During 1955-56, there were signs of a tightening of the Australian economic position, though industrial expansion and immigration continued. A sharp increase in taxation and increased import restrictions had a somewhat deflationary effect.

The general elections of December 1955 resulted in a victory of the Liberal and Country Party coalition under Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies over the Labor Party opposition. In the New South Wales state elections, Abram Landa, member for the district of Bondi, was re-elected, but in the allocation of state cabinet portfolios, he exchanged the ministry of labor and industry for the housing ministry. Leon S. Snider continued as a member of the New South Wales Upper House, and Baron D. Snider was still a member of the Victorian State Parliament.

Jewish Population and Immigration

The Jewish population of Australia was estimated at 56,000, out of a total Australian population of 9,313,291. It had almost doubled since 1937, almost entirely due to immigration.

Ninety per cent of Australian Jews lived in Sydney and Melbourne, and about 5 per cent in the other four capital cities. About 54 per cent of the general population lived in the metropolitan areas of the six Australian states.

Australia's dynamic postwar immigration policy continued, and during the year under review the one-millionth postwar immigrant came into the country. Immigrants came mainly from Britain, followed by immigrants from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and other southern European countries. After 1950, the number of immigrants declined. In the year under review (July 1, 1955, through June 30, 1956) sixty-eight immigrants came as assisted and guaranteed cases of the Australian Federation of Jewish Welfare Societies. Another 250 immigrants came under private sponsorship.

In the fall of 1955, the government had limited immigration from Israel, Spain, Portugal, and Italy to persons sponsored by relatives or guaranteed employment on the land. The restriction on immigration from Israel was based on the argument that Israel itself was a migrant intake country. Previously over a thousand immigrants, chiefly families of already settled persons, had come from Israel.

Jewish efforts to bring immigrants from Asian countries were not successful in cases where such intending immigrants were excluded because of their non-European origin under the White Australia Policy. This applied particularly to Jews of Oriental or Arabic origin; even close relatives of Australian Jews could not be brought in.
Generally no difficulty was experienced in finding employment for immigrants. The welfare societies maintained employment sections which assisted immigrants and older residents.

**Discrimination and Anti-Semitism**

Australian Jewry enjoyed the same civic and political status as all other Australians. Anti-Semitism was at a minimum. No important incidents of an overt character occurred during 1955-56. No apparent discrimination manifested itself in the spheres of employment, housing, education, or among general groups or organizations.

**Community Organization and Communal Affairs**

Australian Jewry was a highly organized community. At the state level matters of concern to Australian Jews were channeled through the states' Boards of Jewish Deputies. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) maintained a close relationship with Commonwealth government departments.

Under a constitutional provision for the biennial alternation of ECAJ headquarters between the states of Victoria and New South Wales, the headquarters were to return to Sydney, New South Wales, after a conference in Melbourne, Victoria in August 1956.

Australia was represented by Maurice Ashkanazy of Melbourne (president of the ECAJ during 1954-56) on the directorate of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (CJMCAG), whose meetings were held in Paris in February 1955 and in New York in January 1956. The CJMCAG allocated £53,800 ($118,360). This was in addition to a further installment of £12,500 ($27,000) of the special three-year-grant for Mount Scopus College (Melbourne) that the CJMCAG had made the year before.

The greater part of the allocation went to the Jewish welfare societies for rehabilitation of victims of Nazi persecution. Grants also went to the Sir Moses Montefiore Home for Aged Jews, the Isabella Lazarus Home for Children (of Sydney), the Emmie Monash Home for Aged (Melbourne), and the South Australian Board of Jewish Deputies for an old people's home; all of these institutions served immigrants.

**Religious Life**

Suburban Orthodox congregations in Melbourne and Sydney expanded their activities. In Sydney the Orthodox congregation of the Maroubra-Kingsford District inducted its first full-time rabbi, Alexander Grozinger, on March 4, 1956, while in the Western Suburbs Hebrew Congregation (the oldest in Sydney) Rabbi Lew Aisenstadt succeeded the late Rabbi Isaac Rabinowitch on April 29, 1956.

The Great Synagogue in Sydney, the largest congregation in the British Commonwealth, opened its War Memorial Centre. The project cost almost £100,000 ($220,000), and was built underneath the existing synagogue. It included a meeting hall, a classroom, club facilities, and a library to house
what was expected to become the most complete collection of Jewish books in Australia.

Suburban congregations in Sydney, too, were engaged in building projects, especially the growing North Shore Congregation and the Parramatta Congregation, situated about eighteen miles from the center of the city.

Temple Emanuel, Sydney, completed extensions to its present structure with a building known as the Owen Klippel Memorial Hall. The Liberal congregation extended its religion classes to the North Shore district.

The ninety-one-year-old Brisbane Hebrew Congregation celebrated the seventieth anniversary of the existence of its synagogue.

The Central Synagogue in Bondi, Sydney, appointed Rabbi Harry Freedman, a well-known Jewish scholar, as its chief minister.

George W. Reuben was appointed rabbi of the Perth Liberal congregation, established in May 1956.

Jewish Education

Several small day schools and kindergartens in Sydney and Melbourne increased the number of their pupils. Approximately 1,000 pupils attended Jewish day schools. Mt. Scopus College, Melbourne, completed extensions to buildings and planned to expand further and increase the present total attendance of between 600 and 700 children in primary and secondary classes. Mt. Moriah College, Sydney, obtained the services in February 1956 of Mr. Tovia Shahar as director of Jewish studies. The Melbourne Yeshiva, established in 1950 and having 100 pupils, moved to new premises in Caulfield, with an attached yeshiva day school. The Sydney Yeshiva, founded in 1955, increased its enrollment to more than forty students.

About 1,500 children received religious instruction in Hebrew classes for from three to six hours per week. Most of these classes were under synagogue auspices.

Contact was maintained with the approximately 5,300 children attending state schools by a scripture lesson given weekly by teachers provided by the Jewish community. In many cases this was the only religious education they received.

Most of the costs of Jewish education were defrayed by funds raised from appeals within the Jewish communities.

Social Services

Hostels in each state housed some 150 immigrants, who were assisted in securing positions and establishing homes and businesses with funds made available by the CJMCAG and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) through the branches of the Federation of Australian Jewish Societies.

The sheltered workshop founded in February 1955 by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in their Sydney premises was organized on a cooperative basis, with some seventy aged men and women participating and enjoying social satisfaction and comfort, as well as obtaining a small remuneration.
The Australian branch of the United Restitution Organization (URO) processed almost 500 claims against the West German Government of the 800 claims submitted.

Zionism and Israel

The growing seriousness of the situation in Israel further solidified Australian Jewish communal feeling for the Jewish state. An emergency appeal was held towards the end of 1955. This was in addition to the regular yearly Israel Appeal and yielded £110,000 ($242,000); the annual United Israel Appeal obtained pledges amounting to about £150,000 ($330,000) a sum surpassing the 1954 total of pledges—pledging being 3 per cent higher than actual funds collected.

Zionist activity continued to center in the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand. The conference of the federation, held in Melbourne January 28-30, 1956, endorsed the principle of recognizing specific needs of the local community. As of the time of writing (August 1956), there were no visible signs that this resolution was being implemented.

During the Israel crisis, beginning in February-March 1956, emergency committees representing most Jewish communal bodies were set up. In Sydney and Melbourne, these emergency committees included the local Boards of Jewish Deputies.

Late in 1955, meetings were organized under the aegis of the ECAJ and the Zionist Federation of Australia to protest the supplying of arms by Czechoslovakia to the Arab countries. A resolution to this effect was duly handed to the Commonwealth government on April 25, 1956. Subsequently Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies received a delegation requesting that Australia's voice be raised at the United Nations and that the matter be brought before the Prime Ministers' Conference to be held in London in July 1956.

The Jewish National Fund expanded its coverage of the community and aimed to increase its general revenue by 25 per cent by September 1956. The total for Australia was £120,000 ($336,000), including the Jewish National Fund Blue Box collection of £36,000 ($100,800).

The youth shelfichim (emissaries) of the Jewish Agency continued training youth in leadership, organization, and culture (these emissaries were Menachim Levin, Asher Mansbach, and Gad Padatzur); a number of young people were sent to Israel, some as scholarship students, and some as members of collectives.

The attitude of the Australian public grew more favorable toward Israel, mainly as a result of the deterioration of Britain's relations with the Arab states. Newspapers and broadcasters gave increasing attention to the problems of Israel and the Middle East. Two newspapers, the Sydney Morning Herald and the Melbourne Sun, sent their correspondents to Israel and other Middle Eastern areas to report on the situation for Australian readers, in April and May 1956, respectively.

The government's friendly attitude continued, and was reflected by the

Efforts continued to transfer the Israel legation, now situated in Sydney, to Canberra, the national capital; there was some hope that financial problems might be overcome so that construction of a legation building there might begin in 1956. The legation made preparations for an Israel stamp exhibit and an Australia-wide Israel fashion show. Trade between Australia and Israel, particularly in the fashion field, increased, but was far below potentials. The renewed Australian import restrictions did not improve the situation.

The experiment of Solomon Goldberg in transplanting Australian sheep to Israel showed success; the practicability of further shipments of Australian sheep to Israel for breeding purposes was discussed by Goldberg and interested Jewish businessmen.

Cultural Activity

The bulk of cultural activity in Yiddish and English took the form of repertory play reading, youth drama festivals, lectures, symposia, panel discussions, and exhibitions of arts and crafts.

The second edition of *The Star of David*, by Rabbi Rudolf Brasch of Temple Emanuel, Sydney, dealing with the principles and customs of Judaism, went into print early in 1956.

Personalia

On November 25, 1955, the death was reported of Isaac Herbert Boas, national forestry expert and distinguished chemist, a president of the Jewish Advisory Board and the Jewish Welfare Society, as well as of the Australian Friends of the Hebrew University.