assembly affirms its approval of the Balfour Declaration and expressed the hope that the White Paper will not be enforced.'⁹¹ Pilcher also seems to have been further involved politically on various fronts as he reported to the Council that Curtin had promised the churches he would receive a deputation of church and trade union representatives 'for the purpose of impressing on the Government that Refugees should not be compelled to work in the Civil Alien Corps, as this would compel them to consort with Nazis and Fascists.'⁹²

The following month, the draft reply to the Prime Minister was further considered and it was decided to send two letters on Pilcher's suggestion, one dealing with Palestine and one dealing with persecuted Jews.⁹³ Hehir asked to abstain on the Palestine letter vote, indicating his reservations regarding Jewish rights to Palestine, as well as that of the Catholic Church.⁹⁴ Several other publications of interest and note were discussed⁹⁵ indicating that the Council saw a key element of its mission to disseminate educational materials and to decide on which modes and articles would be most appropriate.

By September 1944, the reply to Curtin had been finalised by Pilcher but Hehir tended his resignation in writing.⁹⁶ Hilary Rubinstein wrote that this was probably due to Cardinal Gilroy being 'anxious that his Irish-derived church's reputation for Empire patriotism should not be sullied.'⁹⁷ The Committee tasked Pilcher to inquire why this was done⁹⁸ as Hehir's resignation meant the Council was without Catholic representation and support leaving a significant gap

⁸⁹ "Analysis of the Replies to Archbishop's Questionnaire Regarding March 12 [1944]" for the National Day of Prayer. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹⁰ "Analysis of the Replies to Archbishop's Questionnaire Regarding March 12 [1944]" for the National Day of Prayer. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹¹ CCJ Minutes, 17 July 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹² CCJ Minutes, 17 July 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹³ CCJ Minutes, 15 August 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹⁴ CCJ Minutes, 15 August 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹⁵ CCJ Minutes, 15 August 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹⁶ CCJ Minutes, 11 September 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁹⁷ Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume I* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 519.

⁹⁸ CCJ Minutes, 11 September 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

in its ability to advocate on behalf of the majority of Christians and Jews. Hehir's decision related to Catholic opposition to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, an issue which Pilcher as a representative of the Anglican Church was strongly promoting in response to the increasing knowledge about the Holocaust. Regarding this episode, Porush remembers that 'Early on it became clear that the Catholic Church, in particular, had reservations regarding any efforts made by the Council concerning Palestine.'⁹⁹ This issue where the Catholic Church expressed strong ambivalence, was seen in the steps leading to the formation of the Council, as discussed previously, and was a significant factor in its demise. Pilcher firmly believed that the Council should advocate on behalf of Zionism and against British government policies, which created friction amongst its member.¹⁰⁰ William Rubinstein argues that the Catholic Church's opposition to any reference to Palestine in the Council's activities represented '[the] direct conflict [within the Council] between Christians and Jews over Palestine, especially from Catholics.'¹⁰¹ According to Rabbi Brasch, this division precipitated Pilcher's decision to concentrate his energies elsewhere as it became clear that his Zionist ideals would not be tolerated further within the Council.¹⁰²

The support for the Jewish position in Palestine was expressed by the Anglicans in other states. Pilcher informed the September Council that he had received a letter from the Archbishop of Brisbane where a Pro-Palestine Committee [referring to pro-Jewish] had been founded, consisting of the two Archbishops in that city, a representative of the YWCA and another unaffiliated representative.¹⁰³ This indicated that the idea of the Council seemed to take hold in other cities in and that church leaders in other parts of Australia were manifesting interest in its affairs. This meeting was also informed that the pamphlet on the 'Protocols of Zion' was finalised and Porush read a message from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had made a broadcast to Hungarian Christians appealing to them to assist with the escape of Jews in every way.¹⁰⁴ A quote from the broadcast's conclusion was inserted into the minutes as follows: 'I speak as a Christian who cannot help [,] to Christians who can, for the honour of our common Christianity I implore you to do your utmost.'¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 52.

¹⁰⁰ William Simpson, 'Note of conversation with Rabbi Dr Israel Porush (Chief Rabbi of Sydney, Australia),' 28 June 1955. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁰¹ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, 470.

¹⁰² Rudolph Brasch, Letter to William Simpson, 2 September 1949. CCJ, Box 1 File 1, AAJ.

¹⁰³ CCJ Minutes, 11 September 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁰⁴ CCJ Minutes, 11 September 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁰⁵ CCJ Minutes, 11 September 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

The following month, a letter from Hehir was read at the Council's meeting stating that he would be willing to resume his seat on the Council, and thereby ensure Catholic representation, provided 'the question of the [Jewish] settlement in Palestine were not made a subject of the Council's activities.'¹⁰⁶ The Council resolved to agree to the request, albeit reluctantly,¹⁰⁷ and to assure Hehir that it would henceforth confine its activities 'to fighting anti-Semitism as it affected Australia'¹⁰⁸ and to promoting good relations with councils in Britain and America.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the Council confined its activities during its existence to combating antisemitism and highlighting the plight of European Jewry due to the Nazi policies of mass slaughter, and not to the promotion of good relations between religions. This aim included, in the opinion of Pilcher, addressing the issue of rescuing Jews from Europe and advocating for their settlement in Palestine, which the Catholic Church clearly disagreed with.¹¹⁰

Concerning its campaign against antisemitism, the Council learnt that the 'Protocols of Elders of Zion' was sold at the major Sydney bookshop, Angus and Robertson Booksellers, and resolved to make enquiries about this.¹¹¹ It also discovered an antisemitic article printed in the *Catholic Weekly* of 28 September 1944 and hoped Hehir would give further insight into how this happened when he returned.¹¹² Canon Hammond then offered to speak to the Returned Servicemen League regarding statements about an Adelaide Conference, which seemed to imply a possible antisemitic tendency.¹¹³ This marked the first engagement of Hammond within the council (other than as secretary) and also the first engagement the Council had with community groups. In fact, the Council 'carefully watched the Press and the utterances of public men'¹¹⁴ and was successful in some instances in countering false antisemitic claims.

The year 1944 was indeed the busiest for the Council with numerous achievements. Unsurprisingly therefore, the Council commissioned an undated report on its last three meetings of 1944. The report included a list of achievements, such as the letter received from the Acting Prime Minister and the proposed reply, the fact that an offer to make broadcasts

¹⁰⁶ CCJ Minutes, 16 October 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁰⁷ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 194.

¹⁰⁸ CCJ Minutes, 16 October 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁰⁹ CCJ Minutes, 16 October 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹⁰ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 193-194.

¹¹¹ CCJ Minutes, 16 October 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹² CCJ Minutes, 16 October 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹³ CCJ Minutes, 16 October 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹⁴ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 191.

with a certain radio station did not eventuate, that a number of pamphlets were distributed in the Council's name, that the Archbishop suggested to urge the Australian government to keep the promise it made at the Evian Conference and grant all 15,000 landing permits to Jews, a quota that has not yet been filled, and that the Council attended the Australian Council for Jewish Rights meeting.¹¹⁵ The report also mentioned Rabbi Schenk's Brotherhood Week suggestion and preparations that were made to implement this concept, that Rabbi Porush had published material refuting the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' that almost 100 replies were received from the Council's survey from clergy who preached about the plight of European Jewry in March and it was found that they were generally sympathetic to the cause, willing to cooperate with the Council and noticed little increase in antisemitism.¹¹⁶ Thus, the Council compiled what could be seen as a report card of its achievements to date. The exact purpose of this report was not stated, but one can speculate that its appearance close to the preparatory conference for Brotherhood Week might have been connected to the Council's desire to raise further awareness of its work. The report might also have been used to generate further momentum and enthusiasm amongst its members as the war was coming to an end in the Allies' favour and thereby the need for the Council did not seem as urgent as in previous years.

Whether or not the report was read by the other member of the Council is unclear, but it was clear that momentum and enthusiasm for the Council's activities waned in 1945 as only four meetings took place that year. Noteworthy was that Hehir was absent at both the March¹¹⁷ and April¹¹⁸ meetings of 1945 and no reason was given for this. These two meetings concentrated on preparations for Brotherhood Week which was to be held on 6-13 May 1945¹¹⁹ and to include sermons, addresses as well as references at May Day celebrations and a Town Hall meeting.¹²⁰ In April 1945, a letter from the British Council of Christians and Jews was also discussed, proposing a world conference of faiths in London.¹²¹ Thus, the major activity of the Council in 1945 was the holding of the first Brotherhood Week in New South Wales, following the American example.

¹¹⁵ 'Report on the Last Three Meetings of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' undated, probably late 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹⁶ 'Report on the Last Three Meetings of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' undated, probably late 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹⁷ CCJ Minutes, 5 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹⁸ CCJ Minutes, 16 April 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹¹⁹ CCJ Minutes, 16 April 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²⁰ CCJ Minutes, 16 April 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²¹ CCJ Minutes, 16 April 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

9.4 Brotherhood Week 1945

The minutes of December 1944 meeting made it clear that Rabbi Schenk's idea of initiating a Brotherhood Week in 1945 had gained momentum. It is noteworthy that Porush, an Orthodox rabbi, was apparently collaborating with his Reform counterpart because Porush explained the proposals for a Brotherhood Week to the Council executive.¹²² This is evidence of the recent article analysing Porush's philosophy, where Elton commented that while he was strongly opposed to Reform Judaism from a religious, ideological perspective, he was prepared to cooperate with Reform leaders in secular matters,¹²³ and he did enjoy a good relationship with Schenk. It was to be held in Sydney and similar to one held in Melbourne previously.¹²⁴ The Council decided to hold a conference to decide on a suitable week and to make preparations.¹²⁵ The idea of a Brotherhood Week was very much aligned to Porush's personal interests based on his sermons and much more in tune with the original objectives of the Council. The idea also seemed to have aroused much interest as it was decided initially to invite the Governor to convene the preparatory conference, but later the Council settled on the Lord Mayor of Sydney instead.¹²⁶ Letters were also sent to secretaries of various other community organisations inviting them to attend the conference¹²⁷ which further spread awareness of the Council and its activities among the wider community.

No time was lost in organising the preparatory conference, which took place less than a week later on 18 December 1944 and included representatives from the YWCA, YMCA, Rotary Club and Young Men's Hebrew Association.¹²⁸ Apologies were received from the Public School Teachers' Federation.¹²⁹ Given that only six days had elapsed since it was decided to hold the initial conference and given this was in the weeks preceding Christmas, this was a good turnout. The discussion centred on explaining the concept of Brotherhood Week and how

¹²² CCJ Minutes, 12 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²³ Benjamin Elton, 'Rabbi Dr Israel Porush: The Religious Thought of Australia's Uncrowned Chief Rabbi,' *AJHS Journal* Vol. 25, No. 2 (2021), 242.

¹²⁴ CCJ Minutes, 12 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²⁵ CCJ Minutes, 12 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²⁶ CCJ Minutes, 12 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²⁷ CCJ Minutes, 12 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²⁸ Brotherhood Week Preparatory Conference between CCJ and other Organisation Representatives, 18 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹²⁹ Brotherhood Week Preparatory Conference between CCJ and other Organisation Representatives, 18 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

it had worked in Melbourne.¹³⁰ An organising committee was formed consisting of members of several organisations and the meeting authorised the Archbishop to enter into negotiations with the Lord Mayor.¹³¹ It was also decided to widen the circle and invite the Retailers Club.¹³²

Brotherhood Week, despite having been interrupted by V-E Day on 8 May 1945 marking the end of World War Two, was a success and the ensuing report was discussed at length at the June meeting of the Council.¹³³ In fact, Brotherhood Week was such a success for the Council that a three-page expose of what occurred during Brotherhood Week in Sydney was commissioned.¹³⁴ This Honorary Organiser's Report stated that Brotherhood Week was launched on 6 March 1945 by the Lord Mayor and included on the executive committee representatives from all major denominations, including Jews, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Salvation Army, Church of Christ as well as the Young Men's Hebrew Association and several academics.¹³⁵ Brotherhood Week set out an ambitious agenda including the fact that sermons in all churches in the state on Sunday, 6 March, were to be on the theme of brotherhood.¹³⁶ The *Sydney Morning Herald* published a letter signed by the leaders of all major denominations 'requesting the citizens observe Brotherhood Week everywhere and inviting the clergy of all faiths to dedicate their sermons to this theme.'¹³⁷ The Department of Education assisted in circulating a letter by the executive to 330 schools and radio broadcasts for schools were made by members of the executive.¹³⁸ Five radio broadcasts were also made by members of different denominations¹³⁹ and a play was even commissioned and performed.¹⁴⁰ There were luncheon addresses at the Rotary Club, Legacy Club, United

¹³⁰ Brotherhood Week Preparatory Conference between CCJ and other Organisation Representatives, 18 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³¹ Brotherhood Week Preparatory Conference between CCJ and other Organisation Representatives, 18 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³² Brotherhood Week Preparatory Conference between CCJ and other Organisation Representatives, 18 December 1944. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³³ CCJ Minutes, 28 June 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³⁴ 'Honorary Organizer's Report on Brotherhood Week,' 6 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³⁵ 'Honorary Organizer's Report on Brotherhood Week,' 6 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³⁶ 'Honorary Organizer's Report on Brotherhood Week,' 6 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³⁷ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 51.

¹³⁸ 'Honorary Organizer's Report on Brotherhood Week,' 6 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹³⁹ 'Honorary Organizer's Report on Brotherhood Week,' 6 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴⁰ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 192.

Associations of Women, Feminist Club and Young Men's Hebrew Association¹⁴¹ and a rally was held, as well as a float organised for May Day processions. Literature on the topic was produced and circulated.¹⁴² These activities did not go unnoticed, and many messages of support were received from trade unions and politicians alike.¹⁴³ All in all, Brotherhood Week was a celebrated success engaging the Council's member denominations with a wide range of community groups. Its events gained significant media coverage and the whole activity marked pinnacle of the Council's existence.

Also on the agenda was the Bureau of Jewish Affairs' willingness to provide 500 free copies of a pamphlet entitled 'The Jews and the War', some of which were distributed to members¹⁴⁴ and it was subsequently decided to distribute some of 'The Jews and the War' pamphlets to members of the press in the name of the Council,¹⁴⁵ 'directing attention to the record of the contribution to the Allied cause made by the Jews in this war.'¹⁴⁶ This was an important pamphlet as one of the main criticisms of Jewish refugees was that they did not contribute to the war effort by avoiding military service. Porush commented that this 'was, of course, not their fault since they were not permitted to join the armed forces at that time, but when the restriction was lifted, the newcomers joined the Special Companies in disproportionately high numbers.'¹⁴⁷ This is one example of how the Council worked constructively together with other organisations to combat common antisemitic perceptions amongst the Australian population.

The Council then considered the declaration made by the San Francisco Conference,¹⁴⁸ which eventually resulted in the United Nations Charter. A memorandum was drafted by the Council and submitted on its behalf to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden.¹⁴⁹ The memorandum stated that 'The Council is deeply concerned that effective safeguards be instituted against policies of discrimination and acts of wholesale persecution against any community on grounds of religion, race, or nationality, such as the persecution of Jews and other minorities under the

¹⁴¹ 'Honorary Organizer's Report on Brotherhood Week,' 6 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴² 'Honorary Organizer's Report on Brotherhood Week,' 6 March 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴³ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 193.

¹⁴⁴ CCJ Minutes, 28 June 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴⁵ CCJ Minutes, 13 August 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴⁶ CCJ Minutes, 13 August 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴⁷ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

¹⁴⁸ CCJ Minutes, 13 August 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁴⁹ 'Council of Christians and Jews Consideration for San Francisco,' *AJC*, 20 April 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Nazi regime.’¹⁵⁰ At the June 1945 meeting of the Council the World Congress of Faiths was also discussed further.¹⁵¹ The next meeting was scheduled for October 1945 but no records exist as to whether it was convened and the next meeting seemed to have only taken place in March 1946,¹⁵² marking a break of seven months and indicating the effectual demise of the Council. It is unclear, whether the October 1945 meeting was cancelled or whether Porush was unable to attend and thereby did not receive the minutes of that meeting.

The tensions between the Catholic Church and the Council as a result of the discussions surrounding the issue of settlement of Jewish refugees in Palestine appeared to have continued as documented by an exchange of letters between Hehir and Gilroy in October 1945 and possibly contributed to the fact that the activities of the council appear to have almost ceased, despite the success of Brotherhood Week earlier in 1945. The first letter had no author but it was presumably Hehir writing to Gilroy who attached minutes of the Council’s last meeting and interestingly wrote about a recent event (undisclosed) that seems to have ‘cooled something of the enthusiasm even of Bp. Pilcher.’¹⁵³ Another letter was sent to Gilroy a few weeks later with attached amendments of objects of the Council for Gilroy to review.¹⁵⁴ The letter also attached a copy of pamphlets to be published by the Council ‘in an effort to stem anti-Semitic agitation’¹⁵⁵ referring to the pamphlet ‘The Jews and the War’ that was discussed at the meeting on 13 August 1945. This exchange occurred almost a year after Hehir had resigned his seat from the Council in protest over the Council’s stand on Jewish settlement in Palestine and demonstrates that he not only kept Gilroy informed about the Council’s activities, especially those of Pilcher, but that he was directly subordinate to Gilroy who ultimately controlled Hehir’s actions on the Council.

There was a similar exchange occurred regarding representation at the planned 1946 conference in London, which involved New South Wales representatives and seemed to mark the end of the Council’s activities. Gilroy had written to Hehir in October 1945 commenting

¹⁵⁰ ‘Council of Christians and Jews Consideration for San Francisco,’ *AJC*, 20 April 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁵¹ CCJ Minutes, 28 June 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁵² CCJ Minutes, 13 August 1945. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

¹⁵³ Letter to Norman Gilroy, 6 October 1945 (no author, presumably Noel Hehir). CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁵⁴ Letter to Norman Gilroy, 23 October 1945 (no author, presumably Noel Hehir). CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁵⁵ Letter to Norman Gilroy, 23 October 1945 (no author, presumably Noel Hehir). CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

that Catholic representation at the conference needed to be decided by Rome.¹⁵⁶ Gilroy also stated bluntly that ‘No anti-Semitic activity has come under my notice here but there is a great deal of anti-Catholic activity.’¹⁵⁷ This may well explain Hehir’s increasing absence at Council meetings as both Hehir and Gilroy perceived there to be anti-Catholic bias by the predominantly Protestant and Jewish membership of the Council. Clearly these tensions played an important role in the Council’s demise.

9.5 Complementary Jewish Community Organisations

The Bureau of Jewish Affairs and the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry were Jewish community organisations that complemented the work of the Council, especially as both these organisations were overtly more Zionist than the Council. The Bureau of Jewish Affairs was established in May 1942 under the leadership of Dr Maurice Laserson to assist in the efforts of the New South Wales Jewish Advisory Board’s Public Relations Committee in countering antisemitism.¹⁵⁸ Another branch in the Sydney Jewish community’s activities in countering antisemitism was the United Emergency Committee for European Jewry (UECEJ) which was established at the same time as the CCJ at the November 1942 Town Hall meeting organised by Laserson. Under the leadership of John Machover, UECEJ functioned actively in 1943 and 1944, even though it was not formally disbanded until 1946. The UECEJ complemented and overlapped to some extent with the aims of the Council as well as the work of the Bureau. In February 1943, shortly after the UECEJ was established, its committee asked the Council to prepare a joint statement of Australian clergy for which Archbishop Mowll’s collaboration was sought.¹⁵⁹ This is not surprising given that there was an overlap of the UECEJ’s members with the Council, including Pilcher who was a member of both, but also shows the members were aware that the Council had limitations in many of its activities due to divergences among the churches on the issue of Zionism and thus these members, such as Pilcher, used the UECEJ for additional leverage.

The UECEJ also functioned as an extension to the Council as many of the functions that should and could have been organised by the Council were instead managed by the UECEJ. One such

¹⁵⁶ Norman Gilroy, Letter to Noel Hehir, 1 October 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁵⁷ Norman Gilroy, Letter to Noel Hehir, 1 October 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 4, AAJ.

¹⁵⁸ Suzanne D Rutland and Sophie L Caplan, *With One Voice: A History of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies* (Sydney: AJHS, 1998), 20-22.

¹⁵⁹ UECEJ Minutes, 4 February 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

example was the organisation of a non-sectarian conference suggested in 1943, for which the help of Baptist minister, Rev Dr Harold Whitmore Dart, president of the Council of Churches, was sought.¹⁶⁰ He agreed to organise a special luncheon and intercession sermon in all churches in New South Wales on a certain date.¹⁶¹ There were further discussions to even have these special intercession sermons broadcast on national radio.¹⁶² It seems that friendly relations existed between the UECEJ and Rev Dart, who offered assistance in other matters such as distribution of pamphlets in churches¹⁶³ and who was an important religious figure at the time, but whose name was not found to be associated with the Council of Christians and Jews. The assistance provided by the churches did not go unnoticed. A letter from Australian Council of Churches was read aloud in 1944 in which the Chairman of the UECEJ reported that he had conveyed to the Council the UECEJ's appreciation 'for their ever so helpful attitude.'¹⁶⁴

These pamphlets were recorded as the Bermuda pamphlets in the minutes of the committee, but no copies of these pamphlets appear to exist. The content did seem to be useful to the purposes of the UECEJ as it was decided in July 1943 to address other organisations on the Bermuda Pamphlet, a proposal which was endorsed by the non-sectarian conference.¹⁶⁵ These other organisations included the League of Nations Union, Millions Club, Legacy Club, Royal Empire Society, Feminist Club, Australian-American Cooperation, Labor rallies and professional women.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, a resolution passed by the British Council of Christians and Jews was discussed and to be forwarded to the Prime Minister and that a similar action should be made by the NSW CCJ which Porush promised to attend to.¹⁶⁷

In contrast to the CCJ, the UECEJ acted swiftly in 1943 on a number of matters which paralleled the efforts of the Council, including writing letters to Curtin, distribution of pamphlets and establishing connections with church leaders and broadcasts. The UECEJ appointed Rev Edwin J Davidson, involved in the Anglican Church's Christian Social Order

¹⁶⁰ UECEJ Minutes, 12 February 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁶¹ UECEJ Minutes, 17 February 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁶² UECEJ Minutes, 25 March 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁶³ UECEJ Minutes, 23 June 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁶⁴ UECEJ Minutes, 22 February 1944. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁶⁵ UECEJ Minutes, 6 July 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁶⁶ UECEJ Minutes, 6 July 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁶⁷ UECEJ Minutes, 6 July 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

Movement (CSOM),¹⁶⁸ who supported Zionist endeavours after the war,¹⁶⁹ to receive necessary literature for broadcasts on behalf of European Jewry and a transcript of the broadcast was to be published by the UECEJ in the Jewish press.¹⁷⁰ The idea was to have one or two broadcasts and suggested speakers were Davidson and Anglican Bishop of Goulburn and social critic, Bishop Ernest Henry Burgmann,¹⁷¹ again suggesting the UECEJ engaged much more widely with Christians than the Council did.

In terms of engagement, the achievements of the committee were formidable, and their message seems to have attracted wide interest. Rabbi Porush travelled to Goulburn in September 1943 and addressed the local Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club, met with a local member of parliament and held several private interviews with the Anglican Bishop Burgmann, Rev Reynolds and other clergymen who indicated ‘great sympathy towards our cause and preparedness to help.’¹⁷² In October 1943, Porush was invited to address a meeting of the Concord Methodist Men’s Brotherhood which was held in December.¹⁷³

The UECEJ’s activities clearly became well known not just in the Christian community but also the community at large as evidenced by the correspondence that was considered at the committee meetings. For example, correspondence from Rev Morris of Lakemba was considered in October 1943¹⁷⁴ requesting for someone from the committee to address his congregation. It was decided that Rabbi Schenk would attend to this.¹⁷⁵ In February 1944, Harold Bloom, a Great Synagogue personality, reported that he had addressed the Methodist Ministers’ Association on behalf of the UECEJ and that his audience showed great interest in the plight of European Jewry.¹⁷⁶ This was twelve months after the committee had already published pamphlets in its name and shows that the Council was much slower to decide on matters let alone take action than the UECEJ.

¹⁶⁸ Samantha Frappell, ‘Building Jerusalem: Church and Society in New South Wales, 1940-1953,’ Unpublished PhD thesis (The University of Sydney, 1995), 66.

¹⁶⁹ Max Freilich, *Zion in Our Times: Memoirs of an Australian Zionist* (Sydney: Morgan Publications, 1967), 209.

¹⁷⁰ UECEJ Minutes, 28 June 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁷¹ UECEJ Minutes, 13 August 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA. See also Peter Hempenstall, ‘Burgmann, Ernest Henry (1885–1967),’ Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/burgmann-ernest-henry-9626/text16977>, published first in hardcopy 1993, accessed online 15 July 2021.

¹⁷² UECEJ Minutes, 16 September 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁷³ UECEJ Minutes, 12 October 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁷⁴ UECEJ Minutes, 12 October 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁷⁵ UECEJ Minutes, 8 December 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁷⁶ UECEJ Minutes, 4 February 1944. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

Bloom also visited the Campsie Ministers' Fraternal as Rabbi Schenk was not available. He met with several ministers who 'showed a keen interest in the problem and expressed their desire to help in every possible way and asked for literature.'¹⁷⁷ The same committee meeting also discussed correspondence from the Adelaide Christadelphian Ecclesia in which the Ecclesia suggested publishing a special pamphlet on the situation in Europe in its name.¹⁷⁸ It was resolved to contribute the Jewish part for the pamphlet and that the matter should be handled by Rabbi Fabian of Adelaide.¹⁷⁹ As discussed in Chapter 6, despite the Christadelphian support of Jewish causes, they were not members of the CCJ so that the UECEJ worked as an extension of the Council to liaise with communities that were not represented on the Council. It also provided support for the idea that the Council was only established to liaise between the main Christian denominations, these being Jews, Anglicans and Catholics, with a lesser role played by the Methodists and Presbyterians.

The UECEJ seemed to be significantly less active during 1944 as evidenced by their meetings becoming more sporadic. Nevertheless, momentum was somewhat sustained as Porush had convinced the CCJ to publish 10,000 copies of the pamphlet on 'Jews in Europe' in their name.¹⁸⁰ The UECEJ was also more successful in establishing connections to federal politicians as a letter from Rev Doyle of Barraba in July 1944 exclaimed.¹⁸¹ The committee swiftly decided that clergymen and other public men were to be asked to write to their federal members and to ministers in support of the UECEJ's activities.¹⁸² By this time, the war in Europe was entering its final stages and the activities of the committee seemed to have waned as well. The last entry in the minutes were from October 1946, where it was decided to send a letter of thanks to Bishop Pilcher for publishing an article in *Sydney Morning Herald* on 6 December 1946 regarding the admission of small parties of Jews to Australia.¹⁸³

The activities of the UECEJ seem to have been much more effective in disseminating information among the public and fostering harmonious interfaith relations between Christians and Jews than those of the CCJ. The swift action taken by the UECEJ can be contrasted to the

¹⁷⁷ UECEJ Minutes, 29 September 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁷⁸ UECEJ Minutes, 29 September 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁷⁹ UECEJ Minutes, 29 September 1943. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁸⁰ UECEJ Minutes, 11 April 1944. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁸¹ UECEJ Minutes, 3 August 1944. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁸² UECEJ Minutes, 3 August 1944. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

¹⁸³ UECEJ Minutes, 10 October 1946. JBoD/UECEJ Collection, B1/10/1/12/015/015.1, AJHSA.

slow and prolonged deliberations of the Council. The UECEJ clearly enjoyed harmonious relations with other Protestant denominations and attracted a keen interest by a variety of religious groups and non-religious organisations, all of whom reported good interfaith relations and indeed an interest in such relations. This contrasted with the attitude of the Catholic church as judged by its activities in the Council.

The Bureau of Jewish Affairs ('the Bureau') also assisted the efforts of the Jewish community to disseminate information amongst the wider public and thereby inadvertently assisted in maintaining harmonious relations between Christians and Jews. The main purpose of the Bureau was to assist in the distribution of information about items of Jewish interest to Jews and non-Jews alike. It advised far-flung Australian Jewish communities of current activities, such as writing to the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation about upcoming radio broadcasts on behalf of the CCJ¹⁸⁴ as well as congregations in Brisbane, Hobart, Western Australia and elsewhere.¹⁸⁵ This coordination amongst Jewish communities was appreciated, as the Hobart Hebrew Congregation thanked the Board for its efforts and noted that their community was following the broadcasts with great interest.¹⁸⁶ The Board also ensured that the local Jewish press was informed of the broadcasts through advertisements.¹⁸⁷

The Bureau was heavily involved in promoting the broadcasts of the CCJ not just within the Jewish community. This may have been because the Bureau paid for many if not all of these broadcasts,¹⁸⁸ providing further evidence of the link between the Bureau and the CCJ. In his capacity as the secretary of the CCJ, Canon Thomas Chatterton Hammond of Moore Theological College in Sydney gave permission to the Bureau to re-broadcast these in Western Australia¹⁸⁹ and in turn the Bureau provided various printed transcripts to Hammond for distribution.¹⁹⁰ The Board also assisted in providing harmonious relations between Christians

¹⁸⁴ BJA, Letter to Hon Secretary of Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, 8 October 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁸⁵ BJA, Letter to Hon Secretary of Adelaide Hebrew Congregation, 2 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁸⁶ Rev J Ansbacher of the Hobart Hebrew Congregation, Letter to BJA, 14 December 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁸⁷ BJA, Letter to Editor of *Sydney Jewish News*, 5 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁸⁸ BJA, Letter to Accountant of Hansen-Rubensohn Company, 18 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Hammond, secretary of NSW CCJ, Letter to BJA, 17 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹⁰ BJA, Letter to Thomas Hammond, 17 November 1943 and 9 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

and Jews by sending letters of thanks to presenters of these broadcast on behalf of the Jewish community, such as to Archbishop Mowll¹⁹¹ and Bishop Pilcher,¹⁹² who responded that he did so 'with right goodwill',¹⁹³ and hoped 'it will achieve something in these dark days.'¹⁹⁴ Other presenters also received such letters of gratitude on behalf of the Jewish community. These included Reverend Rumble¹⁹⁵ and Reverend Williams, who was the president of the Methodist Conference.¹⁹⁶

In addition to the above, the Bureau also assisted by liaising with other community organisations. The Young Men's Christian Association thanked the Board for providing copies of the pamphlet 'One Million Jews in the Services' and said that they made good use of these,¹⁹⁷ which was gratefully acknowledged by the Bureau.¹⁹⁸ These exchanges of courtesies showed that the Bureau were keenly aware of its role in fostering relations between the Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

On another occasion, the Australian Communist Party, a deeply non-religious organisation, requested more copies of a popular pamphlet entitled 'One Million Jews in the Armies of Freedom' with which Bishop Burgmann had an association, as apparently it was very popular with members and informative in combating antisemitism.¹⁹⁹ The party stated that it was unable to secure more from Melbourne,²⁰⁰ which suggests that the Bureau had previously engaged with the party and potentially also with other political organisations.

These initiatives are evidence of the importance of the CCJ, the UECEJ and the Bureau of Jewish Affairs in efforts to combat antisemitism in Australia and raise awareness of the plight of European Jewry. They worked together because of their similar aims, combined with the fact that there was an overlap of personnel on their committees with some of the same personalities, particularly Porush and Pilcher, being particularly active and influential. While

¹⁹¹ BJA, Letter to Howard Mowll, 15 November 1943. BJA Collection File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹² Saul Symonds, Chairman of the BJA, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 30 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹³ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to BJA, 3 December 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹⁴ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to BJA, 3 December 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹⁵ BJA, Letter to Rev Rumble, 30 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹⁶ BJA, Letter to Rev Williams, President of Methodist Conference, 30 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹⁷ YMCA, Letter to BJA, 29 October 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹⁸ BJA, Letter to YMCA, 12 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

¹⁹⁹ Australian Communist Party, Letter to BJA, 29 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

²⁰⁰ Australian Communist Party, Letter to BJA, 29 November 1943. BJA Collection, File 1/AB7/1.31, AJHSA.

the CCJ represented a broader spectrum of Australian society through its Protestant and Catholic representatives, it was sometimes hindered by different perspectives from these denominations. In contrast, the Jewish organisations were more united, and so were able to act more quickly, while also coordinating with and supporting the activities of the CCJ.

9.6 The 1946 International Conference of Christians and Jews in Oxford

Despite the Council officially ceasing to hold official meetings in March 1946, its delegates still went ahead and participated in the London conference, which was actually held at Lady Margaret Hall²⁰¹ at Oxford University but referred to as the London conference in the minutes of the CCJ. All in all, some 150 Christians and Jews attended this conference²⁰² and the fact that representatives from the New South Wales Council were invited to participate put the Council on the international map, demonstrating that its activities had international significance. Porush and Mowll liaised with Reverend William Simpson, the organiser and secretary of the British Council of Christians and Jews. This conference was a joint initiative between the British Council and its American counterpart, the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Simpson mentioned that ‘It was, I believe, the first international conference of Christians and Jews ever to take place.’²⁰³ The theme of the conference was not antisemitism, but rather ‘Freedom, Justice and Responsibility’²⁰⁴ because the organisers thought these ideals needed more safeguarding. Two major achievements of the conference were the recommendation to organise a separate conference on antisemitism in Switzerland in 1947 and the establishment of the International Council of Christians and Jews.²⁰⁵

The idea of Australians joining a conference was first floated by Simpson in July 1945 in a letter to Mowll.²⁰⁶ This letter stated that the National Conference of Christians and Jews in the United States initially suggested the idea and attached a detailed proposed outline of this

²⁰¹ ‘Freedom, Justice and Responsibility: Program of the International Conference of Christians and Jews in Oxford, 30 July to 6 August 1946.’ CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²⁰² Annette Achilles, ‘Jewish-Christian Relations in Melbourne,’ Unpublished BA(Hons) thesis (La Trobe University, 1989), 18.

²⁰³ William W Simpson, ‘Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,’ *Transactions & Miscellanies (Jewish Historical Society of England)* Vol. 28 (1981-1982), 97.

²⁰⁴ Simpson, ‘Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,’ 97.

²⁰⁵ Simpson, ‘Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,’ 97

²⁰⁶ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 18 July 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ

‘Christians and Jews World Conference’²⁰⁷ with August 1946 as a possible date.²⁰⁸ It further suggested that 60 representatives from each the United States and Britain attend, as well as 45 from the European continent, 10 from South Africa, 10 from Canada and 5 from New South Wales.²⁰⁹ This letter was in effect the invitation to attend and Simpson also proposed commissions and discussion topics.²¹⁰ It showed that the Sydney Council was just one branch of a wider, interconnected, global network. Mowll responded that he would need to discuss the matter with the Council’s executive.²¹¹

The last minutes for the Council from March 1946 show that there was discussion surrounding the upcoming London conference as well as who the New South Wales representatives should be.²¹² It was decided to send Rabbi Porush, Rev George A Wheen (most likely Methodist) and possibly Rev RJ McGowan of the Presbyterian church²¹³ but only Porush and Wheen actually attended the conference in the end.²¹⁴ As might be expected given the Protestant/Catholic tensions that had manifested themselves in the CCJ, no Catholic member was selected. The London conference organisers had established six commissions in preparation for the conference. Pilcher was in charge of formulating the Council’s responses for each, which were also discussed.²¹⁵ This was the last full committee meeting to be recorded in the files for the Council of Christians and Jews in New South Wales.

The preparation for the conference was conducted collaboratively between the New South Wales delegates and discussed at the final meeting of the Council’s executive,²¹⁶ presumably to ensure that the delegates did indeed speak on behalf of all the members of the Council. It serves as a sign of the collegiality and respect that existed between the members as well as the knowledge that they needed to tread carefully when speaking on behalf of the Council so as not to offend any member denomination.

²⁰⁷ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 18 July 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ

²⁰⁸ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 18 July 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ

²⁰⁹ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 18 July 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ

²¹⁰ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 18 July 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ

²¹¹ Howard Mowll, Letter to William Simpson, 24 September 1945. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ

²¹² CCJ Minutes, 11 March 1946. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²¹³ CCJ Minutes, 11 March 1946. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²¹⁴ William Simpson, ‘Note on History of Relations between the British Council of Christians and Jews and between Groups and Individuals in Australia, and on the Relations between the Society of Jews and Christians and the Council of Christians and Jews in England,’ undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²¹⁵ CCJ Minutes, 11 March 1946. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²¹⁶ CCJ Minutes, 11 March 1946. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Notes were prepared by Wheen and Porush on the Memorandum received by the Council from its sister organisation in London concerning the impending conference.²¹⁷ These two pages of notes were clearly designed to outline the New South Wales Council's position and how their small numbers could make the biggest difference at the conference. The conference had proposed several commissions and it was decided that commissions Two and Three would not be joined as these were to deal with philosophical questions.²¹⁸ Instead the Australian delegates should join Commissions One and Six where they 'could make their greatest contributions.'²¹⁹ Commission One dealt with tasks confronting the conference such as ideas and attitudes antagonistic to responsible citizenship and how these have affected the British public and Commission Six dealt with responsible citizenship.²²⁰ Participation in these two commissions were clearly based on the Council's expertise in these areas and evidently the small Australian delegation anticipated contributing constructively since Rev Wheen was chosen by the conference as one of the secretaries for Commission Two.²²¹

Further notes confirm this as a handwritten note on a document summarising the various commissions stated: 'Prepare a Statement with Rev GA Wheen on this memo to submit it to Bishop P'²²² indicating that Wheen and Porush were working together with Pilcher to prepare their positions for the conference. It is unclear how much if any financial contribution was made to the organisation of the London conference but there is indication that it was hoped that the organisers would fund the trip for the Australian representatives. In a letter from Simpson to Porush in April 1946 he mentioned that the funds raised were less than anticipated and that if the expenses of the Australian delegation can at all be met in part, then this should be for a

²¹⁷ 'Notes prepared by Rev GA Wheen and Rabbi Dr I Porush on the Memorandum received by the NSW Council of Christians and Jews from its sister Organisation in London concerning the impending conference,' undated. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²¹⁸ 'Notes prepared by Rev GA Wheen and Rabbi Dr I Porush on the Memorandum received by the NSW Council of Christians and Jews from its sister Organisation in London concerning the impending conference,' undated. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²¹⁹ 'Notes prepared by Rev GA Wheen and Rabbi Dr I Porush on the Memorandum received by the NSW Council of Christians and Jews from its sister Organisation in London concerning the impending conference,' undated. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²²⁰ 'Notes prepared by Rev GA Wheen and Rabbi Dr I Porush on the Memorandum received by the NSW Council of Christians and Jews from its sister Organisation in London concerning the impending conference,' undated. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²²¹ 'International Conference of Christians and Jews: Commissions and Officers,' August 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²²² 'Freedom, Justice and Responsibility: International Conference of Christians and Jews. Reaffirming the Essential Rights and Obligations of Man,' undated. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Christian delegate as ‘there is so much work to be done on matters likely to rise out of the Conference discussions in Christian circles.’²²³

Much work was done in preparation for the conference as evidenced by the minutes of the completion committee.²²⁴ Marked private and confidential and completed a week prior to the conference it lists the speakers for the first evening, the most important to welcome everyone.²²⁵ Noteworthy is that America, Britain, Europe and South Africa made submissions but speakers on that first evening only officially came from the bigger centres of America, Europe and Great Britain.²²⁶ However, the British speakers were divided into three, Britain, Australia and South Africa²²⁷ reflecting the colonial mentality of the time. The British speakers had been decided on in principle, except for the Australian one, as it merely mentioned ‘one speaker from Australia’²²⁸, indicating that the Australians had either not been approached yet or they had not responded as to who would make the inaugural Australian contribution.

The international conference of Christians and Jews eventually took place in Oxford from 29 July to 6 August 1946.²²⁹ The official program noted the submissions made by the various councils in America, Britain, South Africa and Europe but neglected to mention any Australian ones.²³⁰ It is unclear whether this was an oversight or whether the Australian delegation simply neglected to make official submissions or was unable to do so due to the cessation of full committee meetings so that an official submission could not be endorsed. This is unfortunate as the Australian delegates had much to contribute. An example of some of the contributions of the other delegations can be found in the South African delegation’s submission which

²²³ William Simpson, Letter to Israel Porush, 16 April 1946. RIP Collection, Box 1 IP 1 Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²²⁴ Minutes: International Conference Programme Completion Committee, 23 July 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²²⁵ Minutes: International Conference Programme Completion Committee, 23 July 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²²⁶ Minutes: International Conference Programme Completion Committee, 23 July 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²²⁷ Minutes: International Conference Programme Completion Committee, 23 July 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²²⁸ Minutes: International Conference Programme Completion Committee, 23 July 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²²⁹ ‘Freedom, Justice and Responsibility: Program of the International Conference of Christians and Jews in Oxford, 30 July to 6 August 1946.’ CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³⁰ ‘Freedom, Justice and Responsibility: Program of the International Conference of Christians and Jews in Oxford, 30 July to 6 August 1946.’ CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

focused on the inroads of Nazism in South Africa and shows the deep concerns of the South African delegation.²³¹

The conference seemed to have been successful overall, and some of the meetings seemed to even have stirred some emotions in Porush, as evidenced by his drawings and scribbles on the back of one of the conference's supplementary resolutions, which has survived. Here, he drew faces, lines, names in calligraphy as well as writing words such as 'Israel',²³² 'Vengeance',²³³ and 'Peace',²³⁴ on the back of the paper. It seems that he also noted on the same paper some ideas for a speech as he wrote 'longest journey "down under," so many contacts which as you may imagine mean so much to us – fine spirit of tolerance, forbearance.'²³⁵ The conference was endorsed by prominent leaders in Israel and included a letter of greeting from Jerusalem co-signed by the Rabbi of the Emet v'Emunah Congregation, the Anglican Bishop, the principal of the Swedish School and Martin Buber, then a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.²³⁶

Some of the additional discussions from community groups included topics on prejudice in the army submitted by the youth delegation,²³⁷ notes on anti-Jewish economic discrimination in Great Britain submitted by the Trades Advisory Council,²³⁸ and discussion of Jewish life at American universities as submitted by (presumably) the American youth delegation.²³⁹ Evidently, the conference organisers were keen to portray a united image that shows the movement was accepted by leaders worldwide and included the youth. Other high-profile speakers at the conference included Leo Baeck, Lord Reading and Pastor Niemöller.²⁴⁰ The conference was also attended by a variety of German Christian ministers, who were

²³¹ 'South African Contribution: Synopsis of Memorandum on the Inroads of Nazism,' July 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³² 'International Conference of Christians and Jews Steering Committee Supplementary Resolution, 1946.' CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³³ 'International Conference of Christians and Jews Steering Committee Supplementary Resolution, 1946.' CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³⁴ 'International Conference of Christians and Jews Steering Committee Supplementary Resolution, 1946.' CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³⁵ 'International Conference of Christians and Jews Steering Committee Supplementary Resolution, 1946.' CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³⁶ Letter of Greeting from Palestine, 22 July 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³⁷ Ross Clinchy, Youth Delegation, 'International Conference of Christians and Jews: "Prejudice in Army Life",' 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³⁸ N Baru and Maurice Orbach, 'Trades Advisory Council, London, England, Notes on Anti-Jewish Economic Discrimination in Great Britain,' 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²³⁹ Eva Schiff, Youth Delegation, 'International Conference of Christians and Jews: "Some Aspects of University Life in the USA",' 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 7, AAJ.

²⁴⁰ Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press: 1977), 162.

disenchanted by Nazism. One such was Adolf Freudenberg, who had quit his career in the German Foreign Office in 1935 since he did not wish to divorce his non-Aryan wife.²⁴¹ Instead, he went on to study theology and, after having been ordained as a minister, became the head of the ecumenical refugee agency in Switzerland.²⁴²

Sadly, by the time the Australian delegates had returned to Sydney, the New South Wales Council was effectively defunct, and Rabbi Porush was presumably unable to provide a report to the members of the Council's executive. Instead, he opted to report in full to the Jewish Board of Deputies at a special meeting on his experience and the contacts that he had made²⁴³ as well as to other gatherings he had attended, such as the Young Men's Hebrew Association. His report was reposted in the media.²⁴⁴ Overall, it did not seem as though the conference had made an important impression upon him.

The international conference of Councils of Christians and Jews seemed to have spurred a flurry of interest around the world on a number of points, potentially due to the media attention it achieved. The conference was exceptional in that for the first time in a very long time Jews and Christians of different denominations united to create a new Christian teaching and proclamation for cooperation.²⁴⁵ The result was the establishment of various associations of Christian-Jewish cooperation in Europe after war, especially in Germany,²⁴⁶ which were for the most part organised by Christians since few Jews survived the war to cooperate in these.

The media attention was also due to Simpson's efforts to disseminate literature to anyone deemed of interest. An example of this is the correspondence received by Simpson in November 1946 from the Wellington Council of Jewry in New Zealand which informed him of talks that existed between the local Jewish community and churches and a desire to receive more information about the purpose of the British Council.²⁴⁷ The letter highlighted that the only successful cure to antisemitism is to improve Jewish-Christian relations. Simpson's

²⁴¹ Martin Stöhr, 'Ökumene, Christlich-Jüdische Gesellschaften, Akademien und Kirchentag,' *Evangelische Theologie* Vol. 61 (4) (2001), 290.

²⁴² Stöhr, 'Ökumene, Christlich-Jüdische Gesellschaften, Akademien und Kirchentag,' 290.

²⁴³ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 194.

²⁴⁴ Israel Porush, Letter to William Simpson, 30 December 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁴⁵ Stöhr, 'Ökumene, Christlich-Jüdische Gesellschaften, Akademien und Kirchentag,' 292.

²⁴⁶ Stöhr, 'Ökumene, Christlich-Jüdische Gesellschaften, Akademien und Kirchentag,' 292.

²⁴⁷ B Heyman, Letter to William Simpson, 16 November 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

response enclosed not just the desired literature but also information about the attendance of the New South Wales delegation at their recent conference.²⁴⁸

The matter seemed to gain momentum when Campbell West-Watson, New Zealand's Anglican Archbishop, wrote to Simpson that he had been approached about establishing a Council for Christians and Jews in New Zealand. He asked whether the Council had achieved anything useful in England and whether these councils have been widely established elsewhere in the dominions.²⁴⁹ Given that Simpson now had two inquiries from New Zealand, from both the Anglican and Jewish denominations, he deemed the matter important enough to forward the letters to Sir Robert Wiley-Cohen,²⁵⁰ who was one of the founders and executives in the British Council.²⁵¹ Sir Robert confirmed that he wished to respond personally with a cover letter, as he was close with West-Watson because they had studied together at Cambridge University but that ultimately a response should be prepared by Simpson on behalf of the Council.²⁵²

The detailed response to West-Watson that followed described the history of the Council in England and other councils established in Canada, the United States as well as the South African Conference that has been successfully running for 15 or 16 years.²⁵³ In fact, the American Council had been operating since 1930 and the British Council was established in 1942.²⁵⁴ He detailed the success of the British Council and the successful conference that was conducted in 1946 but also highlighted the continued struggle to raise funding.²⁵⁵ Simpson mentioned the New South Wales Council and that Sydney's Anglican Archbishop served as its chairman,²⁵⁶ possibly in an attempt to persuade West-Watson to show the same kind of leadership in New Zealand. He then informed West-Watson of the letter he had received from the Jewish community in Wellington and that he had met with one of its members who was visiting London and that he was assured of the community's willingness to consider such a proposal.²⁵⁷

²⁴⁸ William Simpson, Letter to B Heyman, 27 November 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁴⁹ Campbell West-Watson, Letter to William Simpson, 11 April 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵⁰ William Simpson, Letter to Sir Robert Wiley-Cohen, 22 April 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵¹ Simpson, 'Jewish-Christian Relations since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' 95.

²⁵² Sir Robert Wiley-Cohen, Letter to William Simpson, 24 April 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵³ William Simpson, Letter to Campbell West-Watson, 5 May 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵⁴ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 160.

²⁵⁵ William Simpson, Letter to Campbell West-Watson, 5 May 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵⁶ William Simpson, Letter to Campbell West-Watson, 5 May 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵⁷ William Simpson, Letter to Campbell West-Watson, 5 May 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Sir Robert attached a personal note to Simpson's letter to West-Watson recommending the establishment of a Council of Christians and Jews in New Zealand on the basis of the good work that had been achieved by the British Council, such as the recent conference which was opened by the Archbishop of Canterbury.²⁵⁸ All in all, both Simpson and Sir Robert tried their best to persuade him to consider favourably the establishment of a Council in New Zealand but it is unclear as to whether their efforts yielded any success.

The Council Minutes, especially during the war years, provide clear evidence that the sole purpose of the Council of Christians and Jews was to advocate on behalf of the Jewish community's concerns, most notably Jewish refugees trying to escape to Palestine, intake of Jewish refugees in Australia after the war, and combating antisemitism in Australia. Virtually no other work was conducted by the Council and their meetings served no other purpose. Towards the end of the year tensions arose over the question of Palestine and Zionist endeavours. After the end of the war, and the liberation of surviving Jews from Nazi domination, the Council seems to have lost its purpose and after 1946 faded away, apparently officially ending in 1948.

9.7 Aftermath of the Council

After London conference of the Councils of Christians and Jews, the activities of the New South Wales Council seem to have gone into abeyance, although Simpson tried to keep the communications channels open until the early 1950s. The last meeting of the executive of the Council was held in March 1946 before its delegates attended the London conference in August 1946. Whilst Porush later claimed that 'two or three meetings occurred after the return'²⁵⁹ from Europe it is unclear whether these took place since no written records of these meetings have survived. He later stated that the 'Council continued in active existence until 1948, but with time its current aims became happily less and less urgent in the developing tolerant attitude towards newcomers.'²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Sir Robert Wiley-Cohen, Letter to Campbell West-Watson, 7 May 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁵⁹ William Simpson, 'Note of conversation with Rabbi Dr Israel Porush (Chief Rabbi of Sydney, Australia),' 28 June 1955. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶⁰ Porush, *The House of Israel*, 163.

Despite the Council being defunct as of March 1946, the legacy of the Council continued until the late 1940s and it was even mentioned in correspondence decades later. It seems evident that no one had informed the secretary of the British Council of Christians and Jews of its demise as he continued to correspond with various members, notably Porush and Pilcher. Evidence of this is the fact that Simpson sent the Archbishop of Canterbury's official resolutions of the international conference of Christians and Jews to Mowll in December 1946 in his capacity as chairman of the Council in Sydney.²⁶¹ A similar letter was sent to Porush who responded in December 1946 that 'There has been no startling development with our Council in recent weeks owing to the pressure of work.'²⁶² He also wrote in the same letter that 'During January and February [...] our Council will hold no meetings, so that the next opportunity to discuss further the outcome of the Conference will be in early March [1947].'²⁶³ This not only confirms that the March 1946 meeting was likely the last meeting of the Council's executive but also that the Council was technically in existence and that hopes or plans for future meetings were still entertained at this time.

Simpson continued his efforts to maintain connections with Australian counterparts, despite Jewish-Christian relations in Australia again reverting to the actions of individual clergymen, rather than the work of a coordinated body. Initially, Pilcher responded to Simpson after the Council became defunct indicating his continued interest on the subject matter and the work of the British Council. True to form, Pilcher wrote a strongly worded letter 'on my own behalf'²⁶⁴ acknowledging that his opinions were not representative of the Council or of the Church. He lamented the wording of resolutions at the British Council at their most recent Annual General Meeting, a copy of which must have been sent to him. In particular, he said: 'To condemn the [Jewish] terrorists and to say nothing about the British government's breach of pledge after pledge, seems to me, as I have said before, very one sided.'²⁶⁵ He asked Simpson 'Why is Jewish terrorism worse than Irish or Arab terrorism? I write this in a way because it seems to me that the Press has confused us all.'²⁶⁶ He also mentioned the problem of refugees and the British refusal to admit them into Palestine and that absorbing these refugees in the United States and Britain instead, would only cause additional antisemitism, which had been his

²⁶¹ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 18 December 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶² Israel Porush, Letter to William Simpson, 30 December 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶³ Israel Porush, Letter to William Simpson, 30 December 1946. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶⁴ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to William Simpson, 8 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶⁵ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to William Simpson, 8 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶⁶ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to William Simpson, 8 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

experience in Australia.²⁶⁷ He argued that despite this, the refugees actually want to go to Palestine rather than Britain or the United States.²⁶⁸ The issue of Jewish settlement in Palestine had occupied Pilcher for years and was the key sticking point within the Council between him and Hehir, the Catholic representative.

In response, Simpson defended the wording of the resolution and the actions of the British government. Simpson lamented Pilcher's position as 'It may be that this is partly due to the distance from which you view the situation, both in Palestine and here in this country, where the feelings have grown very tense in recent months.'²⁶⁹ He went on to say that blaming the British government was an 'over-simplification'²⁷⁰ and said that admitting the remaining refugees to Palestine would achieve nothing. Instead, he blamed the 'Zionist extremists'²⁷¹ for the terrorism. Simpson also stated that the refugee problem was fuelled by the Soviets who push people towards Palestine in 'a form of embarrassment to the British government in the carrying out of its responsibilities in the Middle East.'²⁷² He mentioned that he had spoken with Rabbi Leo Baeck who told him that had the doors to America been open, the refugees would gladly have taken this option,²⁷³ refuting Pilcher's claim that they all want to go to Palestine and instead blaming the Americans. Simpson also stated that Australia and Canada could be doing more to alleviate the refugee problem. He stressed that 'the truth is that the other nations of the world have not really faced up to the challenge of anti-Semitism, and their relations with the Jewish community.'²⁷⁴ Pilcher did not respond to Simpson's staunch defence of British government policy, at least there is no response in the archives, and it seems as though Pilcher had lost interest in the Council or corresponding with Simpson by this stage.

Further evidence for this was found when examining subsequent correspondence between Simpson and other organisations that mentioned the New South Wales Council, but no further correspondence with Pilcher was uncovered in the archives. Subsequently, Simpson seemed to have acted almost as the ex-officio secretary of the New South Wales Council as he sought to

²⁶⁷ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to William Simpson, 8 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶⁸ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to William Simpson, 8 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁶⁹ William Simpson, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷⁰ William Simpson, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷¹ William Simpson, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷² William Simpson, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷³ William Simpson, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷⁴ William Simpson, Letter to Charles Venn Pilcher, 17 January 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

revive its activities and continued to answer questions and direct correspondence addressed to it through its British sister organisation.

An example of this is Simpson's correspondence with Evelyn Rothfield of Melbourne in 1947. Evelyn, with her husband Norman, were key players in the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism. She was also involved in combating antisemitism and attended a further conference on the topic held in Seelisberg, Switzerland in mid-1947.²⁷⁵ This was the second conference organised by the British Council and unlike the first conference, concentrated on antisemitism.²⁷⁶ She seemed eager to learn more about the issue because she wrote to Simpson requesting more information, especially regarding the situation in Poland and Bulgaria.²⁷⁷ In responding to her request in November 1947, Simpson asked her if 'the Council of Christians and Jews in Sydney [is] still in existence, and do you ever hear anything of its activities?'²⁷⁸ Obviously the lack of action in Sydney was concerning London.

Rothfield's response confirmed that Melbourne was at that time also trying to establish a Council of Christians and Jews,²⁷⁹ perhaps because of the momentum she had gained from attending the conference in Seelisberg. She confirmed that the intention was for the Melbourne Council to eventually merge with the one in Sydney²⁸⁰ but that Sydney has been 'extremely inactive lately.'²⁸¹ She mentioned that Bishop Pilcher was the 'moving spirit'²⁸² in Sydney and expressed hope that a council in Melbourne would 'galvanise it into action once more.'²⁸³ Rothfield thereby confirmed to Simpson that the Sydney Council of Christians and Jews was defunct by December 1947, that Pilcher had lost interest and that the Council was unlikely to be revived without him, given that his enthusiasm was one of its driving factors. This exchange gives further credence to the notion that Simpson's defence of the British Council's position on Palestine caused Pilcher to lose interest in the activities of the Council thereby causing it to cease functioning.

²⁷⁵ William Simpson, Letter to Evelyn Rothfield, 5 July 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷⁶ Simpson, 'Jewish Christian Relations Since the Inception of the Council of Christians and Jews,' 97.

²⁷⁷ Evelyn Rothfield, Letter to William Simpson, 3 November 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷⁸ William Simpson, Letter to Evelyn Rothfield, 18 November 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁷⁹ Evelyn Rothfield, Letter to William Simpson, 1 December 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸⁰ William Simpson, 'Note on History of Relations between the British Council of Christians and Jews and between Groups and Individuals in Australia, and on the Relations between the Society of Jews and Christians and the Council of Christians and Jews in England,' undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸¹ Evelyn Rothfield, Letter to William Simpson, 1 December 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸² Evelyn Rothfield, Letter to William Simpson, 1 December 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸³ Evelyn Rothfield, Letter to William Simpson, 1 December 1947. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Simpson nevertheless persisted in communicating with various members of the New South Wales Council, sending them literature and information of events associated with the British Council, ostensibly in the hope that it could be revived in Sydney. One such exchange occurred in August 1948, when Simpson wrote to Mowll as ‘Chairman, New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews’²⁸⁴ to inform him that the International Council of Christians and Jews was created at a conference in Fribourg, Switzerland.²⁸⁵ He enclosed information, reports and the constitution, which was ratified by the various constituent American, British and Swiss councils.²⁸⁶ He offered auxiliary membership to the New South Wales Council and noted that ‘It is a long time since we corresponded with each other about the development of your work, and I look forward very much to hearing from you.’²⁸⁷ Clearly by writing to Mowll in his capacity as chairman of the New South Wales Council, Simpson had hoped to stir it back into action.

However, writing to Mowll clearly did not produce the intended result. In late 1949, Simpson was presented with another opportunity to re-energise the New South Wales Council when Max Corne from Cardiff in Wales visited Australia on business. Corne was a member of the finance committee of the British Council and was interested in meeting people associated with the Council in New South Wales.²⁸⁸ Simpson provided him with a letter of introduction as well as a list of contacts in Australia, which included Evelyn Rothfield in Melbourne and Rabbis Porush and Brasch in Sydney as well as Bishop Pilcher and Rev Wheen.²⁸⁹ He had met Wheen at the 1946 conference at the ‘London Conference’ held at the University of Oxford.

During his Australian visit, Corne succeeded in meeting with many of the people suggested by Simpson and reported that he ‘was successful in setting up a Council and with a bit of luck I think they should make a very good job of it’²⁹⁰ further suggesting that high profile speakers be sent to Australia to ensure the momentum carries forward.²⁹¹ It is unclear which Council

²⁸⁴ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 5 August 1948. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸⁵ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 5 August 1948. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸⁶ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 5 August 1948. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸⁷ William Simpson, Letter to Howard Mowll, 5 August 1948. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸⁸ William Simpson, Letter of Introduction for Max Corne, 8 December 1949. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁸⁹ William Simpson, Letter of Introduction for Max Corne, 8 December 1949. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹⁰ Max Corne, Letter to William Simpson, 20 February 1950. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹¹ Max Corne, Letter to William Simpson, 20 February 1950. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Corne was referring to as the New South Wales Council was certainly not revived and Hilary Rubinstein writes that the formation of a Victorian Council of Christians and Jews was not attempted until 1958.²⁹² Simpson in response hesitated in approaching any speakers due to the costs involved of sending them to Australia and that the meetings at which they would present needed to be sufficiently important to warrant the journey.²⁹³ The hesitation may have been caused by a worry that the new Councils that Corne wrote about may not survive.

Concurrent with Corne's visit, Simpson also communicated with Rabbi Rudolph Brasch who had replaced Rabbi Max Schenck as leader of Sydney's Reform Jewish community. He informed Brasch of Corne's visit, urging them to be in contact with one another.²⁹⁴ Brasch indicated a keen interest in Christian-Jewish relations. He had initiated contact with Simpson in September 1949, when he wrote about his interfaith activities in Sydney. These included luncheon meetings which he said were similar to those of the Jewish-Christian Youth Council in Britain.²⁹⁵ He also informed Simpson that he hoped to revive the Council and that he had met with Wheen, Porush and Pilcher to discuss the demise of Sydney's Council of Christians and Jews,²⁹⁶ stating that it 'just "passed away"'. Bishop Pilcher explained to Brasch that he had lost interest because the Council refused to deal with any Zionist matter which, to him, was an impossibility...²⁹⁷ Simpson later noted this remark in his three-page history note of interactions between the British and Australian Councils.²⁹⁸ In his reply, Simpson mentioned that:

Bishop Pilcher's account of the demise of the council in Sydney confirms the fears I had entertained. I knew that he felt strongly about Zionism and had seen letters of his which made me feel that there was a danger of the council being shipwrecked on that particular issue. Now that the State of Israel is established, however, I hope that it may

²⁹² Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 244.

²⁹³ William Simpson, Letter to Max Corne, 14 March 1950. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹⁴ William Simpson, Letter to Rudolph Brasch, 12 January 1950. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹⁵ Rudolph Brasch, Letter to William Simpson, 9 September 1949. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹⁶ Rudolph Brasch, Letter to William Simpson, 9 September 1949. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹⁷ Rudolph Brasch, Letter to William Simpson, 9 September 1949. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

²⁹⁸ William Simpson, 'Note on History of Relations between the British Council of Christians and Jews and between Groups and Individuals in Australia, and on the Relations between the Society of Jews and Christians and the Council of Christians and Jews in England,' undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

be possible to revive the council as a body concerned primarily with relations between Jews and Christians in Australia.²⁹⁹

This is further evidence that Pilcher was one of the key drivers of the Council and that the Council was unable to function without his input. It illustrates that the exchange between Pilcher and Simpson in January 1947 caused Pilcher to lose interest not just in the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews – which at that time had already suffered from a lack of enthusiasm and momentum from its other constituents – but also in the global movement that the British Council tried to create in support of its objectives. Pilcher's disillusionment with the Council was of such a significant level that he did not even try to convene a formal meeting to dissolve it.

In 1952, the visit of the British Chief Rabbi, Israel Brodie, to Australia provided Simpson with a further opportunity to reignite a formal channel for communication between Christians and Jews in Australia. Co-incidentally, Brodie was also the co-president of the British Council of Christians and Jews.³⁰⁰ Simpson provided Brodie with letters of introduction to Wheen and Pilcher and also mentioned Rabbi Isaac L Swift, chief minister of Central Synagogue, Bondi Junction.³⁰¹ He assumed that he would naturally meet with Porush, but did not mention Rabbi Brasch as he may have understood that facilitating a meeting between the Orthodox Chief Rabbi and a leading Reform rabbi would be politically untenable even if the intentions were for better relations between Christians and Jews. He noted in his letter that

I have had little news of any active co-operation between Christians and Jews in Australia for some time now. Any information that may come your way while you are in the country will be of the greatest interest and value to us here. Indeed, I should like to think that one result of your visit to the Commonwealth might be the beginning of a new period of activity in a field where I think there is considerable opportunity and even need for it.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ William Simpson, Letter to Rudolph Brasch, 22 September 1949. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰⁰ William Simpson, Letter to Israel Brodie, 31 December 1951. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰¹ William Simpson, Letter to Israel Brodie, 31 December 1951. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰² William Simpson, Letter to Israel Brodie, 31 December 1951. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Pilcher in fact responded that he would endeavour to meet with Brodie and that he had met with Swift and enjoyed the interaction with him, commenting: 'We had quite a long talk together.'³⁰³ This indicated that whilst Pilcher may have lost interest in the official Council, his belief in better Christian-Jewish relations remained unshaken and that he continued to engage in this regard albeit on an individual basis. There is evidence that despite there being no official channel for communication between Christians and Jews in Australia, both denominations nevertheless continued to engage in dialogue. One example is Melbourne's Catholic Archbishop Mannix providing Roman Catholic reactions to antisemitism in an editorial published in an Irish newspaper.³⁰⁴

In 1952, Rabbi Herman Sanger of Melbourne's progressive synagogue, Temple Beth Israel, wrote to his counterpart, Rabbi Leslie Edgar, in England stating that particularly younger congregants were interested in establishing a Council of Christians and Jews in Melbourne and asking for advice and assistance.³⁰⁵ His main concern at the time was how:

Orthodox and Liberal Jews work together in this set-up? Thanks to the present Chief Rabbi, this co-operation is becoming the same problem in Australia as it has been for some time in England. What are the chief activities of your Society in London? What is your own opinion of its usefulness? Please be very honest with regard to this latter question.³⁰⁶

This shows that by the early 1950s, the Jewish community had become fractured internally to the extent that serious concerns existed as to whether or not the community could even present a united front to engage with Christian counterparts constructively thereby undermining the ability of any future Council of Christians and Jews to achieve tangible results. It also clarifies why Simpson did not introduce Brodie to Brasch when he visited Sydney.

Rabbi Edgar turned to Simpson for advice on the issue and Simpson provided him with a detailed three-page history of the interactions between the British and Australian Councils from

³⁰³ Charles Venn Pilcher, Letter to William Simpson, 14 February 1952. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰⁴ Daniel Mannix, 'Freedom – The Name and The Reality' (editorial), *An T-Iolar Standard*, 24 October 1949. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰⁵ Herman Sanger, Letter to Leslie Edgar, 6 November 1952. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰⁶ Herman Sanger, Letter to Leslie Edgar, 6 November 1952. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

his perspective. This was forwarded to Sanger and satisfied of his concerns.³⁰⁷ A note was also sent by Simpson to the public relations officer of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies³⁰⁸ potentially attaching the same history of the New South Wales Council. This note only mentions Pilcher's exchange of correspondence with Simpson 'about certain aspects of the Palestinian problem'³⁰⁹ without mentioning any further details and the heading of the note, read 'history of relations between the British Council of Christians and Jews and groups and individuals in Australia,'³¹⁰ omitting any mention of the official New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews' name. It shows that Simpson had the impression that from his perspective, the council in Sydney was always more of a collection of strong individuals rather than an officially organised channel that existed independently of these men.

The ghost of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews continued to haunt Simpson as he was repeatedly called upon to provide information and to explain why it had failed in Sydney. For example, in mid-1953 Rabbi Swift wrote to Simpson regarding the matter.³¹¹ Simpson replied that he had conveyed the full story of the Australian Council to a Mr AS Leibler – Abraham [Roman] S Leibler, then active on the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies Public Relations Committee and later its president – when he visited London recently.³¹² He would have been known to Swift, since he visited Sydney on business trips for his diamond business. Simpson affirmed his 'hope that some day it might be possible to revive the former Council'³¹³ and that Leibler, after hearing the story seemed 'determined to do something about reviving the work himself.'³¹⁴

Nothing came of Leibler's determination and Simpson's hopes of one day re-establishing the Council in Australia remained unfulfilled despite his best intentions. By 1955, Simpson seems to have resigned himself to this reality as confirmed by the notes of a conversation he had with

³⁰⁷ William Simpson, Letter to Edgar Leslie, 31 January 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰⁸ William Simpson, Letter to Carline Isaacson, 31 January 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³⁰⁹ William Simpson, 'Note on History of Relations between the British Council of Christians and Jews and between Groups and Individuals in Australia, and on the Relations between the Society of Jews and Christians and the Council of Christians and Jews in England,' undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹⁰ William Simpson, 'Note on History of Relations between the British Council of Christians and Jews and between Groups and Individuals in Australia, and on the Relations between the Society of Jews and Christians and the Council of Christians and Jews in England,' undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹¹ Isaac Swift, Letter to William Simpson, 5 July 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹² William Simpson, Letter to Isaac Swift, undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹³ William Simpson, Letter to Isaac Swift, undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹⁴ William Simpson, Letter to Isaac Swift, undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

Porush, in which Porush recalled that he had represented the New South Wales Council at the conference in 1946 and that ‘Shortly afterwards it [the Council] had virtually ceased to function.’³¹⁵ Interestingly, in 1960 Roman Leibler’s son, Isi Leibler, tried to build on the steps begun in 1958 to establish a Victorian Council, which had lapsed. However, he was not successful in these efforts.³¹⁶

The reestablishment of the Council was considered on several occasions after the war and in fact promoted by William Simpson, who feverishly corresponded with anyone willing to entertain the idea. However, relations between Christians and Jews had improved considerably in the post-war years so that Sanger dismissed the need for the idea in 1963 in a letter to Simpson, noting that ‘My own reaction is simply that most Australian prejudice is not religious, but is xenophobia utilising anti-religious arguments just as another weapon from the arsenal.’³¹⁷

The objectives of the Council as agreed to at its creation in 1942 were in fact much broader and even initially included ‘Christian and Jewish co-operation regarding post-war reconstruction,’³¹⁸ This, however, did not eventuate and there were references to this objective in the minutes noted so that it does not appear to have been discussed. As a result, the CCJ faded away. As Porush described the situation: ‘[it] has never been formally dissolved, but it does not function, and much work that might otherwise have been done under its auspices is done through friendly and informal contact.’³¹⁹

9.8 Conclusion

The CCJ revived the tradition of harmonious interfaith dialogue that had been forged in the nineteenth century between Jewish and Christian ministers, particularly from the 1880s as discussed in Chapter 4. These relations were severely challenged by the rapid rise of antisemitism in Australia during the 1930s, which was imported following the emergence of fascism and Nazism in Europe. The initial reactions of the churches in Australia were almost

³¹⁵ William Simpson, ‘Note of conversation with Rabbi Dr Israel Porush (Chief Rabbi of Sydney, Australia),’ 28 June 1955. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹⁶ Suzanne D Rutland, *Lone Voice: The Wars of Isi Leibler* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2021), 58-59.

³¹⁷ Herman Sanger, Letter to William Simpson, 24 October 1963. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³¹⁸ Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ 48.

³¹⁹ William Simpson, ‘Note of conversation with Rabbi Dr Israel Porush (Chief Rabbi of Sydney, Australia),’ 28 June 1955. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

mute regarding the persecution of Jews in Europe, which concerned Porush and led him to advocate for greater awareness and action on behalf of the Christian leadership.

In the nineteenth century the interfaith dialogue was successful in ensuring harmonious and beneficial relations through informal connections between Jewish and Christian ministers. These connections had waned during the 1930s. The unfolding catastrophe for European Jewry was momentous enough to revive these connections in New South Wales and necessitate the creation of a formal official interfaith body to facilitate communication and especially joint activities. The initial flurry of activities in the first two years of the Council's existence was presented as a united front to the Australian public through various mediums and creative approaches as discussed in this chapter.

Ultimately the Council faded away because it was unable to reconcile the, at times, disparate views of its key personalities. This demise coincided with the allied victory and the end of the genocide of European Jewry. Thus, 'by this time [1946] the immediate need had passed'³²⁰ to combat antisemitism, which was the central focus point of most of the Council's activities. In addition, and as illustrated by the brief withdrawal of the Catholic representation on the Council, the conflicting views over Palestine greatly limited the Council's ongoing activities. Given that Porush and Pilcher were the driving forces of the Council, and both actively supported the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, this spelt the death knell of the Council. The unity of purpose which the urgency of the Holocaust created, dissipated after the war, unlike in the British Council of Christians and Jews, which continued to thrive.

³²⁰ William Simpson, 'Note of conversation with Rabbi Dr Israel Porush (Chief Rabbi of Sydney, Australia),' 28 June 1955. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

CHAPTER 10

THE DEMISE AND LEGACY OF THE COUNCIL

10.1 Legacy of the Council

The Council died prematurely, but, according to Porush, this was because of the improving relations that existed between Christians and Jews after the war. He argues that this led to the overall Jewish experience in Australia being ‘a happy one’¹ since ‘most Australian prejudice is not religious.’² As well, John Levi noted that ‘there are other more pressing problems. Survival is simply time-consuming,’³ and in the immediate post-war period assisting the post-war Jewish survivor migration to Australia took precedence. Hilary Rubinstein also argues that survivors were ‘deeply scarred by their experiences at the hands of so-called Christians in Europe, have tended to be isolationist and often somewhat negative in their attitudes towards rapport,’⁴ This may explain why no further tangible attempts were made to re-establish the New South Wales Council of Christian and Jews until 1986.

Despite its demise, the Council of Christians and Jews was an important, if short lived experiment, in establishing a formal channel for interfaith relations in Australia. Forged largely due to the external pressure of the Holocaust, its focus eventually centered on the fight against antisemitism, despite the broader goals of its founders. Largely a product of the personal passions of its two key players – Porush and Pilcher – their eventual disenchantment with the Council’s narrow focus at the end of World War Two, as well as the differing positions in regard to the Zionist hope for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, ultimately led to the Council’s demise.

However, the Council’s legacy stretches further back and refracts further into the future than what might be believed. Finding its roots in informal interfaith relations forged in the nineteenth century, it sprang from a particularly Australian mixture of religious pragmatism and egalitarianism that eventually won out against the implicitly biased vision of religion

¹ Israel Porush, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),’ *AJHS Journal* Vol. 6, Part 4 (1968),’ 182.

² Herman Sanger, Letter to William Simpson, 24 October 1963. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

³ John Levi, ‘The Jewish People and the Christian World,’ in *When Jews and Christians Meet: Australian Essays Commemorating Twenty Years of Nostra Aetate*, ed. John W Roffey (Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches, 1985), 14.

⁴ Hilary L Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 244.

embodied by the *Church Acts*. The formation and activities of the Council demonstrated that the Christian majority in Australia clearly rejected the importation of European antisemitism and fascist ideology and supported the rights of its Jewish minority. The establishment of the Council was an admission by both Christians and Jews that historically, the informal interfaith dialogues, which had been the backbone of harmonious relations between the faith groups in Australia, and indeed the Jewish community's successes in this country, required a more formal structure during Jewry's hour of greatest need with the Holocaust. These dialogues were the key in ensuring a well-integrated Jewish community. It was further an admission that relations had been strained during the 1930s with the emergence of organised antisemitic groups in Australia in response to the 'Great Depression' and the emergence of German Nazism, creating new challenges which required a more formal channel for dialogue and communication with the broader Christian public.

The Council also forged a basis for interfaith relations that would continue in informal settings after the war and ultimately be re-established informally once the immediate concerns of the post-war period were contained. Rabbi Porush continued his very active interfaith dialogue on a personal basis, as did the new Reform Rabbi Brasch. The Council, however, did not provide a flawless model for co-existence, and in its fractious ending we also see the challenges of true interfaith relations and dialogue, challenges of dissent fueled by deep ideological disagreements, divergences that reverberate in the present. These challenges were both internal within the faith traditions – between Reform and Orthodox Judaism and between Protestantism and Catholicism – as well as external, especially relating to the Zionist endeavour.

10.2 Contributions and Future Directions of Interfaith Dialogue in Australia

The Council's had lofty goals of combating 'all forms of religious and racial intolerance. To promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews, and to foster co-operation in educational activities and in social and community service.'⁵ However, given that it failed to diversify its interests and concentrated almost exclusively on combating antisemitism, it effectively became superfluous after the war was won by the Allies.⁶ Instead,

⁵ William Simpson, 'Note on History of Relations between the British Council of Christians and Jews and between Groups and Individuals in Australia, and on the Relations between the Society of Jews and Christians and the Council of Christians and Jews in England,' undated but likely 1953. CCJ, Box 1 IP Shelf List 64, File 1, AAJ.

⁶ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 182.

many of the Council's activities were taken over by the Public Relations Committee of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies.⁷

Reflecting later on the demise of the Council, Porush also argued that the public awareness activities of the Council were taken over by the Public Relations Committee of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies and the trade unions.⁸ He noted that, at a meeting in September 1948, the Public Relations Committee lamented the demise of the Council of Christians and Jews but attempts to revive it in 1949 by Porush himself were merely considered by the Public Relations Committee, but not followed up with action.⁹ He wrote that the reason for this was that the Public Relations Committee had by this time already successfully been carrying out the public awareness campaigns previously conducted by the Council and that the other denominations were unable to contribute financially to the extent that would have made the Council viable.¹⁰ It 'was thought inadvisable that the Jewish community should carry the whole burden'¹¹ and thus attempts to revive the Council in the late 1940s failed.

The demise of the Council meant that from 1946, 'Spontaneous contacts between Christian and Jewish religious leaders were continued'¹² following the situation prior to World War Two. It was once again 'up to the rabbis to keep alive a modicum of cooperation or at least some sort of dialogue between individual clergymen.'¹³ Little is known of what, if any, informal cooperation existed during the 1950s and 1960s between the organised Jewish and Christian faith groups. In an attempt to engage with the non-Jewish population, Porush lectured in post-Biblical Hebrew in the Department of Semitic Studies at The University of Sydney from 1951 onwards and noted that many of his students were candidates for the Christian ministry exhibiting 'a veritable thirst on the part of sincere Christians to learn more about the religion that gave birth to theirs.'¹⁴

⁷ Marianne Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' (Unpublished research paper, The University of Sydney, 1990), 8.

⁸ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 195.

⁹ Israel Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi* (Melbourne: Special Publication of the AJHS (Vic), 1992), 53.

¹⁰ Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 195.

¹¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 53.

¹² Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 53.

¹³ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 53.

¹⁴ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 53.

Sydney's interfaith dialogue scene was reinvigorated in the 1970s. In 1971, Porush attended several official receptions in honour of the visit to Australia by Pope Paul VI and was presented with a medal by the Pope at Government House to mark the occasion.¹⁵ During the visit, the Pope granted an audience to representatives of the Jewish community at the Apostolic Delegation to celebrate *Nostra Aetate*,¹⁶ the Second Vatican Council's (also known as Vatican II) historic declaration of the Catholic Church to consider 'more closely her own relation to non-Christian religions.'¹⁷ Porush was designated by the Jewish community to respond to the Pope on their behalf,¹⁸ presumably in honour of his status as chief minister of the Great Synagogue but also in recognition of his earlier interfaith successes.

The arrival of Rabbi Raymond Apple at Sydney's Great Synagogue in 1973 was an important turning point in closer interreligious cooperation. His inauguration was attended 'by the State Governor, the Lord Mayor and Cardinal [James Darcy] Freeman.'¹⁹ Apple 'systematically nourished'²⁰ interfaith relations during the 1970s establishing 'regular tours of the synagogue for non-Jewish visitor [which were] enlarged into study groups.'²¹ Hailing from London, Apple was familiar with the work of the British Council of Christians and Jews and corresponded with other denominations to re-establish such a Council in Sydney within months of his arrival.²² In a noteworthy turn of events, the Catholic Archbishop was prepared to issue a 'statement of approval'²³ so long as the Anglican Archbishop at least cooperated.²⁴ However, the project was shelved, despite interest from numerous Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church, as the Anglican Archbishop of the time 'was not enthusiastic.'²⁵ Instead, Apple established an informal Christian-Jewish Study Centre, which successfully operated for several decades, fostered 'inter-faith friendships, and quite often the contacts made through the Centre provided participants with knowledge of the right person or organisation to talk to in matters requiring inter-religious co-operation.'²⁶ Rabbi Apple also described this Study Centre

¹⁵ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 54.

¹⁶ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 54.

¹⁷ Paul VI, Vatican II Council, '*Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions),' in *When Jews and Christians Meet: Australian Essays Commemorating Twenty Years of Nostra Aetate*, ed. John W Roffey (Melbourne: Victorian Council of Churches, 1985), 69.

¹⁸ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 54.

¹⁹ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 9.

²⁰ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 53.

²¹ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 53.

²² Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 9.

²³ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 9.

²⁴ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 9.

²⁵ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 9.

²⁶ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 10.

as ‘a Christian-Jewish Luncheon Club, which has met bi-monthly at the Great Synagogue ever since’²⁷ its establishment.

In 1965, *Nostra Aetate* significantly changed the interfaith landscape as the Catholic Church moved ‘from a ghetto-church to a church that engages in more positive and open fashion with the world’s people’s, cultures and religions.’²⁸ However, this changed required significant work at the grassroots. In this spirit, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) received an invitation in 1976 on behalf of the Catholic bishops of Australia to ‘consider it wise and opportune to initiate in Australia some form of religious dialogue between Jews and the Catholic Church.’²⁹ This invitation meant that the Catholic Church gave effect to the words of *Nostra Aetate* that ‘Given this great spiritual heritage common to Christians and Jews, it is the wish of this sacred Council to foster and recommend a mutual knowledge and esteem, which will come from biblical and theological studies, and brotherly discussions.’³⁰ It signalled a new beginning and a reset of relations between Catholics and Jews in Australia. The request was positively received by Australia’s Jewish community leadership. Whilst a revival of the Council of Christians and Jews was considered by ECAJ, it opted instead to prioritise direct relations with the Catholic Church in the form of a Catholic Jewish Liaison Committee, especially since the Vatican’s recognition of Israel remained an issue for the Jewish community at the time.³¹

Interfaith efforts increased during the 1980s with the establishment of the Holocaust Remembrance Committee in 1981 and the Interreligious Council for Peace in 1982.³² In the early 1980s, the Jewish community was ‘gravely concerned at the growth of extreme left-wing anti-Zionism and the continued existence of right-wing antisemitic groups.’³³ As a result, in 1984 an international conference on antisemitism was convened by the newly formed Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs under the chairmanship of Isi Leibler and held at The

²⁷ Raymond Apple, *The Great Synagogue: A History of Sydney’s Big Shule* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2008), 295.

²⁸ Gerard V Hall, ‘Australian Catholicism and Interfaith Dialogue,’ *The Australasian Catholic Record* Vol. 88 (Issue 3) (July 2011), 299.

²⁹ Dacy, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,’ 11.

³⁰ Paul VI, ‘*Nostra Aetate*,’ 72.

³¹ Dacy, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,’ 12.

³² Dacy, ‘The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,’ 14.

³³ William D Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Volume II* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 468.

University of Melbourne.³⁴ Here, prominent Jewish and Christian ministers, including keynote speaker Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, called for increased interfaith dialogue.³⁵ Relations between the faiths continued to improve and during Pope John Paul II's visit to Australia in 1986, a delegation from ECAJ was again invited to an audience with the Pope 'as an expression of cordiality between the two faiths.'³⁶

The Sisters of our Lady of Sion, were particularly active in the interfaith sphere. The Catholic order was originally with the aim of converting Jews to Christianity but this aim was abandoned in the wake of the Holocaust and *Nostra Aetate* and instead the order 'totally changed its objectives to improving Catholic-Jewish understanding.'³⁷ In 1985 and 1986 the Sisters brought Father John Pawlikowski to Australia, a priest who was well known for his interfaith activities in America.³⁸ Fr Pawlikowski addressed leaders of the Jewish community, held various interfaith colloquia and addressed the inaugural meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews in Melbourne in 1986.³⁹ The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews was re-established shortly thereafter in 1988⁴⁰ and constituted representatives from the Reform and Orthodox branches of Judaism as well as sponsorship from the main Christian denominations, such as Anglicans, Catholics, the Greek Orthodox Church, Uniting Church and the Salvation Army.⁴¹

An Australian Council of Christians and Jews was established in 1991 which represents the New South Wales and Victorian Councils on a federal level.⁴² The aims of the national Council were somewhat similar to those of the original New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews in 1943. Apple wrote that the aims of the national Council were

To educate Christians and Jews to appreciate each other's distinctive belief and practices and their common grounds

³⁴ Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History, Vol. II*, 468. See also Suzanne D Rutland, *Lone Voice: The Wars of Isi Leibler* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2021), 344.

³⁵ *Australia/Israel Review*, 19 July–6 August 1984, as cited in Hilary L Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria: 1835-1985* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), 187.

³⁶ Suzanne D Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001), 385.

³⁷ Apple, *The Great Synagogue*, 295.

³⁸ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 14.

³⁹ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 14.

⁴⁰ Dacy, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews,' 16.

⁴¹ Apple, *The Great Synagogue*, 295.

⁴² Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 53.

To promote the study of and research into the historical, political, economic, social, religious and racial causes of conflicts between Christians and Jews

To promote, for the benefit of the community, education in those fundamental ethical teachings common to Christianity and Judaism.⁴³

The original New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews clearly had a profound impact on the development of interfaith dialogue in Australia in the aftermath of World War Two. This is evidenced by the numerous attempts to revive it until it was reconstituted in 1988 in Sydney. The New South Wales, Victorian and national Councils of Christians and Jews continue to operate until today.

10.3 Research Limitations of the Thesis

This thesis attempted to provide a brief overview of the history of Christian-Jewish relations in Australia up until and including World War Two. Whilst many historians have written at length on issues of Jewish and Christian cooperation prior to World War Two, this scholarship has hitherto not been combined into one coherent historical overview. As a result, much of the first half of this thesis concentrated on providing a historical overview of Jewish-Christian relations in Australia from 1788.

The central tenet of this thesis was an exploration of the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews during World War Two. The Council was established at a time where relations between these two denominations were particularly strained. The once flourishing informal channels of cooperation between various individual communal rabbis and Christian ministers which defined interfaith dialogue prior to the war ceased to operate effectively. Rabbi Porush and Bishop Pilcher recognised this problem and attempted to remedy the situation by initiating the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews, thereby establishing Australia's first formal channel of interfaith dialogue. The results of this short-lived Council were indeed 'praiseworthy'⁴⁴ but the narrow application of its objectives and diverging political priorities hindered its expansion after the war ended and the immediate danger of antisemitism subsided.

⁴³ Apple, *The Great Synagogue*, 295-296.

⁴⁴ Porush, *The Journal of an Australian Rabbi*, 46, and 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews (1943-1948),' 195.

Whilst this thesis originally sought to provide a comprehensive account of Jewish-Christian relations in Australia, it was ultimately forced to limit itself to a brief overview of the matter and concentrate on the New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews. Furthermore, due to volume of materials available, the thesis limited its research for the most part to the collections contained in the Archives of Australian Judaica. Several reasons exist for this limitation. The first being the intermittent and often prolonged lockdowns and closures of libraries and archives as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This has meant that it was, at times, very difficult to access relevant materials and the research had to be based on what was accessible during the periods between the ongoing lockdowns. The second reason for the limitation is the word count limit imposed on any PhD thesis by its awarding institution. As a result, the discussion in the first part of the thesis was condensed, materials had to be excluded and some relevant archives were not consulted to corroborate the materials found in the Archives of Australian Judaica. This particularly applies to the other Church archives, where the research was severely restricted, with only the Jesuit Archives being consulted briefly.

In order to fill these gaps, additional research on this topic is required in future. It is believed that the Catholic archives in Sydney may hold additional resources, particularly as pertains to Cardinal Gilroy and Father Hehir's involvement in the Council. Similarly, the Anglican archives certainly contain additional resources with regards to Bishop Pilcher and Archbishop Mowll. The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches as well as the Salvation Army may also possess items of interest. The relationship between Jews and Lutherans in Australia, particularly during World War Two, also warrants further exploration, and their archives have recently been deposited at the Sydney Jewish Museum, provided an ideal opportunity for future research.

Geographically, this thesis limited its discussion to Jewish-Christian relations in Australia and further research should be conducted to compare the activities of the CCJ to the situation in other countries. Some research has been conducted into the history of the British Council of Christians and Jews but more is needed. As discussed in Chapter 9, the 1946 international conference of Christians and Jews in England included not just British and Australian representatives but also delegations from the United States, South Africa and other parts of Europe. Additional comparative studies into the activities of these other councils could

contribute significantly to our knowledge and understanding of Christian responses to the Holocaust in other Allied countries.

As well, due to the limitations of space and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, this thesis limited its discussion of Christian-Jewish relations during the war to the activities of the Council in New South Wales, and did not include wartime interfaith activities conducted in other states and territories, which could bear interesting additions to this research. As well, apart from the work of Sr Marianna Dacy, limited research has so far been undertaken to document interfaith relations in Australia as these evolved post World War Two. In fact, these days much of the interfaith dialogue work in Australia is concentrated not just on relations between Christians and Jews, but has in fact evolved to incorporate all the Abrahamic faiths, with a plethora of key organisations being involved in interfaith relations. For example, the Affinity Intercultural Foundation was formed in 2000 as a dialogue organisation to foster a better understanding of cultural diversity, including the Muslim community.⁴⁵ The Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia was founded in 2003⁴⁶ in recognition that whilst Australia is remote from many of the conflict areas in the Middle East, the tensions between the religions elsewhere ‘reverberate locally and have the potential to affect intercommunal relations in this increasingly plural society.’⁴⁷ Whilst this thesis provided a brief overview of the significant developments in the interfaith space, especially since *Nostra Aetate*, further research is needed to connect the research findings of this thesis with the twenty-first century.

The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews was created at a time of particularly stressed relations between these faith groups in Australia. The period during World War Two was a time where the traditional informal avenues of dialogue between individual Jewish and Christian ministers, which had served the country well prior to the war, no longer sufficed. The Council thus became Australia’s first formal channel to facilitate interfaith dialogue and had several successes but ultimately faded due to its limited objectives and inability to keep the momentum alive in the new post-war era. Whilst interfaith relations once again reverted to informal dialogues between various ministers, the Council’s achievements were evidence that in time of need, Australia’s diverse religious communities had the capacity to cooperate and

⁴⁵ Affinity Intercultural Organisation, ‘Our History,’ accessed 6 April 2022, <https://affinity.org.au/about-us/our-history/>.

⁴⁶ Sven Alexander Schottmann, ‘Sustaining Interfaith Dialogue – A Case Study from Australia,’ *Global Change, Peace & Security* Vol. 25, No. 3 (2013), 320.

⁴⁷ Schottmann, ‘Sustaining Interfaith Dialogue,’ 324.

thereby facilitate a lasting, positive and united impact on the broader society. The legacy of this understanding is today carried on by the reconstituted Councils of Christians and Jews.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Analysis of the Replies to Archbishop's Questionnaire

Courtesy: Archives of Australian Judaica

ANALYSIS OF THE REPLIES TO ARCHBISHOP'S QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING MARCH 12.

- 1) About 100 replies were received. The questions of the questionnaire were:
 - a) Whether sermons on behalf of Jewry were given on March 12.
 - b) What was the reaction of the congregation?
 - c) Did you notice any increase of anti-Semitism in your parish of late?
- 2) Some 50% gave sermons and a large portion of the remainder read special prayers.
- 3) The vast majority state that they have not noticed any increase in anti-Semitism. Quite a number even go so far as to say that they have not noticed any anti-Semitism in their districts. A few mention an undercurrent of prejudice and ascribe it to various sources. Refugees play a part according to very few, also religious prejudice and propaganda are mentioned as sources of this manifestation. Some distinguish between the church goer and those outside the church, saying that among the former they have not noticed any prejudice.
- 4) The general reaction of the congregations to the sermons wherever they were delivered, seems to have been one of indifference, with a few exceptions. As far as sympathy is concerned, it seems to have been universal.
- 5) With regard to Palestine, quite a number have heard adverse criticism and the stress of the Arab side rather than the Jewish.
- 6) The analysis is in no way alarming unless of course the ministers were reticent in recognising a state of affairs which was none too pleasant.

.....ooo.....

Appendix II: Review of the Replies Received to the Questionnaire of the NSW Council of Christians and Jews

Courtesy: Archives of Australian Judaica

REVIEWS

of replies received to the Questionnaire of the
N.S.W. Council of Christians and Jews, on the
*Day of Prayer, 12th March, 1944 and on Anti-Semitism -
by Mr. Sam Karpin.

Number of letters received: 94

1. Were any sermons delivered at your Church on March 12th or thereabouts, on the subject of the present tragedy of European Jewry?

X Yes 61 No (not even any reference, variety of reasons) 33

2. What, if any, was the re-action of your congregation?

No perceptible reaction in most cases; some emphasize utter indifference; many ignored question entirely; several included answer with (3.).

3. Has there been any noticeable change in the attitude of your people towards Jews; have you noticed any increase in anti-Semitism?

No..... 42 Indifferent.... 26 Yes (in varying degrees) .. 26

Most noticeable features:

a) Most sympathetic answer came from Minister of aboriginal congregation.

b) Several ministers could not refrain from indicating their own personal "anti" bias.

c) Many ministers reflected their own personal feelings, e.g. in areas like Waverley (Rev. R. Pattison Clarke) and Newtown (Rev. Thomas C. Hammond) and Rose Bay (Rev. Clifford Baker) and Paddington (Rev. R. C. Colman), where there are large concentrations of Jews.

Answers were surprisingly positive in that there was no evidence of anti-Semitism and no increase in anti-Semitism.

Most genuine replies were coal mining areas - Wollongong, Kembla and Newcastle areas.

Most disturbing replies were in the city, Darling Point, Cremorne, Gordon and so-called "posh" congregations. (peculiar reply from Cranbrook.)

Altogether, any conclusion is that survey reveals a disturbing, almost alarming attitude to Jewish question based on ignorance, Church teaching, and ingrained dislike of Jews.

"That the Jews were always seeking to dominate the money market"; I find this kind of feeling fairly common. (Rev. Linton, Raymond Terrace.) One parishioner returned from Moree says anti-Jewish feeling there is very strong. Refugees ... crowd out the hotels, behave in a very greedy, selfish way at mealtimes, etc. A

There are a few who show opposition to the Jews on the fact of the Jews being the cause of the financial troubles and being "money controllers"; thus making so many suffer in the world. (Rev. Davison, Wilberforce.) A

I think there is a widespread opinion in which I join that the admission of a large number of Jews to Australia would be a disaster. (Rev. R. A. Collins, Bondi.) Aust

I do know there is a strong feeling of dislike of the refugee Jew in the Eastern suburbs, which area has become known as the "New Jerusalem". This attitude is based on the way in which the refugee has established himself, in our midst, many own large blocks of flats, others have secured shops and some have even set up small factories in their homes, and rightly or wrongly are accused of underselling to merchants, and the community. They seem to have come to stay and are entering into competition with Australians in business The practice of the Jew to make for the cities, there to enter into business and so create something of the problem that made them unpopular in Europe before the war. (Canon Barder, Darling Point.) A.R.P.

In a discussion after service, it was pointed out that the Jews who came here are ~~x~~ very poor citizens, who are intent on exploiting this country and that possibly they did the same in their former country. The few I discussed the matter with thought that because of the supposed bad history of the Jews as colonists ~~xxx~~ the ~~xxxx~~ Arabs ~~xxx~~ were fortunate in the issue of the White Paper. A.P. They think the exploitation ~~policy~~ policy of the Jews justifies the British Government in repudiating the Balfour Declaration. (Rev. Walker, Ingleburn.)

I rejoice in that the day is coming when the blindness of the Jews shall be swept away and that they in Palestine, their country of promise, will worship and serve our Blessed Lord. (Rev. Hodgson, Castle Hill.)

I find especially here in Coogee that people are not at all kindly disposed towards the Jews ... nickname of Coogee "New Jerusalem". (Rev. Wade, Coogee.) A

I have noticed that most of those who have been to the East have pro-Arab sympathies. (Rev. Fielding, Longueville.) P

I am not aware of any special prayer for the Jews authorised pursuant to the Acts of Uniformity Amendment Act of 1872 which I could use in Public worship. (Rev. Johnstone, Bescroft.)

I have heard sentiments like "Jews run the Bank of England" - "Jews are responsible for the evils of capitalism". (Rev. Hemming, Bexley.) A

My own feeling is that there is no doubt Jews are a "separate" people, take very little interest in the community outside themselves and are very hard to do business with. (Rev. Pyke, Gordon.) !! A

Many expressed the opinion that the Jews should be allowed to have Palestine as their national home, and felt they would then cause less trouble than they have done in the past. (Rev. McDardy, Belmore.) P

I find that many Christians honestly believe that because of the part played by Jews 1900 years ago in rejecting our Lord, the modern Jew is unworthy of their sympathy. (Rev. Davidson, King St. City.) A!!

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