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Australia *

DURING the period under review (July 1, 1958, to June 30, 1959) the Australian economy recovered from the previous year's slight recession. Prices tended to level off, the balance of payments improved, and overseas investment increased. Immigration and industrial expansion continued, but some unemployment persisted.

The Liberal and Country parties' coalition under Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies continued its record term of office. The Democratic Labor party, which in 1956 had split from the Labor party led by Herbert V. Evatt, lost some of its already slight support, but it remained doubtful whether the Labor party could regain power in the near future.

Jewish Population

In 1958 Australia's population passed ten million. The exact Jewish population was unknown, but the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) estimated it to be close to 65,000. Melbourne (Victoria) had some 30,000 Jews, Sydney (New South Wales) 28,000, Brisbane (Queensland) 1,750, Adelaide (South Australia) 1,300, Perth (Western Australia) 3,000, Canberra (Australian Capital Territory) 90, and Hobart and Launceston (Tasmania) 100. A few Jews were to be found in other provincial centers.

Immigration

In 1958-59 Poland replaced Hungary as the main source of Jewish immigration, followed by Israel, Hungary, Rumania, Egypt, and other countries, in that order. Of 1,500 Jews known to have arrived during the year, 70 per cent settled in Melbourne and 30 per cent in Sydney. Many English Jews were thought to have arrived, but no figures were available. Most of the recent Hungarian and Polish immigrants were of a different type from those of the immediate postwar influx, and it was too early to assess their integration in the community. Close cooperation and sympathy were received from the Federal government. Permits had been granted previously to some North African and Egyptian Jews of European origin with relatives in Australia. For the first time, 25 permits for Egyptian refugee families in Europe without relatives were granted. President Sydney D. Einfeld of the Australian Federation of Jewish Welfare Societies visited Poland on behalf of the government to investigate Polish emigration policy and problems.

Except for some Egyptians who went to Adelaide and a few who went

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* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 359.

to Brisbane, most of the Jewish immigrants settled in Melbourne and Sydney. The Jewish welfare societies tried to help them to find jobs.

Community Organization and Activity

The Jewish communities in each state—except Tasmania, which was represented by Hobart congregation—were organized in boards of deputies, which in turn elected ECAJ. Delegates to the boards came from congregations and Zionist, welfare, educational, ex-service, sporting, and social organizations. In Sydney and Melbourne some deputies were elected by direct franchise. The boards coordinated communal activities and appeals and relations with state governments, besides referring matters of general Australian Jewish concern to ECAJ for discussion with the Federal government or overseas Jewish organizations.

CJMCAG provided a total of A£107,700 ($242,325), of which about A£91,700 ($206,325) went for social services and A£16,000 ($36,000) for education. ECAJ was a constituent member of WJC and of the Consultative Committee of Jewish Organizations. The Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand maintained close links with WZO and the Jewish Agency. Many other organizations kept in close contact with parent bodies overseas. Australia was represented at meetings of the executive of WJC and CJMCAG, and the actions committee of the Jewish Agency. Australian representatives also participated in the world convention of B'nai B'rith in Jerusalem in May 1959 and in the first World Jewish Youth Conference in Jerusalem in July 1958.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Youth activities were intensive and varied. The National Union of Australian Jewish Students was active in all states. Zionist youth movements, including ha-Bonim, Betar, Bene 'Akiva, and ha-Shomer ha-Tzaïr, formed the Australian Zionist Youth Council. There were many active and well-organized sporting organizations in all states, and some synagogues also had youth groups. In Melbourne there was a Bundist youth group. In Melbourne and Sydney there were Jewish scout groups. Intermarriage was negligible in Melbourne and Sydney, but presented problems in other centers.

There was a dearth of organizations serving men and women between 25 and 40.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Major social services were handled by welfare societies in each state, which were united in the Australian Federation of Jewish Welfare Societies. Many other organizations were also active. Hostels run by the welfare societies for persons awaiting permanent housing accommodated approximately 125 in Melbourne and 45 in Sydney, and homes for the aged housed approximately 80 in Sydney and 90 in Melbourne. In Sydney a successful Migrants Co-operative Housing Society was established, and loans were granted to acquire businesses and houses. The welfare societies also supplied trained social

workers to help migrants with problems of rehabilitation, family relations, mental health, and adjustment to their new environment.

In Sydney a sheltered workshop, which had operated for five years, employed approximately 90 aged men and women, providing them with social activities and a supplement to their income. During 1958-59 a similar workshop employing 22 persons was established in Melbourne.

The Australian branch of the United Restitution Organization continued to process claims against the West German government.

JEWISH EDUCATION

In Queensland, with the assistance of the Zionist Federation, a husband and wife arrived from Israel to teach in the part-time Hebrew school (160 pupils), assist in youth work, and provide kindergarten services. Available periods of instruction rose to nine per week. Perth had a kindergarten and a small day school (11 pupils), as well as one-day-a-week schools attached to the Orthodox (120 pupils) and Liberal (65 pupils) congregations. Adelaide's one congregation had 118 pupils in Sunday-morning classes and 45 in each of two other classes during the week.

In Melbourne the community's Mount Scopus College, with about 900 pupils, began building a new wing. Altogether 1,280 attended day schools, including also Moriah College, the Adass Israel day school, and the Lubavitcher yeshivah, which opened the Moses and Lea Feiglin memorial wing. Two out of every three children reaching school age in Melbourne were enrolled in Jewish day schools. There were nine kindergartens. The (Liberal) Temple Hebrew school taught 540 children once a week. The Orthodox United Jewish Education Board provided part-time education for 255 pupils once a week and for another 300 pupils for six to ten periods weekly. It conducted a radio session and gave correspondence courses for 71 children throughout Australia and the Pacific area. Other part-time schools, with a total of 780 pupils, included the Bialik School, with 110 students, and a Yiddish school, with 460 students. For the first time a state high school taught Hebrew as part of the school curriculum.

Sydney had one private Jewish day school, Moriah College, with 160 pupils. The Orthodox New South Wales Board of Jewish Education taught 1,800 pupils once a week and some 50 pupils three times a week. Adass Israel had 60 pupils four times a week and Temple Emanuel (Liberal) approximately 300 once a week. The New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies planned to create a communal day school. Hebrew classes were conducted by the State Zionist Council of New South Wales.

In Melbourne and Sydney the Jewish Board of Education provided a weekly period of religious instruction to 6,000 children in classes at state schools under the "right of entry" system.

An emissary of the Jewish Agency conducted an extended teachers' seminar in Melbourne, and a short seminar in Perth.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Suburban Orthodox congregations in Melbourne and Sydney continued to grow. Liberal congregations in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth extended their activities. In Sydney the Orthodox Central synagogue started work on the largest synagogue building in Australia. Large additions to Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne were completed. The St. Kilda Hebrew congregation (Melbourne) appointed Simon Herman of London as its chief minister; he was to arrive in September 1959. The Newcastle Hebrew congregation in New South Wales engaged a new minister, Rabbi Azriel Tarsis.

In Sydney initial steps were taken to unify *shehitah* and *kashrut* administration. Leading rabbis in Melbourne and Sydney formed the Melbourne Beth Din (chairman, Rabbi Isaac Rapaport) and the Sydney Beth Din (chairman, Rabbi Israel Porush). The Adass Israel congregations in Melbourne and Sydney maintained their own rabbinical courts.

CULTURAL ACTIVITY

The four principal Jewish weeklies were the *Australian Jewish News* and *Jewish Herald* in Melbourne and the *Jewish News* and *Australian Jewish Times* in Sydney, the first three having Yiddish supplements or subsidiary publications. There were small papers in Adelaide and Perth, and many organizations and congregations maintained their own periodicals.

Rabbi L. M. Goldman continued his series on the history of Australasian Jewish communities and published a *History of New Zealand Jewry*. ECAJ maintained a book club. Rabbi Rudolph Brasch published *The Eternal Flame*.

Melbourne had three Jewish bookshops, and Sydney one. There were continuous discussions, lectures, symposia, and quizzes organized by synagogues, youth organizations, the National Council of Jewish Women, WIZO, and Zionist groups. Kadimah in Melbourne and the Folk Center in Sydney provided lectures and cultural activities in Yiddish, and there were several dramatic groups, both English and Yiddish. The Sholem Aleichem centenary was marked by extensive cultural activities.

Antisemitism

Australian Jews continued to enjoy full civic and political rights. Baron D. Snider, a member of the Victoria legislative assembly, represented all Australian states at the interparliamentary conference in Barbados in January 1959. Abram Landa was New South Wales minister for housing. There were Jewish judges in New South Wales and Victoria. Israel enjoyed great prestige and favorable comment in all organs of opinion.

But isolated discrimination persisted. A few social and golf clubs did not admit Jews. Groups of recent immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe seemed inclined to antisemitism. Eric Butler, leader of a Social Credit group in Melbourne, engaged in anti-Israel and anti-Jewish activity, and D. W. DeLouth in Queensland distributed antisemitic literature received from Swedish and other sources. These activities, while carefully scrutinized by the community, did not give cause for alarm.

Renewed efforts by small pressure groups to ban *shehitah* in Melbourne on humane grounds met with no public or government response.

Public relations were largely in the hands of the state boards of deputies and ECAJ, which cooperated with the Zionist movement and other interested bodies. Left-wing organizations against antisemitism existed in Melbourne and Sydney but attracted little support.

Zionism and Relations with Israel

There was a Zionist council in every state except Tasmania. With its headquarters in Melbourne, the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand exercised, as a "territorial organization," complete jurisdiction over the Zionist movement. Its president was Joseph Solvey. In Melbourne Po'ale Zion, Mizrahi, Revisionists, and General Zionists carried on political and cultural activities. In other states Zionist party politics was limited or nonexistent. In all states WIZO was extremely strong, with a total of 6,000 members. Friends of the Hebrew University and Magen David Adom maintained branches in most states.

Israel's independence day was enthusiastically celebrated in all communities; the 1959 Melbourne celebration attracted approximately 5,000 people to hear American Rabbi Israel Goldstein, who also addressed rabbis in Sydney, Perth, and Adelaide and together with David Ha-Cohen led the 1959 United Israel Appeal (UIA). The community's commitment to Israel was shown by the 17,000 JNF boxes in homes and offices and approximately 7,500 individual pledges received by UIA, which raised approximately A£200,000 ($450,000). The annual income of JNF and WIZO totalled A£185,000 ($416,250). Four youth emissaries of the Jewish Agency continued training Zionist youth groups in leadership, organization, and culture, and the Zionist Federation maintained a training farm *(hakhsharah)* at Shepparton, near Melbourne. Since 1948 the number of Australian and New Zealand settlers in Israel reached approximately 275, of whom some 100 were graduates of the *hakhsharah*. Thirty other *halutzim* had departed for Israel without passing through the *hakhsharah*.

The Israel legation remained in Sydney, but plans to build a legation in Canberra progressed. Moses Yuval arrived in September 1958 as Israel's minister to Australia, and during the year was joined by First Secretary and Consul Hayyim Raphael, replacing Zeëv Dover. Oswald Sharef became Israel's first commercial attaché in Australia.

Lord Mayor Henry F. Jensen of Sydney visited Israel as guest of the Israel government and returned profoundly impressed by Israel's achievements, speaking of it many times to the Australian public.

Personalia

Gerald De Vahl Davis, a former president of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, vice-president of ECAJ, and holder of many other offices, died in Sydney in November 1958 at the age of 61.

ARNOLD BLOCH