Between Nationalism and Assimilation: Jewish Antifascism in Australia in the Late 1940s and Early 1950s

Max Elliot Kaiser

Orcid ID: 0000-0003-1853-1347

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University of Melbourne

Abstract

This thesis argues that Jewish antifascism was a major political and cultural force in Australian Jewish communities in the 1940s and early 1950s. It charts the emergence of a non-nationalist and anti-assimilationist Australian Jewish antifascist political subjectivity, and examines its ideological basis, cultural and political practice, and the circumstances of the rapid demise of its hegemony.

This thesis focuses on transnational dimensions of the political imagination and, while drawing on relevant historiography, also develops a partisan framework. It analyses the complex historical positioning of Australian Jews within Australian white supremacy and settler colonialism, and tracks the emergence of an Australian Jewish antifascist political subjectivity from a complex political ethic of Holocaust memorialisation. It outlines how this ethic was geared towards a horizon of redemption and radical social change, and how this orientation led to possibilities for political solidarity with other oppressed peoples.

Drawing on a range of archival sources, such as newspaper articles, magazines, pamphlets and creative works, this thesis paints an intellectual and cultural portrait of the vibrant Australian world of Jewish antifascism, and consequently uncovers a previously obscured history of radical Jewish thought in Australia. This thought is contextualised in terms of its relationship to international political forces, including a transnational Jewish antifascist movement, Zionism, Communism, global decolonisation and the Cold War. In narrating this account, this thesis overturns previous scholarly assumptions about Australian Jewish history and the history of Holocaust memory, and in so doing contributes to new understandings of Australian migrant history and the place of migrants within Australian settler colonialism.

Declaration

(i) This thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated in the preface;

(ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used; and

(iii) This thesis is fewer than 120,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices, as approved by the Research Higher Degrees Committee.

Preface

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List of Abbreviations

ABS Australasian Book Society

AGMC Anti-German Migration Campaign

AJC American Jewish Committee

AJO *Australian Jewish Outlook*

ALP Australian Labor Party

BUF British Union of Fascists

CPA Communist Party of Australia

CPGB Communist Party of Great Britain

DP Displaced Persons

ECAJ Executive Council of Australian Jewry

ILO International Labour Organisation

IWW Industrial Workers of the World

JAFC Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee

JCCFAS Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism

KYO Kadimah Youth Organisation

RWG Realist Writers Group

RSL Returned and Services League

SCCFAS Sydney Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism

VAJEX Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen

VJBD Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies

WJC World Jewish Congress

Introduction

With whom does historicism actually sympathise? The answer is inevitable: with the victor.

Walter Benjamin [1]

For it is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intended in that image.

Walter Benjamin [2]

In June 1948, the representatives of Jewish communities from over 60 countries met for the Second Assembly of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in Montreux, Switzerland. This Assembly was the first possible since the Congress's inaugural session in 1936. Setting the scene for the discussion at the conference, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the WJC, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, pronounced that since the First Assembly the Jewish people 'have witnessed the greatest tragedy in Jewish history — the annihilation of more than one third of our people by the Nazi barbarians and their allies.'[3] Referring to the collective Jewish failures to save more lives from what is now commonly known as the Holocaust, Goldmann continued:

> it was the tragic short-sightedness of a people which had got used to its abnormal situation, and which, confronted with a danger of unprecedented character and dimensions, could react only by the usual routine methods. More important than any admission of our past failures, is to apply to our future the tremendous results of the greatest tragedy in Jewish history.[4]

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[1] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1955; reprint, 1973), 248.
[2] Ibid., 247.
[3] Dr. Nahum Goldmann, "Opening Address," in *Papers from the World Jewish Congress Second Plenary Assembly* (Montreux, Switzerland: World Jewish Congress (WJC). Available at http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=22287, 1948). Goldmann would go on to serve as WJC president from 1948 until 1977.
[4] It is important to note that during the 1940s and 1950s the term 'Holocaust' was not yet in widespread usage to refer to the mass murder of European Jewry by the Nazi regime. I use the term throughout this thesis for consistency, brevity and ease of reference and understanding. This term was chosen in preference to 'Shoah' or 'Khurbn' both because of its more encompassing character and because it is the more widely known and accepted term. For discussions of the politics and history of this naming, see Anna-Vera Sullam Callimani, "A Name for Extermination," *The Modern Language Review* 94, no. 4 (1999): 978-999; Vivian M. Patraka, "Situating History and Difference: The Performance of the Term Holocaust in Public Discourse," in *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, ed.

Goldmann went on to suggest that the world was facing great upheavals, revolutions, and social, cultural and economic change. He asked, '[i]n the fight against new ideas, reactionaries — defenders of the past — must always seek a scapegoat — and who more likely than the Jewish people, the classic scapegoat and object of attack from time immemorial for every reactionary movement in the world?' Goldmann then outlined the dangers of a growing antisemitism in Great Britain, the US, Latin American countries, and especially in Germany and Austria. He emphasised:

> I hope the Jewish people has learned from the last fifteen years not to deal lightly with anti-semitism, not to regard it as an isolated local phenomenon, for which antiquated and piecemeal methods are still adequate. Anti-semitism always was, and to-day is more than ever, a general political phenomenon. It is one of the most popular disguises of reactionaries, Nazis and Fascists everywhere, one of the most formidable weapons for all aggressive movements…It is much more of a problem of world politics than a specifically Jewish one, and it is only with the help of all democratic, liberal and progressive forces in the world that there is any chance of striking at it effectively, and preventing in the future catastrophes such as the one through which we have passed in the last decade or so. [5]

Goldmann here outlined the main themes and analysis of a widespread Jewish antifascist interpretation of the Holocaust and its consequences. It is the purpose of this thesis to delineate hitherto neglected aspects of the political movements that generated this interpretation and were generated from it.[6]

In particular, this thesis focuses on the key Australian left-wing manifestations of this politics in the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS) and the Kadimah Youth Organisation (KYO). A like-minded group of Central European refugees, men from established Eastern European families, and Anglo-Australian Jews founded the JCCFAS in Melbourne in May 1942.[7] As historian David Rechter has stated, the JCCFAS 'represented in institutional form the broad-based antifascist leftism enjoying considerable vogue both within the Jewish community and in society at large.'[8] It combined the practical activity of monitoring and responding to specific

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Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 83-98.

[5] Goldmann, "Opening Address."

[6] The broad consensus on Goldmann's antifascist analysis and principles are reflected in the resolutions of the Second Assembly, see World Jewish Congress, "Resolutions Adopted by the Second Plenary Assembly of the World Jewish Congress," ibid.

[7] David Rechter, "Beyond the Pale: Jewish Communism in Melbourne," (University of Melbourne, 1986), 81-82.

[8] Ibid., 82.

incidences of antisemitism with a larger propaganda effort that consistently linked the threats of antisemitism and fascism.[9] The KYO was formed in 1946. It evolved from and replaced the Kadimah Younger Set, taking a more political and radical direction than the earlier organisation.[10] Although it was a venue for intense political discussion, its focus was more cultural than the JCCFAS and it was less of a campaigning body in and of itself, although its membership had a large overlap with the youth section of the JCCFAS.[11]

Focusing on the writings and publications associated with these organisations, this thesis argues that Australian Jewish antifascism was a major political and cultural force in Australian Jewish communities in the 1940s and early 1950s. It charts the emergence of a non-nationalist, anti-assimilationist Australian Jewish antifascist political subjectivity, and examines its ideological basis, cultural and political practice, and the circumstances of its rapid fall from grace. Drawing on a range of archival sources, such as newspaper articles, magazines, pamphlets and creative works, it paints a vibrant intellectual and cultural portrait of the Australian world of Jewish antifascism created and inhabited by these organisations, and consequently uncovers a previously obscured history of radical Jewish thought in Australia. This thought is contextualised in terms of its relationship to international political forces, including a transnational Jewish antifascist movement, Zionism, Communism, global decolonisation and the Cold War. In narrating this account, this thesis overturns previous scholarly assumptions about Australian Jewish history and the history of Holocaust memory, and in so doing contributes to understandings of Australian migrant history and the place of migrants within Australian settler colonialism.

[9] Ibid., 110.
[10] Ibid., 89. See also Lou Jedwab, "The Kadimah Youth Organisation in Melbourne: Reminiscences 1942-53," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 12, pt.1 (1993): 179-187.
[11] There was also considerable overlap with the Eureka Youth League, an organ of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). The youth section of the JCCFAS formed in December 1947. Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 95-97.

Challenging the Australian historiography

In this thesis I draw on a range of scholarship, including previous influential histories of Jews in Australia that have emerged since the 1960s and developed more fully in the 1980s and 1990s. Analysing this trend, John Docker argued in the mid-1990s that the major historians of Australian Jewry have produced works which tend towards a self-congratulatory narrative of progress and achievement that valorises one type of conservative and inward-looking Jewishness.[12] Docker suggested that these histories were not written with an eye towards how Australian Jewry related to a changing landscape of antisemitism and racialisation in Australia; instead, he argued that any obstacles encountered by Jews have been assessed as primarily internal issues.[13] Building on this analysis, I suggest that the major problem with the historiography on Australian Jewry is similar to one that occurs in the broader genre of Australian multicultural historiography.

Hsu-Ming Teo provides us with a concise overview of multicultural historiography in Australia, arguing that it reflects similar developments in Australian multicultural policy more generally. [14] Both have functioned to centre the dominance of Anglo culture as the 'core' national culture, with 'so-called ethnic cultures . . . marginalised'.[15] The 'ethnic contribution histories' that were written in the mid-1980s presented histories of ethnic cultures as 'petrified spectacles'.[16] Barry York has critiqued the 'Australian Ethnic Heritage' series, which consisted of a number of books published in the mid-1980s covering a brief history of different ethnic groups — such as Afghans, Americans, Hungarians, Dutch, Jews etc. — and their contributions to Australian society. York

[12] John Docker, "Rethinking Postcolonialism and Multiculturalism in the Fin De Siècle," *Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (1995): 416-418. Docker's chief target was the Rubinsteins' recently published history of Jews in Australia, discussed further below.
[13] John Docker, *1492: The Poetics of Diaspora* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), 172.
[14] Hsu-Ming Teo, "Multiculturalism and the Problem of Multicultural Histories: An Overview of Ethnic Historiography," in *Cultural History in Australia*, ed. H. Teo and R. White (Sydney: Allen and Unwin 2003).
[15] Ibid., 143-144.
[16] Ibid., 144. Jon Stratton suggests that ethnicities were conceived in government policy in the 1980s as cultures that were 'static', 'discrete', 'unified and homogeneous'. Jon Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish* (London: Routledge, 2000), 230-231. This 1980s governmental definition of ethnicity was preceded by the 1970s social movement in Australia which mobilised around 'ethnic rights', see George Zangalis, *Migrant Workers & Ethnic Communities: Their Struggle for Social Justice & Cultural Rights: The Role of Greek-Australians* (Common Ground, 2008), 321-327, passim; Mark Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945-1975* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 131-155.

suggests that these books had a propensity to exaggerate the importance of an ethnic group and a tendency to 'isolate the activities of the particular group from the wider social historical matrix'. He also notes their 'failure to link experience in Australia to conditions in the country of origin.'[17] While these studies have certainly enlarged the popular and academic understanding of ethnic community histories in Australia, they are limited by their emphasis on success, achievement and ultimately integration into a national multicultural 'mosaic'. According to Teo, this genre of history tends to support the prevailing histories of Australian nation building, just adding more 'colour and movement' to already dominant narratives.[18]

The process of becoming a singular 'ethnic community' in Australia, Teo argues, is not simply a 'natural' collective response to having a shared minority language or culture. Instead, various groups and individuals 'governed by different economic interests, gender inequality, and [regional] ethnocentrism' are brought together in response to discrimination, assimilatory pressures and social marginalisation.[19] This process of 'ethnicisation' is reinforced by business, political and cultural institutions which discursively construct the ethnic group as a method of exploitation, governance and representation.[20] Teo suggests that rather than treating ethnicity as a reified category,

[17] Barry York, "Ethno-Historical Studies in a Multicultural Australia," in *Studies in Australian Ethnic History* (Canberra: Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Australian National University, 1996) cited in Teo, "Multiculturalism," 147.
[18] Ibid., 147. In a similar mode, Sara Wills suggests that 'historians need to confront those versions of the multicultural script that serve only to constitute the nation.' Sara Wills, "Un-Stitching the Lips of a Migrant Nation," *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 118 (2002): 72.
[19] Teo, "Multiculturalism," 149.
[20] Ibid., 149. In Michael Kakakios and John Van Der Velden's account, 'the massive increase of the migrant working mass, and the hegemonic problems this has created for the state since the 1960s, gave birth to "ethnicity" as an outward ideological projection of the community bourgeoisie.' Michael Kakakios and John van der Velden, "Migrant Communities and Class Politics: The Greek Communities in Australia," in *Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia*, ed. Gill Bottomley and Marie De Lepervanche (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1984), 163. Ghassan Hage discusses the socio-political positioning of the ethnic other in Australia as reflecting 'a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion' necessary for the devaluation of their labour. Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998), 117-140. For an account of the positioning of Australia's immigrant workforce as a super exploitable section of the working class in the latter half of the twentieth century see Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land* (Sydney: Pluto Press Australia, 1988); Constance Lever-Tracy and Michael Quinlan, *A Divided Working Class: Ethnic Segmentation and Industrial Conflict in Australia* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988). For further critical approaches to ethnicisation see Jon Stratton and Ien Ang, "Multicultural Imagined Communities: Cultural Difference and National Identity in Australia and the USA," *Continuum* 8, no. 2 (1994): 124-158; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (Verso, 1991); Rey Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

critical histories should consider histories of 'ethnicisation' as a multi-faceted, always relational process.[21] This perspective has been key to this thesis.

I suggest that the perceived need for multicultural histories to further a narrative of success and integration has distorted and occluded the central role the Jewish left played in the Jewish community in the 1940s and early 1950s. The principal target of Docker's critique is Hilary and W.D. Rubinstein's two-volume *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History* (1991). In the second volume, covering the post-World War Two era, W.D. Rubinstein's central thesis is that the Jewish community since the early 1950s has become increasingly 'non-universalistic', 'inward-looking' and 'concerned almost solely with its own future'.[22] Rubinstein correlates this with Jewish 'economic, professional, and cultural success in the wider Australian community' and contrasts it with the US Jewish community's long tradition of socialism, liberalism and 'universality'.[23] According to Rubinstein,

> Post-war Australian Jewry arguably never had … any vision which is not, essentially wholly Jewish, and either aimed at rebuilding the shattered remnants of European Jewry here, or at furthering Israel and Zionism, or a vision expressed in purely religious terms. Post-war Australian Jewry has never sought to change Australian society for the better through radical nostrums.[24]

Rubinstein links this to the Holocaust and to Israel: 'Jewish survival became, and remains, the central concern of a tiny community composed very disproportionately of Holocaust survivors; Israel's raison d'etre is Australian Jewry's writ large. In such an environment, Jewish universalism is a luxury which cannot be afforded, and which, regularly, represents an impediment to Jewish aspirations.'[25]

In seeming contradiction, on the very next page Rubinstein notes that there was a challenge to this non-universalistic ideology in the decade after World War Two. Referring obviously to the JCCFAS, Rubinstein states that in this period 'a coherent and articulate body of Jewish activists in effect challenged the direction of the community's leaders'; he immediately clarifies that these activists were 'decisively defeated' and that

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[21] Teo, "Multiculturalism," 148-150.
[22] William D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History: Volume 2, 1945 to the Present* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 6.
[23] Ibid., 6-7. For a history of the ongoing contested nature of this liberalism since World War Two, see Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (Columbia University Press, 2002).
[24] Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, 7.
[25] Ibid., 15.

'the decisiveness of [their] defeat meant that no universalistic group or tendency has since occupied more than a marginal place in the community.'[26] Thus, in Rubinstein's narrative, the JCCFAS is the exception that proves the rule. While affecting even-handedness, for the most part Rubinstein views and judges the JCCFAS, through the prism of its denials of Soviet and Eastern European antisemitism in the mid to late-1950s, as something of a 'tragic' anomaly.[27]

This thesis concurs with Rubinstein's assessment of this period as being the high point of the mainstream acceptance of left-wing Jewish ideas in the Jewish community. However, there are several limitations in Rubinstein's conceptualisation: principally that he devolves his overall narrative into a triumphalist teleology. Although this thesis is limited in scope and focuses only on the late 1940s to the mid-1950s, I would question the extent to which left or more liberal ideas were ever completely purged from Australian Jewish communities.[28] To suggest such a thing was possible also suggests that the institutional structures of the community were fully representative of one easily identifiable and analysable 'Jewish community'. As I demonstrate in this thesis, particularly in Chapter Four, this purging of the Jewish antifascist left from Jewish institutions was not an inevitability; it could only have taken place because of a convergence of multiple internal and external factors, all concentrated in a very short time period. As put by Stuart Hall in his gloss on Antonio Gramsci, this thesis takes the view that 'social forces which lose out in any particular historical period do not thereby disappear from the terrain of struggle; nor is struggle in such circumstances suspended.'[29]

Rubinstein also expresses a very Melbourne-centric view. As Suzanne Rutland notes, in Sydney there was never any violent break between the left and the Jewish

[26] Ibid., 8.
[27] Ibid., 410.
[28] For instance, Peter Medding's 1960s survey of the Melbourne Jewish community found significant continued support for the JCCFAS. P.Y. Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival: A Political and Sociological Study of an Australian Jewish Community* (Melbourne Canberra Sydney: F.W. Cheshire, 1968), 176. See also Philip Mendes, "The 'Declining' Years of the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1954-1970," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 17, pt.3 (2004): 375-388; Philip Mendes, *The New Left, the Jews and the Vietnam War, 1965-1972* (North Caulfield: Lazare, 1993).
[29] Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 423.

establishment.[30] While Rubinstein is correct to point to the denials of Soviet and Eastern European antisemitism as one of the major reasons for the rapid decline in popularity of the JCCFAS, if we take this as our principal prism of analysis we risk recapitulating anti-communist discourse about 'communist fronts' and 'ultimate allegiances'.[31] As I discuss below, this is a discourse that obscures more than it reveals. Further, I question Rubinstein's assumptions about the Holocaust as an inevitable cause for conservativism. As I show throughout this thesis, Holocaust memory was a key part of the Jewish left's decidedly universalistic discourse.

As Docker notes, Rubinstein's narrative of the overcoming of purely internal problems leads to a demonisation of Anglo Jews as uniformly assimilationist, wealthy and hostile towards new Jewish migrants. This is a well-worn trope in Australian Jewish historiography and explains Rubinstein's surprise at the presence of Anglo Jews in the JCCFAS.[32] Although a sociological or economic analysis of the Jewish community and its political factions is not a primary part of my narrative, following Docker I do not see the politics of these factions as forming principally along ethnic lines. Thus, one contribution of this thesis is to remedy the limited analyses of those who have assessed the history of the Jewish antifascist left as a marginal anomaly, to be addressed only in order to further a dominant meta-narrative of Australian Jewish conservatism.

Another key contribution of this thesis is to build on the work of those who have considered the significance of the Jewish left in a more sympathetic light. While recognising the contribution of these scholars, I contest their analyses by offering a re-framing of Jewish antifascist ideology during this period. The latter half of David Rechter's 1986 Master's thesis on 'Jewish Communism in Melbourne' remains the best general history of the JCCFAS.[33] Rechter's history is based on written sources and a

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[30] Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Rose Bay: Brandl & Schlesinger 1997), 335-336.
[31] The conservative sociologist Peter Medding also adopts this framing in his discussion of the JCCFAS. Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 62-71.
[32] Docker, *1492: The Poetics of Diaspora*, 172-173; Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, 403.
[33] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 80-153. Suzanne Rutland's account of the Jewish Council follows more closely Sarah McNaughton's Honours thesis, which is sympathetic towards the Council, painting it as part of a left liberal Melbourne civil society political and intellectual tradition. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 327-336; Sarah McNaughton, "Liberalism and Anti-Communism in the Melbourne Jewish Community in the 1940s and 1950s," (Sydney University, 1984). Rutland has a useful discussion of the key players behind *Unity* in Suzanne Rutland, "Creating Intellectual and Cultural Challenges: The Bridge," in *Feast and Fasts: Festschrift in Honour of Alan David Crown*, ed. Marianne Dacy, Jennifer Dowling, and Suzanne Faigan (Sydney: Mandelbaum, 2005). See also Nate Zusman, ""Unity" a Magazine of Jewish Affairs," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 9, pt. 5 (1983): 341-355. Mark Aarons' discussion runs along similar lines to Rutland's. He too concentrates on the government's

series of twenty oral history interviews with key figures. It is a central reference throughout this thesis. Rechter makes a distinction between the smaller and more sectional communist Yiddish-speaking groups in Melbourne, and the broad based JCCFAS. As Rechter outlines, the JCCFAS emerged as an organised response to the urgent need for new communal strategies to combat the elevated international menace of antisemitism. These strategies displaced the previous Jewish leadership's passive 'fear of conspicuousness' approach.[34] In this sense, Rechter argues that the JCCFAS' politics had a much broader scope than other contemporary Jewish left groups and featured a mix of Anglo, Eastern European, and — I would add — Central European Jews.[35]

Yet it is my contention that to understand the political positioning of the Jewish antifascist left in this period, it is essential to understand its ideology and thought in an international context. Much work has been done internationally on the anglophone Jewish left of the twentieth century using the framework of 'Jewish Communism'.[36] While this framing is undoubtedly relevant to the US context, which had a strong and relatively distinct Jewish communist movement, I suggest we gain further insight into

migration policy and Jewish reaction to it, rather than assessing the thought and politics of the JCCFAS, see Mark Aarons, *Sanctuary: Nazi Fugitives in Australia* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1989), 80-109.

[34] Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 70.

[35] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 84-85.

[36] For a representative sample of the most recent historiography, see Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik, eds., *A Vanished Ideology: Essays on the Jewish Communist Movement in the English-Speaking World in the Twentieth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016). See also Henry F. Srebrnik, "Communism and Pro-Soviet Feeling among the Jews of East London, 1933-45," *Immigrants & Minorities* 5 (1986): 285-304; "The British Communist Party's National Jewish Committee and the Fight against Anti-Semitism During the Second World War," *Immigrants & Minorities* 8, no. 1-2 (1989): 82-96; *Dreams of Nationhood: American Jewish Communists and the Soviet Birobidzhan Project, 1924-1951* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010); Jason Heppell, "A Question of 'Jewish Politics'? The Jewish Section of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1936-1945," in *Jews, Labour and the Left, 1918-1945*, ed. Christine Collette and Stephen Bird (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Tony Kushner, "Jewish Communists in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Zaidman Collection," *Labour History Review* 55, no. 2 (1990): 66-75; Bat-Ami Zucker, "Jewish Communists and Jewish Culture in the 1930s," *Modern Judaism* 14, no. 2 (1994): 175-185; John Holmes, "American Jewish Communism and Garment Unionism in the 1920s," *American Communist History* 6, no. 2 (2007): 171-195. On non-Anglophone Jewish communists, see Joel Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Nick Underwood, "Our Most Beautiful Children: Communist Contests and Poetry for Immigrant Jewish Youth in Popular Front France," *Jewish Social Studies* 23, no. 1 (2017): 64-100; Orit Bashkin, *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 141-182; Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party, 1919-1948* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1979; repr., 2010); Amir Locker-Biletzki, "Colonialism and Imperialism in Communist Thinking in Palestine/Israel, 1919–1965," *Settler Colonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2018): 384-399; Robert Watson, "Between Liberation(s) and Occupation(s): Reconsidering the Emergence of Maghrebi Jewish Communism, 1942–1945," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 13, no. 3 (2014): 381-398; Alma Rachel Heckman, "Jewish Radicals of Morocco: Case Study for a New Historiography," *Jewish Social Studies* 23, no. 3 (2018): 67-100.

what Enzo Traverso has called the 'plurality of the antifascist phenomenon' by readjusting our framing towards 'antifascism' rather than 'communism' in the international context during this period.[37]

This thesis is concerned with a Jewish antifascism born from the international Popular Front against fascism. Although I nuance this definition further in Chapter Two, here I use the term 'Popular Front politics' to denote the movements and ideas generated through the international Communist movement's strategy of working within broad cross-class and cross-political tendency coalitions to defeat the international threat of fascism.[38] This new orientation on the global left had a significant effect on Jewish left politics internationally.[39] Both the Jewish and non-Jewish left's emphasis during this period on fighting fascism meant a change in Jewish left politics to reflect the understanding that fascism attacked Jews as Jews. This politics came to international prominence with the entry of the Soviet Union into World War Two and the impact of the Holocaust on a worldwide Jewish consciousness. While others have drawn attention to the impact of Popular Front politics on Yiddish speaking communists and leftists, [40] I suggest that the Australian Jewish antifascist left in the period I survey here was part of a parallel move towards an English-language, Jewish antifascism internationally. This international contextualisation of Jewish antifascism has previously been missing in the Australian context.

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[37] Enzo Traverso, *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914-1945* (New York and London: Verso 2015), 11. For an overview of the historiography on antifascism, see Hugo García, "Transnational History: A New Paradigm for Anti-Fascist Studies?," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 4 (2016): 563-572. See also Hugo García et al., eds., *Rethinking Antifascism : History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016); Christopher Vials, *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014); Nigel Copsey and Andrzej Olechnowicz, eds., *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Nigel Copsey, *Anti-Fascism in Britain* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000); Dave Renton, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Britain in the 1940s* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000); Michael Seidman, *Transatlantic Antifascisms: From the Spanish Civil War to the End of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Mark Bray, *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017).

[38] Duncan Hallas, *The Comintern* (London: Bookmarks, 1985), 123-159; Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 244-328.

[39] Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik, "Introduction," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 10-11.

[40] Matthew B. Hoffman, ""At What Cost Comrades?": Exploring the Jewishness of Yiddish-Speaking Communists in the United States," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016); Ester Reiter, "The Canadian Jewish Left: Culture, Community, and the Soviet Union," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016).

Although Rechter analyses these developments through the lens of Jewish Communism rather than Jewish antifascism, I agree with his depiction of the relationship between the Jewish left and the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In his account, although the way the Jewish communists worked was akin to the Party's Popular Front tactics of being leading or key players within larger broad based organisations (such as the JCCFAS), 'organisational links with the party were limited, and the relationship between the Party and the organised Jewish communists was ill-defined.'[41] This meant that although Jewish members of the CPA did operate at times as an organised and binding 'fraction' or caucus, claims about communist fronts, puppet organisations or infiltration are ill-conceived.[42]

Unlike other studies of the Jewish left in this period, Rechter does not just assess the JCCFAS; he also has a focus on the KYO and their activities.[43] Rechter suggests that 'Jewish communists formed the most active part of the Jewish anti-fascist movement. Working in the English-speaking community, and among the bilingual youth and solidly Yiddishist older generation, they created a dynamic social and political sub-culture, the impact of which reached into many areas of Jewish communal life.'[44] My thesis takes this as a prompt to delve deeper into this social movement, to interrogate the substance of the politics, thought and creative expression of Jewish antifascism in Australia.

Rechter mentions the influence of international Jewish antifascism, particularly in the Soviet Union and Britain, but given the scope of his thesis he does not focus on the exact nature of these influences or on their substantive ideas.[45] His assessment that the JCCFAS maintained 'to a degree' an increasingly obsolete 'pre-war Weltanschauung' is

[41] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 99. Here I assess Australian Jewish Popular Front politics along similar lines to Michael Denning's assessment of the US Popular Front as a 'historical bloc' of social movements, where the 'fellow travellers' were the core of these movements, rather than being centrally directed by Communist Party members. Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1997), 5-6. For discussion along these lines in the Australian (particularly Melbourne) case, see Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement, 1920-1955* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1975), 198.
[42] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 100. 'Fraction' was a CPA organisational term denoting an organised communist grouping within a larger non-communist organisation, workplace or community. E.g. see Douglas Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945-1960" (Victoria University, 2011), 26, 50; Macintyre, *The Reds*, 116.
[43] Rechter also discusses the different approaches the younger and older group had to politics. Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 100-101.
[44] Ibid., 87.
[45] Ibid., 98.

far from accurate.[46] In lines such as these, Rechter falls back on a discourse similar to Rubinstein's. In such a reading the politics of the Jewish left are all but dismissed as irrelevant historical curios, or as relics of a time that we have now completely transcended. This sort of approach is encapsulated in the unfortunate title of a recent collection on Jewish communism in the anglosphere: 'A Vanished Ideology'.[47]

Phillip Mendes has built upon Rechter's work in taking a more even-handed and sympathetic approach to the JCCFAS, dismissing the claim that it was simply a communist front.[48] Mendes has done important work with the JCCFAS's papers, amongst other sources, tracing the various ins and outs of the Jewish Council's controversies and conflicts with more conservative parts of the Jewish establishment.[49] However Mendes' analysis suggests that Jewish leftists can be neatly divided into those who were communist universalists and used their Jewishness cynically, and those who prioritised their Jewishness but had a mistaken strategy in aligning themselves with the left.[50] This depiction misrepresents the manner in which a distinct Jewish antifascist politics fitted into the broader Jewish and non-Jewish ideological landscape of the period. This thesis demonstrates that Australian Jewish antifascism was not just a matter of strategic calculations or ultimate allegiances; it involved a larger world-view, a reconceptualization of Jewishness and an ambitious cultural project. To suggest that these activists and thinkers were simply misled is to participate in a condescending and ultimately reactionary historicism which holds that Jewish antifascist ideas are relevant only to a past period. In Mendes account, Australian Jewish leftism was principally

[46] Ibid., 122.
[47] Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik, eds., *A Vanished Ideology: Essays on the Jewish Communist Movement in the English-Speaking World in the Twentieth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016). Though the chapters contained within do not reflect this abysmal title.
[48] Philip Mendes, "The Cold War, McCarthyism, the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, and Australian Jewry 1948-1953," *Journal of Australian Studies* 24, no. 64 (2000): 199-200.
[49] Mendes has produced a large amount of relevant publications on the Australian Jewish left, including inter alia, "Jews, Nazis and Communists Down Under," *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 119 (2002): 73-92; "The Cold War, McCarthyism, the Melbourne Jewish Council."; "Constructions of Judeo-Communism and the Unravelling of the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1949-1950," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 20, pt. 1 (2010): 110-122; "The 'Declining' Years of the Melbourne Jewish Council."; "The Enemy Is on the Right: Re-Evaluating the Formative Ideology and Political Strategy of the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1942-1947," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 14, pt. 2 (2008): 285-292; "Jewish Communism in Australia," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016).
[50] Mendes, "Jewish Communism in Australia," 208.

characterised by a combination of tragic mistakes and disloyalty to narrowly construed 'Jewish interests'; as such it can be safely relegated to the past.

In acknowledging the work of those who have studied the history of Australian Jewry in the post-World War Two period, and particularly the development of the Jewish left, I would suggest that much of the 'what', 'who', 'when', 'where' and to an extent 'how' has been written (though there is always room for more research). This thesis is the first major work, however, to examine the 'why' of Australian Jewish antifascism in the 1940s and early 1950s in any depth. Nevertheless, this 'why' does not sit separately from the other questions. Although I suggest that Jewish antifascist political thought is more than the sum of its historical determinants, this thesis reveals how this thought was generated through the cultural and political practice of the Jewish antifascist left movement which worked in, and to transform, a particular historical situation.

Reframing Australian Jewish histories

In order to produce an alternative to contribution or success narratives such as Rubinstein's, this thesis reframes Australian Jewish histories by drawing on conceptual tools developed in the fields of transnational migration studies, critical race and whiteness studies and settler colonial studies. In doing so it challenges a particular version of Australian Jewish history that focuses on a neat transition from assimilationism to multiculturalism. For Geoffrey Braham Levey, for example, the advent of official multicultural policy in 1970s Australia produced a significant change in Australian Jewish self-perception within Australian society.[51] In his account, before the initiation of these policies Jews publicly downplayed their difference, seeing themselves as 'Australians who happened to be of the Mosaic faith'.[52] This account of the Jewish community's history and approach to multiculturalism should be questioned.

I suggest that multiculturalism was not a product of top-down government policy. Instead, the refiguring of power relations between Anglo Australians and non-Anglo migrants, and the construction of ethnic and multicultural institutions, resulted from a

[51] Geoffrey Braham Levey, "Jews and Australian Multiculturalism," in *Jews and Australian Politics*, ed. Geoffrey Braham Levey and Phillip Mendes (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2004).
[52] Ibid, 181.

complex dialectic of ethnic self-organisation, class politics and government responses.[53] As this thesis demonstrates, debates about Jewish identity, difference and assimilation were occurring long before the 1970s. Thus, my research also seeks to revisit those histories of multiculturalism that downplay migrant political agency in the 1950s and 1960s and see migrants as essentially alienated from existing Australian political parties, trade unions and political institutions.[54] In doing so, I build on recent studies which question the extent to which assimilationism was an all-pervasive social ideology and policy framework.[55]

Robert Mason suggests that it is precisely through turning to transnational history that we can start to overcome the limitations of existing multicultural and ethnic histories.[56] He argues that we need to take the transnational constitution of these ethnic communities seriously: physically through the process of migration, but also ideologically and epistemologically. Mason quotes the editors of the edited collection *Transnational Ties* (2008) as saying that 'transnational history is not a case of tracing the movement of certain individuals, but of investigating such individuals' "imaginative reach"'.[57] Thus a transnational framing can foreground migrants' past political and cultural experience as well as depict an ongoing 'transnational dimension of political self-constitution'.[58] Mason suggests that the diversity of migrant culture and politics exceeds the limits of ethnic and multicultural institutional structures (and, I would add, histories) that 'emphasise depoliticised ethnicities at the expense of other facets of migrants' lives'.[59] An essential part of writing a transnational history of mobilities and migration is to understand and take seriously the worldviews, epistemologies and transnational ideological connections that shape and are shaped by migrants. In this

[53] Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism*; Zangalis, *Migrant Workers*; Andrew Jakubowicz, Michael Morrissey, and Joanne Palser, *Ethnicity, Class and Social Policy in Australia* (Social Welfare Research Centre, University of New South Wales Kensington, 1984); Kakakios and van der Velden, "Migrant Communities and Class Politics,"; Simone Battiston, *Immigrants Turned Activists: Italians in 1970s Melbourne* (Kibworth Beauchamp, UK: Troubador Publishing, 2012).
[54] See James Jupp, *Arrivals and Departures* (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1966); Collins, *Migrant Hands*.
[55] Anna Haebich, *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia 1950-1970* (North Freemantle: Freemantle Press, 2008); Andrew Markus and Margaret Taft, "Postwar Immigration and Assimilation: A Reconceptualisation," *Australian Historical Studies* 46, no. 2 (2015): 234-251.
[56] Robert Mason, "Australian Multiculturalism: Revisiting Australia's Political Heritage and the Migrant Presence," *History Compass* 8, no. 8 (2010): 817-827.
[57] Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott, eds., *Transnational Ties: Australian Lives in the World* (ANU E Press, 2008) quoted in Robert Mason, "Australian Multiculturalism," 819.
[58] Ghassan Hage, *Alter-Politics: Critical Anthropology and the Radical Imagination* (Melbourne University Publishing, 2015), 92.
[59] Mason, "Australian Multiculturalism," 820.

thesis the transnational dimension of the political imagination of the Jewish antifascist left takes centre stage. This staging assists us to break with 'the frame of the nation-state' as *the* site of politics.[60]

Critical race and whiteness studies also assists with this approach. Whiteness studies originated in the US but has since been taken up internationally, including by Australian scholars, and I draw on it in this thesis to analyse some of the complexities of Australian Jews' racial positioning.[61] US scholars of immigration and migrant histories have found whiteness studies provides useful analytic tools.[62] I suggest that since Australia and the US share somewhat similar histories of settler colonisation and high levels of immigration, concepts taken from US whiteness studies are useful in the Australian context.[63] Georgia Shiells has suggested that whiteness is an 'unmarked marker' and a privileged positionality in Australia, but that through historical analysis, the constructed, changing and contingent nature of this whiteness can be revealed. [64] The obverse of this understanding is that those who have not become 'white', through historical processes, are still subject to racialisation.[65]

More specifically, Eric L. Goldstein's analysis of American Jewry's historical relationship to whiteness, provides a fruitful model for discussion of the shifting

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[60] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 20.
[61] Georgia Shiells, "Immigration History and Whiteness Studies: American and Australian Approaches Compared," *History Compass* 8 (2010): 790-804; Suvendrini Perera, "Who Will I Become? The Multiple Formations of Australian Whiteness," *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association Journal* 1 (2005): 30-40; Jon Stratton, "Multiculturalism and the Whitening Machine, or How Australians Become White," in *The Future of Australian Multiculturalism: Reflections on the Twentieth Anniversary of Jean Martin's the Migrant Presence*, ed. Ghassan Hage and Rowanne Couch (Sydney, NSW: Research Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sydney, 1999).
[62] See David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (Basic Books, 2006); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Harvard University Press, 1999); Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (Rutgers University Press, 1998); Thomas A Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2003); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Hasia R. Diner, "The World of Whiteness," *Historically Speaking* 9, no. 1 (2007): 20-22.
[63] My approach here stems from a comparative mode of analysis established by Patrick Wolfe. See Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* (2001): 866-905; Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London and New York: Verso, 2016). See also Katherine Ellinghaus, *Taking Assimilation to Heart: Marriages of White Women and Indigenous Men in the United States and Australia, 1887-1937* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).
[64] Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 203-204 in Shiells, "Immigration History," 791.
[65] Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*.

racialisation of Jews in Australia.[66] He contends that by aiming for inclusion within 'whiteness', migrants can collude with an oppressive regime of racialisation and exclusion. The background to this collusion, however, is the powerful structures of white supremacy, and thus he argues that 'there was also a good deal of coercion involved in the process by which [American] Jews became part of the white majority'.[67] His treatment, like mine, considers the strategy, conflict and contradictions within Jewish discourse about Jews, antisemitism and race more generally. In this depiction Jewish people are not passive objects defined solely through a changing governmental racial discourse. They deploy notions of race, religion and ethnicity in order to (partially) shape their own positioning within Jewish and non-Jewish discourse.[68] This approach accords with Teo's concern with histories of 'ethnicisation'.[69] Goldstein suggests that ethnicisation is not a top-down process, but one shaped by multiple, contesting ideas and practices.[70] Following Michael E. Staub, I suggest that the formation of 'ethnic identities' in this context is just as much shaped through 'intraethnic' political conflict as through 'interethnic conflict'.[71] My analysis of newsletters, propaganda, magazines and the Jewish press reveals the complexities, conflicts and contradictions of Jewish efforts at self-definition and collective political positioning.

The field of settler colonial studies is also particularly useful in delineating the changing forms of racialisation in Australia. Much recent scholarship has questioned the disciplinary and ideological divide between research on Australian multiculturalism and research on Indigenous issues.[72] For these scholars, race relations between non-Indigenous Australians cannot be understood fully without considering the formation of the Australian nation through an ongoing process of colonisation. Aileen Moreton-Robinson suggests that an analysis of settler colonialism is vital to understanding the

[66] Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*.
[67] Ibid., 5.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Teo, "Multiculturalism," 148-150.
[70] Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, 204-208.
[71] Staub, *Torn at the Roots*, 18.
[72] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, "Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation," in *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press 2004); Suvendrini Perera, "Futures Imperfect," in *Alter/Asians: Asian-Australian Identities in Art, Media and Popular Culture*. ed. len Ang et al. (Sydney: Pluto Press 2000); Ann Curthoys, "An Uneasy Conversation: The Multicultural and the Indigenous," in *Race, Colour and Identity in Australia and New Zealand*, ed. John Docker and Gerhard Fischer (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2000).

formation of whiteness.[73] Interrogating the relationship between racialisation, settler colonialism, migrants and Jewish people, I figure Australian white supremacy as the product of a set of distinct yet interrelated processes.

Patrick Wolfe, one of the key figures in the field of settler colonial studies, has a materialist, structuralist analysis of race and whiteness that has been a key influence in my work. Wolfe suggests that racial divisions have their genesis as ideological tools used to create and maintain social divisions. These social divisions, Wolfe argues, are ultimately premised on systems of exploitation of labour and land. For Wolfe, settler colonialism requires replacing Indigenous people on their land with settlers; this leads to a fundamental 'logic of elimination' that has determined and continues to determine the relationship between settlers and Indigenous people.[74] In Wolfe's formulation, 'invasion is a structure, not an event'.[75] I follow Wolfe in positing that this logic of elimination that accompanies invasion and settlement in Australia is the primary determinant of this nation's racial order.

The salience of an analysis of settler colonialism and its interrelation with Jewish left discourse will be expanded upon in Chapter Five, but for now we can note that in my analysis Jewish people sit within Australia's racial order as settlers that are 'not quite white' or 'marginal whites'.[76]According to Jon Stratton, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Jews occupied an ambivalent position in relation to the 'White Australia' policy and Australia's changing racial hierarchy.[77] I follow Stratton's discussion of whiteness as it refers to perceived assimilability and 'cultural compatibility'.[78] He suggests that before World War Two whiteness, in Australia, was assessed in a racially determinist way, with reference to a particular white phenotype. As a result of the post-war mass migration program, the category of whiteness was broadened and an importance was placed on race as a signifier of culture.[79]

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[73] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
[74] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409; "Land, Labor, and Difference."
[75] Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 33.
[76] Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*, 61.
[77] Ibid., 193-250.
[78] Stratton, "Multiculturalism and the Whitening Machine," 177.
[79] Ibid., 178. Gwenda Tavan suggests that the contested and contradictory nature of 'assimilationism' in the post-war era was precisely a result of its 'transitional' nature. In her view it represented a repudiation of an earlier explicitly racially determinist and eugenicist nationalism, challenged by international movements against racism and colonisation as well as new intellectual and academic currents. Gwenda

This emphasis on a common morality and values as a key element of whiteness runs through Australia's history of racial exclusion and white supremacy. This history is tied to larger issues of geopolitics and Western imperialism: from competition with China to the War on Terror; from the early exclusion of Chinese people through to the current panic around asylum seekers and Muslim migrants.[80] We can understand this logic as Orientalist.[81] As discussed below, it is this logic that partly determined the mid-century racialisation of Jewish people in Australia. In this thesis I also explore how the scope of intra-Jewish conflicts over Jewish racial and political positioning in Australia were heavily influenced by the changing place of Zionism and Israel within Western imperial designs.[82]

Stratton gives us a useful historical outline of governmental discourse regarding the racialisation of Jews in Australia. He notes that a growth in Australian nationalism, in the lead up to Federation and the establishment of the White Australia policy, was coupled with a rise of antisemitism in the 1890s.[83] The White Australia policy of immigration restriction, which would continue until the 1970s, was principally aimed at excluding Asian people and forming a 'cornerstone of the construction of a

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Tavan, "'Good Neighbours': Community Organisations, Migrant Assimilation and Australian Society and Culture, 1950–1961," *Australian Historical Studies* 27, no. 109 (1997): 77-89. For a discussion of the whiteness assigned to Syrians by virtue of their Christianity in the early twentieth century, see Anne Monsour, "Becoming White: How Early Syrian/Lebanese in Australia Recognised the Value of Whiteness," paper presented at the Historicising Whiteness Conference, Melbourne, Vic, Australia, 22-24 November 2006.

[80] Fethi Mansouri, "Citizenship, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Australia," in *Islam and the West: Reflections from Australia*, ed. S. Akbarzadeh and S. Yasmeen (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005); Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008).

[81] Andrea Smith, "Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy," in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Daniel Martinez HoSang, Oneka LaBennett, and Laura Pulido (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). I do not use Andrea Smith's work here lightly, being mindful of her deception and the great damage she has done. My citation of her here and in Chapter Five should not be taken as a personal endorsement of her or her conduct nor should my citations of anyone else throughout this thesis be taken in a similar way. See "Open Letter from Indigenous Women Scholars Regarding Discussions of Andrea Smith," https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/opinions/open-letter-from-indigenous-women-scholars-regarding-discussions-of-andrea-smith/. Smith is a US based scholar and her particular theorisation of 'Orientalism' here stems from an analysis of US politics and history.

[82] Abigail B. Bakan, "Race, Class, and Colonialism: Reconsidering the "Jewish Question"," in *Theorizing Anti-Racism: Linkages in Marxism and Critical Race Theories*, ed. Abigail B. Bakan and Enakshi Dua (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014). See also Keith P. Feldman, *A Shadow Over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

[83] Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*, 204-206. This mirrored developments in Europe where as Patrick Wolfe puts it 'the racialised Jew' as a 'displaced colonial surrogate within ... took on the xenophobic intensity of nationalism's outward thrust'. Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 102; Shmuel Almog, *Nationalism & Antisemitism in Modern Europe, 1815-1945* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1990).

homogeneous white Australian nation' as an outpost of the British empire.[84] Rutland notes that in the 1890s Jews were attacked by elements of the press as part of an 'aggressive nationalism' that figured Jews as playing a nefarious role in 'international finance and usury.'[85] The antipathy towards Jewish migration was particularly directed towards Russian Jews, who, unlike Anglo-Jews, were racialised as 'Asiatic'.[86] Despite this, Jews in Australia were for the most part considered white until the 1930s when in governmental discourse potential Jewish migrants were racialised and considered unassimilable.[87]

This thesis covers a period when Australian antisemitism was at its height, around the mid to late 1940s, when anti-Jewish refugee hysteria combined with the adverse public reaction to Jewish terrorism in Palestine.[88] Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s Jews were discriminated against in Australia's immigration policies.[89] This discrimination also extended into society more broadly at least until the mid-1960s.[90] Stratton

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[84] Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*, 214-215. As suggested above, this was coupled with a project of Indigenous dispossession and elimination which was justified on racial grounds. For a discussion of the relationship between Asian exclusion and Indigenous elimination and dispossession at the time of Federation, see Fred Cahir and Dan Tout, ""All That Appears Possible Now Is to Mitigate as Much as Possible the Trials of Their Closing Years": Alfred Deakin's Attitudes to Aboriginal Affairs," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 64, no. 2 (2018): 177-193. On the White Australia policy, see also Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, 137-165; Jennifer Rutherford, *The Gauche Intruder: Freud, Lacan and the White Australian Fantasy* (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2000); Gwenda Tavan, *The Long Slow Death of White Australia* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2005); Leigh Boucher, "'Whiteness' before 'White Australia'?," in *Historicising Whiteness: Transnational Perspectives on the Construction of an Identity*, ed. Leigh Boucher, Jane Carey, and Katherine Ellinghaus (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2007); Jane Carey and Claire McLisky, eds., *Creating White Australia* (Sydney University Press, 2009); Haebich, *Spinning the Dream.*

[85] Rutland also quotes *The Bulletin* calling Jews 'the one with the Talmud', suggesting that the racialisation of Jews in Australia was partly based on their perceived allegiance to alternate system of law and values. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 95.

[86] Jon Stratton, "The Colour of Jews: Jews, Race and the White Australia Policy," *Journal of Australian Studies* 20, no. 50-51 (1996): 55.

[87] Ibid., 58; Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 144.

[88] Suzanne Rutland, "Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria: A Case of Racial or Religious Bigotry?," *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no. 77 (2003): 69-79.

[89] Suzanne Rutland, "Subtle Exclusions: Postwar Jewish Emigration to Australia and the Impact of the IRO Scheme," *The Journal of Holocaust Education* 10, no. 1 (2001): 50-66; Andrew Markus, "Jewish Migration to Australia 1938–49," *Journal of Australian Studies* 7, no. 13 (1983): 18-31.

[90] For example, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne Frank Woods noted in 1965 that '[a]nti-Semitism is fairly general in Melbourne in business and academic circles and in some schools, and certain clubs and organisations in Melbourne are barring Jews from membership.' Quoted in J.M. Machover, "Towards Rescue," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 7, pt.1 (1971): 10. The story for Sephardic Jews, migrating from India and the Middle East to Australia, was different from that of European Jews. Although restrictions were eventually lifted in the mid-1960s, they faced a greater degree of governmental racialisation and discrimination than that faced by European Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants as well as racial prejudice from Jewish community institutions, see Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 242-243; Naomi Gale, "A Case of Double Rejection: The Immigration of Sephardim to Australia," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 269-286. For accounts of Middle Eastern and Sephardic Jewry in Australia, see Racheline Barda, *Egyptian-Jewish Emigres in Australia* (Amherst, New York:

concludes that during the twentieth century Jews in Australia occupied an ambivalent position within Australian racial discourse. An antisemitism informed by racial and religious discourse meant that 'there was always the possibility that Jews in Australia would be racialised as 'Asiatics' and excluded from the nation-state.'[91]

While the Jewish antifascist left principally thought of antisemitism in relation to fascism and reactionary politics, I explore the ways in which they also linked antisemitism to other forms of racism, colonialism and structural inequality. Stratton's account of Jewish racialisation in the wider context of white supremacy in Australia is useful in this regard; however, he does not offer an empirically based insight into the agency of Jews in shaping both internal Jewish community discourses and resisting external discourses of racialisation and ethnicisation. Rutland presents us with a strongly empirical account of anti-Jewish prejudice in the late 1940s. She does not discuss in detail Jewish efforts to resist or refute such antisemitism.[92] I shall argue that Australian Jews were not passively defined under these discourses — on the contrary they often struggled in a contested and contradictory manner to collectively define themselves in relationship to both antisemitism and settler colonialism.[93]

Identifying the Jewish 'community'

In order to situate the history outlined in this thesis, it is necessary to clarify the grounds upon which we can talk of a 'Jewish community' in Australia. According to census figures, the Jewish population in Australia more than doubled in the years between 1933 and 1961; rising from 23,553, with a majority being Anglo-Jews, to 59,343. This was largely the result of German and Austrian refugees arriving in the late 1930s and

Cambria Press, 2011); Naomi Gale, *The Sephardim of Sydney: Coping with Political Processes and Social Pressures* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2005); Aaron Aaron, *The Sephardim of Australia & New Zealand* (Sydney: A. Aaron, 1979). Here I should note that a comprehensive historical account of Jewish racialisation in Australia and indeed intra-Jewish racism and discrimination is outside of the scope of this thesis.

[91] Stratton, "The Colour of Jews: Jews, Race and the White Australia Policy," 63.

[92] Rutland, "Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria: A Case of Racial or Religious Bigotry?"

[93] Here I build on and question aspects of Colin Tatz's mostly negative assessment of the historical relationship between Australian Jews and Indigenous people. Colin Tatz, "An Essay in Disappointment: The Aboriginal-Jewish Relationship," *Aboriginal History* 28 (2004): 100-121.

Holocaust survivors arriving from Eastern Europe in the late 1940s and the 1950s.[94] Almost all of the post-war migrants settled in Melbourne and Sydney, cementing these cities as the major Jewish population centres.[95] As Rutland puts it, this influx 'radically transformed every aspect of Jewish life in Australia.'[96] Despite this doubling, Jewish people have always been a small minority in Australia, never constituting more than one percent of the total population.[97]

Australian Jews were (and still are) divided by class, ethnicity, gender inequality and large differences in religious practice and affiliation.[98] These divisions raise the issue of the usefulness of the concept of 'the Jewish community'. In this thesis I do not treat the 'Jewish community' as a monolith, nor do I claim that its representative structures were in any way identical with a complete political expression of all Jews in Australia. This thesis at times pluralises this term to 'Australian Jewish communities' in order to avoid completely reifying this concept and to indicate the geographic dispersal of Australian

[94] It is notable that census questionnaires in Australia have only ever defined Jewishness as a matter of religious identification. Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 18-19. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 256. There was also significant immigration of Jews from Russia, Palestine and particularly Poland before the 1930s. Ibid., 147-148.

[95] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora,* 254. There were (and still are) significant Jewish populations elsewhere in Australia. For example, see Jennifer Creese, *Jewish Life in Queensland: Celebrating 150 Years since 1865* (Milton, QLD: Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies, 2016); David Mossenson, *Hebrew, Israelite, Jew: The History of the Jews of Western Australia* (Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 1990).

[96] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora,* 256.

[97] Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 18; Ernest Platz, *New Australians: An Occupational Analysis of Jewish Migrants in Victoria* (Melbourne: Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1949). For an account of how this particular history of immigration has led to a 'long-term cultural invisibility' of Australian Jews, see Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*, 239-240.

[98] Census figures from 1947, while being broken down along ambiguous categories, indicate that although occupation distribution amongst Australian male Jews was quite different from the general population, a large majority were employees. Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 20-21. According to Peter Medding's random sample by 1961 (with the caveat that in contradistinction to the census he classes managers as employers) we can see there was a large change in class composition amongst male Jews in Australia with 51.2 % being categorised as employers. Ibid., 20-21. These statistics give no indication of women's occupations. For histories of Australian Jewish women, see Marlo L. Newton, *Making a Difference: A History of the National Council of Jewish Women* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2000); Lysbeth Cohen, *Beginning with Esther: Jewish Women in New South Wales from 1788* (Sydney: Ayers & James Heritage Books, 1987); Barbara Bloch and Eva Cox, "Mending the World from the Margins: Jewish Women and Australian Feminism," in *Jews and Australian Politics*, ed. Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Philip Mendes (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004); Rebecca Aizen, "Like Gefilte Fish out of Water: Constructing Jewish Femininity in Australia," (University of Melbourne, 2005). Divisions among Jews in Australia formed not only along political lines, but among class and cultural lines. One of the major indicators of this in Melbourne, for example, was the geographic division between poorer, more recent migrants in the inner northern suburbs and more established and wealthier Jews who lived in the south-eastern suburbs. This symbolic division did not map exactly onto realities however. Rutland notes that these geographic divisions played out quite differently in Sydney. Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 20; Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora,* 288-289. For a discussion of religious differences amongst Australian Jews, see Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 340-346.

Jews.[99] However, I employ the idea of a singular 'Jewish community' for a number of reasons. As suggested above with regard to the creation of the 'ethnic community' in Australia, the idea of 'the Jewish community' can be apprehended as a result of historical processes of resistance to racialisation and social discrimination, as well as as a technique of governance and management of difference. I suggest that a 'Jewish community' was created by what both Rubinstein and Rutland deem a 'revolution' in Jewish communal affairs across Australia in the early 1940s.[100]

This 'revolution' was the result of the rapid emergence of a widespread acceptance of a Jewish identity that transcended religion and an intra-Jewish political solidarity.[101] Along with the creation of the JCCFAS, the result of this 'revolution' was to create the semi-democratic representative structures of Australian Jews — including a national representative body, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry in 1944 — that are significantly unaltered to this day.[102] As Rubinstein suggests, '[a] very large component of the drive for communal reform came from the Jewish Left and those who shared its values.'[103] This 'revolution' facilitated the large expansion of Jewish communal institutions.[104] The major factor prompting these changes was the Holocaust and the challenges thought to be facing Jews as a whole from an intensified international antisemitism.[105]

Along with the creation of political structures went a change in the way the Jewish press operated. The 1940s saw a flowering of periodicals and magazines that engaged in a common conversation about the politics and plight of Jewish people in Australia and internationally.[106] In this sense the 1940s saw the emergence of what Benedict Anderson terms an 'imagined community', a group of people who did not necessarily know each other personally, but saw themselves as part of the same public through engagement and investment in a common media, social and political groups, cultural,

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[99] This thesis' geographic scope in Australia is almost entirely limited to Melbourne and Sydney.
[100] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 324-327; W.D. Rubinstein, "The Revolution of 1942-1944," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 11, pt. 1 (1990): 142-153.
[101] W.D. Rubinstein, "The Revolution of 1942-1944."
[102] These representative bodies are not elected via universal suffrage. They consist of delegates from Jewish organisations. Proposals for individual democratic franchise were defeated in this period. Ibid., 152.
[103] Ibid., 151.
[104] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 352-357.
[105] W.D. Rubinstein, "The Revolution of 1942-1944,"146-149.
[106] Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 212. Marianne Dacy, *Periodical Publications from the Australian Jewish Community: A Union List* Fifth ed. (Sydney: University of Sydney, Archive of Australian Judaica, 2007). See further discussion in Chapter Three of this thesis.

educational and welfare institutions, political representation etc.[107] This meant that 'the Jewish community' became a site that can be conceptualised as an arena of political contestation. It is in this sense that I employ the term throughout this thesis.

We now need to address a further question of definition. Who exactly is a Jew? As Cynthia M. Baker has outlined, the term 'Jew' was not employed widely as a self-designation until the modern era.[108] The term's usage by Jews and non-Jews, has shifted through history expressing a multitude of often contradictory meanings.[109] Thus my definition of a Jew or someone who is Jewish, is also historically specific. For the purposes of this thesis, when discussing Jews in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s 'a Jewish person' refers to those who understood themselves to be Jewish. However, this understanding and self-designation was not a matter of fully controlling one's own social identity or choosing voluntarily to be Jewish or not Jewish. It was a manifestation of a particular identity in the social, economic and political situation of Australia (and the world) in the 1940s and 1950s.[110]

This thesis does not treat Jewish identity as a private matter of religion. While Jewish antifascism could not be deemed a religious movement, neither could it be deemed absolutely secular in nature.[111] The Jewish political and cultural practice of the Jewish

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[107] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). Obviously the Jewish community in Australia differs in many ways from a national imagined community, lacking sovereignty, an army etc. Barbara Bloch has a critical discussion of the notion of 'the Jewish community' in an Australian context. Barbara Bloch, "Unsettling Zionism: Diasporic Consciousness & Australian Jewish Identities," (University of Western Sydney, 2005), 77-91.

[108] Cynthia M. Baker, *Jew* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2017), 3, passim.

[109] For a small sample of the relevant literature, see Ulrike Brunotte, Anna-Dorothea Ludewig, and Axel Stähler, *Orientalism, Gender, and the Jews: Literary and Artistic Transformations of European National Discourses* (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2014); Efraim Sicher and Linda Weinhouse, *Under Postcolonial Eyes: Figuring the "Jew" in Contemporary British Writing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Jay Geller, *The Other Jewish Question: Identifying the Jew and Making Sense of Modernity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); Sarah Hammerschlag, *The Figural Jew: Politics and Identity in Postwar French Thought* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Harley Erdman, *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity, 1860-1920* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

[110] As put by Stratton, 'the racialisation of Jews is not something that, in the end, Jews have control over'. Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*, 236. This is not to say that all who had been designated as Jewish, or even identified as such chose in this period to base their public cultural and political activity around Jewishness. This is discussed in Chapter Three.

[111] I am here informed by historical critiques of the ideological binary between the secular and the religious, see Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

antifascists involved transcending a notion of Judaism as a privatised religion of faith and belief.[112] As I show, particularly in Chapter One, Jewish antifascist thought was informed by Jewish epistemologies and practices that originated before the modern era. Jewish religion was not imagined as a separate sphere of life before modernity; as such it makes little analytical sense to deem these Jewish ideas and practices as either religious or secular.

This question of Jewish identity brings us to another concept that is central to this thesis: 'assimilation'. Here a brief historical digression is needed. The conditions for Jewish acculturation and entrance into non-Jewish society in Europe only became possible through Jewish emancipation.[113] Whereas previously Jews belonged to separate collective legal and political entities, Jewish modernity meant the 'shift of political agency to the individual Jew who became a citizen of the modern nation-state.'[114] This led to the hegemonic idea that 'Jewishness' was an ongoing attribute of an individual.[115] As Julie E. Cooper outlines, for Hannah Arendt this making of 'Jewishness' into an indelible social marker rather than a political body or a denotation of religious practice was discursively adjacent to the racialisation of Jewish people and was thus highly dangerous.[116] In nineteenth and early twentieth century Western and Central Europe,

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[112] For a historicisation of this notion, see Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011). As put by Batnitzky, Jewish secular culture (as it originated in Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe) is 'parasitic on a religious culture', meaning it relied on references to Jewish theology. Ibid., 143.

[113] This process proceeded unevenly with Western European Jews achieving legal equality far before Eastern European Jews. Ibid., 130; Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, eds., *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). The literature on Jewish assimilation is vast. For a sample, see Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); Paula Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995); Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History, 1656-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Zygmunt Bauman, "Exit Visas and Entry Tickets: Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation," *Telos* 77 (1988); Marion Berghahn, *German-Jewish Refugees in England: The Ambiguities of Assimilation* (London: Macmillan, 1984); Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: A Study of the French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Klaus L. Berghahn, ed. *The German-Jewish Dialogue Reconsidered: A Symposium in Honor of George L. Mosse* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

[114] Batnitzky, *How Judaism*, 4. For an overview of the diversity of Jewish political history, see David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986).

[115] Julie E. Cooper, "A Diasporic Critique of Diasporism: The Question of Jewish Political Agency," *Political Theory* 43, no. 1 (2015): 87.

[116] Ibid., 87-88. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 1951; repr., 1976), 87.

Jewish people aiming to become accepted into wider non-Jewish society were marked and continually judged.[117] Thus individual personal conduct (whom one would marry, what one would eat etc.) became *the* ideological terrain for anxieties over Jewish identity and futurity.[118]

It is from this context that Australian Jewish historiography has inherited its definition of assimilation as involving the taking on of non-Jewish modes of 'dress, language and behaviour' and intermarriage.[119] This thesis breaks with this definition. In my rendering, Jewish assimilation is not understood as the consequence of an agglomeration of individual Jewish behaviours. Assimilation is not seen as a marker of becoming less Jewish as if there was one 'authentic' mode of Jewish life untouched by outside forces.[120] Instead, I analyse Jewish assimilation as an issue of collective political and cultural positioning.

Finally, in this discussion of forms of Jewish community and identity, it is necessary to outline this thesis' understanding of 'Jewish nationalism'. I do not suggest that there was ever what could be deemed a 'diaspora nationalism' in Australia as there had been in Eastern Europe and Russia.[121] The Jewish nationalism I consider in this thesis is primarily Zionism.[122] Zionism in Australia is discussed in detail in Chapters Three and Four, and I would simply note here its opposition to the internationalism of the Jewish antifascist left.[123] Zionism located Jewish safety and flourishing as being achievable

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[117] This was particularly so in Germany which became the paradigmatic case. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, USA: Polity Press, 1991), 112-113. Arendt famously outlined that in this situation Jews could only choose between being a parvenu and a pariah. Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," in *The Jewish Writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York: Schocken Books, 2007).

[118] Cooper, "A Diasporic Critique," 88; Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 84.

[119] See Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 5-6; Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 141. For a critical analysis of post-Holocaust Australian Jewish discourse around intermarriage, 'sexual insularity' and heteronormativity, see Jordana Silverstein, "'If Our Grandchildren Are Jewish': Heteronormativity, Holocaust Postmemory and the Reproduction of Melbourne Jewish Families," *History Australia* 10, no. 1 (2013): 167-186.

[120] See Amos Funkenstein, "The Dialectics of Assimilation," *Jewish Social Studies* 1, no. 2 (1995): 1-14.

[121] For an overview of the recent historiography, see David N. Myers, "Rethinking Sovereignty and Autonomy: New Currents in the History of Jewish Nationalism," *transversal* 13, no. 1 (2015): 44-51. See also Joshua M. Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013); Simon Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2014); *Jews & Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2012).

[122] In Chapters Three and Six Jewish internationalist antifascist multilingualism is also posed against Yiddishism, figured as a form of cultural Jewish nationalism.

[123] For other iterations of twentieth century Jewish internationalism, see Samuel Moyn, "René Cassin (1886-1929): Human Rights and Jewish Internationalism," in *Makers of Jewish Modernity: Thinkers, Artists, Leaders, and the World They Made*, ed. Jacques Picard, et al. (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton

only through Jewish self-determination in a Jewish nation-state, reflecting nineteenth century European nationalisms.[124] Jewish antifascism, on the other hand, was internationalist, locating Jewish safety and flourishing in a universal struggle for peace and freedom that transcended national borders and emphasised the validity of an internationally dispersed global Jewry.[125] It reflected broadly a socialist internationalism, one heavily inflected by Popular Front politics, which, as this thesis explores, tended to embrace elements of nationalism.[126]

Multidirectional Holocaust memory

To understand further how political movements in the Australian Jewish community such as Zionism and Jewish antifascism took shape it is necessary to look at the history of Holocaust memorialisation. A crucial dimension of an historical analysis of migrant

University Press, 2016); James Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). For Jewish internationalism in an earlier period, see Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006).

[124] Myers notes that Zionism, historically, did not only come in statist forms, see David N. Myers, "On the Idea of a Jewish Nation: Before and after Statism," *Perush* 1 (2009). Zionism after 1904 aimed at national Jewish self-determination in Palestine. For projects along similar lines not based in Palestine, see Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: NYU Press, 2014). For general histories and analysis of Zionism, see Jacqueline Rose, *The Question of Zion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Michael Brenner, *Zionism: A Brief History*, trans. Shelley Frisch (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2003); Michael Stanislawsky, *Zionism and the Fin De Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972). For histories of Zionism in Australia, see Bernard Keith Hyams, *The History of the Australian Zionist Movement* (South Caulfield, VIC: Zionist Federation of Australia, 1998); Max Freilich, *Zion in Our Time: Memories of an Australian Zionist* (Sydney: Morgan Publications, 1968); Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 295-323. For a critical exploration of the ideological role of Diaspora Zionism in the context of Holocaust education in Jewish schools in Australia and the US, see Jordana Silverstein, *Anxious Histories: Narrating the Holocaust in Jewish Communities at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), 99-131. For a critical history of Australian Zionism and the Australian Jewish relationship with Israel, see Bloch, "Unsettling Zionism," 120-190.

[125] This will be explored in-depth in Chapters Two and Three especially.

[126] On socialist internationalism, see Robert Bozinovski, "The Communist Party of Australia and Proletarian Internationalism, 1928-1945," (Victoria University, 2008); Michael Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement: The Idea of the Nation in Socialist and Anarchist Theory* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution: A History of International Communism, 1917-1991*, trans. Allan Cameron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Talbot C. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

subjectivities is an examination of collective memory.[127] Until the late 2000s it has been a commonplace understanding in popular memory and in studies of Holocaust memory internationally that in the first decades following World War Two, memories of the Holocaust were widely suppressed and silenced.[128] Over 17,000 Holocaust survivors migrated to Australia in the post-war period, around 60 per cent going to Melbourne and 40 per cent to Sydney.[129] Despite this, relatively little has been written on the history of Holocaust memory in Australia.[130] The accounts we do have, such as Judith Berman's, concur with the conventional analysis. Berman states that it was not until the late 1970s that the Holocaust moved from the 'periphery of Australian Jewish public consciousness'.[131] However, in recent years the 'silence model' or the 'myth of silence' have come into serious question.[132] There is a growing body of international research that seeks to overturn the previous consensus around a post-war silence.[133] One of the contributions of this thesis is to debunk the 'myth of silence' in the Australian context.

For Stratton, it was ultimately the Holocaust that established a common Jewish ethnic identity in Australia. In his account, the central role of the memorialisation of the Holocaust means it has become 'an ethnic-origin' event. Stratton finds this anchoring of Australian Jewish identity in the Holocaust problematic.[134] Jordana Silverstein suggests that Holocaust memorialisation and education play a major role in how Australian Jews navigate their ambivalent status within Australian society.[135] Taking these prompts, I

[127] Joy Damousi, ""We Are Human Beings, and Have a Past": The "Adjustment" of Migrants and the Australian Assimilation Policies of the 1950s," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 59, no. 4 (2013): 501-516.
[128] See e.g. Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1999). See Beth Cohen, "The Myth of Silence: Survivors Tell a Different Story," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).
[129] Judith E. Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance in Australian Jewish Communities, 1945-2000* (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2001), 5; Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney, NSW: Collins Australia, 1988), 254.
[130] See Tom Lawson and James Jordan, "Introduction," in *The Memory of the Holocaust in Australia*, ed. Tom Lawson and James Jordan (London and Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008); Steven Cooke and Donna-Lee Frieze, *The Interior of Our Memories: A History of Melbourne's Jewish Holocaust Centre* (Melbourne, Victoria: Hybrid Publishers, 2015).
[131] Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance*, 9.
[132] Lawson and Jordan; Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009).
[133] David Cesarani, "Introduction," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).
[134] Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*, 241-243.
[135] Silverstein, *Anxious Histories*.

further historicise Holocaust memory to examine the changing role of Holocaust consciousness in Australian Jewish identity and politics.

Kirstin Gwyer has suggested that some of the current cultural emphasis on 'postmemory' in academic and artistic work is a concomitant of the 'myth of silence'.[136] There is a tendency within such work to imply that Holocaust survivors (the first generation) were not able, in the decades immediately following the Holocaust, to process, or express what had happened to them; or if they could, it was only through unmediated raw accounts rather than creative or imaginative work. The second generation has thus been assigned a privileged position where the trauma of the Holocaust can only *now* begin to be properly processed, through memorialisation, healing and ultimately a successful working-through or mourning. Such a narrative occludes an account of the always already-mediated expression of Holocaust survivors and their first-generation contemporaries in interpreting and memorialising the Holocaust.[137] I partially rectify this historiographical imbalance in the Australian context.

Against the claims of Rubinstein, and to an extent Stratton, of the inevitable conservative effects of the centring of Holocaust memory within the Australian Jewish community, I employ Michael Rothberg's concept of 'multidirectional memory' and build on his historical linkage of the emergence of early Holocaust memory with global decolonisation struggles.[138] As defined by Rothberg, multidirectional memory is a concept for thinking collective memory against the framework of 'competitive memory — as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources'.[139] I analyse the Australian Jewish antifascist left's image of the Holocaust as a racist genocide perpetrated by a transnational fascist movement. This understanding of the Holocaust allowed lines of political solidarity and multidirectional comparison to be opened to international

[136] Kirstin Gwyer, *Encrypting the Past: The German-Jewish Holocaust Novel of the First Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 48-49.
[137] Ibid., 45-50.
[138] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*. Rothberg's concept has been taken up in a variety of fields and continues to inspire scholarly debate, see e.g. Nathan Snaza, "Posthuman(ist) Education and the Banality of Violence," *Parallax* 23, no. 4 (2017): 498-511; Iris Van Ooijen and Ilse Raaijmakers, "Competitive or Multidirectional Memory? The Interaction between Postwar and Postcolonial Memory in the Netherlands," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, no. 3-4 (2012): 463-483; Çimen Günay-Erkol and Deniz Şenol-Sert, "From Competitive to Multidirectional Memory: A Literary Tool for Comparison," *Turkish Studies* 19, no. 1 (2018): 118-138; Steven Robins, "Thinking through and Beyond "Competitive Memory" and Hierarchies of Suffering," *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (2018): 98-105.
[139] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 3.

decolonisation and anti-racist struggles. A multidirectional memory practice was not just one mode of Holocaust memorialisation in the Australian Jewish antifascist left; I argue it was central to its expression.

Writing a partisan history: key sources and methodology

As may now be apparent, I do not pretend that mine is a detached history. I position this thesis as a partisan history. I agree with Saul Friedländer that 'a kind of purely scientific distancing from the past, that is, a passage from the realm of knowledge strongly influenced by personal memory to that of some kind of "detached" history [is] a psychological and epistemological illusion.'[140] My sympathies are with the Jewish left and against their opponents, their politics reflecting in many ways my own. Although I was vaguely aware of my grandfather Walter Lippmann's association with the JCCFAS, one somewhat unexpected product of this research has been uncovering the extent of his involvement. Discovering an article he had written about the Australian Jewish Anti-German Migration Campaign of the early 1950s and struggling to understand the politics behind it was the first impetus towards this research endeavour. Conditioned by Australia's current migration politics, my immediate reaction to this campaign was to dismiss it as misplaced and xenophobic. But my grandfather was a committed anti-racist and multicultural activist. To attempt a transhistorical political understanding of this seeming contradiction necessitated an approach that took seriously the political commitment and sophistication of the Australian Jewish antifascist left, but also that located their political values in a continued thread with my own.

This partisanship informs my historical method as a process of excavation and recovery of fragments of an 'oppressed past'.[141] I am not seeking here to invent a useful past that could serve as a future model. I agree with Samuel Moyn's assessment that '[t]he best and the worst thing about the past, as usual, is that it is only indirectly relevant to our plight.'[142] However, I seek to resist the conservative triumphalist historicisation of the

[140] Saul Friedländer and Martin Broszat, "A Controversy About the Historicization of National Socialism," *New German Critique*, no. 44 (1988): 120-121.
[141] Benjamin, "Theses," 254.
[142] Samuel Moyn, "Fantasies of Federalism." *Dissent Magazine* (Winter 2015). Available at https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/fantasies-of-federalism.

Jewish left. Their ideas deserve neither to be aestheticized, anomalised, or relegated to the status of a 'lost treasure entrusted to antiquarian remembrance'.[143] This thesis is a history that assists in the necessarily indirect bringing together of the thought of the Australian Jewish antifascist left of the 1940s and 1950s and of ours today.

This thesis examines newspaper articles, magazines, propaganda pamphlets, novels, short story collections, annual reports and organisational minutes to construct a complex history of Australian Jewish experience in the post-war period. In finding and selecting my sources, a bibliography of 'Periodical Publications from the Australian Jewish Community' created by Marianne Dacy of the Archive of Australian Judaica at the University of Sydney, was invaluable.[144] My initial approach was to identify all the major Australian Jewish publications of the late 1940s and early 1950s. After I identified *Unity*, a left-wing Jewish magazine published in Sydney between 1948 and 1951, as a key source, I worked backwards from this periodical to trace people, reprints, references and debates to other contemporary publications both in Australia and internationally.

Unity and *Jewish Youth*, the magazine of the Melbourne KYO published between 1946 and 1947, emerged as key sources. Both were magazines with relatively brief print runs aimed primarily (though not exclusively) at Australia's Jewish community. As evidenced by Marianne Dacy's bibliography, these magazines were produced in and received into a rich and lively world of Jewish publications in Australia. A visit to the Kadimah library, in the Melbourne suburb of Elsternwick, provides evidence that the Australian Jewish publications of this period were read alongside a large amount of imported international literature and periodicals, in both Yiddish and English. Reducing the scope of this thesis to mostly English language materials (including material translated from the Yiddish) allowed for a manageable selection of texts.[145] There are many Australian Yiddish and English language Jewish periodicals (some that I have briefly cited in this thesis) that remain unexamined by historians and offer a valuable resource for future researchers.

[143] Alain Brossat and Sylvie Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History of Jewish Radicalism*, trans. David Fernbach (London and New York: Verso Books, 2016), ix.
[144] Dacy, *Periodical Publications*.
[145] Language politics in the Jewish community during the 1940s and 1950s is examined across Chapters Two, Three and Six.

The Jewish periodicals I analyse in this thesis are examples of what has been deemed the 'ethnic press' in Australian scholarship. This literature began with Miriam Gilson and Jerzy Zubrzycki's foundational 1967 sociological survey, 'The Foreign-language Press in Australia'.[146] Gilson and Zubryzycki assess the role of the ethnic press as functioning to socialise migrants into life in Australia, and acting 'as an agency of social control within the ethnic group.'[147] I suggest that both of these functions apply partly to my 'ethnic press' sources, but they are insufficient heuristics for analysing their contents. While Gilson and Zubryzycki's study remains important, it is a prime example of the proto-multicultural sociological studies of this period that aimed to defend and justify the autonomous activities of ethnic groups in Australia to an Anglo audience by emphasising their function in preparing 'the immigrant population for good citizenship.'[148] As discussed above, this thesis focuses on intraethnic conflict surrounding assimilation and cultural and political positioning. This approach complicates a straightforward analysis of ethnic press sources as maintaining or policing group identity and assisting socialisation or acculturation into Australian society. I treat my texts as evidence of the heavily contested nature of how these processes played out in the Australian Jewish press.

More recent scholarly historical studies utilising the ethnic press in Australia are few and far between. As late as 2009, James Jupp stated, in a foreword to a collection about the Italian Australian newspaper *Il Globo*, that '[h]ardly anyone has looked at the non-English press in the past or at the ways in which Australian political alignments arise in immigrant situations.'[149] However, a small historical literature has emerged in the past decade or so that makes use of ethnic press sources, applying critical frameworks from

[146] Miriam Gilson and Jerzy Zubrzycki, *The Foreign-Language Press in Australia* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1967).
[147] Ibid., 127-128. Gilson and Zubrzycki's study explicitly excludes the Chinese and Jewish press. They cite Percy Joseph Mark's *The Jewish Press in Australia, Past and Present* (Sydney, 1913) as 'unfortunately out of date'. Ibid., vii. Mark's volume was eventually succeeded by Suzanne Rutland, *Pages of History: A Century of the Australian Jewish Press* (Darlinghurst, NSW: Australian Jewish Press, 1995). For a more sociological survey, since outdated, see Mark Braham, "The Jewish Press in Australia," in *The Ethnic Press in Australia,* ed. Abe (I.) Wade Ata and Colin Ryan (Melbourne: Academia Press and Footprint Publications, 1989).
[148] Gilson and Zubrzycki, *Foreign Language-Press*, 157. The major studies of the ethnic press succeeding this volume take the form of brief sociological surveys along ethnic lines and are collected in Abe (I.) Wade Ata and Colin Ryan, eds., *The Ethnic Press in Australia* (Melbourne: Academia Press and Footprint Publications, 1989).
[149] James Jupp, "Foreword," in *Il Globo: Fifty Years of an Italian Newspaper in Australia*, ed. Bruno Mascitelli and Simone Battiston (Ballan, VIC: Connor Court Publishing, 2009), 10.

transnational cultural studies, critical race studies and gender studies. [150] In a similar vein, this thesis also applies critical frameworks to these marginalised sources to write ethnic or migrant history that transcends the 'contribution' genre and re-writes aspects of Australian history. I do not treat these texts as imparting a more accurate version of events, or a more objective truth. *Unity* and *Jewish Youth*, in particular, were intended by their editors and contributors to express a strong political vision. I have utilised these sources throughout this thesis with this understanding.

My method for complicating and challenging the established historiography and popular memory of this period is, following Benjamin Balthaser and Michael Rothberg, to construct an alternative archive, a collection of lost texts: unperformed plays, out of print novels, ephemeral political pamphlets, forgotten magazines, etc.[151] This has involved unearthing many previously unstudied texts, and drawing links that have never previously been made. My conceptualisation of this thesis as a partisan history aimed at a fundamental re-assessment of Australian Jewish antifascism has meant a journey through previously dispersed texts and archives to identify sustained patterns of analysis and definable tendencies of thought. I do not assess this constructed archive as representative of a completely coherent, static or final discourse. I treat these works as texts generated through dynamic political and cultural struggle, reflecting (though not fully determined by) the contradictions, potentialities, strategic considerations and circumscriptions of their conditions of production.[152]

The sources I refer to throughout this thesis are largely unexamined by historians. *Unity* and *Jewish Youth* in particular have previously had no sustained scholarly attention. Accordingly, I make significant use of quotations, showing the magazine's contributors as sophisticated and creative theorists and writers while contextualising their thought

[150] Important examples being Mei-fen Kuo, *Making Chinese Australia: Urban Elites, Newspapers and the Formation of Chinese-Australian Identity, 1892-1912* (Clayton, VIC: Monash University Publishing, 2013); Francesco Ricatti, "'Was I Cursed?' 'Was I Hypnotized?' Ethnic Moralism, Sexual Dilemmas and Spectral Fantasies of Italians in Australia (1956–1964)," *Women's History Review* 21, no. 5 (2012): 753-771; Catherine Dewhirst, "Collaborating on Whiteness: Representing Italians in Early White Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 32, no. 1 (2008): 33-49. As far as I know Simone Battiston's analysis is the only previous significant work on an explicitly left-wing migrant publication in Australia, see Simone Battiston, "How the Italian-Australian Left and Its Press Viewed Il Globo," in *Il Globo: Fifty Years of an Italian Newspaper in Australia*, ed. Bruno Mascitelli and Simone Battiston (Ballan, VIC: Connor Court Publishing, 2009).

[151] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 18. Benjamin Balthaser, *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 30.

[152] Balthaser, *Anti-Imperialist Modernism*, 17-18.

and artistic works by comparing them to other relevant contemporary texts. My concern is to recover 'what people in the past meant by the things they said and what these things "meant" to them'.[153] However, I do not suggest that what these things 'meant' was ever fully transparent, or completely identical with the author's intention; therefore at times I subject the texts to deconstructive and psychoanalytically informed close readings to analyse the contradictions and tensions contained within. I proceed from the assumption that the texts I analyse are partially constitutive of social and ideological formations as well as being shaped by those formations.[154]

It is necessary, finally, to note some limitations of my sources. Surveying the literature, I was struck by two photographs of the JCCFAS in Rubinstein's volume. The first is of the 1967 Annual Dinner and features eight men in suits and one woman, all posed formally. The second is of a joint protest against the 'arrival of convicted war criminal Baron Alfred Krupp in 1958', held by the Melbourne Jewish Youth Council and the JCCFAS. It features an equal number of men and women taking part in a lively protest, holding angry signs denouncing Krupp.[155] These two photographs, considered together, demonstrate some of the limitations of my sources in constructing this history. As the first photograph indicates, organisations such as the JCCFAS were structurally sexist — men always dominated. This flowed through to associated publications such as *Unity* and *Jewish Youth* (not to mention the *Australian Jewish News*), where the vast majority of material published was from men.[156] However, as the second photograph illustrates, women were always a vital part of the Jewish left. The prominent women from this period in the Jewish left and associated social justice and civil society organisations, such as Evelyn Rothfield and Rosa Goldbloom, were intelligent, capable and passionate intellectuals and activists. Here I can only point to this history's own faults and limitations in replicating the sexism of my principal sources. Although I have tried to feature some of the women who contributed to the intellectual output of the Jewish left, I know that the work of so many women who contributed to producing these ideas and sustaining this movement has been left out. This points towards a broader limitation of

[153] John Burrow quoted in Richard Whatmore, *What Is Intellectual History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 13.
[154] I here follow a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, see Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* (Sage, 2009); Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Routledge, 2013).
[155] Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*.
[156] Although the interviews that Rechter draws upon for his history are mostly with men, he does note that the leadership group of the KYO consisted of 'six men and four women'. Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 90.

this thesis. For the most part it is an intellectual and cultural history and not a finely grained social history account of Jewish left organisations and milieus. I do not give much of a sense of the everyday experience of working within the Jewish antifascist movement.

A word on the chronological scope of sources surveyed for this thesis is also necessary. Much of the writing on Australian Jewish history cited above focuses on the early years of the JCCFAS, and its final years. My focus is, for the most part, narrower, the late 1940s and early 1950s. For the first three chapters the time period is 1948-1951, the years of publication of *Unity* magazine, the premier Jewish left magazine of Australia and my key text of analysis. Chapter Four deals with 1950-1952, the period of the Anti-German Migration Campaign and the JCCFAS's rapid fall from grace. Chapters Five and Six examine the KYO, its magazine *Jewish Youth* (1946-1947), as well as an assessment of the larger oeuvre of some of its contributors, which extends from the mid-1940s to the early 1950s.

Thesis outline

My thesis comprises six core chapters. Chapter One examines how the Holocaust was memorialised within the pages of *Unity*. I contrast Holocaust memorialisation on the Jewish left to the contemporaneous liberal framing of the Holocaust, and the narrative closure effected by today's dominant modes of memorialisation. I outline how an antifascist Jewish consciousness was produced through the generation of a political ethic of memory. This, combined with an understanding of the Holocaust as a racist genocide, opened up lines of political solidarity that transcended a nationalist narrative of ahistorical or exclusive Jewish suffering. I show how *Unity's* depiction of the particularity of the Holocaust's targeting of Jewish people, meant a resistance to contemporary assimilatory narratives.

In Chapter Two I discuss the construction of a Jewish antifascist political subjectivity (in organisations such as the JCCFAS) as it related to the Australian Jewish antifascist left's particular theorisation of fascism and antisemitism, comparing *Unity's* approach with that of the international Jewish left to contextualise Australian Jewish antifascism

as part of a transnational movement. I trace this transnational movement to the Popular Front against fascism, and a re-assessment of the place of Jewishness within international communist politics. I assess here the role of Jewish left organisations and publications in the Soviet Union, the UK and the US in producing and developing these ideas.

In Chapter Three I compare and contrast the approach of the Jewish antifascist left with other political factions in the Australian Jewish community. I explore how the Jewish antifascist left's version of a collective Jewish political subjectivity was posed against both Jewish assimilationism and Zionism, the two other major forms of Australian Jewish politics. While I suggest that the Jewish antifascist left were not Zionists, they did strongly support the Jewish settlement in Palestine and the founding of Israel. I analyse the nature of this contradictory ideology in an international context. The central tension I chart here is *within* the Jewish antifascist left itself: between a federalist internationalism and an embrace of Israeli independence and elements of Zionism.

In Chapter Four I examine the complex politics surrounding the Jewish community's Anti-German Migration Campaign (AGMC) led, especially in Melbourne, by the JCCFAS. Here I utilise a wider variety of sources, in particular Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers as well as JCCFAS meeting minutes. I establish the popularity of the AGMC in the Jewish community as being in large part a result of a Jewish antifascist hegemony. However, I explore how this consensus was destroyed very quickly by the increasing alignment of international Jewish institutions with anti-communism and Western Cold War policy imperatives. I analyse the tension between a transnational Jewish antifascist campaign that centred its objections to German migrants in political terms and an attempt by the Jewish right both to quash the Jewish left and reframe the ersatz replacement AGMC within racial exclusivist terms.

In Chapter Five I utilise settler colonial theory to find conceptual tools for understanding the place of Jewish migrants within Australian settler colonialism. I discuss three complex texts from *Unity* which give a sense of three interrelated threads within progressive antifascist discourse on Indigenous people and settler colonialism. I then turn to an examination of how these discourses related to post-war Australian cultural nationalism. The central tension charted in this chapter is between two modes of contemporary cultural nationalism — an Australianism which emphasised national

character as a replacement for class politics; and a more amorphous internationalist branch of Australian cultural expression, associated with Marxist ideas, Aboriginal struggle, global decolonisation and Jewish antifascism. This chapter and Chapter Six suggest that an anti-assimilationist Jewish political subjectivity navigated a path through wider Australian society through its engagement in a particular critical form of Australian cultural nationalism.

Chapter Six continues to explore this tension, turning to a detailed examination of *Jewish Youth*, the magazine produced by the KYO. I establish the complex cultural vision of *Jewish Youth* was a product of the international Jewish antifascist politics reflected in *Unity*. I go further here, however, and suggest that it was the site for the development of a Jewish antifascist minor literature. I discuss Judah Waten's work and note how it reflects many of the Jewish antifascist ideas and concerns outlined throughout this thesis. I analyse his writing as forming part of a greater Jewish antifascist cultural output that can act as a vehicle for the transmission of the Jewish antifascist political imagination to the present.

Thus, through an in-depth assessment of the political and cultural thought of the Australian Jewish antifascist left in this period, I aim to establish new conceptual and historical bases for the re-writing of Australian Jewish history in a manner that expresses the contemporary relevance of the politics I have analysed here. This is a politics that presents a challenge to global capitalism, colonialism and white supremacy. As suggested in the epigraphs that frame this introduction, it is a history of an oppressed past, previously obscured by a narrow historicism congruent with the hegemonic conservative Zionist politics of Australia's Jewish communities. Writing this thesis as a recovery of this past has only been possible because of present-day challenges to that hegemony. In this sense, it is a symptom of a present that could begin to recognise itself as intended in the image of the past I offer here.

Chapter One: Australian Jewish Antifascism and the Holocaust

[A] notion of the specificity of Nazi genocide emerged against a background of relative silence and universalizing condemnations of atrocity precisely through its articulation in the kind of comparative framework that would later be stigmatized as relativising the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

Michael Rothberg[1]

The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption.

Theodor Adorno[2]

On the 3rd of March 1950, a letter appeared in the Yiddish edition of the *Sydney Jewish News (SJN)* from Chaim Chalef.[3] In this letter Chalef gave an eloquent account of the history of the Bialystok Ghetto.[4] He detailed the betrayal of the underground resistance, of which he was a part, by the Bialystok *Judenrat*, and he called for *Kapos* (concentration camp prisoners assigned supervisory or administrative functions by the Nazis) and people who had been part of *Judenraete* (Jewish leadership organisations in the Ghettos) who had been traitorous, to be excluded from Australian Jewish communities where there was 'adequate proof'.[5] According to Chalef these people

[1] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 119.
[2] Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London and New York: Verso, 1951; repr., 2005), 247.
[3] For further biographical details of Chaim Chalef, see "Chalef Chaim," Virtual Shtetl, Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN, https://sztetl.org.pl/en/biographies/4315-chalef-chaim; Rafael Rajzner and Henry R. Lew, *The Stories Our Parents Found Too Painful to Tell* (Melbourne: AMCL Publications, 2008), 155.
[4] It was later republished as Ch. Chalef, "The Judenrat and the Kapos," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1950).
[5] Chalef mentioned that unlike in Bialystok, in other ghettos such as in Warsaw and Kovno there were 'heroic and sincere Juden-rat leaders'. Ibid. The thousands of Jewish administrative organisations set up by the Nazis had very mixed records, see Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford University Press Oxford, 2010), 81-86.

> should be judged without any sentimental regards! To purify our ranks, so that Jews should know there is no scum! There much be a reckoning for everything! We must be certain that our ranks are closed and united.

Chalef noted that 'judgement is not so much important for us, but for the historian, for if, God forbid, such a tragedy should repeat itself, Jews should have learnt a lesson'.[6] Chalef's letter was a particularly powerful contribution to a passionate debate, then playing out in the *SJN*, regarding how Australian Jewish communities should treat Jewish refugees who had been accused of collaborating with the Nazis. The debate was prompted by the presence of *Kapos* in Australia. [7]

Chalef's letter was the only sample of this debate to be translated and republished by the Jewish antifascist left-wing magazine, *Unity*.[8] His stark and uncompromising appraisal of the history of the Holocaust meant, for him, that a complete re-assessment of Jewish communal politics in Australia was needed. Antifascist unity was crucial and those who would damage this goal had to be sidelined. The memorialisation of the Holocaust was important, above all, to draw out its ongoing political and social consequences. It is this Jewish antifascist interpretation of the Holocaust and its consequences that this chapter delineates.

This interpretation was exemplified well in Australia, by *Unity*. *Unity* was published in Sydney between 1948 and 1951. It was a mature and sophisticated forum for debate, opinion and analysis, representing a high point of Jewish antifascist and left thought. The Unity association was founded in 1945, inspired by the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS). Most people involved in the Unity association were active in the socialist Zionist movement, had some association with the Communist Party or had communist sympathies.[9] It began publishing the magazine in May 1948 before members of the association formed the Sydney Council to Combat

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[6] Chalef, "The Judenrat and the Kapos."
[7] Ibid. In response to this discussion in the Yiddish press the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies instituted a commission of inquiry. Rutland has a brief discussion of this issue, see Suzanne Rutland, "The History of Australian Jewry, 1945-1960," (University of Sydney, 1990), 165. Mark Aarons has an interesting discussion of the case of Heinrich (Chajim) Bontschek, see Aarons, 104-106. This topic needs further research. For overseas studies, see Laura Jockusch and Gabriel N. Finder, eds., *Jewish Honor Courts: Revenge, Retribution, and Reconciliation in Europe and Israel after the Holocaust* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2015).
[8] Chalef, "The Judenrat and the Kapos."
[9] NAA: A6122, 155 REFERENCE COPY, "Jewish Unity Association," (1941-1949).

Fascism and Anti-Semitism (SCCFAS) later that year.[10] The magazine differed from other Jewish publications, it was not a newspaper, nor was it affiliated with a synagogue or a stream of Jewish religion.[11] It was an independent magazine, governed by its own editorial committee, rather than being the organ of a political organisation or youth movement, though it had close ties and affinities with both the Melbourne based JCCFAS and its Sydney equivalent. Notably, the magazine was published in Sydney rather than in Melbourne where the JCCFAS was much stronger and had more influence and followers.[12] I suggest that this allowed the magazine to be somewhat independent from the JCCFAS's everyday campaigns and concerns, and thus able to attract a broader range of readers and writers. It also allowed *Unity* to posit itself as a national Jewish magazine, appealing to and rhetorically addressing all Jews in Australia.[13] This meant that although parochial issues were occasionally covered by the magazine, in the most part it wrestled with larger, national and indeed international issues on a political and philosophical level.

Because of its depth and variety, one cannot assess the ideas in *Unity* as representing a singular political program or one coherent ideology of the Jewish left in Australia. However, I explore and contextualise the themes and topics covered by the magazine to suggest the issues at stake for the Jewish left at the time, concentrating on its engagement with international issues and the transnational constitution of post-war, post-Holocaust Jewish political subjectivities. While *Unity* was not the only publication of the Jewish left, its sophistication and depth of engagement make it a rich source for analysis.

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[10] After the formation of the Sydney Council, the magazine continued to be published by the Unity association. All other political work was undertaken by the SCCFAS. Nate Zusman, ""Unity" a Magazine of Jewish Affairs," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 9, pt. 5 (1983).

[11] There were two major Jewish weekly newspapers in Melbourne at the time, both of which had substantial Yiddish supplements, the *Australian Jewish News* and the *Australian Jewish Herald*. In Sydney there was *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia* and the *Sydney Jewish News*. There was a plethora of contemporary publications affiliated with social and sporting clubs, political organisations and synagogues. For a comprehensive listing of Australian Jewish periodical publications, see Marianne Dacy, *Periodical Publications from the Australian Jewish Community: A Union List* Fifth ed. (Sydney: University of Sydney, Archive of Australian Judaica, 2007).

[12] This was not a decision made by the Melbourne JCCFAS. The two Jewish Councils were not, at this stage, in close co-operation. The driving force behind the establishment of the magazine was its editor Hyam Brezniak who lived in Sydney, see Suzanne Rutland, "Creating Intellectual and Cultural Challenges: The Bridge," in *Feast and Fasts: Festschrift in Honour of Alan David Crown*, ed. Marianne Dacy, Jennifer Dowling, and Suzanne Faigan (Sydney: Mandelbaum, 2005); Hyam Brezniak, interview by Hazel de Berg, 29 April, 1975, National Library of Australia, Hazel de Berg collection.

[13] A part of Jewish left politics in this era was an ambition of unifying and thus leading the entire Jewish community.

The first issue of *Unity* in March 1948 opened with an editorial calling for a national Jewish conference to combat antisemitism.[14] This editorial established a number of themes that would animate *Unity's* articles for the next four years. First, it established that *Unity* was actively engaged in political organisation and activism. Second, the editorial analysed antisemitism in order to better fight against it. Third, it highlighted the need for immediate action, noting that '[t]his is an urgent need of the moment. We dare not leave ourselves open to the rebuke of doing too little too late.'[15] This was an allusion to what it saw as the complacency and naiveté of Germany's Jews during the 1930s.

In this chapter I track the complex ways the Holocaust was memorialised in the pages of *Unity* and its analysis of how German Jewish communities reacted to the growth of antisemitism and the rise of Nazism. I suggest that *Unity's* forms of Holocaust memorialisation resisted both a liberal framing and a narrative of closure, opening up new lines of political solidarity.

Memorialising the Holocaust

Unity first appeared in March 1948, not quite three years since the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. The Nazis had attempted to eliminate the Jews of Europe, murdering approximately six million Jewish people. As Jordana Silverstein suggests, a popular historiography and pedagogy has emerged in Jewish communities in Australia and the US that imposes a chronological narrative structure on our understanding of the Holocaust. In these tellings there is a need for narrative closure 'to ensure that the Holocaust is finished, and the Jewish people reborn'.[16] Silverstein demonstrates that this narrative closure takes the form of a reinstitution of the law and the creation of the state of Israel, both of which can be seen as forms of mimicry that seek Jewish safety and belonging in an embrace of particular facets of modernity.[17] This has come to be the

[14] "Editorial - Unity Says: A National Conference Needed," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948).
[15] Ibid.
[16] Jordana Silverstein, *Anxious Histories: Narrating the Holocaust in Jewish Communities at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), 87.
[17] Ibid., 110-111.

hegemonic narrative of the Holocaust within most Western Jewish communities. Tony Kushner has suggested that in the years immediately following World War Two, as images of the Western concentration camps were released (Dachau, Belsen etc.), the dominant narrative of these camps was of general Nazi atrocities, framed within a nationalist narrative justifying World War Two, or a liberal narrative that refused to understand the genocide of the Jews as the result of a distinct program of racial extermination. The particular narrative of the Jews as victims of Nazi genocide was consistently played down by Western governments.[18]

As noted in the introduction, Australian Jewish communities are the product of the Holocaust in a way that is not true for other Western Jewish communities, such as those in the UK and the US. As noted by Suzanne Rutland, the combined effect of the migration of pre-war Central European refugees, as well as the post-war Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe, was to more than double the Australian Jewish population. The newcomers profoundly changed the structure, culture and politics of the Jewish community.[19] Tackling this situation, Judith Berman has suggested that the memorialisation of the Holocaust in the Jewish community in the first three decades following World War Two was somewhat inconsistent. In her account, the major institutionalisation of Holocaust memorialisation was an annual day of remembrance that was first held to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, then moved to *Yom Hashoah*;[20] no Holocaust museum or other formal modes of Holocaust pedagogy

[18] Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1994), 205-269. Daniella Doron provides a compelling account of the post-war struggle of French Jews to voice a specifically Jewish narrative of suffering during the War, against a mainstream narrative of universalisation and '[t]he fierce resistance of French state and society to alternative memories of the war'. Daniella Doron, *Jewish Youth and Identity in Postwar France: Rebuilding Family and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 32, 31-73. For a nuancing of Kushner's assessment, particularly around a knowledge of the Holocaust in Britain in the immediate post-war period, see David Cesarani, "How Post-War Britain Reflected on the Nazi Persecution and Mass Murder of Europe's Jews: A Reassessment of Early Responses," *Jewish Culture and History* 12, no. 1-2 (2010): 95-130.

[19] Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Rose Bay: Brandl & Schlesinger 1997), 256.

[20] Judith E. Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance in Australian Jewish Communities, 1945-2000* (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2001), 15-20. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was commemorated on April 19. Memorial events were held in both Melbourne and Sydney from 1944 onwards. By decree of the Israeli government in 1953, Yom Hashoah is held on the 27th of Nisan on the Jewish calendar. There were significant Holocaust memorial events held by the Jewish Labor Bund, the *landsmanschaftn* and the Katzetler Farband before the 1970s. This is mentioned only fleetingly by Berman and represents topics that need further historical research. Ibid., 8-9.

developed until the mid-1970s, when Berman suggests that the Holocaust moved from the 'periphery of Australian Jewish public consciousness' to its centre.[21]

Berman's analysis, however, neglects a close study of Jewish publications in the decade following World War Two, a neglect that conforms with a once-dominant historiographical model of a post-war silence about the Holocaust in Jewish communities.[22] While I will leave aside the question of the development of Holocaust memory in non-Jewish communities, I suggest that even a cursory glance through Australian Jewish newspapers of the late 1940s and early 1950s demonstrates that there was an overwhelming concern with the Holocaust and Nazism. However, this concern was effected in a register very different from the one that recognises and narrativises the Holocaust in the twenty-first century. In what follows I show that in the Australian Jewish community during this period the Holocaust was understood through Jewish antifascism, an antifascism that did not use either a liberal assimilatory framing or aim for the same sort of narrative closure of the Holocaust that is presently hegemonic.

'Six million of the "big noses" died in concentration camps': internalised antisemitism, the Warsaw Ghetto and a political ethic of memory

In articles written shortly before his death and published in 1947 in the Melbourne Yiddish journal *Ojfboy*, the acclaimed Yiddish writer Pinchas Goldhar interrogated the effects of antisemitism.[23] A few of his eloquent articles were translated and published for the first time in English in the early issues of *Unity*. For Goldhar, the effects of the Holocaust continued: '[t]he Nazis not only enslaved and slaughtered us, but also stigmatised us in such a way, and so discriminated between us and all other peoples and races, that our human values have decreased in the eyes of the world'.[24] The Nazis' dehumanisation of Jewish people was a continuing source of external antisemitism, but

[21] Ibid., 9.
[22] See David Cesarani, "Introduction," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-4.
[23] Goldhar had come to Melbourne from Lodz, Poland in 1926, see Judah Waten, "Goldhar, Pinchas (1901–1947)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/goldhar-pinchas-6415/text10969, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 30 March 2016.
[24] Pinchas Goldhar, "Does Anti-Semitism Affect Us Only Physically?," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948).

also an internalised antisemitism.[25] As suggested by Nahum Goldmann, the Holocaust was not simply a past event on another continent, it had a profound effect on a transnational Jewish imagination, provoking what Goldhar suggested was an 'acute spiritual crisis associated with the great physical tragedy shared by all of us'.[26]

In Goldhar's opinion this prompted a complete re-assessment of antisemitism and minority Jewish communities' political relations with the dominant non-Jewish societies. He stated: 'The fire of Hitlerian extermination-antisemitism has not been extinguished under the ruins of the Third Reich. It continues to smoulder everywhere, all over the world, and will flare up at the smallest opportunity. We must be alive to this danger and prepare all forces at our command to fight it.'[27] It was precisely this analysis that underlay the importance of memorialising the Holocaust in the pages of *Unity*. The Holocaust was not over. As Kushner suggests, there was no outpouring of sympathy for Jewish people, or tempering of antisemitic attitudes, in the years immediately following the Holocaust. If anything, there was a hardening of opinion against Jews. In Britain, as a partial result of violence in Palestine, antisemitic riots broke out in 1947.[28] In Australia, there was an antisemitic campaign in the popular press against Jewish migration.[29] Politically conscious Jews in Australia saw a strong need to intervene

[25] 'Internalised antisemitism' is my, borrowed, terminology rather than Goldhar's. The classic theorisation of the concept of internalised oppression is Frantz Fanon's 1963 outline of the psychological effects of colonialism. Fanon suggests that a pervasive ideology of the inferiority of the culture of the colonised and the superiority of the culture of coloniser is a fundamental element of the operation of colonialism. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. C. Farrington (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991). The concept of internalised racism came to prominence in the eighties and nineties, particularly through the work of African American activists and scholars, with such seminal works as Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Power and the Politics of Empowerment*, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990). I explore this concept further below with reference to arguably the first theorisation of an approximate concept, W.E.B. Du Bois' 1903 'double consciousness', see W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks*, Norton Critical Editions (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 5-10. The concept of 'internalized anti-Semitism' has been important for the US Jewish left since the early 1990s and has returned to prominence in the past decade. Past and present day Jewish anti-racist activists have also criticised aspects of the concept's deployment, see Bettina Aptheker, "Teaching About Anti-Semitism and the Legacy of Jewish Women," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 3/4 (1993): 63-68; Jenney Milner and Donna Spiegelman, "Carrying It On: A Report from the New Jewish Agenda Conference on Organizing against Racism and Anti-Semitism," *Bridges* 3, no. 1 (1992/5752): 138-147; Tallie Ben Daniel, "Antisemitism, Palestine, and the Mizrahi Question," in *On Antisemitism: Solidarity and the Struggle for Justice*, ed. Jewish Voice for Peace (Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2017); Ilise Benshushan Cohen, "Intersections of Antisemitism, Racism, and Nationalism: A Sephardi/Mizrahi Perspective," ibid.

[26] Pinchas Goldhar, "Jewish Antisemitism," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, 223.

[29] Suzanne Rutland, "Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria: A Case of Racial or Religious Bigotry?," *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no. 77 (2003): 69-79; Klaus Neumann, *Across the Seas: Australia's Response to Refugees: A History* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2015), 86-96. Walter Lippmann writing in the *Sydney Jewish News* suggested that Calwell's 1947 cessation of the family reunion scheme (which had

against antisemitism in the public discourse of Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Part of this involved a memorialisation of the Holocaust that gave justice to a Jewish narrative and sought to create a greater transnational Jewish consciousness through the remembrance of the Jewish victims of Nazism.

In the April 1950 issue of *Unity*, Ernest Platz, a prominent member of the JCCFAS and a regular *Unity* contributor, wrote a letter to the editor, prompted by an article in the previous issue, decrying the dangers of antisemitic humour.[30] Platz aimed his letter's opprobrium at a prominent contemporary Australian Jewish comedian, Roy Rene, who played a character called Mo. A prominent part of Mo's humour was his self-deprecating antisemitism, including references to 'big noses'. This was unacceptable to Platz who said 'I was in a concentration camp. There the Storm-Troopers used to call us "the Jewish mob" and point to our "big noses" . . . He [Mo] may be appalled to learn it, but experience proves that his kind of humour is as effective as it is brutal... six million of "the big noses" died in concentration camps or were consumed in the gas ovens. My father and 21 of my relatives were among them.'[31] Platz moved on to tell the story of Max Ehrlich, a famous comedian, who was with him in Buchenwald. According to Platz, Ehrlich was forced by the concentration camp guards to sing a song; "I am a Jew and you can see that by my big nose". Then, Platz continued, '[o]ne night in 1939 the Storm-Troopers clubbed Max Ehrlich to death. Before he died, he could be heard whimpering the slanderous song, "I am a Jew with a big nose".' Platz ended with a plea that Mr. Rene 'this great Australian comedian' would never end up in the same situation, 'I would never again like to hear the echo of a dying voice whimpering, "I am a Jew with a big nose".'[32] An eyewitness account of a concentration camp murder here formed a direct warning against internalised antisemitism and its potentially devastating consequences.

Platz's story worked as a powerful parable. However, Max Ehrlich was never in Buchenwald with Platz. Ehrlich left Germany for the Netherlands in 1939. In 1943 he

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been bringing Jewish refugees to Australia) demonstrated 'the extent to which racial and religious prejudices have survived the military defeat of fascism.' Cited in Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 236.

[30] Julian Rose, "Time to Call the Joke Off," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1949).

[31] Ernest Platz, "Letters to the Editor- "Time to Call the Joke Off"," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1950). It is interesting to compare this article with the glowing appreciation of 'Mo' in the Australian Jewish Outlook. A magazine I discuss in chapter three. Lennard M. George, ""Mo" as I See Him," *Australian Jewish Outlook* 1, no. 2 (1947).

[32] Platz, "Letters to the Editor- "Time to Call the Joke Off"."

was sent to the Westerbork concentration camp. Ehrlich was put on the last transport to leave Westerbork for Auschwitz in September 1944. He was murdered in the gas chambers less than a month later.[33] We can speculate that Platz was informed of a version of this story through word of mouth, through stories shared amongst Holocaust survivors. A cynical reading of Platz's account would hold that he was exploiting the memory of Ehrlich's life and death to make his own political point. I suggest that though there may be an element of truth in that reading, we gain a better account if we consider Platz's story as a form of what Marianne Hirsch terms 'affiliative memory'. Hirsch defines 'affiliative memory' as a type of 'postmemory', which, as she puts it,

> describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before — to experiences they "remember" only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.[34]

Hirsch uses the term 'affiliative memory' to describe how as a result of 'loosened familial' structures after the Holocaust, even those who were not actually descendants of Holocaust survivors gained a certain type of postmemory as 'the result of contemporaneity and generational connection with the literal second generation, combined with a set of structures of mediation that would be broadly available, appropriable, and, indeed, compelling enough to encompass a larger collective.'[35] Crucially, Hirsch suggests that postmemory does not take the form of an absolute identification with the memory of survivors; there is a necessary distancing which recognises the ultimate inability of non-survivors to comprehend survivor's experiences or inhabit an approximate subject position.[36]

I suggest we can also apply this analysis to an understanding of the complex forms that memory and testimony took for the first generation of Holocaust survivors (and their

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[33] Rebecca Rovit and Alvin Goldfarb, eds., *Theatrical Performance During the Holocaust* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 54-57. Ehrlich was the director of the Camp Westerbork theatre group a cabaret troupe that during its 18-month existence staged six major theatre productions. According to one account he was ordered to tell jokes by the SS officers in Auschwitz. "Max Ehrlich," Music and the Holocaust website, http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/places/camps/western-europe/westerbork/max-ehrlich/.

[34] Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 5.

[35] Ibid., 36.

[36] Marianne Hirsch, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14, no. 1 (2001): 35.

generational contemporaries) for whom familial structures were to an even greater extent destroyed and disturbed. Postmemory, as it applies to the second generation, is dependent on firstly the specifics of what memories were recounted and what were not by the survivors; and secondly a wider frame of cultural and historical understanding and reference that mediates the reception of the original memories and determines how processes of 'imaginative investment, [and] projection' create postmemory.[37] Hirsch suggests however that the concept of '[p]ost-memory should reflect back on memory, revealing it as equally constructed, equally mediated by the processes of narration and imagination.'[38] I suggest therefore that although there are obvious variables that apply to intergenerational processes of postmemory creation that do not apply in the more immediate aftermath, there was still — as evidenced in publications such as *Unity* — a delay, still a mediated aspect of 'imaginative investment, projection and creation' in how this memory was transmitted, received and felt, which was not a matter of recall.

Hirsch's conceptualisation of affiliative memory here is useful for my account because it describes how the traumatic memory of survivors is transmitted to others, who in turn do their own memory work of creation and transmission, creating universes of meaning for the legibility of the original experiences in a manner that is 'distinguished… from history by deep personal connection.'[39] Unlike Maurice Halbwach's conception of collective memory, Hirsch's conceptualisation allows the space to suggest that this memory practice was not agglomerated into a society-wide field of memory centred on one version of events, but was part of a minority political and cultural movement that was at odds with the dominant memory of, or indeed occlusion of the memory of, the Holocaust.[40]

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[37] I do not suggest that there is a pre-linguistic or pre-social experience or memory here that is only subsequently mediated. For a critique of 'experience' as a foundational epistemological category in history, see Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773-797. Silverstein draws on Scott to discuss how this applies to teachers and historians' presentations of Holocaust testimony. Silverstein, *Anxious Histories*, 80.

[38] Marianne Hirsch, "Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory," *Discourse* 15, no. 2 (1992): 8-9. As discussed by Silverstein, the truth the survivor is attempting to represent is not only incommunicable but is also fundamentally unavailable to the survivors themselves. Survivor testimonies far from being direct representations of the truth of the Holocaust are thoroughly mediated through the available social conditions of communicability, and concomitantly through a necessarily partial reconstruction of memory. Silverstein, *Anxious Histories*, 77-78.

[39] Hirsch, "Family Pictures," 8.

[40] See Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 14-15. There are also resonances here with what Christine Bold, Ric Knowles and Belinda Leach call 'cultural countermemory' practices, see Christine Bold, Ric Knowles and Belinda Leach, "Feminist Memorializing and Cultural Countermemory: The Case of Marianne's Park," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 1 (2002): 125-148. David

Dori Laub, a psychoanalyst, suggests that survivor testimony does not necessarily function to give an 'accurate' account of events, but this does not mean that their testimony cannot reveal a different form of historical truth, an added dimension of meaning and signification.[41] Platz's story should be seen as part of this memory work. It played a part in inventing a universe of meaning, an exchange of a particular type of knowledge across a transnational network of survivors, that extended through forums such as *Unity* to the wider Jewish community creating a new post-Holocaust Jewish public informed by selected truths garnered from the Holocaust experiences of survivors, and those that left records of their experiences. At the same time, we should also recognise Platz as a talented writer, and a passionate political operative. His story, his affiliative memory of Ehrlich's death, cannot be separated from his antifascist and anti-racist political commitments, which included combating internalised antisemitism.

Platz's 'eyewitness' account should be seen as part of post-Holocaust antifascist efforts at historical and political world-making that took place partially through a project of publicising, reviewing and translating Holocaust literature. In this sense I suggest that although Platz's account is theorisable as a form of first-generation affiliative memory it should also be thought of as participating in what I deem a Jewish antifascist political ethic of Holocaust memorialisation. As I suggest below, by way of reference to Alain Badiou and Walter Benjamin, this ethic was central to *Unity'*s approach to the Holocaust.

The emergence of this ethic can be traced in articles in *Unity* treating the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. In the years immediately following World War Two, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (aka the Warsaw Ghetto revolt) was the main emphasis of Holocaust commemoration.[42] *Unity* ran a special issue every year, to coincide with the Uprising's anniversary. For *Unity*'s second issue, Joachim

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Slucki refers to Holocaust survivor groups in the US as forming 'communities of memory', see David Slucki, "A Community of Suffering: Jewish Holocaust Survivor Networks in Postwar America," *Jewish Social Studies* 22, no. 2 (2017): 120-121.

[41] Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 59-62. Mark Roseman suggests that the usefulness of comparing other sources with survivor testimony does not lie in an attempt to verify or falsify their account. Instead a comparison and an uncovering of discrepancies can help to 'illuminate the … processes of memory'. The modification of details or even the adoption of others experiences represent an effort to 'bring the past under control in some small way', to not 'be exposed quite so powerlessly and passively to an unbearable past.' Mark Roseman, "Surviving Memory: Truth and Inaccuracy in Holocaust Testimony," *The Journal of Holocaust Education* 8, no. 1 (1999): 18-19.

[42] Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance*, 15-20.

Schneeweiss translated from Yiddish a long article titled 'The Fundamental Idea of the Revolt' by Tovyah Bashikowsky, one of the few surviving Warsaw Ghetto resistance members. For Bashikowsky the revolt was 'the most heroic demonstration of the will to live differently and the striving to become different'.[43] The revolt was ultimately important not because there was any prospect of winning, but rather because,

> [t]he idea of the Jewish revolt to be fought in defence of the honour of a people, became the greatest incentive for the minds of the masses and created greater strength than any previous revolt or uprising...Had we ended these bitter years only with Jewish destruction and not with Jewish strength, we would, in addition to broken hearts, have carried a burden of shame for ourselves and for the whole world. The heroic fight in the Ghetto saved the few survivors spiritually, giving them the strength to continue working and fighting, without regard to their incurable wounds.[44]

This passage gives us a crucial insight into how the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising became the pre-eminent aspect of the Holocaust memorialised by Jews in the post-war period.[45] The story of the Holocaust as the widespread and indiscriminate slaughter of helpless victims was not only reductive, but also not a useful story for the type of Jewish consciousness that was being developed in post-war communities such as Australia. The story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising provided a productive metonym for the Holocaust as a whole because it represented a truly heroic struggle: it represented the horrors of the Holocaust, but also a forceful, proud and militant Jewish resistance. I suggest that rather than occluding a broader knowledge and memorialisation of the Holocaust, the elevation of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was a correlative for the expression of traumatic memory and the formation of a political ethic of Holocaust memorialisation.[46]

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[43] Tovyah Bashikowsky, "The Fundamental Idea of the Revolt," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948).
[44] Ibid.
[45] The promotion of memory of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 by the Communist government in Poland has a complex ideological history. The Ghetto Uprising can be read as an ersatz stand-in and/or an ideological displacement of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, redirecting the patriotism of Poles associated with this Uprising to a more ideologically suitable event. This was also part of an official campaign against antisemitism, following the Kielce pogrom, which associated antisemitism with reactionary ideology and right-wing opposition, see Patryk Babiracki, *Soviet Soft Power in Poland: Culture and the Making of Stalin's New Empire, 1943-1957* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 125-133; Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 43-61. For a discussion of the political valences of the memorialisation of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in Israel, see Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, trans. Haim Watzman (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 434-439; Idith Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood*, trans. Chaya Galai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25-44.
[46] Diner notes how in the US context Warsaw Ghetto Uprising memorial events became the vehicle for a much wider expression of Holocaust memory which encompassed all the Jewish victims of Nazism. In contrast with the Australian situation, she suggests that prominent non-Jews, 'particularly elected

Holocaust survivors, and indeed their generational contemporaries, could tie their 'broken hearts' to memories of the revolt as a vehicle that provided a means of interpreting and deepening the meaning of their struggles. The cover of the 1949 commemorative issue illustrates the affiliative nature of the memory produced by *Unity*. Adjacent to an image of the 'Monument to the Ghetto Heroes' are the lyrics translated from the Yiddish 'partisan song' composed in the Vilna Ghetto in 1943 by 21-year-old poet Hirsh Glick, who was inspired by hearing news of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.[47] The song spread throughout the ghettoes and camps of Eastern Europe, subsequently becoming a mainstay of Holocaust memorial events throughout the Jewish world.[48] The lyrics themselves display a remarkable transhistorical spur to a greater Jewish consciousness:

> And the morning sun will vanish all our woe/ All our yesterdays will vanish with the foe/ And if the sun does not appear to bring us light/Then this song will be our beacon in the night…/ That's why they'll never make us say this is the end/ For we know somewhere, some day, we'll find a friend/ And the day that we all dreamed of will be near/ When we'll shout to all the world/ "We Still Are Here."[49]

I suggest we should read the lyrics "We Still Are Here", featured on the front page of *Unity*, as precisely an identification with the partisans and victims of the Holocaust who may have sung this song. The 'we' represents a continuity formative of a post-Holocaust transnational Jewish consciousness, and indeed an 'imaginative investment' creating a form of affiliative memory of the Holocaust.[50] This transtemporal memorialisation resembled homologous forms of remembrance in Jewish religious

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officials' were often invited to participate in these commemorations. Diner, *We Remember*, 65-79. This is not to say there was not dissent to the emphasis on the Warsaw Ghetto; in response to claims that German Jews were not attending Warsaw Ghetto Uprising commemorations German Rabbi Rev. W. Katz, responded that '[t]he history of the Warsaw Ghettto will perhaps be written in 10 or 20 years time. The last stand of a desperate group in a hopeless situation will then be seen as only one of the many tragic incidents in various concentration camps — only on a larger scale. It will be seen as a typical example of the undying Jewish spirit. If future commemorations will be organised as an hour of memorial for 6 million Nazi victims, but not as an hour in honour of the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto only — then German Jews will gladly take part, and will also accept an invitation to be on and speak from the platform.' Rev. W. Katz, "Letter to the Editor - German Jews Stigmatised," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 6 July 1950. David Slucki notes the Polish hegemony that emerged in Holocaust memorialisation in the US, which I would suggest was very similar in Melbourne. Slucki, "A Community of Suffering," 119.

[47] Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 70-73.

[48] For an account of its first ever performance in Melbourne in March 1947, see Arnold Zable, *Wanderers and Dreamers: Tales of the David Herman Theatre* (South Melbourne: Hyland House, 1998), 28.

[49] "Cover," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949). In another version/translation of this song the same stanza reads: 'The morning sun will tinge our today with gold/ And yesterday will vanish with the enemy/ But if the sun and the dawn are delayed/Like a watchword this song will go from generation to generation.' Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust*, 71.

[50] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5.

tradition which often involve an identification with past Jewish victims of oppression and suffering. As Hirsch notes, the most obvious example of this is during the Passover Seder when Jews are enjoined to identify themselves as, and thus remember, having been personally saved from slavery in Egypt.[51]

Our understanding of the focus on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in *Unity* is also enhanced by considering it as an 'event', as defined by French philosopher Alain Badiou: 'a rupture in the normal order of bodies and languages as it exists for a particular situation'.[52] I suggest that the writers of *Unity* and the Jewish antifascist left more generally were attempting to understand the Uprising as a true rupture and discontinuity that produced a radically new situation.[53] This is even more so the case as the revolt was brutally crushed, and almost all of the participants murdered. The temptation here then would be to deny the event's significance: everyone died, the Holocaust occurred, nothing was altered. The memorialisation of the revolt takes the form of maintaining a fidelity to the event as something truly significant in the face of seeming oblivion. Badiou defines an event as occurring when an element of a situation previously of minimal importance, or even at its void point, becomes maximally important — the new defining point of the situation.[54] In the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the Jews moved from complete segregation and near death, to a miraculous revolt that managed to fend off the Nazis for a month.[55] If we follow this movement from the void point, to the maximal point, from insignificance to a significance that completely redefines the situation, we can see how a fidelity to this event can form the basis for a broader expression of Holocaust memory. As Bashikowsky suggests, it is the strength of the revolt that carries this expression, which allows the voiding of meaning, the murder and dehumanisation of the Nazis to be resisted. It is the centring of the revolt

[51] Hirsch, "Surviving Images," 35. I will discuss the influence of specifically Jewish forms of remembrance further below.
[52]Alain Badiou, "The Idea of Communism," in *The Idea of Communism*, ed. S. Žižek and C. Douzinas (London, New York: Verso, 2010), 6. Rothberg also draws on Badiou's philosophy as part of establishing a 'multidirectional ethics of memory'. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 272.
[53] In Badiou's terms the political subject is incorporated into the truth procedure that the event opens the possibility of. The subject thus becomes a militant of that truth. For Badiou the truth is the subject's fidelity to the event, defined as 'that which this fidelity produces in the situation'. A thinking of the situation according to the event embodies this fidelity, see Alain Badiou, *Ethics* (London and New York: Verso, 2001), 42; Badiou, "The Idea of Communism," 3.
[54] Badiou, *Ethics*, 74.
[55] Marek Edelman, *The Ghetto Fights* (London: Bookmarks, 1946; repr., 2013).

here that allowed for the development of a particular consciousness and political ethic of memorialisation of the Holocaust.

The emphasis on the militant and dignified image of resistance was of huge import to a Jewish antifascist movement that wanted to develop a proud Jewish self-consciousness. It enabled a transcendence and refutation of the image of the Jew as a dehumanised object of pity, as outlined by Goldhar. Focus on the Uprising shaped a certain political ethic of memory which transcended a merely historical appreciation of what had transpired. In Badiou's terms the event opens the possibility for the creation of heterogeneous timescapes, knowledges and thought which defy any easy historicisation.[56] Fidelity to the event thus has as its correlate a break with the 'homogenous, empty time' of history.[57] History for Badiou is synonymous with the narrative representation of the 'state', the 'system of constraints that limit the possibility of possibilities'. We can also understand the 'state' as the nation-state.[58] In the hegemonic historiography and popular understanding, as discussed above, the mass murder of European Jewry was subsumed within a broader account of the clashing state regimes of World War Two. The ethic of Holocaust memory rendered by *Unity* as an account of individual lives, collective Jewish life and Jewish resistance thus represented both a challenge to a dominant historicisation but also a form of knowledge that exceeded history. As in the case of Platz, for the writers of *Unity* this ethic of memory was inseparable from a broader political commitment. This ethic represented an impetus to the creation of political and cultural forms of remembrance which produced a deep affective engagement with the Holocaust.

Reviewing, translating, and publishing Holocaust literature

Unity had a strong commitment to translating, publicising and reviewing eye-witness accounts of the Holocaust, particularly accounts of the Polish ghettos. In 1948, Hyam

[56] A. Johnston, *Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 11.
[57] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, (London: Fontana, 1955; reprint, 1973), 245-255. I explore Walter Benjamin's philosophy of mourning and history below.
[58] Badiou, "The Idea of Communism," 7.

Brezniak, the editor of *Unity*, reviewed *No Traveller Returns*, a collection of stories from the Warsaw Ghetto, by Henry Shoskes, edited by Carl Reiss, published in 1945 in New York. The review begins with a startling quotation:

> If we do not forget. If we keep their memory, and the memory of their deeds alive for generations to come, we will one day be recompensed for suffering with those who have suffered in the ghetto of Warsaw. We will take courage from their fight. We will know that a world in which there were such men and women cannot be without hope. We will understand that the Jews in the ghetto of Warsaw, too, were crucified for us, for all of us.[59]

This passage is an illustration of the 'spiritual crisis' referred to by Goldhar. Such was the unimaginable suffering of the Holocaust, that it provoked here an explicitly messianic schema of interpretation. As I explore below, a more secular variant on this messianism was an important factor in the imagining and memorialisation of the Holocaust and its connection with a broader politics.

For *Unity*, the meaning of the Holocaust was far from set; it needed an ongoing process of memorialisation, publicisation and interpretation. Above all it needed to be understood as having had enormous ongoing consequences for international Jewish culture and politics. In an article republished in *Unity*, Professor Hyman Levy, a Jewish intellectual in the Communist Party of Great Britain, wrote of the importance of documenting this history. According to Levy fidelity to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising meant not just memorialising the fighters:

> when we speak of the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto, of the last 60,000 who fell on their oppressors with little more than their bare hands, and fought to the last before they perished in the flames, let us also remember those who in the midst of this inferno steadily secured that this unprecedented episode shall not go unrecorded in all its details, and that whatever else shall perish, the story of the Warsaw Ghetto shall live in the history of Jewry.[60]

Jews were collecting and documenting their experiences of Nazi oppression and murder during World War Two and the Holocaust. In July 1944, Lublin in Poland was liberated by the Red Army. In August 1944 a major Jewish historical commission was set up in Lublin, which at its height expanded to 25 branches and 100 staff and conducted over

[59] Hyam Brezniak, "No Traveller Returns - Review," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1948).
[60] Hyman Levy, "Crucifixion of Jewry," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949). Note here the messianic title of the article. For an account of the historians of the Warsaw Ghetto, see Samuel D Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Indiana University Press, 2007).

5,000 interviews.[61] Jewish survivors in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Germany also set up historical commissions and published journals which collected and published accounts of the Holocaust. These journals and other publications circulated throughout Yiddish speaking communities worldwide.[62] As David Cesarani puts it,

> [d]espite the disruptions of communications and disputed borders, authors, witnesses as well as manuscripts criss-crossed war shattered Europe. With extraordinary speed, accounts by survivors from one country appeared in another, frequently translated into a third language.[63]

In an essay published in 1950, Phillip Friedman, a leading Yiddish historian, reported that there were over 10,000 books and articles published on 'our recent catastrophe', written by people 'who never in their lives dreamed of becoming writers'.[64] In the same year A. Sonnenberg was writing in *Unity* of the creation of 'a new literature…the like of which the world has never seen before'; a literature which 'in its naked revelation should shame mankind . . . The Jewish literature which has survived deserves to be translated into every language so that all who can, may read and those who cannot, may listen.'[65] For Sonnenberg, the task of translating, publicising and reading this literature meant a sacred, specifically Jewish form of remembrance conjoined with a secular universal political purpose: '[t]his literature is the Kaddish to our dead. Through their writing the dead must live. Through that writing their heroism must become known and strength renewed to banish fascism from the face of the earth.'[66] *Unity's* ethic of memory meant a commitment to reading, reviewing, distributing and publicising Holocaust literature, directly contributing to producing a specifically Jewish political

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[61] Cesarani, "Challenging the 'Myth of Silence': Postwar Responses to the Destruction of European Jewry," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 16.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 18-19.
[64] Phillip Friedman, "Unzer Khurbn-Literatur," *Yidisher Kemfer*, 31 March 1950 in Mark L. Smith, "No Silence in Yiddish: Popular and Scholarly Writing About the Holocaust in the Early Postwar Years," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 56.
[65] A. Sonnenberg, "War without Gold Braid," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1950).
[66] Ibid. These sentiments were echoed in a review of *Bleter Fun Pain Un Umkum* (Document on the History of Jewish Extermination) published by the YIVO Committee, Melbourne, 1949. The volume was a compilation of accounts from seven survivors and was, as the review put it, 'the first attempt in this country [Australia] to record for posterity data on the greatest Jewish tragedies, and provides not only material for the historians and writers of the future, but portrays for the reader to-day the real extent and nature of the tragedy.' Nate Zusman, the reviewer, wrote that 'this book should be read and re-read, particularly by those fortunate enough to be in Australia during the war. It will bring home more forcibly than any other writing can, the nature of Fascism and the need for constant vigilance against a resurgence of this evil.' Nate Zusman, ""Bleter Fun Pain Un Umkum" - Review," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no.2 (1949).

consciousness. As I have suggested, this represented more than a fostering of historical consciousness. Sonnenberg's injunction that 'the dead must live' is here both a product of and a spur to an affiliative memory of the Holocaust, a deeply personal connection and identification with the Jewish victims, formed through an ongoing ethic of memory.

It is important to note that although this consciousness was certainly deeper and more sophisticated than then dominant non-Jewish understandings, it was tied to images of the Holocaust that were necessarily limited by the available sources, which were principally the remaining survivors.[67] This circumscribed the 'imaginative investment, projection, and creation' which formed the immediate post-war memorialisation of the Holocaust.[68] As Sonnenberg noted, the literature produced by survivors could be grouped into three categories: descriptions of the Nazi concentration camps, accounts of the Jewish ghettos and 'the diaries of those Jews who managed to "live" on the Aryan side', by either hiding or passing as non-Jews.[69] In this respect, many aspects of the Holocaust were neither understood nor represented within the memorial narratives of post-war Jewish communities.[70]

As translated, and publicised through the pages of *Unity*, we should acknowledge a further bias of presentation of this Holocaust literature, particularly in its major focus on resistance in the ghettoes. As discussed above this militant Jewish figure was important to the re-imagining of Jewish identity. Notably in other imaginings of this figure, it was directly tied to a masculinised, Zionist 'New Hebrew' Jewish subjectivity, a break with the feminised image of the passive diaspora Jew.[71] *Unity* had a somewhat ambivalent

[67] Cesarani, "Challenging the 'Myth of Silence'," 22.
[68] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5.
[69] Sonnenberg, "War without Gold Braid."
[70] One of many instances of this misunderstanding was Platz's claim that 'six million [Jews] died in concentration camps'. Ernest Platz, "Letters to the Editor- "Time to Call the Joke Off"," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 1. As Holocaust historian, Timothy Snyder, has noted, our general historical understanding of the Holocaust, even as it has passed into a wider non-Jewish Western consciousness has been limited by the nature of the survivor literature. The focus on the western camps and Auschwitz as the central aspect of the Holocaust is a legacy of the fact these camps were labour camps as well as death camps, meaning their function was not simply to kill all prisoners as quickly as possible. As Snyder puts it 'two thirds of the Jews who would be killed during the war were already dead by the end of 1942. The main victims, the Polish and Soviet Jews, had been killed by bullets fired over death pits or by carbon monoxide from internal combustion engines pumped into gas chambers at Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor in occupied Poland.' Timothy Snyder, "Holocaust: The Ignored Reality," *The New York Review of Books*, July 16 2009.
[71] This was particularly the case in the cultural production of the DP camps, see Margarete Myers Feinstein, "Re-Imagining the Unimaginable: Theater, Memory, and Rehabilitation in the Displaced Persons Camps," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012). Though as noted by Yosef Grodzinsky, 60 percent of Jewish DPs chose not to go to Palestine, despite it being the easiest place to travel to. Yosef

attitude towards Zionism (as I explore in Chapter Three), its images of Jewish resistance were more often geared towards a general antifascist and anti-assimilationist consciousness.[72]

Although the image of the militant figure of ghetto resistance certainly predominated, I suggest that *Unity* offered other approaches to Holocaust memory which held this heroic image of resistance in tension with more negative representations. In 1943, Itzchock Katzenelson, a participant in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was deported to a concentration camp in Southern France. Before being sent to his death at Auschwitz, Katzenelson told his friends where he had placed a long poem, 'Song of the Slaughtered Jewish People', 'hidden in three hermetically sealed bottles and buried under the twisted and gnarled roots of an old tree'.[73] As part of their 1950 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising memorial issue *Unity* printed a translated extract from this poem which ends '[o]h Heaven, desolate and waste! Oh vistas of wide and endless nothingness/ I have lost my God amidst your emptiness.'[74] In introducing this extract, the editors of *Unity* concluded that '[t]his volume of verse contains perhaps the most poignant, the most stark, record of the Third Destruction.'[75] By foregrounding the importance of a work like this, which represented the essential negativity and difficulty of assigning meaning to the Jewish catastrophe, *Unity* was attempting to hold open a gap in interpretation, an opening rather than a closure of narrative. The extract published here produces, in

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Grodzinsky, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Struggle between Jews and Zionists in the Aftermath of World War II* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2004), 225-226. For a critical account of the Zionist movement and emerging Israeli state apparatus' role in the DP camps, including the violent forced conscription campaign, see ibid. For further discussion of the 'New Hebrew' see Chapter Three.

[72] Cesarani notes that many of the Holocaust memoirs and testimonials that emerged in Europe in the immediate post-war years, were written within a narrative of hegemonic post-war official national anti-fascist ideology which effaced the narrative of 'racial persecution and the specifics of Jewish suffering'. Cesarani, "Challenging the 'Myth of Silence'," 22. As I explore in this thesis, *Unity* did not efface this narrative, they made it inextricable from their antifascist ideology.

[73] Itzchok Katzenelson, "Song of the Slaughtered Jewish People (an Extract)," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1950).

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid. 'The third destruction' or '*der driter khurbn'* was a common way to describe the Holocaust in Yiddish speaking communities. The first two destructions being of the temples in Jerusalem. David G. Roskies notes that Katzenelson's poem was published and promoted in Yiddish and Hebrew by the Kibbutz movement in Israel because of his links with the socialist Zionist Dror movement and that 'Katzenelson's long day's journey into the ghetto night made maximal demands of the reader and would never have appeared were it not for its institutional sponsor'. David G. Roskies, "Dividing the Ruins: Communal Memory in Yiddish and Hebrew," in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 90.

Hirsch's terms, 'the disruptive emotion that prevents too easy a resolution of the work of mourning'.[76]

In a similar vein, Martin Jay suggests that Walter Benjamin was attracted to *trauerspiel*, a genre of German tragic drama, because of its 'endless, repetitive "play" of mourning, as opposed to … the allegedly healthy "working through" of grief'.[77] Jay cites Gillian Rose as suggesting that Benjamin's 'defence of repetitive, never worked through remembrance' was grounded in the Jewish notion of *zakhor*, the 'commandment that is at the heart of Judaism', the 'commandment to remember, which Benjamin would enlist for the method and outcome of revolution'.[78] According to Jay, 'Benjamin defended allegorical melancholy to keep the wound open in the hope of some later utopian redemption, understanding ritual or redemption as a placeholder for future happiness.'[79] As I suggest further below, we can see the writers of *Unity* participating in a similar ethic; their memorialisation was not aimed at curing the 'incurable wounds' of the survivors, their fidelity to the event of the Uprising served as placeholder for a future redemption as yet unknown in form — in Benjamin's terms a 'utopian apokatastasis', a messianic vision of universal justice.[80] As suggested above, this form of repetitive, ritualised memory practice has held a central place in Jewish religion and culture, often coupled with an injunction to a transtemporal and transhistorical identification. In what follows I argue that *Unity* did not embrace a Zionist narrative of transcending the Holocaust in order to make a clean break with an obsolete form of Jewishness. Instead it allowed its readers to dwell with the memory of the Holocaust, figured as an incurable wound, to continue to draw out its complex and non-teleological consequences.

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[76] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 172. Herz Bergner's novel *Between Sky and Sea*, with its tragic, non-redemptive ending, works very much in this same vein. Herz Bergner, *Between Sky and Sea*, trans. Judah Waten (Melbourne, Australia: Text Publishing, 1946; repr., 2010).

[77] Martin Jay, *Refractions of Violence* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2003), 15. *Trauerspiel* was the subject of Benjamin's *habilitationsschrift*. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1928; repr., 1998).

[78] Jay, *Refractions of Violence*, 21; Gillian Rose, *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1993), 206. This concept was famously explored by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi who suggested that the invocation to remember, for rabbinic Judaism, displaced historical consciousness which was seen as unnecessary while '[t]he biblical past was known, the messianic future assured; the in-between-time was obscure.' Rose suggests this led to an ethic of 'eschatological repetition' at the expense of 'political judgement'. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1982), 24; Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 207.

[79] Jay, *Refractions of Violence*, 22.

[80] Jay defines 'apokatastasis' here as 'the redemption of all the fragments of fallen reality, the admission of all souls into heaven'. Ibid., 20. See also Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'*, trans. Chris Turner (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 34-36.

‘Commemorating the Jewish “Anzac Day”’: the Warsaw Ghetto and multidirectional memory

Part of this struggle to understand the Holocaust was evidenced in *Unity’s* fascination with the ‘Monument to the Ghetto Heroes’ in Warsaw. Images of the ‘Monument to the Ghetto Heroes’, erected by the Polish government in April 1948 and designed by Jewish sculptor Natan Rapoport, were featured in at least four issues of *Unity,* including the cover of the 1949 commemorative issue.[81] In Michael Rothberg’s analysis, the monument embodies a ‘double consciousness’: a specific experience of oppression and estrangement that opens up a more universal insight. Rothberg’s ‘double consciousness’ here gestures explicitly to W.E.B. Du Bois’ 1903 conception of ‘double consciousness’ which referred to ‘the fact that minorities are both “gifted with second-sight” by virtue of their inside/outside position vis-à-vis dominant culture and are plagued with a lack of “true self-consciousness” because they are “always looking at [their selves] through the eyes of others”.’ [82] The monument is two sided, with bronze statues representing the heroes of the ghetto as typically heroic ‘mytho-proletarian’ figures on one side.[83] On the other side of the monument there is a stone bas-relief depicting a ‘train of huddled [Jewish] figures herded towards their death’, a particularly Jewish narrative of suffering.[84]

For Rothberg, rather than assimilating a specifically Jewish story into a flattening Stalinist and universalising aesthetic as some have alleged, the monument successfully holds both narratives together in tension.[85] The tension of this ‘double consciousness’, for Rothberg, is a precondition for making memory ‘multidirectional’.[86] Multidirectionality is a concept for thinking collective memory against the framework

[81]On the 1949 cover it was paired with the popular Yiddish ‘Partisan song’. “Cover,” *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949). Images of the monument were also prominent in contemporary US Jewish media, see Diner, *We Remember*, 29. For an account of the changing uses, reception and interpretations of the monument, see James E. Young, “The Biography of a Memorial Icon: Nathan Rapoport’s Warsaw Ghetto Monument,” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 69-106.
[82] According to Rothberg, ‘[t]he simultaneity of estrangement and insight that Du Bois locates in the black experience of modernity certainly finds its analogue in twentieth-century Jewish history and its articulation in Rapoport’s monument’. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 129-130. For the original quote, see Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks,* 5-10.
[83] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 155 quoted in Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 128.
[84] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 128.
[85] Ibid., 128-131.
[86] Ibid.

of ‘competitive memory — as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources’. Multidirectional memory is therefore ‘subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; [it is] productive and not privative.’[87] The monument’s simultaneous specificity and universality provides a discursive space for memory to travel in multiple directions.

The articulation of a specifically Jewish narrative of the Holocaust was in stark contrast to concurrent hegemonic interpretations, which denied the racial nature of the Nazi regime and considered the Nazi’s victims through liberal universalism in the West and as undifferentiated Soviet Citizens in the USSR.[88] David Ritter has suggested that this was very much the case in the non-Jewish Australian context, where the Holocaust only started to be widely known as a distinct phenomenon as a result of publicity from the Eichmann Trial in 1961.[89] Even then, Ritter suggests that the interpretation of the trial was ‘heavily conditioned by the crucial context of the chilling and polarising rigidity of the Cold War’, occluding an understanding of the specificity of the racial nature of the Nazi regime and its genocide of European Jewry.[90]

In contradistinction, Michael Rothberg suggests that ‘communism provided one of the discursive spheres, both in the US and elsewhere, in which the articulation of genocide

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[87] Ibid., 3.

[88] See Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*; Zvi Gitelman, “History, Memory and Politics: The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5, no. 1 (1990): 23-37; Dov-Ber Kerler, “The Soviet Yiddish Press: Eynikayt During the War, 1942-1945,” in *Why Didn’t the Press Shout? American and International Journalism During the Holocaust*, ed. Robert M. Shapiro (Hoboken, NJ: Yeshiva University Press in association with KTAV Publishing House, 2003), 226. For an account of Auschwitz as de-Judaised memorial site in a ‘Cold War theater’ in the late 1940s and early 1950s, see Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration, 1945-1979* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003), 79-107. Lawrence Baron suggests that previous accounts of a silence over Nazi atrocities in popular culture, here referencing Hollywood in particular, were overstated. There were several significant films throughout the 1940s and 1950s which dealt with Nazi crimes and Nazi war criminals. Although most of these films acknowledged that Jews were particular targets of the Nazis, this narrative was most often subsumed under a broader depiction of the universal evils of the Nazi regime. Lawrence Baron, “Trial by Audience: Bringing Nazi War Criminals to Justice in Hollywood Films, 1944-59,” in *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence*, ed. David Cesarani and Eric J Sundquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 152.

[89] See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

[90] David Ritter, “Distant Reverberations: Australian Responses to the Trial of Adolf Eichmann,” *Holocaust Studies* 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 78. Paul Bartrop notes that there was sporadic reporting of the oppression and murder of Europe’s Jews in the Australian press throughout the War, but that general coverage of Nazi atrocities was very patchy until the exposure of the western camps in April and May of 1945. Journalists visited the camps personally, taking photographs and reporting on what the *Sydney Morning Herald* called the ‘German Camp Horror which has Shocked the World’. Although the facts were readily available, these revelations were not identical to an understanding of what we would now deem the ‘Holocaust’, nor was it widely understood that the Nazis had a specific policy and program of extermination of European Jewry. Paul Robert Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust, 1933-45* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 212.

and colonialism could first be attempted'.[91] Peter Novick points to the high frequency with which Jewish communists, communist sympathisers and Communist Party members more generally, referred to the Holocaust in the US. Their anti-Cold War and anti-McCarthyist rhetoric was particularly informed by Holocaust references.[92] Rothberg discusses how in the communist discursive sphere there uniquely emerged an idea of 'the specificity of the Nazi genocide' through its articulation in a 'comparative framework'. This framed the Holocaust in comparison with other instances of racism and colonialism, most particularly with the civil rights struggles of African Americans.[93] Hasia R. Diner notes that in the post-war era American Jewish agencies focused huge amounts of energy on civil rights struggles. Jewish and co-sponsored events and campaigns on civil rights issues constantly evoked the memory of the Holocaust.[94] Although there was no such sustained movement amongst Australian Jews to campaign alongside Indigenous people in Australia, I argue below that the interpretation of the Holocaust within an antifascist framework meant that the memory of the Holocaust rather than being understood solely as a Jewish story of past suffering, had wider political implications for Jews and non-Jews.[95]

In 1950 a controversy erupted highlighting the ideological disjuncture between a still somewhat assimilationist Jewish leadership in Sydney, and a new antifascist, anti-assimilationist consciousness associated with the JCCFAS and *Unity*. Following a poor turnout for the previous year's event, the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies declined to organise a Warsaw Ghetto Uprising commemoration in 1950. Brezniak, in his *Unity* column was outraged: '[t]o Jews all over the world the day of the Warsaw Ghetto Commemoration is a day of remembrance for the fallen Jews in the greatest cataclysm in Jewish history. This is the day when the message of Jewish resistance and of Jewish survival is echoed once more. The leading body of NSW Jewry has no message.'[96] Brezniak continued, invoking a particularly Australian analogy: '[h]ave the few years which separate us from those never to be forgotten days when a symbolic revolt took place been sufficient to make us insensitive to the importance of

[91] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 118.
[92] Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*, 93-94.
[93] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 118-19.
[94] Diner, *We Remember*, 294-296. See also Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (Columbia University Press, 2002), 19-44.
[95] I explore the Australian Jewish relationship with Indigenous people in Australia and Australian settler colonialism in Chapter Five.
[96] Hyam Brezniak, "Spotlight on Events," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1950).

commemorating the Jewish "Anzac Day"?'[97]

I suggest that this rhetorical flourish is a prime example of *Unity's* deployment of multidirectional memory practices. Rather than substituting or hierarchising the two commemorations, Brezniak highlighted the importance of the Warsaw Ghetto commemoration by comparing it to the widely acknowledged importance of ANZAC Day in Australian society, connecting the suffering and sacrifice of Australian soldiers with the heroism and suffering of the Warsaw Ghetto fighters.[98] Brezniak both maintained the distinctiveness of the Jewish narrative, whilst opening up the collective memorialisation of the Holocaust to analogy and comparison in a specifically Australian context, thus suggesting a multidirectional approach to collective memory. This idea was echoed in *Unity's* 1949 commemorative issue which featured a page titled 'Lest We Forget' including Holocaust photographs with descriptive captions (see Figure 1). The introductory text read: 'A reminder to those who need it! With horror we witness the revival of the Nazi movement in Germany, and many of those responsible for crimes against humanity, being placed in important posts.'[99] This page at once connected the memory of the Holocaust and the importance of memorialisation with the traditional refrain of ANZAC Day commemorations, as well as pointing to the ongoing threat of fascism in West Germany. The collective memory of the Holocaust here was projected not just horizontally, across and through Australian ANZAC memory, but also forward, as an explicit warning for the future, manifested through an antifascist politics.

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[97] Ibid.

[98] The meaning and memory of ANZAC Day was far from uncontested in Australian society. Nick Dyrenfurth suggests that although 'conservative idealisation of national solidarity' was the predominant ideology associated with ANZAC Day in the inter-war years, the Australian Labor Party and the Labour movement also had a complex and often contradictory engagement with ANZAC memory. By World War Two, Prime Minister John Curtin successfully 'conflated … the labour movement's collectivist accent with the nation's task of military defence.' Nick Dyrenfurth, "Labor and the Anzac Legend, 1915-45," *Labour History*, no. 106 (2014): 186. The years of total war, along with the politics of the Popular Front against fascism saw a resurgence of this left nationalism, see Richard Haese, *Rebels and Precursors: The Revolutionary Years of Australian Art* (Melbourne: Allen Lane 1981), 140. Joy Damousi has explored how in the immediate post-war years 'a culture of reserve' excluded and marginalised the grief of war widows from official ANZAC day commemorations, leading to the establishment of alternate ceremonies. Joy Damousi, *Living with the Aftermath: Trauma, Nostalgia and Grief in Post-War Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10-20. For an overview of the historiography on ANZAC day, see Bruce Scates et al., "Anzac Day at Home and Abroad: Towards a History of Australia's National Day," *History Compass* 10, no. 7 (2012): 523-536.

[99] "Lest We Forget," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949). The line 'Lest We Forget', taken from Rudyard Kipling's poem, 'Recessional', has been incorporated into the 'Ode of Remembrance' which is regularly recited at ANZAC day memorial events.

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LEST WE FORGET

A REMINDER FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT!

With horror we witness the revival of the Nazi Movement in Germany, and many of those responsible for crimes against humanity, being placed in important posts.

Rabbis who were compelled to witness Jews being put to death, and then also killed.

S.S. men make cruel sport in forcing a Jew to pray for the lives of fellow Jews whom they have done to death.

Bodies being taken from the gas chambers at Auschwitz death camp and carted away to be burned.

Two men and a woman hanged together in the market place in Lodz immediately on the entry of the Nazis into the city.

Figure 1 — 'Lest We Forget', *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no.1 (1949).

The memory of the Holocaust in general, and the Warsaw Ghetto in particular, took on an international significance for *Unity* who placed themselves firmly within the worldwide peace campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s, which sought to head off a seemingly immanent third world war.[100] In the words of Hyman Levy, in an article he

[100] Although the worldwide peace campaign of these years was a key aspect of Soviet Union foreign policy, the peace movement in Australia certainly predated and exceeded its determination by the Soviet Union and the CPA, see Kim Thoday, ""A Harder Thing Than Dying": Peace Activism and the Protestant Left in Australia During the Early Cold War," in *Fighting against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Phillip Deery and Julie Kimber (Melbourne: Leftbank Press, 2015); Phillip Deery and Doug Jordan, "Fellow-Travelling in the Cold War: The Australian Peace Movement," paper presented at the Ninth National Labour History Conference, The University of Sydney, 30 June-2 July 2005. I explore the complex relationship between the antifascist Jewish left, the CPA and the Soviet Union in Chapters Two and Four.

wrote after visiting Warsaw, '[m]ay the graveyard that is the Warsaw Ghetto be sanctified by becoming the graveyard of war itself. If this is to become a reality it will not come by mere words of dedication, but by the conscious and deliberate actions of all those who understand.'[101] Here an appreciation and understanding of the history of war and fascism that led to the Warsaw Ghetto was tied to a political consciousness that could combat war in toto. We move here from the specifics of Jewish oppression and the Jewish Uprising to a universal political goal, embodying Rothberg's 'double consciousness'. We can also note this passage's Benjaminian resonances as discussed above: the memorialisation of the Warsaw Ghetto served as a placeholder for a more universal redemption.

'respectful, uniformed guests [who] were regaled with motion pictures of Warsaw in flames': genocide, the Holocaust and de-colonisation

In 1949, *Unity* ran an article covering the use of the term 'genocide' as part of the indictment of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. As noted by the article's author, Simon Wolf, the term had only been recently coined by the Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin.[102] Wolf noted that the term 'will, in due course, be included in dictionaries and encyclopaedias, but it first should penetrate into the minds of all civilised peoples as a term for the most horrible of deeds and, more important still, as a warning for the future.'[103] The article continued by detailing the arguments of Lemkin's book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944), which was notable not just for its strong legal arguments and documentation, but for being a pioneering work of genocide studies that framed the Holocaust in a comparative perspective:[104]

> Genocide itself was not invented by the Nazis: the blood-stained history of our planet contains dreadful chapters on the mass extermination of human beings. Genghis-Khan and Attila, described in history books as great warriors and

[101] Hyman Levy, "Crucifixion of Jewry," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949).
[102] Simon Wolf, "Genocide: The Crime That Is No Longer Nameless," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 3 (1949); John Q Barrett, "Raphael Lemkin and 'Genocide' at Nuremberg, 1945–1946," in *The Genocide Convention Sixty Years after Its Adoption*, ed. C. Safferling and E. Conze (The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press, 2010), 46-47.
[103] Wolf, "Genocide."
[104] A. Dirk Moses, "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide," in *The Oxford Handbook on Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19-41. See also James Loeffler, "Becoming Cleopatra: The Forgotten Zionism of Raphael Lemkin," *Journal of Genocide Research* 19, no. 3 (2017): 340-360.

> conquerors, were in reality genocidal maniacs: the destruction of Carthage and Jerusalem: the massacres of the Albigenses and the Waldenses and, more recently, of the Armenians, were classic acts of genocide.[105]

Describing the Nazi genocide, Wolf continued to detail Lemkin's analysis: '[t]his all-out attack on the very existence of some races was made by the Germans against Jews, Gypsies [sic], Poles, Russians and other Slavs'. Enshrining the concept of 'genocide' as a crime in international law, he argued, would act as an important deterrent against 'any criminal attack on a civilian population by a conqueror in any future war, or by a ruthless oppressor of a racial, national or any other minority in time of peace.'[106] For Wolf, Lemkin's proposals and achievements meant both a specific conceptualisation of the Nazi's crimes as well as the beginnings of a new international political order which would prevent future genocides from occurring to any people.

In a 1951 issue *Unity* published a condensed version of an article titled 'Hitler and the Gypsies [sic]' by Dora E. Yates, then the world's foremost Romani scholar.[107] It was introduced by the editors, who noted: '[o]ne of the oldest Aryan groups in Europe was destroyed because it did not suit with Hitler's Fascist expansion. Let this account be an additional warning to the free people of the world of the danger of the revival of Nazism in Germany.' Yates then gave a brief account of Gypsy [Romani] history, beginning with an analogy: the 'Gypsies [sic], like the Jews, stand alone in the history of the world as an isolated race; both are, seemingly, miraculous survivals'. Yates continued:

> Hitler and his gangsters then chose to classify the whole race as "asocial" — i.e., a nomadic people who did not fit into his New Order and a proper object for genocide… [h]e decreed the wholesale massacre of Gypsies [sic] in Central Eastern and Southern Europe, for the sole reason that they were Gypsies [sic], a race of free men and women.[108]

Unity's analysis of Hitler's regime as a racial, genocidal regime that targeted many groups including Jewish people evinced a sophisticated understanding of the Holocaust as well as opening up a wider field of analysis of racism and fascism, enabling the creation of multidirectional forms of memory and new lines of political solidarity.

An example of this is an article by John Hatch, a lecturer in International Relations at Glasgow University, in the February 1950 edition of the JCCFAS newsletter. Hatch

[105] Wolf, "Genocide."
[106] Ibid.
[107] Dora E. Yates, "Hitler and the Gypsies (the Fate of Europe's Oldest Aryans)," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 4 (1951).
[108] Ibid.

wrote of 'the transformation of South Africa into a great concentration camp for all peoples with coloured skins' and made explicit comparisons with Nazism, suggesting that the Nationalist policy was 'galloping to the same end as was found in Dachau, Buchenwald, Belsen, Maidenek [sic] and a score of other camps.'[109] An editorial from the short lived JCCFAS affiliated magazine *The Clarion* (1952-1952) went further, criticising Australia's key allies, by suggesting that:

> the Master Race theory of Nazism has reached a new peak in the war circles of America and Britain: for what is the difference between exterminating "Gooks" in Korea and "Yids" in Europe? Both are fruits from the same tree of evil.[110]

The JCCFAS consistently connected the commemoration of the Holocaust and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising with broader political issues. Whilst Berman notes that for the most part the speeches given at the annual commemorations were particularistic and insularly focused, the JCCFAS pushed to have non-Jewish speakers included.[111] Berman notes that Norman Rothfield, a key JCCFAS activist, stands out for his 1949 speech at the commemoration, which made a universalistic point: "Jews did not die that we should weep and mourn, but so that we might live to carry on the fight for a better world secure from the fascism and war that destroyed them…We must learn from the past and wake up to the danger of fascist tendencies and aggression everywhere today."[112] According to Berman, Rothfield cited events in Indonesia and elsewhere as dangers to freedom.[113] We can note again here a Benjaminian suspended structure of mourning and its association with multidirectional Holocaust memory.[114] The references to South Africa, Korea and Indonesia suggest not just that the memory of the Holocaust became a venue for new lines of political solidarity, but that anti-colonial and

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[109] John Hatch, "South Africa: Malan Brings Back Slave Labour," *Newsletter of the Melbourne and Sydney Jewish Councils to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism*, February (1950).
[110] "Editorial: The Clarion Fights for Peace," *The Clarion: A Progressive Jewish Monthly*, no. 1 (1952).
[111] Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance*, 64-68.
[112] Ibid., 68; "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 3rd April 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).
[113] Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance*, 68. The context of Rothfield's remarks on Indonesia would have been the long-running struggle for Indonesian independence against the Dutch. Australian trade unions had played an active part in this struggle, principally through a ban on Dutch shipping, see Douglas Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945-1960" (Victoria University, 2011), 33-38; Rupert Lockwood, *Black Armada: Australia & the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1942-49* (South Sydney: Australasian Book Society, 1975). See also Walter Kaufmann, "Indonesia Calling," in *The Curse of Maralinga, and Other Stories* (Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers, 1959).
[114] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 209.

de-colonial struggles provided a discursive space for the articulation of Holocaust memory.[115]

In early 1949, *Unity* published a report on the World Congress of Intellectuals at Wroclaw (August 1948) from Ber Mark, a representative of Polish Jewry at the Congress and the editor of *Dos Naye Lebn*, the Yiddish organ of the Central Committee of Polish Jews in Warsaw.[116] The Soviet-sponsored Congress aimed to unite communist aligned and non-communist intellectuals against US imperialism.[117] The main focus of the article was the speeches given by 'a series of representatives of the colonial and oppressed peoples':

> Each speaker in turn hurled a stirring J'accuse against imperialism… They came to demand the fulfilment of the urge for freedom of millions of enslaved colored peoples, to cry out against oppression by imperialism, colonialism and racism. They came to unite with the ever-growing movement for freedom that is gathering power in Europe and rousing America from sleep.[118]

After detailing a number of the speeches and giving portraits of the colonial intellectuals, Mark continued: '[a] deep impression was made by the speeches of … the French North African writer, Aimé Césaire … [who] explained in broad, powerful terms the basic issues of colonialism … Césaire ended his speech with the moving words, "[e]very time a Negro is beaten, a Chinese is oppressed or a Jew attacked, civilisation is desecrated."'[119]

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[115] Rothberg discusses this multidirectional movement in relation to the emergence of the idea of Holocaust survivor testimony in France against the background of the Algerian War, see Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 192-198.

[116] Ber Mark was a famous Polish Jewish communist historian. Interestingly Moshe Shklar notes that *Dos Naye Lebn* was a newspaper 'without an official Party line'; that Mark was less dogmatic than the paper's previous editor, Michal Mirski, who we encountered above at the World Jewish Congress; and that the paper 'concentrated on mirroring a rebirth of economic and cultural life of Jewish society in Poland. Simultaneously it referred to the struggle of Palestinian Jews in the creation of the Jewish state.' Moshe Shklar, "The Newspaper Folks-Shtime (People's Voice), 1948-1968: A Personal Account," in *Under the Red Banner: Yiddish Culture in the Communist Countries in the Postwar Era*, ed. Elvira Grözinger and Magdalena Ruta (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2008), 137. For an account of the genesis of the World Congress of Intellectuals and the tensions between Soviet and Polish Communist approaches, see Babiracki, *Soviet Soft Power*, 89-90.

[117] Robbie Lieberman, ""Does That Make Peace a Bad Word?": American Responses to the Communist Peace Offensive, 1949-1950," *Peace & Change* 17, no. 2 (1992): 199-200. This congress formed part of the Soviet Union's 'peace offensive'. For further discussion see Chapters Two and Four of this thesis.

[118] Ber Mark, "Voice of the Oppressed: World Congress of Intellectuals in Wroclaw, Poland, August, 1948," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 6 (1949).

[119] Césaire's remark here prefigures his 1950, *Discourses on Colonialism*, which as outlined by Rothberg, expounded on the concept of 'un choc en retour', which can be loosely translated as a boomerang effect, whereby as a result of all of the tortures and atrocities committed by European colonisers, and the acceptance of them by the European public 'there is the poison instilled in the veins of Europe and,

Mark noted that a specifically Jewish perspective 'did not come out as clearly and as strongly as it should at an anti-war Congress'. But he also noted that 'in many speeches by both Jews and non-Jews mention was made of the Jewish tragedy, of present-day Jewish struggle and of the attitude of the Jewish people towards war and peace.' Mark wrote of his own unfulfilled impulse, to call out a German delegate for his statement that the German people had committed great crimes against the Polish people, "and also against other peoples", rather than mentioning specifically the 'barbaric murder of six million innocent Jews'.[120] Mark quoted Albert E. Kahn, the American delegate to the conference, who after outlining the growing problems in the US, described his visit to the ruins of Warsaw: "I speak not only as an anti-Fascist and as an American. I speak also as a Jew. Six million Jews were annihilated in the last war. I have three children and I do not want them to suffer the tortures of the Jewish children in occupied Europe." Mark commented:

> These words evoked a tremendous response. The audience hung on his words. They wanted to hear from the lips of a Jew, from a proud Jew, the J'accuse of the Jewish people. When the entire audience rose to its feet and gave the speaker a tremendous ovation, it was primarily applause for the Jewish people, it was a tribute to the indescribable martyrdom of the Jew.[121]

The effect of this passage is to give the reader a sense of the power of Kahn's speech to the Congress audience. But the article was written for a Jewish readership; thus the reader is positioned simultaneously as both the international non-Jewish audience and in a similar position to the Jewish Kahn. The audience is portrayed as having a deep psychic need to hear a specifically Jewish account of oppression stemming from the 'indescribable martyrdom of the Jew'. Kahn fulfils the desire of the audience, while the 'tremendous ovation' also functions to validate the Jewish speaking position of Kahn, as well as represent a somewhat triumphant overcoming of Mark's initial hesitance to interrupt the German delegate. Mark's article is an emotionally resonant description of the discursive space opened at the World Congress in Wroclaw for an association of Holocaust memory and anti-colonial movements. We should also understand Mark's position as a global Jewish intellectual, representing not just Polish Jewry but a transnational antifascist Jewish consciousness. The printing of Mark's report in *Unity*

slowly but surely, the continent proceeds towards savagery'. The suggestion was that Nazism was the return of colonial violence. See Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 66-107.

[120] Mark, "Voice of the Oppressed."

[121] Ibid.

speaks to the complex movement of thought and memory between a specifically Jewish memorialisation of the Holocaust, world communism and its associated cultural initiatives and international events, a post-war worldwide anti-colonial or de-colonial moment and finally the antifascist Jewish cultures created locally in Poland and in Australia.[122]

The salience of global decolonisation for Jewish antifascist thinking in this period is also apparent in an extraordinary article written pseudonymously for *Unity* in 1951. The author 'Maccabeus' decried the present state of world affairs:[123]

> Cultured announcers purr into our homes the news that American Generals, the morganatic descendants of the victors of Bull Run and Gettysburg, are devising for the Chinese and the Koreans brilliant new ways of death which cause them to asphyxiate in airless vacuums caused by exploding petrol jellies that absorb the oxygen in the air. One thinks of those film shows, organised by German embassies in still uninvaded countries, in which respectful, uniformed guests were regaled with motion pictures of Warsaw in flames. Grain for starving India is held back to blackmail her government into the export of death-dealing materials, in the same way as the Nazis bartered the life of the Jews for lorries and drugs.[124]

After outlining the mass movements against colonialism that erupted following World War Two, and associating these movements with a progressive movement of history, Maccabeus continued:

> The deliberate resuscitation of Nazism in Germany which threatens the Jewish people is insolubly linked with the mad and impossible adventure of bringing the lords of rubber, tin and oil back to assume the white man's burden. Equally it is a childish illusion to believe that we can oppose one form of this catastrophic "policy" without opposing the other — an American High Commissioner in Germany who makes a mockery of de-nazification and conspires to return Krupp to the Ruhr is only trying to keep in step in his own sector with the work of a MacArthur, a Malcolm MacDonald or a De Lattre de Tassigny.[125]

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[122] For a much more unsympathetic account of the congress, see A.J.P. Taylor, "Intellectuals Betrayed Liberty at Wroclaw," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 September 1948.

[123] 'Maccabeus' is a reference to Judas Maccabeus, or Judah Maccabee, the leader of the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire, a figure of Jewish anti-colonial resistance par excellence. For a brief discussion of the place of the Maccabees within the discourses of Rabbinic Judaism and chivalric Christian Europe, see Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 273-274.

[124] The article was clearly written from an Australian perspective, the decline of civilisation was partially indicated by 'Queenslanders thrill[ing] to the twang of Texan Guitars [and] housewives of the Murray country do[ing] their ironing, soothed by an American singer singing a Californian song'. "Maccabeus", "Despair and Hope," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 4 (1951). Also note the ironic references to 'cultured announcers' and 'respectful, uniformed guests', echoing the Frankfurt school's famous co-implication of civilisation and violence, e.g. Benjamin's '[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.' Benjamin, "Theses."

[125] "Maccabeus", "Despair and Hope."

Thus, 'Maccabeus' made clear that there was a strong link and continuity between fascism, American imperialism and colonialism. In the paragraph quoted immediately above it was the contemporary struggles against a resurgence of Nazism and rearmament of West Germany that were joined with an anti-colonial critique. In the first paragraph, it was the memory of the Holocaust that was associated with (then) present-day colonial violence. There was a mixing of temporalities here which both eschewed a unidirectional causal connection between phenomena and avoided flattening them as essentially interchangeable atrocities within a liberal universalistic schema. Paradoxically, the capacious nature of the progressivist historical schema employed here created a space for a non-hierarchised, non-deterministic, transnational and transtemporal comparison, co-implication and multidirectionality. I suggest that the rhetorical strategies employed by 'Maccabeus' here take us not just from the memory of the Holocaust through to a critique of contemporary American policy in West Germany, and a leap again to an account of colonialism in Korea, India, Malaya and Indochina, but also went in the other direction. The anti-colonial movements battling colonialism and imperialism in these countries provided an occasion to articulate Holocaust memory within a broader field of political meaning. [126]

'Learn[ing] what it cost German Jewry so dearly to teach': lessons for Australia

Finally, we can note that *Unity* provides us with evidence that the experiences of the Jews of Germany during the rise of Nazism held particularly important lessons for the Australian Jewish antifascist left. The failures of assimilated German Jews became a key reference point for the writers and activists associated with *Unity* in combatting antisemitism, discrediting assimilationism and creating an antifascist consciousness. As has commonly been pointed out, Germany's Jews held themselves to be 'more German than the Germans'. In Enzo Traverso's account the fêted German-Jewish symbiosis had a unidirectional character. He suggests that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries German Jewish cultural dialogue and embrace of Enlightenment values was most often an intra-German Jewish dialogue, whilst the German intelligentsia, and particularly university students, increasingly embraced a *volkisch* reactionary ideology.

[126] I discuss further the Jewish left's specific theorisation of fascism in the following chapter.

This embrace of German culture had as its concomitant a certain chauvinistic attitude towards *Ostjuden*, un-assimilated Yiddish speaking and traditionally religious Eastern European Jewry, who migrated in increasing numbers to Germany in the early twentieth century.[127] In an article translated for *Unity*, Pinchas Goldhar questioned this chauvinism:

> Thanks to the integrity of their souls and their proud Jewish self-consciousness, our Eastern Jewry created a certain respect for themselves on the part of the non-Jewish surroundings. They were hated, but while hating them, they knew that the Jew was prepared to suffer for his beliefs, that he would die defending his Jewish faith or his revolutionary ideals. This bridled the hatred of anti-Semitism which became humanised and elevated to the state of a conflict, the state of a struggle between equals. The Jewish communities in Western Europe, as well as those in the countries across the sea, whose Jewish self-consciousness has become atrophied, are harbouring an unworthy fear of the surrounding world. Their souls are seared by an inferiority complex which is gnawing at them not only in a national sense, but is also degrading their human honour and dignity, and therefore, the hate towards them is as heartless and cold as if they were creations of a lower order.[128]

Leaving aside Goldhar's doubtful claims as to the superior antisemitism suffered by 'Eastern Jewry', this passage is indicative of a fundamental post-Holocaust re-assessment of Jewish culture, politics and history.[129] It is representative of a new widespread consensus on the ultimate failure of Jewish attempts to assimilate as an

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[127] Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982); Enzo Traverso, *The Jews and Germany: From the 'Judeo-German Symbiosis' to the Memory of Auschwitz*, trans. Daniel Weissbort (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 7-22. Marion Kaplan suggests that Traverso's case is somewhat overstated, that there were some examples of a genuine symbiosis and that Traverso's gender bias, leads him to a 'marginalization of women [that] badly skews German-Jewish history, for it was in the home and family where Jews retained far more Jewishness than has previously been acknowledged'. Marion A Kaplan, "The "German-Jewish Symbiosis" Revisited," *New German Critique*, no. 70, Special Issue on Germans and Jews (1997): 185.

[128] Goldhar, "Jewish Antisemitism."

[129] Steven E. Aschheim suggests that even before the Nazis took power, during the era of the Weimar republic there was a strand of German Jewish culture, reflective of Weimar sensibilities more generally, that embraced post-liberal, post-*Bildung* (*Bildung* was a central notion of German enlightenment liberalism, meaning self-cultivation, which was particularly embraced by German Jews) conceptual frameworks. Against the usual assessment, of their cultural marginality, Aschheim suggests that figures such as Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem were all in different ways part of this post-*Bildung* intellectual movement. Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1996), 31-44. Ned Curthoys argues against a simplistic characterisation of *Bildung* as a mode of assimilation. Instead he suggests that it also represented 'a vehicle for multifarious human engagement with the world that inspired not only a movement beyond reified conceptions of tradition, whether religious or secular, but forms of activism that could combine cosmopolitan sympathies with communal affiliation.' Ned Curthoys, "Redescribing the Enlightenment: The German-Jewish Adoption of Bildung as a Counter-Normative Ideal," *Intellectual History Review* 23, no. 3 (2013): 365.

answer to antisemitism, and thus a re-assessment of the content and worth of non-assimilatory Jewishness. I will discuss further the two major consequences of this re-assessment — Zionism and the re-imagining of diasporic Jewish communities — in Chapter Three. Here it is crucial to note the way the case of German Jewry was understood and how it came to inform the political consciousness of those associated with *Unity*. I suggest the failure of German Jewish assimilation became, through political parable and its ties with other forms of Holocaust memory, a foundational aspect of Jewish antifascist consciousness.

In *Unity's* first issue, Judah Waten referred to the historical precedent of the chauvinism of German Jewry to warn against anti-Jewish refugee sentiment: '[r]efugee-baiting is, in the present circumstances, a form of Jew-baiting that must not be ignored – and is reminiscent of Hitler's attacks on the "eastern Jew" which lulled even some sections of German Jewry into a false sense of security.'[130] Hyman Levy, in an article on assimilation, took a similar line of argument:

> [f]irst it was only the Jews from Eastern Europe to whom they [the Nazis] objected, not the more "cultured" German type, whose grandfathers only were of Hebrew extraction. This move played on a class distinction, for the Jews of Poland were perhaps the most poverty-stricken in Europe. And the middle-class German Jew — and the middle-class German — fell for it. "Hitler hasn't bad ideas, you know, if only he stops just there."[131]

It is notable that this argument was mounted not just against assimilation but also against intra-Jewish class divisions and racism. A further example of the significance of a particular narrative of German-Jewish history to Jewish antifascists in Australia was an article titled 'Heads You Win, Tails I Lose' by Walter Lippmann in *Unity*. Lippmann was a refugee from Nazi Germany, a leading activist in the JCCFAS and the Melbourne editor of *Unity*.[132] Warning of the intensifying Cold War and the challenge to civil liberties represented by Prime Minister Robert Menzies' attempts to ban the Communist Party, Lippmann wrote: '[a]s Jews … [w]e cannot run away from it, nor can we hide our heads in the sand and say, "this does not concern us." It concerns us vitally. And we must learn from the experience of Jewish communities elsewhere rather than repeat the

[130] Judah L. Waten, "Anti-Semitism in Australia," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948).
[131] Hyman Levy, "Assimilation," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 5 (1948).
[132] For a brief biography and a collection of Lippmann's letters, writings and speeches, see Andrew Markus and Margaret Taft, eds., *Walter Lippmann, Ethnic Communities Leader: 'Creative Thinker, Dogged Worker, the Kindest of Men'* (Melbourne: Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, 2016).

lessons, only to learn them later, the hard way, by our own experience.'[133] Referring to the demonization of Judah Waten by Jewish establishment figures, Lippmann continued:

> [t]o exclude a man for no other reason than that he holds, or is alleged to hold, unpopular political views, is but a first step to the admission that Hitler was perfectly within his rights, when he arbitrarily excluded Jews from German citizenship or dissolved opposition parties…. Surely Australian Jewry will be on its guard and not allow itself to be divested from its tight and democratic course either by the fear of its weak-kneed members or by the urgings of the local counterparts of that small group of super-Teutonic German Jewish intellectuals who, as the society of National German Jews, embraced even the ideas of Hitler. According to the story, they opened their meetings with a cry, "Down with ourselves!" … There were Jewish firms which subsidised Hitler's National-Socialism. They regarded themselves as far-seeing Jews, who thought their judicious investment might repay itself in immunity. We still have time to profit by their terrible experiences and to refuse to be drawn into the atmosphere of undemocratic intolerance…We must learn what it cost German Jewry so dearly to teach. During periods of stress and straightened economy, no minority can hope, in the long run, to be freer than any other minorities, whether these be racial, religious or economic. Jewish liberties are bound up with general liberties. The only effective fight for Jewish rights, to win them or to keep them, is the fight for democratic rights and freedom of every group or class. It certainly is not to ally ourselves with undemocratic witch-hunts and to apply to ourselves and our allies the evaluation of our enemies.[134]

The 'National German Jews' and the 'Jewish firms which subsidised Hitler's National-Socialism' served a metonymic function here as representatives of a failure of German Jewry as a whole. There was a rhetorical slippage and association from firstly the 'weak-kneed' Jewish community members, then to the openly self-hating National German Jews, then to the 'far-seeing' Jewish firms, then to 'German Jewry' as a whole. Lippmann's analysis and the arc of his rhetorical associations were reflective of his understanding of the vicissitudes of German Jewish history. Historian Sidney M. Bolkosky has demonstrated how even after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, representative Jewish organisations clung to an attachment to an idealised Germany, characterised principally by Enlightenment values. This attachment blinded large sections of German Jewry to the character and prevalence of a German racial nationalism and antisemitism.[135] Lippmann's account here was rhetorical, rather than strictly historical.

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[133] Walter Lippmann, "Heads You Win, Tails I Lose," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 3 (1949).
[134] Ibid.
[135] A particularly notorious episode of this is evinced by the front-page headline of the newsletter of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith, the largest German Jewish organisation, commonly known as the CV) on March 30, 1933.

Like Platz's account, it was based on his personal experience of Nazi Germany, but its truth was not necessarily to be found in its accurate depiction of events. For Lippmann, as for other German refugees to Australia, mostly middle class and assimilated, the lesson from Germany was to warn against the false security of assimilation, and that as a minority Jews had an inherent political stake in 'democratic rights and freedom'. They could not afford to be politically neutral. The parable of the 'National German Jews' represents here the most extreme example of a supposed tendency in German Jewish culture to self-effacement, prejudice and absolute identification with Germany.[136]

In an article for *Unity* that argued that fascism was inherently antisemitic, Waten referred to a well-known book, *The Jews of Germany* (1939) by 'Marvin Lowenthal, a Zionist historian of the German Jews' who wrote of the 'disastrous theory amongst the Jewish people' that fascism was not necessarily antisemitic 'with the result that there was little resistance offered to fascism'.[137] I consider Waten and *Unity's* particular theorisation of antisemitism and fascism in the following chapter, but for our purposes here it is instructive to note Waten's source. Lowenthal's history, largely written in 1935, with an updated epilogue in 1939, still stands as a well written and sophisticated historical analysis. It combined a historical materialist examination of the class basis for Nazism with a complex account of the origins and development of German

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After a visit from Göring, they printed '"[w]e do not support the European boycott; we stand with Germany against all foreign attacks. We are, always have been, and can only be true to Germany." Virtually all other German Jewish journals echoed these sentiments.' Sidney M. Bolkosky, *The Distorted Image: German Jewish Perceptions of Germans and Germany, 1918-1935* (New York, Oxford, Amsterdam: Elsevier 1975), 170-171. Kaplan suggests that events such as this should be interpreted less as delusional and more as desperate survival strategies. Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 230. Recent scholarship has taken a more sympathetic view of the CV's politics and activism against Nazism and antisemitism, see Jürgen Matthäus and Mark Roseman, *Jewish Responses to Persecution, Volume 1: 1933-1938* (Maryland and Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2010), xxxii-xxxvi, 1-2. As noted by Bolkosky the passing of the Nuremberg laws, which stripped German Jews of their citizenship in September 1935, led to a fundamental rethinking of German Jewish politics and culture. For an interesting history of one of the political responses to this new era, the Gross-Breesen Jewish Emigration Training Farm, and an account of the group of 'Gross-Breeseners' who made it to Australia, see Wolfgang S Matsdorf, *No Time to Grow: The Story of the Gross-Breeseners in Australia* (Archive of Australian Judaica, 1994).

[136] Though this was certainly a prevalent tendency, historical scholarship over the past few decades has emphasised the complex nature of the development of German-Jewish culture, particularly in the nineteenth century. John M. Efron suggests that a German Jewish fascination with and mythologisation of a Sephardic golden age in the Iberian peninsula evinces a complex movement of German Jewish acculturation, and differentiation from eastern European Jewry (*Ostjuden*) rather than an assimilatory complete self-effacement. John M Efron, *German Jewry and the Allure of the Sephardic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 20, passim.

[137] Judah L. Waten, "Fascism Is Anti-Semitic," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1950); Marvin Lowenthal, *The Jews of Germany: A History of Sixteen Centuries* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1939).

antisemitism. His analysis of Nazism as a sort of social faith or political religion based on racism, and antisemitism as a widely held delusion about excessive Jewish power, accords with the twenty-first-century historiography on Nazism.[138]

Lippmann too had obviously read Lowenthal's volume, using the same phrasing to describe the group of 'super-Teutonic Jews' as well as learning what it cost German Jews 'so dearly to teach'. Lowenthal made explicit the political and ideological situation of the 1930s, which also seemed to hold true for the post-Holocaust, Cold War world of diasporic Jewish communities.[139] The old forms of a free and flourishing capitalism were dead, taking with it political liberalism and its promise of emancipation through assimilation. It was replaced with a crisis prone, monopoly capitalism and a concomitant authoritarian or fascist politics. Jewish communities needed to realise new ideas to respond to these radically altered economic and political conditions.[140]

Zygmunt Bauman suggests that Germany's Jews were put in an impossibly ambivalent position by the modernity he identifies with the German nation-state. In order to assimilate they needed to divest themselves of their particularity, but as Bauman puts it, their *Entjudung* (De-Jewification, or De-Judaisation) was cast as a *Verjudung* (Judaisation), an infiltration of German cultural and social life.[141] Jews aiming to assimilate were put on a permanent trial period, where the grounds of the trial were constantly shifting, and one's success could paradoxically indicate one's cunning and artificiality, and thus one's essentially Jewish nature.[142] As Goldhar put it '[t]he less conspicuous we attempt to be, the more we are observed, and the more we are observed, the more we create a state of disorder and fear, with the result that we begin to look at ourselves with exaggerated attention and from the same angle as our enemies.' For

[138] Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust*, 192-202. While Lowenthal's Zionism is not hidden it is not overly pronounced or seen as the only obvious answer to the woes of Germany's Jews.
[139] Or at least seemed to hold true from the vantage point of the early 1950s.
[140] Lowenthal, 414-417. This diagnosis is partially echoed by Eric Hobsbawm, himself a Jewish émigré from Berlin, who offers a less economically determinist account of the decline of political liberalism and the rise of fascism in Europe. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short 20th Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus 1994), 124-140. Christopher Vials discusses the ubiquity of class analysis-based accounts of fascism, in this period, in the US context. Christopher Vials, *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 74. In Chapter Four, I discuss how after the hopes of the post-war era for reconstruction and social democracy, with the Menzies government and the seemingly immanent third world war, the economic and ideological conditions of political polarisation and fascism seemed to be re-emerging in the early 1950s.
[141] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, USA: Polity Press, 1991), 119-120.
[142] Ibid., 112-113.

Goldhar, this had the effect of 'crippl[ing] our Jewish self-consciousness by the sickly complexes of inferiority and persecution', creating an internalised antisemitism as described above.[143] Lippmann pointed towards the answer to this internalised antisemitism. In refusing 'to apply to ourselves and our allies the evaluation of our enemies' a space was created for a new consciousness and conception of pluralism and solidarity: '[t]he only effective fight for Jewish rights, to win them or to keep them, is the fight for democratic rights and freedom of every group or class.'

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the major themes and modes of Holocaust memorialisation practiced by the Australian Jewish antifascist left in the immediate post-war period, as exemplified by *Unity* magazine and the JCCFAS. I have suggested that their modes of memorialisation conformed neither to the dominant contemporary liberal framing, nor to the narrative closure common to modes of Holocaust memorialisation in Jewish communities today. The Holocaust in this account was not finally over; the dangers of antisemitism and fascism were still prevalent. Against the prevailing historiography, I have suggested that there was no silence in Australian Jewish communities in this period; while the Holocaust was not thought of in the same mode as it is today, it certainly was a key part of Jewish community consciousness.

The formation of Holocaust memory in the Australian Jewish antifascist left, can be understood in part through the concept of affiliative memory, which can help us to describe the complex movement of memory from survivors to their families and contemporaries, and into the wider Jewish community in a situation of communal mourning and destroyed family structures. Through a discussion of *Unity's* emphasis on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising I have underlined that its idea of Holocaust memorialisation can be understood as maintaining a certain fidelity to the 'event' of the Uprising. This fidelity translated into a firm antifascist political commitment that, combined with Jewish memory practices, produced an identification with a transnational Jewish consciousness and history. I have tracked here the tension between

[143] Goldhar, "Does Anti-Semitism Affect Us Only Physically?"

images of militant and dignified figures of resistance and a foregrounding of negativity that could not be easily resolved into state-centred or nationalist narratives of closure or redemption. This can be further understood as reflecting a Benjaminian type of aberrated mourning. There could be no cure, or proper working through as a response to the Holocaust, only an ongoing memorialisation which would draw from it political and historical significances. In this sense, it was not as if a political layer of meaning was layered on top of raw experience or accounts of that raw experience. The political ethic of memory was the vehicle, the mediating factor, that made Holocaust memory in this mode expressible and intelligible.

This political ethic of memory was realised in an ongoing program of publicising, translating and reviewing Holocaust accounts and testimonies, engaging with a transnational circulation of Holocaust writings. This was coupled with participation and promotion of the Ghetto Uprising commemoration events. In the Jewish left account, the Holocaust was not abstracted from history or politics or understood as belonging to a uniquely Jewish account of suffering. Instead it was seen in a multidirectional mode, leading to a political consciousness with a much wider critical framework opposing war, racism and colonial oppression. *Unity* understood the Holocaust as a racist genocide. This allowed lines of political solidarity and multidirectional comparison to be opened to global decolonisation struggles.

Finally, I have suggested that the case of German Jewry's failed assimilation and lack of united political action was taken as a key political parable for the Jewish antifascist left. Combined with an analysis of internalised antisemitism (which I build on in the next chapter) this was a prompt to bolder ways of assessing the Jewish position as a minority in Australia. In rejecting attempts to assimilate, or to practice respectability politics within an established oppressive political order, the stage was set for the development of a Jewish antifascist political subjectivity.[144] This construction was to take place through a historically specific Jewish antifascist understanding of antisemitism. I turn to this topic in the following chapter.

[144] On 'respectability politics', see Kate Davy, "Outing Whiteness: A Feminist/Lesbian Project," *Theatre Journal* 47, no. 2 (1995): 189-205; Frances E. White, *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Chapter Two: Jewish Antifascism, Communism and Antisemitism

The complexity of the relationship between antifascism and Stalinism is avoided a priori by an approach that sees the former as simply a creature and by-product of the latter.

Enzo Traverso[1]

If one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself as a Jew. Not as a German, not as a world citizen, not as an upholder of the Rights of Man, or whatever.

Hannah Arendt[2]

In August 1946, the acting chairman of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism (JCCFAS), Aaron Mushin, replied to a letter from a Mr. A.G. Silk who had written to the JCCFAS objecting to the inclusion of the word 'fascism' in the JCCFAS's name.[3] This was a common objection to the JCCFAS from those conservative members of the Jewish community who saw the need to actively combat antisemitism but thought that opposing 'fascism' made such a body overly political. Mushin replied that '[t]he Council was given its present title right at its inception, and after tremendous consideration.' A special meeting of the executive had been held that week to reconsider the council's name and had decided:

> after a lengthy and exhaustive discussion…that it cannot recommend an alteration to the name of the organisation. The history of the past decade abounds in examples which link anti-Semitism and Fascism. It was true not only in Germany but in democratic countries where such men as Mosley and Captain Ramsay proved the close tie-up which exists between anti-Semitism and Fascism.

Mushin went on to point to the example of the 'Australia First' movement as an Australian example of the linkage between fascism and antisemitism.[4] This analysis was

[1] Enzo Traverso, *Fire and Blood: The European Civil War, 1914-1945* (New York and London: Verso 2015), 11.
[2] Hannah Arendt, "'What Remains? The Language Remains': An Interview with Gunter Gaus," in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), 12.
[3] "Letter to A.G. Silk from Aaron Mushin, 20th August 1946," (Papers of Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, State Library of Victoria, MS 14257).
[4] See Barbara Winter, *The Australia-First Movement and the Publicist, 1936-1942* (Brisbane: Glass House Books, 2005).

closely tied to the idea that the Holocaust and Nazism were not fully over and safely consigned to the past (an idea explored in Chapter One). As Mushin wrote:

> There is, of course, a change in the world situation since the war has ended. But too often we have found, and considered it necessary to publicize, that while Hitler is dead his devilish work lives on in those quarters where the refugee, the newcomer, the foreigner, the alien, or the Jew are regarded as something inferior, something to be isolated, something to be blamed for economic conditions or post-war handicaps, something to be used as a scapegoat.

Mushin closed his letter with a suggestion that Silk host a drawing-room meeting with his friends, at which a member of the JCCFAS executive could

> explain in detail the work of the Council and incidentally expound more fully the thesis that it is impossible to effectively combat anti-Semitism without understanding its close link with Fascism and without organizing activity in general against both equally dangerous anti-democratic manifestations.[5]

Mushin's letter outlined some major themes of the Australian Jewish left's antifascist politics during this period, and thus appropriately introduces the analysis of the philosophical and political basis of the Australian Jewish left's antifascism provided in this chapter and the next. In this chapter I argue that the Jewish antifascist left saw the fight against transnational fascism and antisemitism as inextricable. In doing so they proffered an analysis of antisemitism as a socially and historically contingent phenomenon. This analysis was tied to a critique of assimilation and the articulation of the necessity of an independent Jewish political subjectivity. I examine how this position related to communism and situate this politics within the broader ideas of the international Popular Front. I compare and contrast the Jewish left's critique with that of the Frankfurt School, suggesting that the Jewish left reflected the ambivalences and contradictions of an international antifascist ideology that involved a defence of democracy. Each of these themes is explored through a transnational framework, underlining the influences, intellectual exchanges, comparisons and contrasts with international Jewish communities.

[5] "Letter to A.G. Silk from Aaron Mushin, 20th August 1946."

The 'spectre of Goebbels' and the necessity of antifascism

Mushin's reference to Captain Ramsay and Oswald Mosley in the passage cited above was not incidental. References to the prominent British fascist Mosley in *Unity,* and in the Australian Jewish press more generally were frequent. This indicated a general Australian fixation on British politics and society but also an understanding that if fascism were to emerge in Australia it would take a similar form to Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF).[6] Mosley had aimed to organise an international fascist movement, prompting a 1948 article in *Unity* by Len Fox asking 'Is Mosley a Danger to Australia?'[7] Discussions around Jewish efforts to combat fascism were paralleled and influenced by those in the UK in the 1930s. In this period the established Jewish representative bodies received criticism from working-class and left-wing Jewish organisations for refusing to oppose fascism outright.[8] As Daniel Tilles notes, this situation was resolved in the late 1930s by a 'communal convergence', with the Board of Deputies of British Jews eventually resolving to oppose fascism and the BUF fully rather than restricting its opposition to the BUF's antisemitism.[9]

In Australia during and following World War Two such a perspective was widely accepted in the Jewish community. In 1943 the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board (the

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[6] E.g. "Mosley's Meetings in London," *Australian Jewish News*, 16 June 1950. The major political force on the Australian far right during the middle decades of the twentieth century, although their influence ebbed and flowed, was the Australian League of Rights, see Andrew A. Campbell, *The Australian League of Rights: A Study in Political Extremism and Subversion* (Melbourne: Outback Press, 1978). For an analysis of the BUF's 'imperial fascism', see Evan Smith, "The Pivot of Empire: Australia and the Imperial Fascism of the British Union of Fascists," *History Australia* 14, no. 3 (2017): 378-394. Mosley had created the BUF in the 1930s, was interned during World War Two, and after the War sought to revive a fascist movement. See ibid.

[7] Fox described Mosley's efforts to 'organise a world Fascist International' and stated that his 'main successes appear to have been in South Africa, Germany and Scandinavia' and that 'already his filth-sheets, faithfully copied from the outpourings of Goebbels and Streicher, are being posted to key points in Sydney and Melbourne'. Fox concluded that 'the real danger of fascism to-day comes from men who don't look like fascists' and that 'Mosley is important, not in himself so much, but as an indication of how respectable Tories and Labour Party Right-wingers are prepared to tolerate and secretly encourage the most violent forms of fascism'. Len Fox, "Is Mosley a Danger to Australia?," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 5 (1948). Fox was a Jewish communist author and journalist, see Vera Deacon, "Farewell to Leonard Phillips Fox," *The Hummer* 4, no. 1 (2003/2004). Fox wrote a pamphlet outlining Jews' role in Australian society and denouncing antisemitism in 1939, which was republished in abridged form by the JCCFAS at the end of the war, see Len Fox, *Australia and the Jews* (Melbourne: Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1945).

[8] Daniel Tilles, *British Fascist Antisemitism and Jewish Responses, 1932-40* (London: Bloomsbury 2015), 123-156.

[9] Ibid., 157-186. Although when Mosley re-surfaced after the war, conflicts within the Jewish community again arose over how best to approach Fascism. Dave Renton, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Britain in the 1940s* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 87-97.

precursor to the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies) voted to give the JCCFAS 'full moral and financial support'. It effectively took over all public relations activities from this point onwards.[10] As noted by Phillip Mendes, this meant that the JCCFAS also operated as the Executive Council of Australian Jewry's (the national representative body) public relations wing when the organisation was based in Melbourne.[11] Sender Burstin, a critic of the JCCFAS, outlined this situation in rather caustic terms:

> It should be noted that the function of "Public Relations," i.e. the point of contact between the Jewish community and the general public, was in the hands of the Council. Every decision in these matters at 325 Collins Street, second floor (the office of the Board), had to pass the censorship of 325 Collins Street, third floor (the office of the Council). In effect, the Council was representing the Jewish community to the Australian public and government bodies.[12]

During the 1940s, the JCCFAS had widespread support throughout the community.[13] The Council was constituted by hundreds of members and numerous committees, including special committees of doctors and lawyers and, later on, a very active and successful ladies auxiliary committee and youth section.[14] That the JCCFAS's activities were also frequently endorsed in the *Australian Jewish News* (*AJN*), serves to indicate that its antifascism was to a large extent hegemonic.[15] As outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, this was reflective of a wider antifascist consensus in Jewish communities worldwide.

An editorial in *Unity* in April 1950 spelled out the continued importance of an antifascist politics in Australia after World War Two and demonstrates how *Unity's* discourse was generated through political struggle. The editorial begins: 'Goebbels' spectre is still alive. Hitler's lies and exploded theories are being refurbished.' [16] The

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[10] P.Y. Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival: A Political and Sociological Study of an Australian Jewish Community* (Melbourne Canberra Sydney: F.W. Cheshire, 1968), 63.
[11] It rotated between being based in Sydney and Melbourne. Phillip Mendes, "Jewish Communism in Australia," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 207.
[12] Sender Burstin, "The Board, the Council and German Immigration (First Published in *Undzer Gedank 1952*)," in *Sender Burstin: Yiddish Melbourne Observed*, ed. Ben Burstin and David Burstin (Melbourne: Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, 2013).
[13] Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 63.
[14] David Rechter, "Beyond the Pale: Jewish Communism in Melbourne," (University of Melbourne, 1986), 84; "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Annual Report 1952-1953," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).
[15] E.g. "Editorial- a New Age," *Australian Jewish News*, 13 January 1950; Robert Kahn, "Here and There," *Australian Jewish News*, 14 July 1950; William D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History: Volume 2, 1945 to the Present* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 404. See also Chapter Four of this thesis.
[16] "Editorial- Unity Says:," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1950).

specific evidence referred to here was the widespread distribution of propaganda in Melbourne from the 'All Aryan World Movement', a white supremacist organisation which advocated 'an alliance with Aryan Germany in a holy war against American Jewry and "their agents the Soviet Communists."' The editorial continued:

> Shall we ignore such ridiculous and poisonous material? Some people in the community because of their sheltered lives in Australia have never really felt or understood the impact of Nazism on the Jewish people. They are advocates of silence. Their counterparts in Hitler's Germany only learned the folly of their inactivity on the threshold of the gas chamber. To-day, we dare not wait to see if these incipient cancerous growths take roots. Prompt action is demanded. The spreading of fascist and anti-Semitic doctrines threatens us not only as Jews but strikes at the very foundations of our democracy…There is only one way to face up to this danger and it is certainly not to imitate the ostrich. The experience of those engaged in Public Relations activities, especially in the Melbourne and Sydney Councils, have proved time and again that vigilance and activity bring results. Only the stupid or the criminally negligent may believe that "It can't happen here" or that fighting anti-Semitism creates anti-Semitism – or that only support for Israel is necessary and the solution. Now is the time for those who do not shut their eyes to reality to join and strengthen the bodies actively concerned in fighting fascism and anti-Semitism. Awareness, vigilance and thorough understanding of the implications of such dangerous propaganda and hitting back in time – these are the only effective means of combating the horrible spectre of Goebbels.[17]

This editorial summarises aspects of the basic approach of a distinct Jewish antifascist politics. The 'spectre of Goebbels' was here a metonym for the Nazi regime and the Holocaust more generally. A central lesson of this period was taken to be that 'monstrous absurdities' cannot be dismissed because of their irrationality and previous marginality; people were susceptible to hateful propaganda given the right circumstances. As discussed in the previous chapter, the example of German Jewish inaction and assimilation was cited as a political parable, an argument against those Australian born Jews who naively 'imitate the ostrich' in their approach to fascism. Fascism was analogised as a 'cancerous growth' that must be cut off before it can take root. It was figured here as inherently dangerous, something that could not be reasoned with or made somehow more moderate. Even in a nascent form, there could be no compromise in confronting it. 'Fascism', and 'anti-Semitism' were drawn together as being both dangerous for Jews and to the 'foundations of our democracy', a greater political threat to rights and freedoms. The JCCFAS and its Sydney equivalent were pointed to as the vital institutions to support and join by those 'who do not shut their

[17] Ibid.

eyes'. The implicit target of this editorial was not just the remnants of the previous assimilationist Anglo Jewish establishment, but a Zionist movement that had gained enormous momentum (and was soon to become hegemonic) with the establishment of the state of Israel, hence the derisive reference to those who hold that 'only support for Israel is necessary and the solution'.[18]

As the Jewish left antifascist hegemony was contested in the Jewish community by the increasing primacy of Zionism and Cold War politics — a process that I cover in detail in Chapter Four — the JCCFAS and its associated milieu were increasingly called upon to justify their linkage of fascism and antisemitism. In 1950, Dr Aaron Patkin, the prominent anti-communist, Zionist intellectual, and editor of the Melbourne monthly *The Zionist* (1943-1952), wrote an article for his magazine strongly criticising the JCCFAS for its focus on fascism.[19] In response Judah Waten set out a comprehensive view of the inextricability of fascism and antisemitism in an article for *Unity* titled 'Fascism is anti-Semitic'.[20] Patkin had claimed that the example of Mussolini's fascist movement in Italy proved that fascism was not necessarily antisemitic. Waten responded with a history of the integral role of antisemitism in the Italian fascist party, and went on to claim that:

> It is true, of course, that fascism grows up as a movement without an ideology in the sense of a distinctive and systematic doctrine and world outlook. There is only a practise, and to cover this practise, a medley of borrowed slogans from any and every theory, principle, or institution which may serve the purpose of the movement. In other words, fascism grows up as a negative movement, in opposition to the Working-class and democratic movement and is mainly distinguished by the use of violent and extra-legal methods against the democratic

[18] The Jewish antifascist left's approach to Israel and Zionism will be explored in the next chapter.
[19] Before emigrating to Germany in 1920, Patkin had been a secretary for Maxim Litvinov in the Bolshevik government. J.S. Levi, "Patkin, Aaron (1883-1950)," (Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/patkin-aaron-15092 , published first in hardcopy 2012, Accessed 8 November 2016). Patkin turned from a previous ally to an enemy of the JCCFAS in 1950. For another biographical sketch of Patkin, see Vivien Altman, "'The Spark in the Ash'," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 23, pt. 1 (2016): 79-92.
[20] Judah L. Waten, "Fascism Is Anti-Semitic," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1950). In the next issue *Unity* published a response to this piece, which, while broadly in agreement with Waten suggested a more nuanced analysis of Fascism, extending the analysis of fascism as a transnational phenomenon to suggest that even in a situation where there are no Jews, fascism always needs an outsider or scapegoat with which to instil fear. Dr J. Gentilli, "Where Do Anti-Semites Breed?," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1950). It is notable here that Waten's claim about the inextricability of antisemitism and fascism served also as an implicit riposte to the increasingly dominant Soviet ideology of downplaying the antisemitic nature of Nazi genocide in World War Two, see Zvi Gitelman, "History, Memory and Politics: The Holocaust in the Soviet Union," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5, no. 1 (1990): 23-37.

> movement… at all times fascist movements, wherever they may be, employ chauvinist, racist, and anti-Semitic slogans.[21]

What is key to grasp in Waten's theorisation here is both the persistence of the fascist threat and the transnational nature of the question of Fascism and antisemitism, necessitating an international Jewish political response:

> There is today a world-wide tendency among some Jewish leaders to try to ignore the development of fascist trends in countries like U.S.A., Great Britain and Australia. They chant that fascism is not necessarily anti-Semitic because they believe that fascism, if it would only play down its anti-Semitic aspects, would be preferable to a whole-hearted struggle against fascism which would imply the alliance of the Jewish people with the progressive democratic forces of the world.

Fascism was theorised here not as the result of a unique path of national development or as a cultural or civilisational deficiency, but as a transnational political movement.[22] In the section below I outline the political and ideological origins of Waten's answer to this movement — 'the alliance of the Jewish people with the progressive democratic forces of the world'.

'I am a Jew': Jewish antifascism and the Popular Front

There is a significant historical literature on the phenomena of 'Jewish communism'.[23] In the following section I suggest some reasons why using the lens of 'Jewish antifascism' is a more helpful frame for an analysis of the Australian Jewish left during the 1940s and early 1950s. I suggest that the popular incarnation of the Jewish

[21] Despite it being an entrenched view (particularly of Italian historians) in the historiography on Italian fascism, that antisemitism did not form a major feature of Italian fascism until pressure was received from the Nazi regime, the most recent historiography vindicates Waten's position. Daniel Tilles and Salvatore Garau, "Introduction," in *Fascism and the Jews: Italy and Britain*, ed. Daniel Tilles and Salvatore Garau (London, Portland: Valentine Mitchell, 2011), 6-13. Patrick Bernhard, "Blueprints of Totalitarianism: How Racist Policies in Fascist Italy Inspired and Informed Nazi Germany," *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 6, no. 2 (2017): 127-162. For an analysis of fascism not as a coherent set of ideas but as a movement or set of behaviours, see Dave Renton, *Fascism: Theory and Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

[22] For an overview and discussion of the 'sonderweg' debate in German historiography, see Helmut Walser Smith, "When the Sonderweg Debate Left Us," *German Studies Review* 31, no. 2 (2008): 225-240. For a discussion of liberal antifascism as relying on a crude culturalisation of fascism, see Christopher Vials, *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 60-61.

[23] See Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik, eds., *A Vanished Ideology: Essays on the Jewish Communist Movement in the English-Speaking World in the Twentieth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016). Further works are cited in this thesis' introduction.

antifascist left in Australia during this period broadly reflected a particular type of pro-Soviet, progressive and Jewish internationalist Popular Front politics and worldview.

As Enzo Traverso has outlined, the origins of Popular Front antifascism lie with antifascist resistance in Italy. After the coming to power of the Nazis in 1933, these antifascist politics expanded throughout Western Europe.[24] In Italy the major antifascist political grouping in exile was the 'Concentrazione Antifascista Italiana' formed by the 'majority of democratic parties outlawed by Mussolini, from socialists to republicans' in 1927.[25] In France, left-wing intellectuals and artists such as André Breton called for united action against fascism and established antifascist groups in 1934.[26] In the 1930s antifascism was expressed in a constellation of magazines published by European antifascist intellectuals and activists in exile around the world.[27] The Comintern's policy shift during the mid-1930s was an adaption to the popularity and salience of this antifascism.[28] The Soviet Union and communist parties worldwide turned from their previous 'third period' political analysis, which had emphasised the need for a strict adherence to class politics and saw all reformist or social democratic political parties as enemies of the working class.[29] The rise of fascism across the continent, and particularly in Germany, saw a drastic recasting of this policy. Under a politics of the Popular Front, national patriotism and cross-class solidarity with liberals and social democrats (and

[24] Traverso, *Fire and Blood*, 261-264.
[25] Ibid., 261. For a history of antifascist resistance in Italy in the 1920s, see Stanislao G. Pugliese, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and the Resistance in Italy: 1919 to the Present* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004).
[26] Traverso, *Fire and Blood*, 261-262. See also Anson Rabinbach, "Paris, Capital of Anti-Fascism," in *The Modernist Imagination: Intellectual History and Critical Theory Essays in Honor of Martin Jay*, ed. Warren Breckman, et al. (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009).
[27] Traverso, 262-263.
[28] Ibid., 261-262. For an analysis of early international antifascist organising, see Kasper Braskén, "Making Anti-Fascism Transnational: The Origins of Communist and Socialist Articulations of Resistance in Europe, 1923-1924," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 4 (2016): 573-596. Joseph Fronczak makes the case that 1935's global 'Hands off Ethiopia' campaign 'midwifed the global Popular Front that followed', see Joseph Fronczak, "Local People's Global Politics: A Transnational History of the Hands Off Ethiopia Movement of 1935," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 2 (2015): 250. For German political dynamics before 1933, see Eve Rosenhaft, *Beating the Fascists?: The German Communists and Political Violence, 1929-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For antifascist organising in Britain preceding the inception of the Popular Front, see Tilles, *British Fascist Antisemitism*, 101-122; Nigel Copsey, *Anti-Fascism in Britain* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), 5-41. For a history of the US Popular Front and its transcendence of Communist or Stalinist politics, see Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1997).
[29] Duncan Hallas, *The Comintern* (London: Bookmarks, 1985), 123-138; Matthew Worley, ed. *In Search of Revolution: International Communist Parties in the Third Period* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004). For the Australian implementation of this policy, see Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1998), 183-202.

indeed imperialist powers) and against fascism was emphasised.[30] Traverso suggests that elements of the politics and values of the Popular Front represented a sidelining of class analysis in favour of a defence of Enlightenment values of rationality, democracy and progress. These values were posited as countering the perceived anti-modern, anti-rational, politics of fascism as well as other reactionary forces seeking to preserve traditional social hierarchies against progressive movements.[31]

Recent work by Benjamin Balthaser has highlighted the plurality of Popular Front politics and culture in the US context, suggesting that as well as a Popular Front stress on a nationalistic celebration of American democracy, there were strong anti-imperialist and anti-colonial threads in the movement. Such threads intersected with African American and Native American modes of Popular Front politics and culture.[32] There was also an international Jewish Popular Front politics.[33] Both the Jewish and non-Jewish left's emphasis on fighting fascism meant a change in Jewish politics to reflect the understanding that Jews were especially targeted by fascism as Jews. As illustrated by the comments from Hannah Arendt that serve as this chapter's epigraph, this understanding had as its concomitant a new validity for a Jewish politics that fought fascism as Jews. This politics came to international fruition and prominence after the entry of the Soviet Union into World War Two.[34]

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[30] Hallas, *The Comintern*, 139-159; Macintyre, *The Reds*, 244-328. For a critical assessment of antifascism's tension with anti-imperialist politics, see Tom Buchanan, "'The Dark Millions in the Colonies Are Unavenged': Anti-Fascism and Anti-Imperialism in the 1930s," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 4 (2016): 645-665.

[31] Traverso, *Fire and Blood*, 263-264, 273-276. Walter Benjamin's theses on the concept of history contain a famous critique of this left-wing understanding of fascism, see Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1955; reprint, 1973), 245-255. For an extended discussion of conservative thought and politics as a reactionary response to movements which seek to challenge social hierarchies, see Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[32] Benjamin Balthaser, *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016). See also John Munro's discussion of an 'anticolonial front' in the post-war period. John Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonisation, 1945-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[33] Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik, "Introduction," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016), 10-11.

[34] For an overview of the geo-political positioning of the Soviet Union and its effect on the international left during this period, see Silvio Pons, "The Soviet Union and the International Left," in *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, ed. Richard Bosworth and Joseph Maiolo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Jewish communism was, to an extent, always a transnational phenomenon, and there are clear continuities here with the Jewish Popular Front politics of the late 1930s, a politics encouraged by the Comintern after 1937, see Nick Underwood, "Exposing Yiddish Paris: The Modern Jewish Culture Pavilion at the 1937 World's Fair," *East European Jewish Affairs* 46, no. 2 (2016): 160-175; Gerben Zaagsma, *Jewish Volunteers, the International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War*

While others have drawn attention to the impact of Popular Front politics on Yiddish communism,[35] I suggest there was a parallel move towards an English-language Jewish leftism internationally.[36] To understand this move, we first need to address the place of Jewishness within communist ideology and policy in the Soviet Union. In the first two decades of the Soviet Union, a Yiddish-language socialist culture was justified through the slogan 'national in form, socialist in content'.[37] The creation of Yiddish cultural institutions and media through the 1920s and 1930s, was envisioned by the majority in the Soviet Union's leadership as a transitional means to assimilate Yiddish-speaking Jews into a broader Soviet, communist culture.[38] Soviet Jewish institutions were prohibited from publishing Jewish content or holding activities in 'non-Jewish' languages.[39] Content produced in Yiddish became the only officially allowable

(London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 34-36, 61-105. However, in the UK, Australia and the US, both a wider enthusiasm for a Popular Front politics in Jewish communities and a transcendence of Yiddishism on the antifascist (non-Zionist) left were post-1942 phenomena. In this sense a Jewish Popular Front politics is part of a longer historical cycle of left politics that stretched until the late 1940s. Michael Denning uses this periodisation in his assessment of the Popular Front in the US. Denning, *The Cultural Front*, xx. As suggested by Christopher Vials, antifascism, in the US context, remained as a vital 'political grammar and cultural force', through the late 1940s and beyond. Christopher Vials, "Antifascism as a Political Grammar and Cultural Force," in *American Literature in Transition, 1940-1950*, ed. Christopher Vials (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[35] Matthew B. Hoffman, ""At What Cost Comrades?": Exploring the Jewishness of Yiddish-Speaking Communists in the United States," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016); Ester Reiter, "The Canadian Jewish Left: Culture, Community, and the Soviet Union," in *A Vanished Ideology*, ed. Matthew B. Hoffman and Henry F. Srebrnik (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016).

[36] There was likely a corresponding movement in non-English speaking countries with substantial Jewish populations but this is unfortunately beyond the scope of the present study. For an examination of political conflicts between Zionists and progressives in the Jewish community in Argentina during the immediate post-war period, see Lawrence D. Bell, "Bitter Conquest: Zionists against Progressive Jews and the Making of Post-War Jewish Politics in Argentina," *Jewish History*, no. 17 (2003): 285-308.

[37] Hoffman, ""At What Cost Comrades?"," 20-21. This too was a position taken by the 'internationalists' in the Bund around the turn of the century, see Roni Gechtman, "National-Cultural Autonomy and 'Neutralism': Vladimir Medem's Marxist Analysis of the National Question, 1903-1920," *Socialist Studies* 3, no. 1 (2007): 75-77.

[38] Though this assimilationist view was not pervasive or monolithic, see Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 52. In actuality this project was more complex, creative, and contradictory, see Anna Shternshis, *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006); David Shneer, *Yiddish and the Creation of Soviet-Jewish Culture: 1918-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For an account of Bundist scepticism of the Bolshevik's nationality policy, see Gertrud Pickhan, "Yiddishkayt and Class Consciousness: The Bund and Its Minority Concept," *East European Jewish Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2009): 256. See also Roni Gechtman, "A 'Museum of Bad Taste'? The Jewish Labour Bund and the Bolshevik Position Regarding the National Question, 1903-1914," *Canadian Journal of History* 43, no. 1 (2008): 31-67. As Brossat and Klingberg suggest, the Bolshevik's Jewish policy was characterised by 'zigzags and incoherence.' Alain Brossat and Sylvie Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History of Jewish Radicalism*, trans. David Fernbach (London and New York: Verso Books, 2016), 196. For a compelling sketch of Jewish history and lives in the USSR, see ibid., 177-239.

[39] Gennady Estraikh, *Yiddish in the Cold War* (London: Legenda, 2008), 3; Shternshis, *Soviet and Kosher*, 147.

expression of Jewishness, imagined as a purely linguistically determined national minority grouping. Matthew Hoffman has demonstrated that although this was the same ideological justification for Yiddish-language communist media and activities in the US; a distinctly *Jewish* communist culture was developed in the US in the decade before the inception of the Popular Front.[40] Nonetheless, the early 1940s turn towards a specifically Jewish progressive politics and culture in 'non-Jewish national' languages represented a significant international shift.

In the Soviet Union the driving force of this re-assessment of Jewishness within communist politics was the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAFC). The Committee was set up by Stalin in 1942 along with other anti-fascist committees meant to rouse their respective constituents to support the war effort. The JAFC featured many prominent Yiddish poets, writers and cultural figures and was headed by the famous actor and director of the Moscow State Theatre, Solomon Mikhoels.[41] As suggested by Antony Polonsky, the JAFC somewhat exceeded its brief, leading to a widespread politics of Jewish solidarity and identification (occasioned as well by the Holocaust), that was named as nationalist by Stalin's regime.[42] Coupled with the rise of Zionism in the Soviet Union, and the paranoia of the regime, the JAFC's popularity and power led to its eventual liquidation and the murder of its central figures.[43]

The JAFC published a regular Yiddish newspaper titled *Einikayt* [Unity], which was widely distributed in allied countries during the War.[44] Polonsky highlights a poem by Itsik Feffer, 'I am a Jew', published in *Einikayt* in December 1942 as a typical cultural production of the JAFC. Feffer emphasised a transnational and transhistorical continuity

[40] Hoffman suggests that after the Popular Front period began, 'the communists' form of Jewishness becomes much less distinctive and more similar to other forms of left-wing Jewish identity and culture.' Hoffman, ""At What Cost Comrades?"," 21. See also Bat-Ami Zucker, "Jewish Communists and Jewish Culture in the 1930s," *Modern Judaism* 14, no. 2 (1994): 175-185.
[41] Shimon Redlich, "The Jewish Antifascist Committee in the Soviet Union," *Jewish Social Studies* 31, no. 1 (1969). See also Jeffrey Veidlinger, *The Moscow State Yiddish Theater: Jewish Culture on the Soviet Stage* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).
[42] This was in some respects an echo of earlier conflicts between the Bund and the Bolsheviks over the supposed 'nationalism' of limited claims for Jewish autonomy, see Gechtman, "A 'Museum of Bad Taste'."
[43] Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia: Volume 3, 1914 to 2008* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation, 2012), 570-581, 613-624. See also Joshua Rubenstein and Vladimir Pavlovich Naumov, *Stalin's Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005). For a description of the workings of Stalin's regime during this period, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team: The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2015), 200-218.
[44] Polonsky, *The Jews*, 571.

and solidarity among Jews, listing persecutions and successes of Jews throughout history, and ending with the projected victory of the Red Army over Hitler and Feffer dancing on Hitler's grave proclaiming 'I am a Jew.'[45] The JAFC was successful in inspiring Jewish solidarity against Nazism and for the Red Army worldwide, the high point being a visit of Mikhoels and Feffer to the US in 1943 where they addressed crowds of tens of thousands.[46] Misreading the political climate, the JAFC unsuccessfully pressed the Soviet authorities in 1947 and in early 1948 to allow the convening of an international Jewish antifascist pro-Soviet conference that would consolidate an international movement and provide an alternative to the World Jewish Congress.[47]

This international Jewish antifascism exceeded the doctrine of 'national in form, socialist in content'. The content itself was a politics of transnational Jewish identification and solidarity, though inextricably allied with an international socialist movement.[48] The form was no longer sutured to Yiddish. As we will see below, the internationalist, and non-nationalist, nature of this Jewish antifascism meant an explicit validation of the dynamic futurity of diasporic Jewish communities worldwide in whichever language or means of expression was available to them. I deploy the idea of Jewish dynamic futurity here to suggest a necessarily changing and changeable Jewish 'ongoingness' internationally that was staked against Jewish elimination, assimilation or concentration in one place.[49] While the staging of an international Jewish conference

[45] Ibid., 578-579. While the listing of historical persecutions and their overcoming by Jews was a typical Jewish nationalist trope, the crucial difference in Feffer's poem was the tying of Jewish fortunes to those of the Soviet Union and the Red Army, see Gennady Estraikh, "Istsik Fefer: A Yiddish Wunderkind of the Bolshevik Revolution," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 20, no. 3 (2002): 14-31.

[46] Polonsky, *The Jews*, 572. Shimon Redlich, *War, Holocaust and Stalinism: A Documented Study of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the USSR* (Luxembourg: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), 74-75. They also visited Mexico, Canada and the UK. Ibid., 76. For an evocative account of the New York and Canada visit, see Ester Reiter, *A Future Without Hate or Need: The Promise of the Jewish Left in Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016), 86-89.

[47] Redlich, *War, Holocaust and Stalinism*, 86-88.

[48] Yehoshua A. Gilboa, *The Black Years of Soviet Jewry, 1939-1953*, trans. Yosef Shachter and Dov Ben-Abba (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 42-86.

[49] While I am inspired here by José Esteban Muñoz's conceptualisation of 'queer futurity', the concept of 'dynamic futurity' is my own formulation. José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009). Both 'futurities' are necessarily critical of and 'profoundly resistant' to the status quo of existing society, figured as inimical to their respective projected futures. However, Muñoz's utopian futurity is explicitly positioned as a Kantian regulative ideal, to be strived for continually but never actually achieved, as forever anticipatory. In this reading, futurity is a potentiality within the quotidian. Ibid., 1-22. An antifascist Jewish dynamic futurity, on the other hand, was both an explicit, though at times contradictory, political and cultural programme and an actually existing political, cultural and geographic praxis, encompassing both a

was quashed by the Central Committee Secretariat, the ideas of an international progressive antifascist Jewish movement were already spreading around the world.[50]

An internationalist progressive antifascist Jewish politics

The most important magazine reflecting this perspective was the US produced *Jewish Life*. It was the most prominent Jewish left English-language magazine of this period, reflecting the size and particular history of US Jewry. It was well resourced, well edited and substantial, covering national and international issues and including reprinted and translated articles from international Jewish communist and left groups. *Jewish Life* was founded in 1946 as an English-language monthly offshoot of the *Morgen Freiheit*, the premier communist Yiddish daily from New York.[51] In August 1948, *Jewish Life* reprinted a keynote speech given by editor Morris Schappes at the American Jewish Cultural Conference in English, which summarised the magazine's perspective as reflecting neither Jewish nationalism nor Jewish assimilationism.[52] Schappes dated the creation of 'English-speaking American Jewish' progressive culture to the inception of the Popular Front.[53] He suggested that:

> The assimilationist escaped not only from the ghetto, but from his people and, often, from himself, leaving a hollow thing. The bourgeois nationalist sought to build his own ghetto walls, not of medieval stone but of modern stream-lined glass brick. We progressive Jews are opposed to ghettoes no matter how fancy, and we refuse to separate ourselves from our people.

For Schappes, this was not simply a question of developing an autonomous Jewish culture. To propose that the chief problem of assimilationism was the imitation of 'gentile ways' suggested a Jewish nationalist separatism or chauvinism. For Schappes

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rejection of assimilationism and a rejection of an ideal of Jewish exodus from Europe or elsewhere, and concentration in Palestine.

[50] Redlich, *War, Holocaust and Stalinism*, 86-87.

[51] Estraikh, *Yiddish in the Cold War*, 27.

[52] For a biographical sketch of Schappes, see Alan M. Wald, *Trinity of Passion: The Literary Left and the Antifascist Crusade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 174-180.

[53] Morris U. Schappes, "Answer to a People Calling, Excerpts from Main Address to American Cultural Conference - June 18-19," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 10 (1948). Though here we should note that it was not only international influence from the JAFC at play in this new politics. Unlike the Australian and UK Communist parties, the CPUSA was 40 percent Jewish (at least in 1939), while anti-racism was at the forefront of communist politics there given the strength and salience of African American struggles, see Vials, *Haunted by Hitler*, 81-82; Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (Columbia University Press, 2002), 29-44.

bourgeois assimilation was not an issue of Jewish culture or ways of life being eroded by gentile or non-Jewish culture. Instead the problems of bourgeois assimilation were identified as the imitation of 'reactionary ways', a broader alignment with the forces of conservatism, imperialism and the American establishment.[54] Jewish culture in this rendering was not something desirable in and of itself. What was desirable was a *progressive* Jewish culture, a culture framed within a broader anti-nationalist, internationalist vision. This vision was firmly pitched against the domination and exploitation of the ruling class and their efforts to build American empire. Progressive Jewish culture was to be built up to 'take its rightful place in the complex culture of many hues and varied sources . . . in defiance of the reactionary Anglo-Saxon domination . . . of American culture.'[55] This battle was intimately tied to the 'inescapable duty of bringing to book that last great citadel of imperialism'.[56]

In the UK, although Jews formed a substantial portion of the membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), it was not until 1943 that a National Jewish Committee was established in the Party. As Tony Kushner suggests, the analysis developed by the National Jewish Committee initiated a fundamental change in the CPGB's approach to Jewish issues.[57] Jason Heppell has outlined the pivotal role of the JAFC, and the visit of Mikhoels and Feffer to the UK, in initiating this new orientation.[58] Antisemitism had previously been understood as an epiphenomenal by-product of ruling class domination, meaning it could be addressed by a general emphasis on class struggle with no special tasks for Jewish communists.[59] This economistic analysis of antisemitism was replaced with a strategy that saw a progressive Jewish struggle as necessary to defeat antisemitic ideology. Jewish communists were tasked with 'mobilis[ing] all Jews and Jewish organisations' in support of winning the war, fostering solidarity with the Soviet Union and Soviet Jewry, and 'mak[ing] of the Jewish people an active element in the democratic life of the country'. This meant that Jewish communists were obliged to participate in Jewish

[54] Schappes, "Answer to a People."
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Tony Kushner, "Jewish Communists in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Zaidman Collection," *Labour History Review* 55, no. 2 (1990): 67.
[58] Jason Heppell, "A Question of 'Jewish Politics'? The Jewish Section of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1936-1945," in *Jews, Labour and the Left, 1918-1945*, ed. Christine Collette and Stephen Bird (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 101-112.
[59] Ibid., 108-112.

organisations and actively campaign for Jewish rights, the plight of Jews in Europe and against antisemitism at home.[60] As noted by Kushner and Henry Srebrnik, this new approach was part and parcel of a 'pro-Soviet euphoria' that had developed amongst British Jews by the end of the War.[61]

Emerging from this context was *New Life (1947-1948)*, a short-lived progressive Jewish pro-Soviet monthly magazine. Unlike *Jewish Life*, it was an independent non-party publication.[62] J.B. Jackson, responding to an article by Leo Koenig that 'challeng[ed] the very aims which *New Life* set itself' by questioning the worth and future prospects of a Jewish culture expressed in non-Jewish languages, laid out the analysis and philosophy informing *New Life's* project. The 'collective experience of persecution and extermination' he argued had occasioned a new 'Jewish consciousness':

> To this should be added a certain awakening to the fact that the question of existence and survival, even as individuals, can no longer be 'solved' by a policy of 'wait and see' but by a joint effort and by joining the forces of progress against those of reaction... It is not a 'Jewish question' but it is one affecting Jews more than any other section of the population. These then, are the realities of life, of Jewish life not less than of the life of the nations of the world. To reduce them, when speaking about Jews, to a question of language, Yiddish or Hebrew, is reverting to a narrow nationalism, making language the sole criterion of cultural values. From here there is only a little distance to mysticism of all sorts, to literary escapism and to bare formalism, completely disregarding contents and context. *New Life* it seems to us is attempting to reach out to as wide as possible a Jewish public, deeply affected by the problems of today. In giving expression to its needs and anxieties, encouraging hope and creative effort and enriching Jewish cultural experience with what is valuable of the Jewish past and of Jewish culture, which is being created in Yiddish, Hebrew or, for that matter, in any other language and in any land where Jews live and work, it can say that it is 'strengthening and spreading Jewish culture'.[63]

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[60] Kushner, "Jewish Communists," 69-70; Henry F. Srebrnik, "The British Communist Party's National Jewish Committee and the Fight against Anti-Semitism During the Second World War," *Immigrants & Minorities* 8, no. 1-2 (1989): 82-96. Although the Communist Party and its Jewish membership were much smaller in Australia, there was a parallel movement and shifting of analysis and priorities in the Jewish section of the Communist Party around 1943-1944. See NAA: A6122, 444, "The Tasks of Jewish Communists in the Struggle against Anti-Semitism and for the Rights of the Jewish People." This included the publication of a new magazine *Jewish Review,* of which unfortunately no copies are extant. A pamphlet issued at the time by the Jewish committee of the Party said, 'We have the right to ask every Jewish party member what he has done in the struggle for the rights of his people. Jewish comrades must, as Communists, be able to answer this question also. And they cannot be good Bolsheviks if they evade the issue'. Ibid.

[61] Henry F. Srebrnik, "Communism and Pro-Soviet Feeling among the Jews of East London, 1933-45," *Immigrants & Minorities* 5 (1986): 298 cited in Kushner, "Jewish Communists," 70.

[62] "Talking to Our Readers," *New Life* 2, no. 5 (1948).

[63] J.B. Jackson, "A Matter of Importance: A Reply to Mr Koenig," *New Life* 1, no. 6 (1947).

Jackson's article is striking because of its refusal to hierarchise differing forms of Jewish culture. The Jewish cultural politics he outlined necessarily exceeded nationalistic formulations. Jewish culture was valid, possible, dynamic and important in any country where Jews lived, and in any language, including English. This linguistic and cultural pluralism was associated with combating antisemitism through a Jewish progressive internationalism. Reflecting the politics of the JAFC, this internationalism was a conscious politics of Jewish political and cultural struggle that sought liberation through solidarities formed across national boundaries, without seeking to dissolve Jewish difference through linguistic or territorial centralisation.

In Australia, this politics was expressed through the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS) founded in Melbourne in 1942, a month after the formation of the JAFC.[64] As David Rechter has argued, it 'represented in institutional form the broad-based antifascist leftism [then] enjoying considerable vogue both within the Jewish community and in society at large.'[65] It combined practical activity in monitoring and responding to specific incidences of antisemitism as well as a larger propaganda effort that consistently tied together the threats of antisemitism and fascism.[66] The founding statement of the JCCFAS connected this analysis to a Jewish Popular Front politics: 'In its lust for power, Fascism has used hatred and persecution of the Jews as the first steps in its path for the Destruction of peoples and Communities and the subjugation of all Democratic Institutions and all forms of liberalism.'[67]

Sydney's *Unity* magazine (closely associated with the JCCFAS) aligned itself with the international progressive antifascist Jewish movement. Its editor, Hyam Brezniak, suggested that fighting antisemitism was impossible 'without seeking the social, political and economic roots of the disease', necessitating an alignment with progressive

[64] While from around 1950 the JCCFAS was increasingly directed by a Jewish fraction of the Communist Party and its allies, in its first decade it was largely an independent body. However, Jewish communists were involved in the JCCFAS from its inception and there were certainly large overlaps in ideology. This is further explored in Chapter Four, see "The Tasks of Jewish Communists,"; Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 81, 101. A 1944 Commonwealth Investigation Service (CIS) document reveals that at least one of the founders of the JCCFAS, Sam Brilliant had a subscription to *Einikayt*. A further report from the CIS indicates the circulation of 'Russian newspapers' through 'little cliques of Jewish people' associated with the JCCFAS. See NAA: A6122, 444, "Communist Party of Australia – Interest and Activities in Jewish Community," (1943-1954).
[65] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 82.
[66] Ibid., 110.
[67] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Founding Statement," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

political forces.[68] This was coupled with an acknowledgement that the strengthening of Jewish culture in a majority non-Jewish country was a necessary cultural-political project.[69] In line with a Jewish Popular Front politics *Unity* sought to be the leading light in furthering an antifascist Jewish solidarity between all sections of the community rather than acting as a dogmatic left-wing mouthpiece.[70] *Unity's* first issue saw a feature obituary article for Solomon Mikhoels, praising his immense cultural impact and his work as part of the JAFC. Accompanying this was the text of an 'exchange of cables' between the Unity association and the JAFC, (respectively) expressing and accepting Unity's condolences on the passing of Mikhoels.[71]

Unity frequently republished articles from *New Life,* the British periodical, and obviously saw it as a chief source of inspiration and analysis.[72] *New Life* was freely available in Australia and subscriptions were advertised in *Unity* and distributed through W.S. Matsdorf's bookshop on George Street in Sydney.[73] *Jewish Life* and other communist material was not as freely available. The JCCFAS had a subscription to *Jewish Life* but the magazine did not have an Australian distributor and direct subscriptions were monitored by the intelligence services.[74] A direct relationship with *Jewish Life*, and an arrangement to republish articles was established in the early period of *Unity's* existence.[75]

The Australian Jewish antifascist left in this period did not express a Jewish-inflected but essentially regurgitated communism; it represented a distinctive type of progressive internationalist Jewish antifascist politics, one which explicitly and implicitly validated

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[68] H. Brezniak, "A Matter of Opinion: We Must Look beneath the Surface," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948).
[69] Ibid.
[70] Julian Rose, "Take Off the Blinkers," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948). For a similar change in Jewish left politics in Canada, see Reiter, *A Future without Hate or Need*, 40-41.
[71] "Exchange of Cables," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948). The article also featured a famous image of Mikhoels as King Lear, likely taken from the cover of issue four of *New Life*. In September 1943, Maurice Allen, a future member of the editorial board of *Unity*, in his capacity as the chairman of the Jewish Section of the Russian Medical Aid and Comforts Committee, cabled the JAFC to invite Mikhoels and Feffer to Australia. See NAA: A6122, 444, "Soviet Jewish Delegates." Mikhoels was murdered on Stalin's orders and his murder was made to look like an accident. Redlich, *War, Holocaust and Stalinism*, 129-134.
[72] See Ernest Platz, "A Review of Jewish Overseas Publications," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1948). The similarities in design between *Unity* and *New Life* are also striking.
[73] ""New Life" Advertisement," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948).
[74] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 4th July 1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1); "Communist Party of Australia – Interest and Activities in Jewish Community."
[75] Nate Zusman, "Letter to the Editor," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 12 (1948).

the cultures and futurity of diasporic Jewish communities. This was a transnational politics in which the Australian Jewish left was firmly enmeshed. Arrangements to republish articles from *New Life* and *Jewish Life* meant *Unity's* ideas were developed in dialogue with the international Jewish left. As such *Unity* did not have a straightforward relationship with the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), the Soviet Union or communism more generally.[76]

'The tall Russian…brought their ghosts into the hall': the meaning of communism for *Unity*

Hyam Brezniak was the main driver of *Unity* magazine and the magazine's editor. Brezniak had come to Australia from Poland in 1939, where he had been very active in left-wing politics. He was a member of the Communist Party at the time of *Unity*'s publication, but became an inactive member after the 'Doctors Plot' in 1953 (Stalin's antisemitic campaign based around the accusation of a conspiracy of Jewish doctors to assassinate Soviet leaders).[77] Dr George Berger, a progressive non-communist Australian Labor Party member, and one of the founders of the Unity association, resigned in September 1949, complaining of the growing influence of a pro-communist perspective.[78] In contrast to Berger, Joachim Schneeweiss, a frequent contributor and translator for *Unity* and member of the SCCFAS (who would go on to be a fairly mainstream Zionist Jewish communal leader), interviewed many years later, perceived

[76] I will assess the relationship between the Melbourne based JCCFAS and communist politics further in Chapter Four.
[77] Bernard Taft, interview by Suzanne Rutland, 30 August 1998, State Library of New South Wales, Suzanne Rutland collection, CY MLOH 437/97. On the Doctor's Plot, see Polonsky, *The Jews*, 621-622. For further details on Brezniak's life, see Hyam Brezniak, interview by Hazel de Berg, 29 April, 1975, National Library of Australia, Hazel de Berg collection. Brezniak discussed his dedication to Yiddish literature and poetry from a young age as well as his friendships with Judah Waten, Herz Bergner, Pinchas Goldhar, Clem Christesen, Brian Fitzpatrick and Vance and Nettie Palmer.
[78] "Dr. Berger Leaves "Unity"," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 15 September 1949. Berger was an art critic who fled from Vienna in 1939 and published many articles on art in *Unity* before his resignation. Interestingly Berger had previously resigned from the *Australian Jewish Forum* because of its emphasis on anti-communism. As will be elaborated in Chapter Four there were many people associated with the Jewish left who found anti-communism abhorrent but were increasingly put off by the poor strategy and controlling influence of Jewish communists.

there to be very little influence from the Communist Party in either *Unity* or the SCCFAS.[79]

The available evidence suggests that although there was a small CPA Jewish Committee, there was no significant organised Jewish communist fraction in Sydney, unlike in Melbourne.[80] Letters between CPA branches in Melbourne and Sydney reveal that Brezniak had told others in the CPA that he had received no content from the Jewish communists in Melbourne, 'hence the need to accept material from the Wattens [sic] and others.'[81] While Waten was a lifelong supporter of the Soviet Union, he had a fractious relationship with the Communist Party and at this time was not a member.[82] The apparently less than preferable acceptance of material from the 'Wattens' — which presumably included others associated with the JCCFAS — indicates a distance between officially sanctioned Communist Party viewpoints and those published in *Unity*.

There was little coverage of Jewish life in the Soviet Union in *Unity*, beyond reference to the equality enjoyed by Jews there, and the outlawing of antisemitism.[83] Neither was there a focus on Jewish life in the Eastern European 'people's democracies'. This was in contrast to the focus on both in *New Life* and *Jewish Life*.[84] This lack of coverage was noted in a letter to the editor by Saul Factor, a prominent Melbourne Jewish communist, who asked:

> Why has the Soviet Union failed to receive adequate mention in your magazine?... [T]he position of the Jewish people in the Soviet Union, with their magnificent culture and achievements might have received a little attention. It would appear, therefore, that in some respects, your magazine is lagging behind enlightened

[79] See Dr. Joachim Schneeweiss, interview by Suzanne Rutland, 19 April & 22 June, 1987, State Library of New South Wales, Suzanne Rutland collection, CY MLOH 437/168-169. Schneeweiss was a refugee from Germany who came to Australia in 1939.
[80] NAA: A6122, 155 REFERENCE COPY, "Jewish Unity Association," (1941-1949).
[81] Ibid. At this stage Brezniak was also after international material such as the *Morgen Freiheit* (the Yiddish communist daily from New York of which *Jewish Life* was an English language offshoot), to be forwarded on from Melbourne. Ibid.
[82] Waten was expelled in 1935 and 1942, paradoxically re-joining in 1957 at a time of mass exodus from the party following Khrushchev's secret speech and the Soviet invasion of Hungary, see David Carter, "Waten, Judah Leon (1911-1985)," (Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/waten-judah-leon-14884/text26074, published first in hardcopy 2012, Accessed 8 November 2016).
[83] This was a common notion across the Jewish world until the late 1940s, see for instance Hannah Arendt, "Antisemitism," in *The Jewish Writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York, Schocken Books, 2007), 51. There were in fact official Soviet campaigns against antisemitism through the 1920s and early 1930s, see Shternshis, *Soviet and Kosher*, 158-170.
[84] For example, see J. Katsenelson, "With Reb Simche at Home: Letter from Moscow," *New Life* 1, no. 5 (1947); Hershl Hartman, "The New Youth in Poland," *Jewish Life* 4, no. 2 (1949).

> Jewish opinion in Australia, and is, therefore, not truly representative of the heightened Jewish conscience that exists in this country today.[85]

It is also striking that there was only passing mention of Birobidjan in *Unity*. Birobidjan was the supposed autonomous Jewish province in the Soviet Union, and an international cause celebre for Jewish communists.[86] In May 1949, for instance, *Jewish Life*'s editorial was a dual anniversary celebration of both Israel and Birobidjan. Birobidjan was celebrated as a place where a 'socialist Jewish life is developing' as part of the Soviet Union's 'solution of the national question'. [87]

Although there were likely a number of reasons behind the lack of coverage in *Unity,* including a lack of access to material, there were two principal reasons for this dearth. Firstly, from 1949 onwards there was a growing repression of Zionist political activism across both the Soviet Union and the 'people's democracies', which became a major issue for Jewish communities internationally.[88] *Unity*, like the JCCFAS, took a lowest common denominator approach, reserving its anti-imperialist opprobrium for the US and its allies rather than featuring celebrations of (or indeed questioning) internal Soviet policy.[89] Openly approving of this repression would have lost them support in the Jewish community, and no doubt amongst the editorial committee and contributors to *Unity*.[90] Secondly, as I explore below, the Jewish antifascist left in Australia was

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[85] S. Factor, "Letter to the Editor - "Unity Criticised"," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1948).

[86] For an account of the Gezerd in Melbourne and its support for Birobidjan, see Rechter, "Beyond the Pale." For a history of the province, see Robert Weinberg, *Stalin's Forgotten Zion: Birobidzhan and the Making of a Soviet Jewish Homeland. An Illustrated History, 1928-1996* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For its support from American Jewish communists, see Henry F. Srebrnik, *Dreams of Nationhood: American Jewish Communists and the Soviet Birobidzhan Project, 1924-1951* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010).

[87] "Anniversary Greetings," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 7 (1949).

[88] This was coupled with restrictions on migration to Israel. For the reactions of the Jewish press internationally, see David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 205; Benjamin Balint, *Running Commentary: The Contentious Magazine That Transformed the Jewish Left into the Neoconservative Right* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010), 68; "Editorial: The Mixed Blessings of Equality," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 8 September 1949.

[89] For the lowest common denominator approach of the JCCFAS, see Walter Lippmann, "Letter to the President & Executive of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Antisemitism, 30 May 1953," (Lippmann collection, 1953).

[90] This reflected a much more pro-Israel and Zionist mainstream Jewish community in Australia than in Britain or in the established non-Zionist communist constituency in the US, see Paul Kelemen, *The British Left and Zionism: History of a Divorce* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 44-68; Hoffman, ""At What Cost Comrades?"," 34. An exception to this was a reprint of an editorial from *Naye Presse*, a contemporary communist Yiddish daily from Paris, which stridently defended Rumanian and Hungarian policy, see G. Koenig, "The World Jewish Press: "He Who Sows the Wind Shall Reap the Whirlwind"," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1949). For accounts of the situation in Romania and Hungary during these years, see Alexandru Florian, "Romanian Jewry: The First Decade after the Holocaust," in *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (New

committed to an analysis of antisemitism that expressly refuted the notion that antisemitism was somehow caused by Jewish behaviour or identity. This served as a rebuff both to Zionist ideas of Jewish 'normalisation' or a restored Jewish dignity through the establishment of Israel, but also to communist ideas of Jewish economic integration, 'normalisation' and 'productivisation'.[91] In the aforementioned editorial in *Jewish Life*, this was phrased as 'the productivization of the Jew'. This style of rhetoric and social policy was common across Jewish and non-Jewish discourse in the post-war 'people's democracies'.[92] This rhetoric was diametrically opposed to the analysis of antisemitism developed by the Australian Jewish left, as I explore below, making a forthright or in-depth focus on Soviet and Eastern European Jewish life a fraught prospect for *Unity*.

Nonetheless, *Unity* was stridently pro-Soviet in orientation. It is evident, however, that this orientation was tied inextricably to an antifascist worldview. In March 1949, *Unity* translated and published a striking article by B. Feder from the Paris communist Yiddish daily *Naye Presse*.[93] Titled 'In the country of the United Nations', it illustrates well the international Jewish left's imagination of the Soviet Union during this period. Feder reported on a UN meeting at the Palais de Chailot in Paris where he observed a session that was debating the text of the Genocide Convention. He described the Soviet representative amending the wording to express a definition of genocide as intimately associated with:

> Fascism, Nazism, and other similar racial theories which carry on propaganda for race-hatred and national antagonism … As he continued speaking, referring to

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York: Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, City University of New York, 1994); Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 604-637.

[91] These policies dated back to the 1920s in the Soviet Union. As Gennady Estraikh notes, these were not imposed solely from above but were adopted from the ideas of liberal and social democratic Jews. Gennady Estraikh, "The Stalinist "Great Break" in Yiddishland," in *1929: Mapping the Jewish World*, ed. Hasia R. Diner and Gennady Estraikh (New York: NYU Press, 1929). The trope of economic normalisation as a prelude to socialism was common across communist and Left Zionist ideology. Pickhan, "Yiddishkayt and Class Consciousness," 255; Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[92] "Anniversary Greetings." E.g. S. Inslicht, "Yugoslavia: An Interview with David A. Alkalay, President of the Belgrade Kehille," *New Life* 1, no. 2 (1947). Which is not to say that this was coerced or even undesirable from a Jewish point of view, see Polonsky, *The Jews*, 625-626.

[93] In September 1949 *Unity* published another article by Feder with a short biography reading 'B. Feder was until recently, editor of a Paris Yiddish daily. He has now taken up residence in Israel where he will act as correspondent for "Unity".' B. Feder, ""The Twenty-Four": Fallen Jewish Resistance Heroes Honored in Paris," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 3 (1949). There were no further articles published by Feder, so this appears not to have eventuated. On *Naye Presse*, see Nick Underwood, "Exposing Yiddish Paris: The Modern Jewish Culture Pavilion at the 1937 World's Fair," *East European Jewish Affairs* 46, no. 2 (2016): 160-175.

> pages, paragraphs, lines etc., there hovered before my eyes, the six million of our murdered brothers and sisters. The project against Genocide [the Genocide convention] wished to forget them, but the tall Russian, standing there in the hall below me, turning over page after page, brought their ghosts into the hall, and pleaded their cause.[94]

In a similar vein, in a feature article for *Unity* in early 1950, Janka Pearl, a Melbourne Jewish immigrant who left Poland in the mid-1930s, recounted her recent return to Warsaw. She made clear the connection between a specifically Jewish antifascism and political memorialisation of the Holocaust, with support for the Soviet Union and the post-war people's democracies:

> I came to see a ruined devastated city given over to despair and resignation. Instead, I found the swift tempo of rebuilding and a kindled hope. There was the noise of utter enthusiasm. Nobody talked about the past or the war, although the memory of the death chambers, the concentration camps and the rest of the horrors of Nazi domination still remain… Polish playwrights are concerned with the problems of building a new, socialist society. This is a subject which engrosses all… One Polish film *Ulica Graniczna — Frontier Street* is regarded as a great classic. The story of the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto, it stresses the inhumanity of anti-Semitism and glorifies the friendship which arose between Jew and Pole in those dark days. The Poles go to see this film as a kind of penance. It is grim and uncompromising as it unveils an awful situation. I have seen men and women weep unrestrainedly during the show. They were not Jewish and I have heard some of them admit their shame. I believe they were really contrite.[95]

This article was a striking expression of confidence in the possibilities for building a type of socialist society directly tied to an ethic of memorialisation of the Holocaust.[96] There was an express relationship posited here between a Polish attitude of penance,

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[94] For a discussion of the Soviet approach to the genocide convention, see Anton Weiss-Wendt, "The Soviet Perspective on the Drafting of the UN Genocide Convention," in *The Genocide Convention: The Legacy of 60 Years*, ed. H.G van der Wilt, et al. (Boston: Brill Nijhoff, 2012). See also Chapter One of this thesis for a discussion of Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention.

[95] Janka Pearl, "I Came Back to Warsaw," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no.1 (1950). Pearl's account, based on her late 1949 visit, of the blossoming of Jewish life and the 'relentless' campaign against 'race-hatred' and antisemitism (although it took place against a background of persistent antisemitism and mass Jewish emigration) is borne out by the historiography. Antony Polonsky notes that in 1946 two-thirds of Jewish children were in Jewish schools, and overseas visitors were frequently impressed with the political and cultural diversity and achievements of post-war Polish Jewry. However, from around 1949 onwards, in line with increasing communist control over all aspects of Polish society, all Jewish organisations, including schools and publications were taken over by communists or 'subjected to communist ideological control'. Although there was political repression, especially restrictions on Zionist activity, this did not resemble the contemporaneous overtly antisemitic purges and widespread repression of Jews in the Soviet Union. Ethnic Jews continued to make up a disproportionate number of government officials until 1956, see Polonsky, *The Jews*, 624-653. Although Pearl's account is decidedly rosy she does not gloss over the persistence of Polish antisemitism nor the Polish government's restrictions on Jewish emigration. Interestingly even the conservative *AJO* recognised the achievements of the new Polish government in the late 1940s, see "News Front: Poland," *Australian Jewish Outlook* 2, no. 4 (1948).

[96] Echoing again Benjamin's repetitive, aberrated mourning, suspended until the moment of redemption.

and memorialisation and the achievements of a new socialist society, a society premised on the outlawing of antisemitism and other forms of discrimination.[97] Communism and the Soviet Union in the Jewish left imagination represented the liberation of Jews through a general politics of emancipation. In this rendering, however mistaken, the principles and politics of international communism meant an end to racial discrimination, a final defeat of fascism and a proper memorialisation of its victims.

As the Cold War heated up, *Unity's* editorial line increasingly reflected the two camps thesis proffered by the Soviet Union. This thesis — that the world was split into one camp of pro-imperialist, anti-democratic warmongers and another camp of anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, pro-peace forces — was adopted by Communist parties internationally.[98] Brezniak interpreted this thesis in a specifically Jewish manner related to *Unity's* ongoing project of Holocaust memorialisation. The politics of the Soviet Union's 'peace offensive' were incorporated into a Jewish Popular Front politics, and a transnational analysis of the continuation of fascism. In a feature article for *Unity*, Brezniak suggested that from the recent Wroclaw Congress of Intellectuals an analysis had emerged that held that:

> There were two camps, but not East and West, rather, two camps of war and peace, progress and destruction, culture and slavery. Those two divided camps exist in America as in France; in Britain as in Italy. Those who released Ilsa Koch, who had lamp shades made of human skin; those who have reinstated former Nazis to high governing positions in Germany; those who talk of Franco Spain as an ally – those who will if they can, wipe out the principles for which the Second World War was fought, and bring about a new one.[99]

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[97] This dynamic was embodied in the film *Ulica Graniczna* or *Border Street* (1949). The JCCFAS screened *Border Street* along with *The Last Stage*, to Jewish audiences and non-Jewish high schools, adult education and church groups. "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Annual Report 1952-1953," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). This points again to the key role of the Jewish left in propagating Holocaust memorialisation as outlined in Chapter One.

[98] For an outline of the two camps thesis, the Soviet Union's peace campaign and CPA activity during this period, see Douglas Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945-1960," (Victoria University, 2011), 83-159; Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement, 1920-1955* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1975), 208-214.

[99] H. Brezniak, "Some Reflections on a Year Past," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 6 (1949). Although a mainstream antifascism quickly dissipated in Australia following World War Two, it was still popular in the Jewish community, see Richard Haese, *Rebels and Precursors: The Revolutionary Years of Australian Art* (Melbourne: Allen Lane 1981), 224. Traverso suggests that by the end of the war in 1945 'antifascism was the hegemonic current in European culture.' Traverso, *Fire and Blood*, 255. In the US, Alan M. Wald names this cultural period of left-wing literature, 'late antifascism'. This is also an apt term in the Australian Jewish context, that makes clear the continuities of the politics of the Popular Front and an ongoing political memorialisation of the Holocaust. Alan M Wald, *American Night: The Literary Left*

We can see here how the defence of antifascist principles and an antifascist analysis gained a wider social and geopolitical application. The association of fascism, reaction and antisemitism was key for the Jewish left during this period. This triad was always posed against a politics of progress, peace and democracy, and an end to colonial oppression. War and imperialism were discussed as generating racist oppression. Waten, in his article on fascism and antisemitism, suggested that 'if we study the post-war fascist movements in the United States and Great Britain and West Germany, the similarity with Italian fascism, and German Hitlerism is striking'. An antifascist politics was thus extended to a wider need to combat oppression and reaction, 'whether it appears in a "respectable" guise or whether it shows the ugly face of German and Italian fascism'; in either case it was figured as a 'deadly menace to the existence of the Jewish people.'[100]

Similarly, Hyam Brezniak's 1948 review of a pamphlet by Nettie Palmer and Len Fox on the Australian contribution to the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War suggested, in a reference to American imperialism, that '[t]he Spanish struggle is on again. The cause of the people will have to be fought in Washington as in Madrid, so that never again will the earth know the terror of Guernica and Treblinka.'[101] The rhetorical effect achieved by drawing Guernica and Treblinka together was an analysis of fascism as a transnational phenomenon not confined to Nazi Germany. The mention of 'Washington' reveals a morphing of this perspective to reflect the Cold War 'two camps' thesis. The feature review of this pamphlet in 1948 indicates the extent to which Jewish antifascism was connected with the wider antifascist movement and indeed how it still related to the pre-World War Two antifascism of the 1930s and the wartime antifascism of the early 1940s.[102] Brezniak and Waten both made clear the continued

in the Era of the Cold War (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012). See Chapter One for further discussion of the Wroclaw conference.

[100] Waten, "Fascism Is Anti-Semitic." This was not an uncommon extension of antifascist rhetoric on the wider left internationally. Vials discusses how for many in the US left 'fascism was often less a specific regime in Europe than a way to conceive the relationship between apparently distinct struggles.' Vials, *Haunted by Hitler*, 83.

[101] H. Brezniak, "Reading a Pamphlet," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1948).

[102] For a US based overview of left antifascism through this period, see Vials, *Haunted by Hitler*, 30-125. There was a close connection between wider Australian antifascism and the Jewish left through the 1930s and early 1940s. One indicator of this was a 1941 precursor exhibition to the famous 1942 Contemporary Art Society's (CAS) 'Anti-Fascist exhibition' organised by the Kadimah youth group at the Kadimah Jewish cultural centre, with works by artists such as Noel Counihan, Vic O'Connor, Yosl Bergner and others. Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 148. Bernard Smith, *Noel Counihan: Artist and Revolutionary* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), 171. The CAS was 'a national body of artist and

salience of an antifascist politics in the post-war period and its extendibility to a wider anti-imperialism and critique of Western democracies.

'Who are the big donors behind the agitator?': Critical theory, antifascism, and antisemitism

An antifascism that broadened into a wider critique of reactionary tendencies within Western democratic societies was not an uncommon transnational phenomenon in the post-war years. Such an analysis was not only a feature of the pro-Soviet left but also of the theorists of the Frankfurt School, the informal name that collectively describes the thinkers, many of whom were Jewish, who were associated with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research.[103] The Frankfurt School went into exile in the US in the early 1930s, and in the 1940s and early 1950s it was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (AJC), a large mainstream Jewish advocacy organization, to produce a series of publications called 'Studies in Prejudice'.[104] This was a major research project into antisemitism, producing most famously *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950*),* which controversially claimed that a good proportion of the American population were antisemitic and potentially fascists.[105] The 'Studies in Prejudice' series was the most in-depth and influential study of antisemitism and associated phenomena produced during this period.[106]

On the one hand, the studies produced by the Frankfurt School under the auspices of the AJC expressed an affirmation of democratic values via a 'spearhead theory' of antisemitism. The spearhead theory held that antisemitism was a precursor to, or first step in, a wider attack on democratic rights and institutions.[107] As Jack Jacobs notes,

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intellectuals whose opposition to reaction and fascism, communism and anti-fascism was conceived in international political and cultural terms'. Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 75.

[103] See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973).

[104] For a discussion of this partnership, see Jack Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 66-67.

[105] Jacobs notes that Adorno's contribution to *The Authoritarian Personality* was critiqued in the pages of *Commentary* for suggesting that we live in potentially fascist times. Ibid., 92.

[106] Jack Jacobs quotes the then head of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, Max Horkheimer on the centrality of an analysis of antisemitism to critical theory: 'society itself can be properly understood only through Antisemitism'. Ibid., 64.

[107] For an interesting discussion of the extent to which Adorno and Horkheimer did embrace the spearhead theory, see Lars Fischer, "Contribution to Review Forum on Jacobs, Jack. The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism," *The German Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (2016): 93-97. Fischer quotes

such a thesis was fully in accord with the stated goals of the AJC: 'the belief that the civil and religious rights of the Jews in the United States are dependent upon the maintenance of our democratic form of government', and antisemitism was a 'miserable anti-democratic and anti-American manifestation.'[108] This theorisation accorded well with a version of Popular Front antifascist politics that emphasised a defence of enlightenment values against a fascism imagined as irrational, mystical, reactionary and anti-modern.[109] On the other hand, elements of these studies employed the critical theory developed by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, most famously in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), which diagnosed political antisemitism *not* as a foreign element to democracy but as symptomatic of mass capitalist society and indeed enlightenment instrumental rationality more generally.[110]

Despite some similarities in analysis — and indeed similar tensions and contradictions, as discussed further below — there is little evidence of any direct influence of the Frankfurt School or the 'Studies in Prejudice' series on Jewish left ideas during this period. However, we can surmise that this material was being read in the Australian Jewish community in milieus adjacent to the Jewish left. In its June 1950 edition, the *Australian Jewish Review*, the magazine of Liberal Judaism (the Australian branch of the Reform movement of Judaism), published a glowing review of a prominent book in the 'Studies in Prejudice' series: *Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator* (1949) by Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman.[111]

Adorno's statement in *The Authoritarian Personality* which although endorsing a version of the theory expresses some unease at it as 'hackneyed and apologetic: the minority most immediately threatened seems to make an all-too eager attempt to enlist the support of the majority by claiming that it is the latter's interest and not their own which really finds itself in jeopardy today.' Ibid., 95.

[108] Quoted in Jacobs, *Frankfurt School*, 68.

[109] For a critique of post-war international antifascist ideology's failure to transcend a Popular Front defence of enlightenment values and thus failure to recognise how the Holocaust was in part a product of modernity, see Traverso, *Fire and Blood*, 263-264, 273-276.

[110] Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London and New York: Verso, [1944] 1997), 168-208. Whereas these empirical studies have often been thought of as disconnected from the critical theoretical work of the Frankfurt School, Jacobs has shown that although these works were not thoroughly integrated, so as to appear part and parcel of a coherent project, there was in fact a substantial dialectical interrelationship. Jacobs, *Frankfurt School*, 43-110. For another take on this issue, see Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 227-263.

[111] Mortimer J. Cohen, "Brilliant Study of Antisemitic Agitators," *The Australian Jewish Review* 11, no. 2 (1950). Michael A Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 203-206. Rabbi Sanger of Temple Beth Israel, the liberal synagogue in Melbourne was a close associate of Walter Lippmann and a key JCCFAS ally until around 1950, see "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 26th April 1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). Jacobs notes that *Prophets of Deceit*, more than other books in the series closely reflected the Frankfurt

In this review, Mortimer J. Cohen noted that 'the authors of this book are eminent scholars who, under the aegis of the American Jewish Committee, together with other social scientists, are making a thorough, scientific study of the social and psychological roots of prejudice'. The only criticism Cohen suggested was that 'one wishes … that the authors had given fuller treatment to the motivations of the agitator himself. Who are the big donors behind the agitator? Why should they be interested in subsidizing the agitators?' While a convincing and 'brilliant' study, a wider social and economic explanation was sought.[112] This explains the reason why, despite some obvious similarities in analysis, the Frankfurt School and their 'Studies in Prejudice' may not have attracted much attention by the transnational antifascist Jewish left and the Australian Jewish left by extension.

The disconnection between the Frankfurt School and the Jewish left was principally caused by the latter's scepticism towards psychoanalysis and psychoanalytically inspired theories. In a 1948 issue of *Unity*, Ernest Platz (who we met in Chapter One), reviewed several overseas publications including the June 1948 edition of *Jewish Life*. Platz declared that *Jewish Life* was 'outspoken and fearless.'[113] He focused on an article by Walter S. Neff on 'Psychoanalysis and Anti-Semitism', endorsing its conclusion that it is 'regrettable and dangerous that so many who wish to fight against fascism and antisemitism are heavily influenced by this self-defeating philosophy which lies at the basis of Freudian psycho-analysis.' Neff had assessed the recently released collection, *Anti-Semitism: A Social Disease* edited by Ernst Simmel and containing chapters by Horkheimer and Adorno amongst others. Neff suggested that the problem with all the contributors' analyses was that they considered antisemitism as:

> related to certain universal and biological attributes of mankind and fundamentally not as a product of certain historical and social conditions. All these writers admit the importance of economic, social and political factors in stimulating or controlling anti-Semitic attitudes, but they really see their origin in

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school's theoretical work, studying 'agitation as a surface manifestation of deeper social and psychological currents' and suggesting that the agitators used techniques of psychological manipulation, underlying the importance of analysing the latent rather than manifest meaning in fascist speeches using psychoanalytic concepts. Jacobs, *Frankfurt School*, 97.

[112] Cohen, "Brilliant Study." Jacobs suggests that the economic explanation for antisemitism, that originated in Horkheimer's 'Jews and Europe' essay and continues through to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, still plays a part in the analyses of the 'Studies in Prejudice' series, though reduced to one factor amongst many rather than as underlying or primary cause. In brief, this economic explanation relied on an analysis of monopoly, state, or late capitalism as making the sphere of circulation redundant. Jews were imagined as representative of this now obsolete sphere. Jacobs, *Frankfurt School*, 58-59.

[113] Platz, "A Review of Jewish Overseas Publications."

> certain hypothecated instincts of aggression, destruction and hate which organized society must combat.[114]

Although psychoanalysis was never as popular in Australia as in the US, it certainly was prominent in international analyses of the problem of antisemitism.[115] We can surmise that based on assessments such as Neff's, psychoanalytic explanations were not salient for the type of politics and analysis expounded by the transnational Jewish left.[116] Psychoanalysis, particularly in its conservative US post-war rendering, was not critical enough of the existing social structures which produced antisemitism.[117]

This critique also extended to other non-materialist theories of antisemitism. In June 1949, *Unity* republished Louis Harap's scathing review, from *Jewish Life,* of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946). Sartre's 'existentialist nonsense' was condemned as ahistorical and abstracted, while his conception of Jews was assessed as both shallow and at times itself antisemitic.[118] Harap sharply criticized Sartre's wholly negative conception of Jewishness (as a product only of antisemitism), and his conception of antisemitism as something chosen by a certain psychological type rather than socially or historically produced. As Michael Walzer has noted, Sartre's work was characterized by its wilful ignorance of Judaism.[119]

While setting out a historical materialist critique, one of the most notable parts of the review is Harap's assessment of Sartre's claim that '[t]he Jews… have one friend, the

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[114] Dr. Walter S. Neff, "Psychoanalysis and Anti-Semitism," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 8 (1948).
[115] For a history of psychoanalysis in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s, see Joy Damousi, *Freud in the Antipodes: A Cultural History of Psychoanalysis in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2005), 179-255.
[116] Another reason for the Jewish left's disinterest in the 'Studies in Prejudice 'series was their association with the AJC, a body proclaimed to be reactionary by *Jewish Life.* In a series of articles published in 1948, Louis Harap, the editor of *Jewish Life* took the AJC to task. According to Harap the AJC was: oligarchic, and anti-democratic, representative of the rich and powerful elite of the Jewish community; actively anti-communist and red-baiting; the AJC's foreign policy sided with Western imperialism against both the Soviet Union and the new democracies; they had a 'hush-hush' approach to combating antisemitism; and most importantly they were against the Jewish national struggle in Palestine. Louis Harap, "The American Jewish Committee Oligarchy," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 6 (1948).
[117] See Dagmar Herzog, *Cold War Freud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 21-86.
[118] Louis Harap, "Sartre on Anti-Semitism," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949). It is notable that *New Life*, the British equivalent magazine, had published a largely positive review of Sartre's volume, celebrating its condemnation of antisemitism, see Maurice Carr, "A Frenchman's View on Anti-Semitism," *New Life* 1, no. 7 (1947). *Unity* chose to republish the more radical critique.
[119] Michael Walzer, Preface to Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), vii. See also Sarah Hammerschlag, *The Figural Jew: Politics and Identity in Postwar French Thought* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 68-116; Jonathan Judaken, *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question: Anti-Antisemitism and the Politics of the French Intellectual* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

democrat. But he is a feeble protector.'[120] This was because the democrat, according to Sartre, only protects or defends the Jew as a human being, rather than specifically as a Jew, echoing Marx's famous critique from *On the Jewish Question*.[121] Harap suggested that Sartre's critique should be directed against the 'bourgeois democrat' rather than 'the democrat' in general. In Harap's rendering the socialist movement held an advanced version of liberal democratic values, as such it was 'among the Marxists, that is, the most advanced democrats, that the Jews find their sturdiest defenders.' Harap reframed the issue to suggest that the project of combating antisemitism fell under the broader project of an advanced version of emancipation through 'more profound concepts' of Enlightenment democracy. Such a view echoed the broad politics of a Popular Front antifascism but with a critical edge suggesting that 'bourgeois democracy' was false or insufficient. Harap advanced a more critical version of the spearhead theory, suggesting that antisemitism was a tool of reaction against democracy, whilst also criticising bourgeois democracy as wholly compatible with a structural antisemitism.[122]

The spearhead theory, with its associated Popular Front style ideology of Enlightenment values and 'democracy' opposing fascism, was commonly employed by the Australian Jewish left. However, as in Harap's analysis, this conception was held in tension with a more critical assessment of the structural inequalities of capitalist societies and the assimilatory homogenising forces of modernity. As discussed in the previous chapter, the memorialisation of the Holocaust within an antifascist framework was linked to critical anti-racist and anti-colonial politics. I consider further below how Jewish antifascist principles in an Australian context related to a critique of assimilationism.

[120] Harap, "Sartre on Anti-Semitism."
[121] Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *The Marx-Engels Reader,* ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1843; reprint, 1972).
[122] Harap, "Sartre on Anti-Semitism." There are resonances here with interwar Jewish socialist thought in Germany which incorporated liberal *Bildung* values, see George L. Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 1993), 144, 148-149.

'Less Jewish Jews': assimilation, antisemitism and Jewish political subjectivity

Whilst the spearhead theorisation of antisemitism certainly predominated on the Jewish left, there is also evidence of more multi-faceted critiques. Julian Rose, a key Sydney activist, explored sources of antisemitism in Christianity and English literature in a series of articles for *Unity*. Rather than associating antisemitism chiefly with reactionary and fascist political movements, these articles explored the widespread basis of antisemitic myths in religious and educational institutions.[123] The most substantial appraisal of the structural nature of antisemitism offered by the Australian Jewish left in this period was through a widely read booklet authored by Dr M. Mushin.[124] The tone of Mushin's booklet, *And Thou Shall Tell Thy Child*, was markedly different from earlier JCCFAS pamphlets which were largely defensive, myth-busting pamphlets aimed at a non-Jewish audience.[125]

Mushin's booklet was aimed at a Jewish audience, particularly the Jewish parent, and was heavily influenced by the psychological theories of Kurt Lewin.[126] In theorizing the causes of antisemitism, Mushin for the most part reflected an analysis centring on the spearhead theory. However, this was also combined with a psychological theory that recognised that although there were various political interests promoting antisemitism, one also needed to recognise the ideological and pathological nature of antisemitism. For Mushin '[a]nti-Semitism [was] at one and the same time grimly logical and madly illogical, and it is this paradox that causes so much confusion in the minds of many adult Jews.'[127]

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[123] Julian Rose, "That Crucifixion Story," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949); "The Jewish Stereotype," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1950).
[124] Dr. M. Mushin, *And Thou Shalt Tell Thy Child* (Melbourne: Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1947). This pamphlet was reviewed very favourably by Joachim Schneeweiss in *Unity*, see Joachim Schneeweiss, "Education against Antisemitism: A Review of Two Booklets," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1948). Dr Maccabbee Mushin was the brother of two of the founding and long-time members of the JCCFAS, Alick Mushin and Aaron Mushin. See NAA: A6119, 102/REFERENCE COPY, "Mushin Aaron Volume 1," (1936-1953).
[125] E.g. Fox, *Australia and the Jews.*
[126] Kurt Lewin was a pioneering figure in social psychology. He was a Jewish refugee from Germany who moved to the US in 1933, see Alfred Jay Marrow, *The Practical Theorist: The Life and Work of Kurt Lewin* (New York: Basic Books, 1969).
[127] Mushin, *And Thou Shalt*, 16. The spearhead theory can be thought of as concomitant of the 'puppet master' theory of fascism whereby the capitalist class are the ones pulling the strings and racism and fascism are 'epiphenomenal smoke screens'. Vials, *Haunted by Hitler*, 76. For a discussion of this idea on the US left and its transcendence by wide-ranging and sophisticated analyses of the origins and strength of racial ideologies, see ibid., 70-89.

Mushin suggested that Jewish children were very likely to encounter antisemitic attitudes and stereotypes in school and that it was incumbent upon parents and teachers to talk to Jewish children and challenge this antisemitism.[128] Mushin disputed, what he suggested was the widespread notion among Jews, that the chief cause of antisemitism was the appearance and behaviour of Jews, and the concomitant notion that the answer to antisemitism was to become inconspicuous and assimilate. Echoing Pinchas Goldhar, Mushin suggested that such attitudes were the products of what we would now call internalised antisemitism: '[h]ammered at often enough a Jew, especially the child, will come to believe in some vague way that he is indeed inferior to his surroundings.'[129]

The Jewish left's analysis of an internalised antisemitism was influential within the wider Jewish community. In September 1949, *Unity* republished a rather blistering editorial from the *Sydney Jewish News* which recounted an event at which a 'well-known Sydney fighter against Anti-Semitism was addressing a Jewish audience' re-iterating that antisemitism was not caused by Jewish behaviour and 'therefore, nothing was to be gained by an attitude of self-effacing mimicry.'[130] During the question and answer period, a member of the audience 'demanded to know what could be done about a number of Jewish housewives who were in the habit of assembling outside a kosher butcher shop on Sunday mornings, there to debate the ills of the world in general, and in particular the merit, or otherwise, of their purchases.' The editorial responded: 'such a person is not a reformer. He does not want wiser Jews, braver Jews, more useful Jews. No, what he wants is more careful Jews and if possible less Jewish Jews… He is an emotional Albino; a man in which oppression has become inverted and the denunciations of others have turned to self-hate.' The editorial ended with a suggestion for curing this self-hatred: to 'discover something about Jewry, its history, its traditions, its politics.'[131] The solution to the internalisation of antisemitism was to form a proud Jewish consciousness.

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[128] Mushin, *And Thou Shalt*, 8-9.
[129] Ibid., 11. For further discussion of internalised antisemitism, see Chapter One.
[130] "As We See It!: Jewish Anti-Semitism?," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 3 (1949).
[131] Ibid. It is interesting to note the gendered aspect of the 'Jewish anti-Semite's' denunciations. *Unity's* stance on this issue compares favourably to *New Life*'s analysis which generally followed a similar line on the causes of antisemitism with the exception of its column for women readers which declared that 'it is not good enough that we protest against anti-Semitism and discrimination whilst we place in the hands of the perpetrators weapons which they will not hesitate to use against us'. "What Women Talk About: Stamp It Out," *New Life* 1, no. 5 (1947).

Mushin drew together an analysis of antisemitism, class and power suggesting that Jews were 'under-privileged on account of anti-Semitism' and that 'a steady and constant economic and social blockade, as well as persecution has achieved this unnatural division in society.'[132] This division and the pressures of assimilation created a certain compromised role for Jewish leaders. Mushin wrote:

> [T]hey achieve eminence or power amongst non-Jews by professional, industrial or cultural merit, but are prevented from assimilating completely by the usual anti-Semitic restrictions. So they remain leaders, though of an under-privileged group, while at the same time moving spiritually away from it. This divided loyalty imposes grave limitations on their leadership. They are those so-called 'respectable' Jews whose outward approach is perfect, but who inwardly hold in contempt those whom they lead.[133]

In other words, antisemitism coupled with the inequalities of class society did not allow for a viable Jewish representative politics within the established order. A Jewish political subjectivity was necessary but only itself achieved through a struggle to change society in co-operation with others.

For Mushin, although strengthening group belonging was the answer to combating antisemitism, this was not figured as a good in itself. In Mushin's rendering, 'this united front, or "group-belonging" allows its individuals, who become freed of inhibitions imposed by anti-semitism, greater freedom.' Instead of internalising antisemitism, the Jewish person who is comfortable in their own group belonging will turn their attention to examining and combating antisemitism and will 'align his thoughts and actions with progressive tendencies in [the wider] society'. The goal of a strengthening of group belonging was in Mushin's words to foster 'sanctuary, not isolation', and inspire the courage for positive interaction and political co-operation with non-Jews. As I will discuss further in the following chapter, this idea was implicitly posed against Jewish nationalist and Zionist ideas, which saw the strengthening of Jewish group belonging as a means of building Jewish power and security in the form of a separate nation-state.

Analyses such as Mushin's were certainly of a piece with other criticisms of assimilationism, and an emerging politics of cultural pluralism. This case was put most strongly in an article in *Unity* titled 'Assimilation is Desertion' by A. Szulman.[134]

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[132] Mushin, *And Thou Shalt,* 12.
[133] Ibid., 13. Mushin also suggested that there were a great number of middle-class Jews moving 'towards the barrier, many of whom remain on the fringe unable to move in either direction' and that they blamed other Jews for thwarting their attempts at assimilation. Ibid.
[134] A. Szulman, "Assimilation Is Desertion," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1950).

Szulman was replying to an earlier letter to *Unity* by Trudy Kingsley, who in his words 'believed that to become a complete Australian it was necessary to rid herself of her Jewishness.' According to Szulman, 'Australia wants a complete liquidation of all minority cultures on the altar of the British way of life.' Counter to this, he urged a 'cultural pluralism' as beneficial both to wider Australian society, the psychic health of the individual and as a type of political solidarity, suggesting that, 'it isn't right to escape from the Jewish masses and leave them at one of the most tragic periods of their history.'[135] Szulman's article makes clear that for the post-war Jewish left, a large part of their definition of Jewishness was not to be figured in terms that were national, racial or religious.[136] Their conception instead was tied to a broader political vision. To resist assimilation did not mean clinging to tradition on one hand or inventing a new ethno-nationalism on the other. The importance of a distinctive Jewishness was figured through a politics of antifascist solidarity, among Jews and with non-Jews.

If the Jewish left's post-war analyses of antisemitism often placed a heavy emphasis on the spearhead theory, leading at times to a somewhat crude exaltation of 'democratic values' at the expense of a more critical account of the sources of antisemitism, their wider interpretation of fascism did make their attendant antifascism more capacious. It allowed the Jewish left to be both more historically prescient (danger to Jews not having to come in the form of jackboots and swastikas alone) but also allowed for the development of a wider anti-racist, and anti-assimilatory politics. An analysis which held that antisemitism was a manifestation of reaction, 'a weapon to bludgeon and beat back progress and upward change' or 'political trickery and demagogic hate', by itself provided a rather rudimentary explanation. It did, however, have the benefit of providing a *political* and thus historical explanation of antisemitism.[137] Such an analysis could be taken in more sophisticated and ambitious directions. Arguments such as Mushin's successfully combined a socio-political, psychological and ideological analysis, adding critical depth to the Jewish left's analysis of the workings of a social order characterised by class divisions and racial and religious oppression.

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[135] Ibid.
[136] I explore this further in the following chapter.
[137] Pinchas Goldhar, "Jewish Antisemitism," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948); Julian Rose, "Anti-Semitism and Reaction," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 4 (1951).

Thus, according to the British Jewish communist intellectual Hyman Levy in an article republished in *Unity*,

> [I]t is possible to strike at antisemitism with clear vision and with understanding, and to see that freedom and equality for Jewry come with freedom and equality for other oppressed peoples. Despair can be left to those who have come to believe that the roots of antisemitism lie deep in the psychological and emotional make-up of Jew and non-Jew, for such people have unconsciously accepted the Nazi theories of racism.[138]

This analysis of antisemitism as a structural product of a contingent set of historical and political circumstances, when connected with a Jewish antifascism that emphasised the importance of a Jewish political subjectivity, provided a basis for a connection to a wider field of political struggle figured through the necessity of solidarity with other oppressed people. A critical historical analysis of antisemitism, combined with an understanding of its irrational ideological workings, provided the tools for a more critical analysis of racism, colonialism, Anglo cultural supremacy and assimilationism. This analysis critiqued the unequal structure of society, and indeed of the Jewish community itself. In this sense Australian Jewish antifascists saw the fight against racialisation as important and valid political action within the prosecution of a more universal social struggle.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have traced part of the political and philosophical basis of the Australian Jewish left's antifascism in the immediate post-war period. The roots of this politics are in World War Two and the Holocaust. For Jewish antifascists during this period, the Holocaust was not finally over nor had fascism faded as a transnational threat. Fascism was inextricably linked to antisemitism, and necessitated an international Jewish politics that fought fascism, and reactionary politics more generally, in alliance with the 'progressive democratic forces of the world'. This was an idea that was widespread throughout the Jewish world. The Jewish antifascist left in

[138] Hyman Levy, "A Letter to Jewish Intellectuals," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1948).

Australia positioned themselves as actively organising against the threat of fascism and antisemitism, arguing explicitly for a specifically Jewish political mobilisation.

Arguing against the ideological reduction of Jewish left antifascism to a cynical cover for Stalinist politics, I have suggested in this chapter that the politics and ideology of international Jewish antifascism exceed and refute this formulation. The roots of Jewish antifascism lay in the politics and values of the Popular Front against fascism. As the Holocaust progressed through World War Two and the Soviet Union was forced to enter the war, a new Jewish consciousness proliferated which saw the need to fight fascism as Jews. In the JAFC's new formulation, Jewish consciousness, culture and transnational political solidarity became a valid, legitimate and important project. This meant a validation of Jewish culture and communities throughout the diaspora. This political and cultural outlook was taken up internationally, promoting the idea of the dynamic futurity of diasporic Jewish communities. No longer tied to national formulations, this Jewish internationalism held that Jewish cultures could be expressed and developed in whichever languages were available. The Australian Jewish left, firmly enmeshed in these international ideas and politics, emphasised the need for a specifically Jewish political subjectivity allied with progressive forces, as well as promoting the validity and importance of a diverse diasporic Jewish culture.

The Jewish antifascist left in Australia related to the Soviet Union and their foreign policy imperatives through the lens of a Jewish antifascism, seeing the Soviet Union as a defender of antifascist principles and proponent of the proper memorialisation of fascism's Jewish victims. Their imagination of communism was a society which had outlawed antisemitism and liberated Jews through a general politics of emancipation. This meant they had a seemingly wilful blindness towards anti-Jewish repression in the Soviet Union and allied countries in Eastern Europe. The 'two camps' thesis of the Soviet Union and its 'peace offensive' were also translated through the lens of a Jewish antifascism, creating an antifascist politics that was both more malleable and more critical. Through an antifascist lens, imperialism and war were theorised as generating racist oppression. In this rendering, antifascism became applicable to a wider swath of imperialist and reactionary politics and involved a more critical approach to the politics of Western democracies including Australia.

While international Jewish antifascist activists and intellectuals were sceptical of the 'Studies in Prejudice' series produced by the Frankfurt School in exile, they shared a similar concern with connecting antisemitism to a wider social theory of fascism, authoritarianism and reaction in Western societies. They also reflected a similar ambivalence as to whether antisemitism was in fact symptomatic of the structural inequalities and pathologies of modernity or if antisemitism represented a spearhead attempt to destroy the valued liberal institutions of a modernity bequeathed to us by the Enlightenment. While a simplified spearhead theorisation was prevalent in the Australian Jewish left, there was also a current of analysis that took a more critical view. Antisemitism, in this more complex account, was analysed as a structural issue with irrational ideological workings in both Jews and non-Jews. The Jewish antifascist left was particularly concerned with the internalisation of antisemitism and methods by which to combat it. They arrived at a formulation which saw the strengthening of group belonging and Jewish consciousness as necessary to co-operation with non-Jewish progressive forces to change society. This would enable the development of a Jewish political subjectivity that could combat antisemitism. Such a project was necessary but fraught within the established antisemitic class society. An alliance with progressive elements aimed at challenging antisemitism and wider structural inequality was necessary to avoid a self-defeating mode of Jewish communal leadership.

The Jewish antifascist left held that Jews could not be liberated from antisemitism through forms of Jewish nationalism. They emphasised the importance and validity of diasporic Jewish communities and culture. A necessary concomitant of these politics was a theory of antisemitism as contingent and combatable wherever Jews may live. Thus, the Australian Jewish antifascist left offered a critical theory of antisemitism joined to a critical analysis of societies in which Jews lived (in this case Australia). As will be further demonstrated in the next chapter, they questioned assimilationism as a strategy and outlook for Jews as well as Australian assimilationism more generally. This was a necessary part of a Jewish cultural-political outlook which validated the dynamic futurity of Jewish diasporic communities. In order to actualise this critique, a specifically Jewish political subject was needed to fight racialisation. This fight was envisioned as one part of a wider political struggle. The challenge of creating a non-nationalist Jewish political subjectivity and cultural politics posed against both Jewish assimilationism and Zionism is addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: The Jewish Left, Zionism and the Diaspora

Living in Israel in a Jewish state is the ideal, and the alternative is exile, with all the connotations of that description. And now we have been given such a state again, how can we say "thanks, but actually exile is quite all right after all"?

Rabbi James Kennard, Principal of Mount Scopus Memorial College.[1]

MALKE: And can't they work in our plantations?

BERL: Of course they can't. Let them work in their own.

David Martin, 'The Shepherd and the Hunter'[2]

In an April 1950 article for *The Zionist,* Aaron Patkin laid out a critique of the Jewish antifascist left. In his rendering, the 'policy and the tactics' of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS) '[do] not "combat" but "spread" Antisemitism' in an effort he considered 'both futile and undignified'.[3] For Patkin, the JCCFAS was a 'useless' organisation because he believed that a Jewish politics that tried to intervene against antisemitism in Australia was doomed to failure.[4] This prevalent Zionist analysis, which saw antisemitism as an unavoidable and omnipresent product of Jews living as minorities in 'diaspora' communities, suggested that the only realistic means of dealing with antisemitism was to create a radically new international political situation for the Jewish people through the Jewish nation-state.

In this chapter I turn to an analysis of how the Jewish antifascist left (represented here through the JCCFAS and *Unity*) in Australia, interacted with and differentiated itself from both the Zionist movement and a politics of Jewish assimilationism. In the first section I situate the Jewish antifascist left position vis à vis Zionist politics through an analysis and explication of international 'Yishuvism'. I suggest that although there were

[1] Rabbi James Kennard, Public Facebook comment, 2 January 2017, *Galus Australis Facebook group*, http://bit.ly/2llQMN7, Accessed 06/02/2017.
[2] David Martin, *The Shepherd and the Hunter* (London: Allan Wingate, 1946), 20.
[3] A. L. Patkin, "Press Review: The "Unity"," *The Zionist*, April 1950.
[4] Ibid.

many similarities between these positions, there were also fundamental philosophical and political differences. I then turn to an analysis of how the Jewish antifascist left and the Australian Zionist movement's political definitions of Jewishness clashed with an until then regnant Jewish assimilationism. I suggest that the Jewish antifascist left reflected neither an assimilationist politics nor a Jewish nationalism but proffered a third option. For the Jewish antifascist left, Jewishness was viewed through a materialist historical lens and was tied to a broader political vision. As outlined in the previous chapter, this vision was tied to a pro-Soviet Popular Front politics, differentiating it from other factions on the Jewish left. Finally in this chapter I suggest that this political vision of a dynamic futurity for diasporic Jewish communities was connected to a cultural outlook that embraced the diversity of international multilingual Jewish cultures.

'A world of free peoples living in peace': Yishuvism not Zionism

The two world-shaking events for Jewish people internationally in this period were the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel.[5] In the post-war world there was initially a close affinity between the Jewish antifascist left and the Zionist movement. Although they were informed by different philosophies, they had common cause in supporting the Yishuv (Jewish settlement) in Palestine, particularly through the immediate post-war years and 1948.[6] The Zionist movement in Australia was contesting the established, conservative and assimilationist politics of the Jewish community. In the post-war, post-Holocaust years this was even more so the case.[7]

After a long, if uneven, sponsorship by the British under the mandate system, the Zionist movement in the Yishuv turned increasingly against the British, after 1945, in

[5] Dr. Nahum Goldmann, "Opening Address," in *Papers from the World Jewish Congress Second Plenary Assembly* (Montreux, Switzerland: World Jewish Congress (WJC). Available at http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=22287, 1948).
[6] In Australia the Jewish antifascist left's embrace of an alliance with Zionists dates to the inception of the new Popular Front unity politics circa 1943, see NAA: A6122, 444, "Proposals for Unity by Jewish Communists."
[7] Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney, NSW: Collins Australia, 1988), 295-310.

its quest for unlimited immigration to Palestine and ultimately for an independent state.[8] This meant Zionist activists in Australia had to turn against the previously ideologically hegemonic Jewish identification as loyal subjects of the British empire.[9] The Soviet Union, tentatively from 1945 onwards but particularly after UN Ambassador Gromyko's May 1947 speech, reversed its longstanding anti-Zionism and supported the establishment of Israel.[10] Communist parties worldwide thus embraced the independence struggle.[11] The international Jewish left thought of the struggle of the Yishuv within the framework of global post-war struggles for de-colonisation and national independence.[12] The JCCFAS, in the events leading up to the establishment of the state of Israel, were its strong proponents, seeing a defence of Israel as inextricable from the fight against antisemitism.[13] *Unity* itself had on its editorial board writers and activists who had been active in the socialist Zionist movement.[14] The cover of the third

[8] This began with the 1939 MacDonald White Paper, restricting Jewish immigration. However, the Yishuv's fortunes were inextricably tied to the fortunes of the British empire in World War Two, dampening protests until after the war. Ibid., 307-310. For the role of the British in facilitating Zionist colonisation, see Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 31-64.

[9] The Australian intelligence services were thus concerned not only with communist activism within the Jewish community but also with Zionism, see NAA: A6122, 155 REFERENCE COPY, "Jewish Unity Association," (1941-1949).

[10] For a discussion of the intersection between Popular Front politics, a changing communist position on Palestine and the shift in Soviet foreign policy, see Paul Kelemen, *The British Left and Zionism: History of a Divorce* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 86-106. For an examination of the change in Soviet policy, see Laurent Rucker, *Moscow's Surprise: The Soviet-Israeli Alliance of 1947-1949* (Cold War International History project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005). For Gromyko's speech, see Andrei Gromyko, "Palestine at UNO: Extracts from the Speech Made by Mr. Andrei Gromyko at the General Assembly of UNO on May 14th," *New Life* 1, no. 5 (1947).

[11] For an account of how the Soviet Union's support for Israel allowed the communist David Martin to briefly edit the *Sydney Jewish News* see David Martin, *My Strange Friend: An Autobiography* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1991), 213-214.

[12] E.g. "Safeguard the Jewish State!," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 3 (1948); Ber Mark, "Voice of the Oppressed: World Congress of Intellectuals in Wroclaw, Poland, August, 1948," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 6 (1949). For an interesting discussion of Martin Buber's contradictory anticolonial Zionist thought, see Stefan Vogt, "The Postcolonial Buber: Orientalism, Subalternity, and Identity Politics in Martin Buber's Political Thought," *Jewish Social Studies* 22, no. 1 (2016): 161-186.

[13] See Burgoyne Chapman, "The Vindication of []," *Australian Jewish News*, 21 July 1950. Philip Mendes, "The Australian Left's Support for the Creation of the State of Israel, 1947-48," *Labour History* (2009): 137-148. It is understandable why the JCCFAS drew these two issues together. While there were no antisemitic riots around the issue as there were in Britain the period saw an upshot in antisemitism in the Australian press and as Norman Rothfield then put it 'there was undoubtedly an attempt by anti-Semitic groups in this country to utilise the situation in Israel for the purpose of creating ill-feeling towards the Jews in Australia'. Quoted in Norman Rothfield, *Many Paths to Peace* (Fairfield: Yarraford Publications, 1997), 23.

[14] "Jewish Unity Association." Dr. Joachim Schneeweiss, interview by Suzanne Rutland, 19 April & 22 June, 1987, State Library of New South Wales, Suzanne Rutland collection, CY MLOH 437/168-169. Although this did not mean that *Unity* was a socialist Zionist magazine.

issue even featured a photo of Israeli soldiers, with the caption ‘Defenders of State of Israel’ (see Figure 2 below).

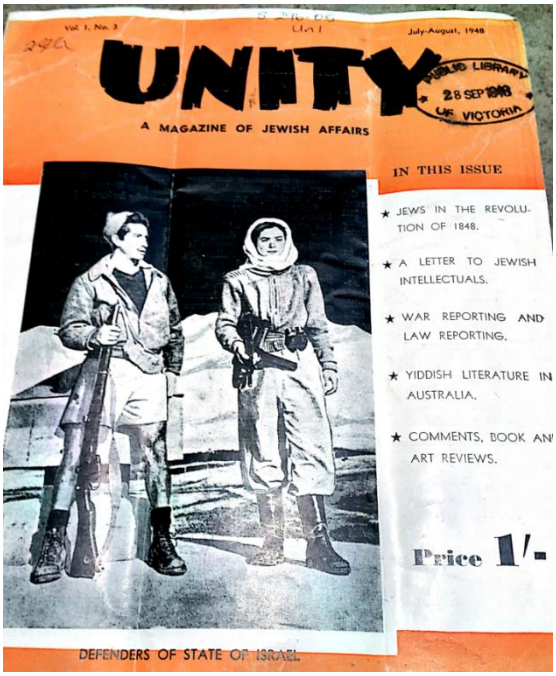

Figure 2 — ‘Defenders of State of Israel’, *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no.3 (1948).

The Jewish antifascist left in Australia adapted very quickly to the new importance and popularity of Zionism within the Jewish community. I suggest however, that despite its general support for Israel, the Jewish antifascist left in Australia did not reflect a straightforwardly Zionist perspective.[15] Despite its uncompromising support of the Yishuv, the Jewish antifascist left practiced a different mode of Jewish politics and

[15] The Jewish left in Australia certainly had a closer affinity with the Zionist movement than the Jewish left elsewhere. In Sydney there were a number of prominent Zionists involved in Unity/SCCFAS. This was the case in Melbourne too, although by the late 1940s these figures were not in leading positions in the JCCFAS. “Jewish Unity Association.”; Rothfield, *Many Paths to Peace*, 22. Both Melbourne and Sydney had a close affinity with Moshe Sneh, a pro-Soviet left Zionist figure who notably moved away from Zionism in the mid-1950s to become a Marxist anti-Zionist. “Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 11th July 1950,” (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1); Moshe Sneh, “What Is Good for Jews? An Address by Dr. Moshe Sneh to the World Jewish Congress, July 1948,” *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1948); Amir Locker-Biletzki, “Empire Nationalism and Colonialism in Mosh Sneh “on the National Question”,” available at https://bit.ly/2oCppCR. There seems to have been little engagement by *Unity* with the non-Zionist Israeli Communist Party/ Palestine Communist Party, despite David Martin’s involvement in the party, see Martin, *My Strange Friend*, 96.

identity. In line with the broader transnational Jewish left, in the post-war period, activists in the Jewish antifascist left in Australia took a bi-nationalist position up until the UN partition vote of November 1947.[16] Although not always explicitly referred to as such, this was the expression of an ideology that was common across the international antifascist Jewish left, that of Yishuvism.

Yishuvism was developed as an ideology by a strand of the Palestine Communist Party in the late 1920s.[17] As Paul Kelemen has documented, it formed a strand of thinking developed by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) from the late 1930s onwards.[18] The idea was to separate the Jewish community and its political/national rights in Palestine from the doctrine of Zionism. Yishuvism ascribed a progressive role to the Jewish settlement, particularly in economic development, as furthering the ideals of a socialist planned economy against the feudal structures of the region.[19] Yishuvists rejected Zionism, and advocated binational unity between 'Arabs' and Jews against British, and later American, imperialism.[20] The popularity of this ideology increased rapidly in the international Jewish left but also in the wider communist movement with the Soviet Union's support for the Yishuv in the period immediately following World War Two.[21]

As Kelemen suggests, Yishuvism's tenets were largely unsustainable. Despite the heterogeneity and wide array of political ideologies in the Yishuv, it was not possible to consider the Jewish community in Palestine without understanding its 'raison d'être [as] economic separatism' and its ultimate inseparability from Zionist structures and

[16] Evelyn Rothfield, *Whither Palestine* (Melbourne: Dolphin Publications, 1947). I discuss Rothfield's pamphlet further below. Binationalist and Yishuvist views were expressed throughout the run of *The Voice*, the Melbourne Jewish communist magazine. For an example of this position on the international Jewish left, see R.S. Gordon, "The Jewish Dilemma in Palestine," *New Life* 1, no. 1 (1947). David Martin's play 'The Shepherd and the Hunter' produced by the Unity theatre in London in 1946 and by the New Theatre in Sydney in 1947, is an example of a broadly Yishuvist politics in the Australian Jewish and non-Jewish left during this period. Martin, *The Shepherd and the Hunter*.
[17] Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party, 1919-1948* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1979; repr., 2010), 9.
[18] Kelemen, *British Left and Zionism*, 96-103. As suggested by Evan Smith, after the dissolving of the Comintern in 1943 the CPGB 'became an influential leader' in analysing and providing political direction for anti-colonial movements in the British Empire, see Evan Smith, *British Communism and the Politics of Race* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), 33-34.
[19] Budeiri, *Palestine Communist Party*, 9.
[20] For example, see "Palestine - a World Issue: World Jewry's Responsibility," *New Life* 1, no. 9 (1947).
[21] Australian Communist Party Jewish Sub-Committee, "We Support the Yishuv in Palestine," *The Voice*, November 1945; S. Mikunis, "Set Palestine Free," *The Voice*, March 1947. Mikunis was a key figure in the Palestine Communist Party.

ideology.[22] Certainly by the 1940s, any anti-Zionist ideology was marginal within the Yishuv.[23] This analysis is backed by many scholars who have analysed the material basis of Zionism in Palestine as an instance of settler colonialism, with a concomitant ideology of eliminationism.[24] This was the result of the Yishuv's buying up land for exclusive use by Jews, an endeavour funded by the World Zionist Organisation through the Jewish National Fund.[25] This practice was combined with the doctrine of *Avoda Ivrit* (Hebrew Labour) — meaning that Jews should hire only Jewish labour — creating a Jewish separatist economic structure.[26] In other words, there were major structural imperatives in the hegemonic ideology of the Yishuv, working against the possibility of any substantial Arab-Jewish political co-operation.

Despite its contradictions, Yishuvism did express a genuine concern for coexistence, Arab-Jewish unity and for an internationalist politics. Although Yishuvism provided an ideological cover for the Soviet Union and international communism's support for the establishment of Israel, it should not be dismissed as mere window dressing, or for that matter as insincere or cynical.[27] Yishuvism offered a different vision of Jewish world

[22] Kelemen, *British Left and Zionism*, 100.
[23] Ran Greenstein, *Zionism and Its Discontents: A Century of Radical Dissent in Israel/Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 50-103.
[24] See Patrick Wolfe, "Purchase by Other Means: The Palestine Nakba and Zionism's Conquest of Economics," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): 133-171; Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London & New York: Zed Books, 2012), 19-87; Omar Jabary Salamanca et al., "Past Is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): 1-8; Lorenzo Veracini, "What Can Settler Colonial Studies Offer to an Interpretation of the Conflict in Israel-Palestine?," *Settler Colonial Studies* 5, no. 3 (2015): 268-271; Yoav Peled, "Delegitimation of Israel or Social-Historical Analysis? The Debate over Zionism as a Colonial Settler Movement," in *Jews and Leftist Politics: Judaism, Israel, Antisemitism and Gender*, ed. Jack Jacobs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[25] Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London and New York: Verso, 2016), 223.
[26] Ibid., 223-235; Steven A. Glazer, "Language of Propaganda: The Histadrut, Hebrew Labor, and the Palestinian Worker," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXXVI, no. 2 (2007): 25-38. David Martin's short story 'Kibush Avodah' is a searing indictment of this doctrine. Martin was briefly a member of the Palestine Communist Party and this story is evidence of objections to 'Avoda Ivrit' amongst sections of the international Jewish antifascist left. David Martin, "Kibush Avodah," in *The Shoes Men Walk In* (London: The Pilot Press Ltd, 1946). In a similar vein, see Walter Kaufmann, "Dawn," in *The Curse of Maralinga, and Other Stories* (Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers, 1959). Abigail Jacobson has outlined the differences in the final years of the Ottoman period between the 'exclusivist' socialist Zionism of the Second Aliya based on 'Avoda Ivrit' and the 'Inclusive Zionism' of the young Sephardi intelligentsia which emphasised a shared Arab and Jewish destiny in Palestine. Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 97-116.
[27] While Johan Franzen attributes a somewhat overblown role to the Yishuvist ideological campaign in influencing Soviet policy, the majority of scholars emphasise a more realist strategic calculus behind this change. The Soviet change of policy had multiple causal factors including that of supporting worldwide decolonisation efforts and the dismantling of the British empire. Johan Franzen, "Communism Versus Zionism: The Comintern, Yishuvism, and the Palestine Communist Party," *Journal of Palestine Studies*

politics, although ultimately it failed to recognise the settler colonial nature of the Zionist enterprise and rested upon well-worn tropes of European cultural and economic superiority. Two widely read pamphlets aimed at the Jewish and wider community written by Evelyn Rothfield, a leading JCCFAS activist and intellectual, are instructive here.[28] In *Whither Palestine*, published in March 1947, Rothfield outlined a short history and political diagnosis of the situation in Palestine.[29] Rothfield's history was dismissive of any grievances the Palestinian Arab population had with the Jewish settlement. She suggested that the (often violent) Arab opposition to Jewish settlement in the late 1930s was the result of the 'Arab land-owners' who 'fomented [the riots] with the help of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany'.[30] As was common to the discourse of the Jewish left at the time, Rothfield combined a typical settler colonialist trope of 'the rising standard of living of the Arab peasant and working man in Palestine' thanks to Jewish settlement, with a call for further Arab-Jewish cooperation. [31]

It is notable, however, that Rothfield, in line with the Yishuvist outlook, forcibly rejected partition as that 'would divide the Arabs from the Jews; emphasise and accentuate their differences instead of solving them [as well as] deprive both peoples of something which they feel vitally to be theirs.'[32] Rothfield's position here could be productively compared with Hannah Arendt's contemporary advocacy of a federated Palestine within a broader world federation.[33] As Gil Rubin has established, rather than a utopian anachronism, these ideas were very much of a piece with broader international political currents in trying to provide a model for the new post-war, de-colonised world.[34] Rothfield argued in an internationalist mode that suggested the harmony of

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36, no. 2 (2007): 6-24; Rucker, *Moscow's Surprise*; Yaacov Ro'i, *Soviet Decision Making in Practice: The USSR and Israel, 1947-1954* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1980), 15-293. For a discussion of Soviet policy on Jewish migration from Eastern Europe to Palestine in the immediate post-war years, see Arieh J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 157-234.

[28] Rothfield was a founding member of (the socialist Zionist group) Habonim in the UK in the 1930s and had strong links with the Yishuv/Israel. She visited family and stayed on a Kibbutz in 1947. However, she was not active in Zionist organisations after she migrated to Australia in 1939. Evelyn Rothfield, *The Future Is Past* (Fairfield, Victoria: E. Rothfield, 1992); Evelyn Rothfield, *Whither Palestine* (Melbourne: Dolphin Publications, 1947); Evelyn Rothfield, *Israel Reborn* (Melbourne: Dolphin Publications, 1948).

[29] Both pamphlets were published by Dolphin Publications which I discuss further in Chapter Five.

[30] For an account of Palestinian Arab opposition to Jewish settlement during this period, see Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, 65-139.

[31] See Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba*, 33-43.

[32] Rothfield, *Whither Palestine*.

[33] Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis of Zionism," in *The Jewish Writings*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York: Schocken Books, 2007).

[34] For a discussion of the post-war politics of federalism and how Arendt's vision of Palestine fitted within these ideological currents, see Gil Rubin, "From Federalism to Binationalism: Hannah Arendt's

Jewish and 'Arab' interests in Palestine, and a rejection of political Zionism's aim of an independent Jewish state: 'The world today provides countless examples of successful co-operation between different peoples in one land to their mutual advantage. And, with successful co-operation, the people of Palestine can strive for and attain that freedom and independence which is the aim of all people.' Rothfield ended her pamphlet on a universalist, internationalist note: 'a free and independent Palestine would co-operate with the people of the Empire and all the United Nations in laying the foundation for the sort of world we all want to see – A WORLD OF FREE PEOPLES LIVING AT PEACE.'[35]

As suggested above, Rothfield here expressed a federalist politics that had become particularly prominent during World War Two, in an attempt to answer international questions of nationalism, independence and decolonisation.[36] This ran counter to the politics of national self-determination implemented in Europe after World War One, which had required large-scale population transfers and afforded wholly inadequate protections for formalised 'minority' groups.[37] As noted by Roni Gechtman, there was an alignment between Wilsonian self-determination — requiring essentially one nation per state, per territory — and the Soviet Union's communist ideal of national self-determination.[38] The ideas proffered by the Jewish antifascist left prior to 1948 reflected this federalist thinking. They argued that the national rights of Jews in the Yishuv should not be achieved through the creation of an exclusivist nation-state. This was

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Shifting Zionism," *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 3 (2015): 393-414. Rubin notes that other scholars have brushed over Arendt's initial rejection of binationalism in favour of a federalist solution. See also William Selinger, "The Politics of Arendtian Historiography: European Federation and the Origins of Totalitarianism," *Modern Intellectual History* 13, no. 2 (2016): 417-446. For analyses of Arendt's colonialist biases, see Shmuel Lederman, "Making the Desert Bloom: Hannah Arendt and Zionist Discourse," *The European Legacy* 21, no. 4 (2016): 393-407; A. Dirk Moses, "Das Römische Gespräch in a New Key: Hannah Arendt, Genocide, and the Defense of Republican Civilization," *The Journal of Modern History*, no. 85 (2013): 867-913.

[35] Rothfield, *Whither Palestine*.

[36] Rubin, "Federalism to Binationalism," 400-401. See also Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, "Unholy Alliances? Nationalist Exiles, Minorities and Anti-Fascism in Interwar Europe," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 4 (2016): 597-617; Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014); Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015).

[37] See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Orlando: Harcourt Books, 1951; repr., 1976), 267-290; Volker Prott, *The Politics of Self-Determination: Remaking Territories and National Identities in Europe, 1917-1923* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[38] Roni Gechtman, "A 'Museum of Bad Taste'? The Jewish Labour Bund and the Bolshevik Position Regarding the National Question, 1903-1914," *Canadian Journal of History* 43, no. 1 (2008): 65.

connected to a fundamental principle of the Jewish antifascist left, as we have seen: that Jewish liberation and an end to antisemitism were inextricably bound up with a wider global struggle of oppressed peoples.

Yishuvist ideology was not completely abstract, there was significant co-operation between Arab Palestinians and Jews in Palestine that did point towards alternate political futures.[39] *Jewish Life* reprinted many documents and communiques from both the Zionist left (Hashomer Hatzair and Mapam) and the communist left in Palestine.[40] While never challenging or indeed recognising Jewish settlement in Palestine as a settler colonial project, these are important and little-known perspectives. They help both to illuminate a degree of heterogeneity amongst the Jewish political left in Palestine with regards to the wars of 1947-1949, but also to indicate that these perspectives were being disseminated internationally to communist and left-wing parties and organisations both Jewish and non-Jewish.[41]

One such letter was from the Young Communist League of Israel to the World Federation of Democratic Youth.[42] In line with an international communist policy (reflected by the transnational Jewish left and Evelyn Rothfield), the conflict in Palestine was painted as an imperialist plot on behalf of the Arab countries acting on behalf of British and (sometimes) American interests:

> In view of all these facts of imperialist intrigue, it is of utmost importance to stress that the main portion of the Arab working and trading masses of Palestine remained outside the attacking camp, and that this is the main reason for the great propaganda for Arab 'volunteers', and finally the invasion from Transjordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt etc. We had many examples of local truces between Arab and Jewish villages, there were whole districts where Arab villages and workers maintained their contacts with their Jewish neighbours for long months. Where they worked and traded together and in some cases even resisted the infiltration of reactionary Arab gangs. [43]

This is borne out by recent archival research by Ariella Azoulay, who has unearthed documentation of the hundreds of 'civil alliance' compacts made between Jewish and

[39] As ultimately impossible as they may have been.
[40] For example, see "Jewish and Arab Communists Unite," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 3 (1949). For an overview of the politics of these groups in this period, see Joel Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 24-55. See also Amir Locker-Biletzki, "Colonialism and Imperialism in Communist Thinking in Palestine/Israel, 1919–1965," *Settler Colonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2018): 384-399.
[41] See also R.S. Gordon, "The Arab Left Wing," *New Life* 1, no. 5 (1947).
[42] Young Communist League of Israel, "Israeli Youth Calls to World Youth," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 2 (1948).
[43] Ibid. See Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement and the Partition of Palestine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

Arab Palestinian communities between November 1947 and May 1948.[44] As suggested above such an emphasis (and a little known or publicised set of facts) was part and parcel of the antifascist Jewish left's non-Zionist emphasis on the possibilities for cooperation between Jews and 'Arabs' in Palestine against a common imperial oppressor.[45] The following passage, from the Young Communist League's letter, however illustrates the limited analysis of this perspective:

> we have actions by Jewish circles, the reactionary military organizations of Irgun Zwai Leumi and Stern, which objectively help British imperialism and Arab feudal reaction to widen the gap between the broad masses of Arabs and Jews. So they perpetrated … the brutal attack on the Arab peasants of Deir Yasseen village in which many women and children were butchered… While fighting, it is our duty to be on the alert against chauvinistic tendencies on the one hand and against pro-imperialist "compromising" on the other.

In other words, the Young Communist League backed Jewish territorial expansion while implying that the chauvinism and cause of 'Arab'-Jewish disunity was the fault only of the far right. There was no criticism of the *Haganah*, or its leadership, as implicated both in the specific massacre of Deir Yassin but also in a larger project of Palestinian ethnic cleansing.[46] The limits of an internationalist solidarity seemed to be reached when it came to assessing a project of Jewish settler colonial dispossession.

Rothfield followed up *Whither Palestine* with another pamphlet titled *Israel Reborn*, published in July 1948, which struck a decidedly different tone.[47] Rothfield here reversed her previous opposition to partition, suggesting that 'the United Nations' proposals … give complete independence to both Arabs and Jews, which is the only basis for a satisfactory solution.' *Israel Reborn,* as well as celebrating the creation of the

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[44] The period after the UN's partition decision and before the establishment of the state of Israel and the subsequent invasion of the Arab states' armies. Ariella Azoulay, "Civil Alliances — Palestine, 1947-1948," *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 4 (2014): 413-433.

[45] For explorations of these possibilities for co-operation, see Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Deborah Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2000); Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Hebron* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[46] See Ilana Kaufman, "Communists and the 1948 War: PCP, Maki, and the National Liberation League," *Journal of Israeli History* 33, no. 2 (2014): 115-144; Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006). For discussions of Mapam's approach to Palestinian refugees, see Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 184-187; Beinin, *Was the Red Flag*, 31-39. For the involvement of the Haganah at Deir Yassin, see Irene L. Gendzier, *Dying to Forget: Oil, Power, Palestine, & the Foundations of U.S. Policy in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 123.

[47] Mendes suggests that the JCCFAS distributed 25,000 copies of this pamphlet. Mendes, "The Australian Left's Support," 144. Norman Rothfield suggests that 100,000 were distributed of both, with the assistance of trade unions and churches. Rothfield, *Many Paths to Peace*, 21.

Jewish state, strongly condemned the British for siding with the 'Arabs' against the Yishuv in the wars of 1947-1948, suggesting that 'American policy [too] had little more to commend it.' Rothfield's exalted celebration of the establishment of the new state certainly represents the zenith of the Australian Jewish antifascist left's support for Israel, as it became indistinguishable from Zionist ideology:

> For two thousand years before the dispersal the Children of Israel cultivated the soil of the Promised land, lived there and produced an immortal literature and culture. Today after a lapse of 1900 years, the Jewish people once more have a land of their own on soil consecrated by two thousand years of history. Much of it has lain barren for centuries, waiting to be fertilised by the blood and sweat and tears of thousands of Jewish pioneers who quite literally gave their lives to the rebuilding of Israel. [48]

Israel Reborn's foreword was written by the Anglican Bishop C.V. Pilcher, who quoted Winston Churchill's statement of support for the Zionist movement at length. In September 1948, *Unity* published an article by Pilcher titled 'Jewish achievements have benefited Palestine Arabs', which furthered a fairly typical Zionist narrative that:

> Jewish immigrants entered the Land of their forefathers with immense enthusiasm. They also brought with them the scientific and agricultural skills of Europe. As a result, the land which had lain desolate for so many centuries began to blossom and to flourish.[49]

There was no mention of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who were being pushed out of the new State.[50] While the Jewish antifascist left seemed to take a principled stand against the doctrine of an exclusivist nation-state form in the lead-up to 1948, following the declaration of statehood their Yishuvism was exposed in its lack of critical capacity to assess Jewish settler colonialism as inimical to a project of 'successful co-operation between different peoples in one land to their mutual

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[48] Rothfield, *Israel Reborn*.

[49] C. Venn Pilcher, "Jewish Achievements Have Benefited Palestine Arabs," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 4 (1948).

[50] While there was only a passing reference to the Palestinian refugees in *New Life, Jewish Life* printed a very sympathetic interview in January 1949 with the 'Arab progressives' which highlighted the issue of the refugees. *Jewish Life* went on to press for the return of the refugees in an August 1949 editorial. "Israel's Arab Problem," *New Life* 2, no. 6 (1948); A.B. Magil, "I Meet the Arab Progressives," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 3 (1949); "Cold War Against Israel," *Jewish Life* 3, no.10 (1949). This was despite this stance being, at the time, the policy of the US and of no interest to the USSR. On the changing positions of the US on the refugee issue circa 1948-1949, see Gendzier, *Dying to Forget*, 201-239. The International Jewish Labor Bund also highlighted the plight of the Palestinian refugees in the late 1940s and early 1950s. They were seemingly better able to recognise the zero-sum nature of settler colonialism in Palestine calling for a halt to Jewish migration as tied to ending the seizure of Arab land, see David Slucki, *The International Jewish Labor Bund after 1945* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 191-192.

advantage'. The ideological image of the 'desolate' land made to 'flourish' obscured the possibility of a more critical approach.

'Does the state of Israel solve the Jewish question?': after 48

While maintaining a stance that was generally supportive of Israel, *Unity's* focus on Israel/Palestine was displaced by other concerns in the years following 1948.[51] An exception was in May 1949 when, on the first anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel, *Unity* printed a number of articles as part of a symposium on the question 'Does the State of Israel Solve the Jewish Question?' The symposium ran the gamut of opinions. HB Newman, President of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand titled his contribution 'Israel has restored our dignity' and suggested that 'the Jewish problem has definitely been solved by the establishment of the State of Israel'.[52] Conversely L. Harry Gould, Director of the Marx School, suggested that although the establishment of Israel was a great victory, a wider solution to antisemitism and for peace and security for all Jews lay in the defeat of imperialism by the forces of democracy, and ultimately in socialism.[53] G. de Vahl Davis, President of the Sydney Liberal synagogue Temple Emanuel, suggested that the establishment of the state while certainly a positive development, was not necessarily an answer to antisemitism and had caused new problems for Jews. According to de Vahl Davis, local Zionist leaders now saw no point in building local community institutions. They viewed antisemitism in the diaspora as inevitable and advocated that all community resources should be devoted to Israel.[54] Other contributors to the symposium suggested that the establishment of Israel was 'nearer the solution', as 'the Jew' has now acquired 'a prestige among the nations with whom he lives'.[55]

[51] After 1953 the JCCFAS returned to a consistently pro-Israel position, following closely the line of the Mapam party, see Philip Mendes, "The 'Declining' Years of the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1954-1970," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 17, pt.3 (2004): 3-5.
[52] H.B. Newman, "Israel Has Restored Our Dignity!," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949).
[53] L. Harry Gould, "Socialism the Solution," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949).
[54] G. de Vahl Davis, "New State - New Problems," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949).
[55] N. Jacobson, "Nearer the Solution," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949); Dr. A. Cymerman, "Free from "Galuth" Psychology," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949).

While de Vahl Davis' view comes closest to representing a Jewish left position in this part of the symposium, a feature article in the same issue of *Unity* by Brezniak is more revealing. The article 'There is No Neutrality' starts as an enthusiastic celebration of the establishment of Israel. The fight for the establishment of Israel, Brezniak claimed,

> had the support of … all who aim in historical progress for the independence of nations, full defeat of Nazism and racialism, breaking colonial and feudal systems, doing away with all manner of anti-Jewish prejudices and restrictions, and for the right of peoples for their own nationhood.

However, in Brezniak's rendering, now that Israel had emerged as a state like any other, support for it from progressive Jews was entirely conditional on its wider geo-political positioning.[56] Brezniak suggested that Israel should push for an independent Arab state of Palestine alongside Israel, in fulfilment of the UN Partition decision rather than follow the 'imperialist policy of handing it over to King Abdullah'. Brezniak asked, with reference to relations with Spain, Greece and the US:

> Is Israel on the side of national movements fighting for national liberation and independence; or is the State of Israel ranged with those who keep them subservient?... [O]n the answers to those questions will depend the future support of the freedom-loving people for the State of Israel. [57]

This section of the Jewish antifascist left still gave primary allegiance to the international anti-imperialist struggle (as led by the Soviet Union), with any allegiance to Israel secondary and highly conditional.[58]

In the September-October issue of *Unity*, the symposium continued. Nate Zusman, a key figure in *Unity* and the SCCFAS, suggested that '[t]his symposium has strikingly revealed the acceptance, either consciously or unconsciously, of the accusation of the Jew-baiters that the Jew himself is the cause of the discrimination exercised against

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[56] H. Brezniak, "There Is No Neutrality," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949).
[57] Ibid. According to Paul Morawetz one of the central reasons why he resigned from the JCCFAS was the ambivalence around Israel. Morawetz suggested that in particular Norman Rothfield and Judah Waten wanted a new neutral position on Israel as they were suspicious that it was 'an outcrop of nationalism, that Israel was in a way an imperialist design and that the Jews might become imperialists in Israel themselves and that the Jabotinsky line might be pursued'. "Notes from Peter Medding's interview with Paul Morawetz," (papers of Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, State Library of Victoria, MS 14257, undated).
[58] An interesting counterpoint to this position was the debate in the International Labor Bund on the question of Israel. Unlike the pro-Soviet Jewish Left, the Bund maintained their opposition to the establishment of the state even after 1948. It did not acknowledge Israel as playing 'a positive role in Jewish life' until 1955. Throughout, it was firmly opposed to Zionism and to the 'ingathering of exiles', calling for a 'de-Zionisation' of Israel. For an overview of international Bundist positions and debates in this period, see Slucki, *International Jewish Labor Bund*, 173-210.

him.'[59] Zusman disputed claims that Israel "frees the 'new Jew' from any slur of inferiority" or gives the Jew "a new standing in his own eyes." Zusman continued:

> Were we inferior and without dignity before the creation of the Jewish state? No! … This outlook … lessens our ability to fight back when we are challenged. If we can only free ourselves from the "Galuth" psychology by going to Israel then those who do not go will only be able to "free" themselves by escaping from their Jewishness. There is no greater danger to our consciousness as Jews and human beings than the corroding influence of this self-hate and inferiority complex…. The solution of the problem for the majority of Jews who live, and will continue to live outside of Israel, lies only in the victory of the democratic forces pledged to eradicate all forms of racial and religious discrimination. [60]

Yishuvism then, rather than representing an ultimate political goal indistinguishable from Zionism, was contingent and conditional on the political circumstances of the time. It was subservient to a larger transnational politics aimed at Jewish emancipation through the democratic and anti-racist transformation of the world. Nevertheless, Yishuvism did not substantially challenge the settler colonialist imaginary which essentially disavowed the dispossession of Palestinians.[61] This complicates, therefore, our understanding of what Zusman meant by 'the victory of the democratic forces pledged to eradicate all forms of racial and religious discrimination.' Despite their increasing scepticism of Israel and Zionist ideology in this period, the Australian Jewish antifascist left never mounted any serious public campaign or challenge to Zionism after the establishment of the state. Instead, for the most part, a critical analysis of the situation in Israel/Palestine was neglected as a political issue.[62] As discussed in Chapter Four, this had serious consequences for the Jewish antifascist left. The Jewish left, rather than presenting a consistent and universally applied politics, dealt sometimes haphazardly, with the international and local political circumstances in which they found themselves. In this period the political approaches of the various Jewish factions to these circumstances were highly differentiated.

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[59] Zusman was notably given the final word in the symposium. Nate Zusman, "Self-Respect and Democracy - the Solution," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 3 (1949).
[60] Ibid.
[61] For an exploration of such disavowals as common across settler colonial imaginaries, see Lorenzo Veracini, "Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal: The Settler Colonial Situation," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2008): 363-379.
[62] The JCCFAS Annual Report for 1949-1950 is striking for the complete absence of any mention of Israel. "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Annual Report 1949-1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

"For God, for King and for Country": responses to assimilationism

During the immediate post-war period the Jewish antifascist left and the Zionist movement seemingly had common cause against the previous assimilationist establishment leadership of the Jewish community. Both movements were struggling to define a Jewish politics involving a certain measure of collective rights and autonomy, rather than seeing Jewishness simply as a private matter of religion.[63] An epiphenomenon of this struggle within the Jewish community was the formation of *The Australian Jewish Outlook (AJO),* a short-lived journal established to counter the growing dominance of Zionism within the Jewish community.[64] The *AJO* was set against both anti-British Zionism and communism.[65] In June 1947, *The Voice* published an article condemning the *AJO*.[66] *The Voice* (1944-1947) was a Jewish monthly magazine with an openly communist perspective (and fairly low production values), edited by the prominent Jewish communist Itzhak Gust and published in Melbourne.[67] The article, in a somewhat overblown tone, accused the *AJO* of being:

> the voice of a small body of Jews who are anxious to carry favour with the most conservative, reactionary elements in this country. They would destroy the communal organisations of the Jewish people, which include religious, cultural and social bodies; they would prevent communication between Jews of this country and prevent communication between Jews of this country and the Jewish people of the rest of the world; they would preach complete subservience to those

[63] As Hannah Arendt suggests, the category of 'Jewishness' as something quantifiable and subject to internal contestation was only possible as a result of modern Jewish emancipation and assimilation. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 83-84.

[64] For an account of the fortunes of this journal, see Louise Hoffman, "A Review of the Jewish Press in Western Australia," *Journal of The Royal Western Australian Historical Society* 8, no. part 2 (1978).

[65] The *AJO* was against what they called 'political Zionism', which aimed at the creation of an independent Jewish State. They were in favour of 'Zionism as a humanitarian and cultural movement designed to facilitate the migration to Palestine of Jews who, because of racial and religious discrimination, cannot or will not live in the country of their birth or adoption.' "The "Australian Jewish Outlook": Editorial Policy Outlined," *Australian Jewish Outlook* 1, no. 1 (1947). The politics of the *AJO* could be productively compared with the politics of the American Council for Judaism, see Tallie Ben-Daniel, "Zionism's Frontier Legacies: Colonial Masculinity and the American Council for Judaism in San Francisco," *American Studies* 54, no. 4 (2016): 49-71.

[66] For a more favourable discussion of the sort of politics represented by the *AJO*, embodied by Isaac Isaacs, see John Docker, *1492: The Poetics of Diaspora* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), 171-188. Despite on the surface there being little in common politically between the *AJO* perspective and a Jewish left analysis, there were a number of echoes, particularly in their scepticism of Zionism. By 1946, Isaac Isaacs was a weekly visitor to the JCCFAS offices, advising them on legal matters and adding his name to official approaches to government. Rabbi Raymond Apple, "Isaacs & Monash: The Jewish Connection," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 11, pt. 6 (1993): 985-999. According to Rothfield, Isaacs 'remained a staunch supporter until his death' in 1948. Rothfield, *Many Paths to Peace*, 21.

[67] See "Jewish Unity Association." for evidence of the different approaches of *The Voice* and *Unity*.

> reactionary forces who masquerade under the slogan "For God, for King and for Country".

This quote illustrates well the then apparent alignment between the aims of the Jewish antifascist left and the Zionist movement. Both needed to challenge the old established principles of a non-political Jewishness, figured as a private matter of religion, to further their political goals involving a transnational Jewish political consciousness.

The *AJO's* primary anxiety around Zionism was that it would lead to a dis-identification of Jews from a fundamental political and national loyalty to Australia and by extension the British empire. The *AJO* denied that 'the Australian Jew is a homeless or Stateless exile; it insists that Australian Jews, either born or naturalised, live in Australia as Australian citizens by right and not by sufferance, and must accept to the fullest degree the obligations of citizenship equally with all other Australians.'[68] The *AJO's* reference to 'exile' here was a response to the widespread Zionist notion of '*shelilat hagalut'* or 'negation of exile'.[69] Developed through the early twentieth century, this notion suggested that a diasporic or exilic existence of the Jewish people was no longer possible or desirable, and that a territorial concentration and a re-establishment of Jewish sovereignty was necessary to return the Jewish people to their full political and cultural potential. In a world situation defined by modern nationalisms, Jewish life in 'exile' was judged to be dangerous, distorting and unnecessary.[70]

Daniel H. Weiss has suggested that this Zionist concept of the 'negation of the *galut*' suffered from a misapprehension of the Jews' supposedly then exilic existence. Weiss defines the pre-modern rabbinical conception of *galut* as referring to a 'nation in exile', indicating: the politically bounded nature of a Jewish collectivity; its universal geography; lack of ties to any particular territory; and lack of ultimate political allegiance to the law or military defence of any nation where Jews were situated.[71] As

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[68] "The "Australian Jewish Outlook": Editorial Policy Outlined."

[69] Shalom Ratzaby, "The Polemic About the "Negation of the Diaspora" in the 1930s and Its Roots," *Journal of Israeli History* 16, no. 1 (1995): 19-38; Donna Robinson Divine, "Exiled in the Homeland," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 21, no. 2 (2003): 66-81; Arnold M. Eisen, *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflection on Homelessness and Homecoming* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986); *Diaspora: Exile and the Jewish Condition* (New York and London: Jason Aronson, 1983).

[70] Ratzaby, "Polemic About." See also Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile Within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the 'Negation of Exile' in Israeli Culture," *Theory and Criticism*, no. 4 and 5 (1993): 23-56, 113-132.

[71] Daniel H. Weiss, "A Nation without Borders?: Modern European Emancipation as Negation of Galut," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 34, no. 4 (2016): 72. This notion of nationhood does not imply a modern concept of nation as produced by modern nationalism. See also Amnon Raz-

suggested by the *AJO*, Weiss argues that the political rights bestowed upon Jews as individuals in modern Western nation-states had already in effect negated the situation of *galut*.[72] The 'negation of the *galut*' through the political emancipation of Jews was most famously phrased during the French Revolution as: 'The Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals.'[73] The *AJO* was in agreement with this formulation; for them the historical debate on the global place of the Jews was essentially done and dusted. They emphasised a 'non-political', religious version of Jewish identity and an ultimate and primary allegiance to Australia and the British empire.[74] Much to their chagrin, in the post-war period this subject became one of live debate.

The post-war Jewish community actively debated the political implications of various definitions of Jewishness. For the *AJO*, Jews were a non-politically defined religious group; for the Zionists and territorialists, Jews were a nation; for others, Jews were a racial group. As I explore below, for the Jewish antifascist left, Jewishness meant none of the above. In December 1947, the *AJO* featured a debate on how to define what Jewishness was. There were three major articles: 'The Case for the Racial Group' by David J. Benjamin; 'The Case for the National Group' by S. Stedman, the editor of the territorialist *Australian Jewish Forum*; and 'The Case for the Religious Group' by

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Krakotzkin, "Jewish Memory Between Exile and History," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 97, no. 4 (2007): 530-543. The premodern conception of Jewish exile runs counter to the Zionist conception of the 'negation of exile' as a return to history for the Jewish people. In Raz-Krakotzkin's rendering 'Exile refers to a state of absence, points to the imperfection of the world, and conserves the desire for its replacement. According to several authorities (mainly kabbalists), it describes the state of the deity—that is to say, God's exile from history. According to this Jewish viewpoint, the exilic existence was not outside history; rather, it embodied the very condition of history.' Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile, History, and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory: Some Reflections on the Zionist Notion of History and Return," *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3, no. 2 (2013): 40. Somewhat more sceptical about the critical resources to be regained from the exilic perspective, Julie E. Cooper emphasises that this pre-modern conception of a Jewish 'nation in exile' had as its concomitant an essential political passivity. Julie E. Cooper, "A Diasporic Critique of Diasporism: The Question of Jewish Political Agency," *Political Theory* 43, no. 1 (2015), 84-85. David Biale has contested this notion of Jewish political passivity in 'exile', suggesting instead a complex and disputed interpretation of 'exile' as well as varied histories of Jewish political power and participation in the pre-modern, post-Temple period. David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 34-117.

[72] Weiss, "A Nation without Borders?"

[73] Cited in ibid., 80. For a discussion of Jews and the French Revolution, see Maurice Samuels, *The Right to Difference: French Universalism and the Jews* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 17-49. For a discussion of Jewish emancipation and the emergence of modern antisemitism, see Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 85-111.

[74] The origins of this ideology lie with the maskilim of the Haskalah or Jewish Enlightenment who venerated the state, seeking to turn Jews into individual state citizens above all else. Biale, *Power and Powerlessness*, 98-117.

Phillip Masel.[75] Masel's opinion was reflective of the *AJO's* editorial line. He suggested that Jews could not be defined as a common race, as they have 'intermingled with all the other racial groups of the world' producing everything from 'Jews of essentially Nordic appearance' to 'communities of black Jews'. Masel disputed the argument that Jews in Palestine were building an all-encompassing Jewish nation, suggesting that they were in fact building a new type of nationality: '[j]ust as the Jew is different from the Israelite of the past, so the Israelite of the future will be different from the Jew of today. The Jew must be a member of the religious group; the Israelite of the future may or may not be.'[76] For Masel there was only one thing that marks the modern Jew as a Jew: 'It is solely his religious faith'.[77]

In Benjamin's definition race was not biological; he held that 'race does not depend entirely on descent'. Benjamin's very loose definition of race was not entirely distinct from the religious definition. He suggested that Judaism as a religion, coupled with a feeling of common descent and the inheritance of Judaism through the ages, made Jews into a race.[78] Unlike in the US, a Jewish discourse about a racial Jewishness was marginal in post-war Australia.[79] Stedman built his definition of Jews as a nation on the basis of a contemporary and historical assessment of the political self-definition and external treatment of Jews. He disputed a purely religious definition of Jewishness by pointing to the example of Jews living in *kibbutzim* in Palestine who, while not observing what was traditionally thought of as religious practice, were 'carrying into practice the very essence of the Jewish religion.' These collective farmers had come 'to Palestine with the sole intention of rebuilding the National status which has been trampled under foot by oppressors of Jewry.'[80]

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[75] David J. Benjamin, "The Case for the Racial Group," *Australian Jewish Outlook* 1, no. 8 (1947); Philip Masel, "The Case for the Religious Group," *Australian Jewish Outlook* 1, no. 8 (1947); S. Stedman, "The Case for the National Group," *Australian Jewish Outlook* 1, no. 8 (1947).
[76] Philip Masel, "The Case for the Religious Group."
[77] Ibid. For a discussion of the transformation of the idea of Judaism into a 'religion' rather than a political entity, see Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); David N. Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 24.
[78] Benjamin, "The Case for the Racial Group."
[79] Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 165-206.
[80] Stedman, "The Case for the National Group."

According to Stedman, the socialist Jewish Labour Bund too, despite being anti-Zionist, 'wish[ed] to assist the building of a new world as a national group.'[81] Stedman went on to claim that the Jews had been recognised by the Balfour Declaration and by Napoleon Bonaparte as a nation; and now the Soviet Union treated the Jews as a nation and assigned them their own territory and state (Birobidjan). Finally, Stedman suggested that what bound Jews together as a nation was 'our common history and culture, common suffering in the face of centuries-long persecution'. He claimed that the Holocaust had also occasioned a new sense of Jewish transnational political solidarity which reflected a turn towards a politics of Jewish nationhood.[82] Although Stedman's definition of a nation conflated a number of differing political definitions in an ahistorical manner, his view was reflective of an increasingly dominant Zionist historiography of Jewish nationhood.[83] Writing in *The Zionist*, Patkin (himself a historian) underlined a stark choice between assimilationism and Jewish nationalism. In his historical account, any resistance to assimilation, from the Haskalah [Jewish Enlightenment] onwards, was evidence of Jewish nationalism.[84]

Unity's intervention into this debate was a reprint from *New Life* of Hyman Levy's article 'What is a nation?' Levy, utilising a materialist analysis, suggested that Jews did not qualify as a nation, but nor could they be defined simply as a religious group.[85] Jews were dispersed throughout the world, he argued, and lived in a large variety of societies, cultures and economic systems:

> In spite of the common tradition and history, religious and secular, they tend naturally to adopt the customs and social habits of the people among whom they

[81] For a discussion of the 'nationalisation' of the Bund within Zionist historiography, see Roni Gechtman, "Nationalising the Bund? Zionist Historiography and the Jewish Labour Movement," *East European Jewish Affairs* 43, no. 3 (2013): 249-264. Gechtman suggests that Israeli historians have assimilated the ideology of the Bund into a proto-Zionism by painting the Bund's focus on 'national-cultural' autonomy as a form of Jewish nationalism. Gechtman argues that this account ignores the (pre-World War Two) Bund's consistent focus on international working-class struggle which rejected a notion of 'klal yisroel' (meaning the whole of the Jewish people or nation) along with a class-based rejection of Jewish nationalism and all bourgeois Jewish parties. See also Gertrud Pickhan, "Yiddishkayt and Class Consciousness: The Bund and Its Minority Concept," *East European Jewish Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2009): 258-259. I discuss the politics of the Bund later in this chapter.
[82] Stedman, "The Case for the National Group."
[83] See David N. Myers, "On the Idea of a Jewish Nation: Before and after Statism," *Perush* 1 (2009).
[84] This account was contained in a withering critique of the *AJO* as a 'medley of ignorance and treachery towards those who in this crucial hour of our history are at one with the people'. A. L. Patkin, "An "Australian Jewish Outlook"," *The Zionist*, June 1947.
[85] Levy's analysis of what constituted a nation was informed by Joseph Stalin's 1913 definition of a national group, see Joseph Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question," in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (Moscow: Co-operative Pub. Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1935), 3-53.

> live… There are many bonds of unity and sympathetic understanding, many cultural bonds of a traditional nature originating in past and in present history, but it would be the veriest of confusions to identify these with what is clearly a very different thing – the sense of national unity… There is, however, most definitely a sense of united consciousness among Jews, of unity of understanding, but to label this as a sense of national consciousness would be a violation of history and of common-sense… Those who, with blinkered vision, cannot see Jewry as other than single nation must wring their hands in despair as they witness [what they see as] the disintegration of Jewry everywhere throughout the world except in the particular spot where they imagine the true essence of nationhood is being preserved and developed. What they are, in fact, doing is to react in despair to the disintegration of their own narrow outlook on the growth and expansion of Jewry. Those, on the other hand, who are conscious both of unity and of diversity in Jewry can witness with delight the rich and varied forms in which this internationally distributed people express themselves in culture -; music, literature, art, and in language, contributing in a unique way to the pattern of civilisation and at the same time reflecting like many facets of a diamond of their own intrinsic beauty.[86]

Jewishness, in this rendering, was a historically determined, legitimate and important collective identity.[87] Its diasporic nature was a positive rather than a negative. The answer to antisemitism was not nationalism but to 'see that freedom and equality for Jewry come with freedom and equality for other oppressed people.'[88] This was an underlying philosophy of *Unity* and indeed the transnational Jewish antifascist left as a whole during this period. Levy's reference to 'the particular spot where they imagine the true essence of nationhood is being preserved and developed' is clearly a derisory reference to the Yishuv as the centre of a Jewish nation. In line with the Yishuvism of

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[86] Hyman Levy, "What Is a Nation?," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948). Levy expanded upon this in his 1958 booklet *Jews and the National Question* (London: Hillway Publishing Company, 1958). For a personal history of the British Jewish communist milieu of which Levy was a part, see Sasha Abramsky, *The House of Twenty Thousand Books* (London: Halban, 2014). Levy was apparently expelled from the CPGB as a result of publishing the 1958 booklet, see Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 318. For an Australian version of a non-nationalist history of the Jewish people which ultimately links the fate of Jews with 'the problems of the whole of humanity' in the fight for progress and democracy, see Evelyn Rothfield, *The Jewish People* (Melbourne: R.A.A.F. Educational Services, 1946). Rothfield's booklet was produced as a result of a request for such an account by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) to the JCCFAS.

[87] The Jewish left historical materialist account of Jewish history is set out comprehensively in a series of articles by Moses Miller published in *Jewish Life* disputing a nationalist (or religion based) Jewish historiography, see Moses Miller, "Zionism and the State of Israel : 1," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 7 (1949); "Zionism and the State of Israel : II," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 8 (1949); "Zionism and the State of Israel : III," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 9 (1949); "Zionism and the State of Israel : IV," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 10 (1949); "Zionism and the State of Israel : V," *Jewish Life* 3, no. 11 (1949). For Miller both a nationalist and a religious interpretation of Jewish history were founded on an idealist conception of a national or divine will as historical subject, discounting material factors. It should be noted the context for the publication of this series in 1949 was a growing repression of Zionist organisations in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as referenced above. For a more recent discussion of Zionist historiography, see David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[88] Hyman Levy, "A Letter to Jewish Intellectuals," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1948).

Rothfield in her 1947 incarnation, a politics of Jewish self-determination which upheld the importance of a unitary state, nation and territory was deemed wholly inadequate for the flourishing of an international diverse people. While Levy's article was a rejection of Jewish nationalism, it did not preclude a transnational, transhistorical identification or solidarity in line with a Jewish antifascist Popular Front politics as outlined in Chapter Two. Whilst the Jewish antifascist left rejected Jewish nationalism, they did not seek like the *AJO* to confirm a 'negation of the *galut*' via political assimilation in Western nation-states. Jewishness in their rendering had a strong political, rather than only cultural or religious, valence but it transcended an allegiance to particular nation-states or nationalist ideologies, including Australia, Israel and other figurings of Jewish nationalism.

'Nationalist and petty bourgeois in ideology and leadership': the antifascist Jewish left and the Bund

This anti-nationalist formulation that figured Jewish freedom as bound up in a more general struggle for social change and emancipation was not a new one. This was a fundamental philosophy of Jewish socialist parties in Europe in the early part of the twentieth century, most prominently the Jewish Labour Bund. The Bund, a mass Jewish working-class party, walked a difficult political line emphasising a politics of 'national-cultural autonomy' but with a firm opposition to nationalism per se.[89] The Bund developed a sophisticated political position which, like the federalists, ran counter to the doctrine of nation-state self-determination. They advocated for a level of Jewish cultural autonomy that would extend to all Jews across Russia (and subsequently Poland), whilst seeing their struggle as inextricable from the broader struggles of the working class to achieve a socialist society. They saw their allies as the non-Jewish working-class socialist movement, whilst the Zionist and Jewish bourgeois parties were their sworn

[89] The 'national' in this case did not refer to all Jews constituting a nation but to the historically determined case of Yiddish-speaking Russian and Eastern European Jews who constituted a particular cultural-linguistic group, see Roni Gechtman, "Jews and Non-Territorial Autonomy: Political Programmes and Historical Perspectives," *Ethnopolitics* 15, no. 1 (2016): 72-77; Roni Gechtman, "National-Cultural Autonomy and 'Neutralism': Vladimir Medem's Marxist Analysis of the National Question, 1903-1920," *Socialist Studies* 3, no. 1 (2007): 75-77.

enemies.[90] They rejected the idea of a Jewish national solidarity that would cut across class lines.[91] Nation, state and territory were thus entirely discontinuous in this political vision of working-class Jewish emancipation. Despite their socialism, Bund demands for autonomy within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and a limited Jewish cultural autonomy under a future workers' government were forcibly rejected by the Bolsheviks as reflecting a bourgeois nationalism or separatism.[92]

Following World War One and the Russian Revolution, the Bund reconstituted in Poland and became a powerful political and cultural force.[93] From the early 1920s onwards, the Polish Bund were thoroughly opposed to the communists and the Soviet Union.[94] During World War Two there were some signs of a rapprochement between the Bund and the Soviet Union, but this did not last long. Victor Alter and Henryk Erlich, two prominent leaders of the Bund were in the midst of talks with Soviet authorities to establish an 'all-world anti-Hitlerite Jewish committee' when they were arrested at the end of 1941 and subsequently murdered by their supposed new allies.[95] This cemented the intense enmity between Bundists and communists internationally, including in Australia.[96]

As David Slucki and Clare Fester have demonstrated, by the end of World War Two, as the Bund became more active in Melbourne, one of their main political priorities was combating communism.[97] I explore the clashes between the Jewish antifascist left and the Bund further in Chapter Four. For now, we can note that despite on paper the pro-Soviet Jewish antifascist left and the Bund having a similar outlook for Jewish politics, in practice they were stridently opposed to each other. Their stances towards the

[90] Pickhan, "Yiddishkayt and Class Consciousness," 255-259; Mario Kessler, "The Bund and the Labour and Socialist International," in *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: The Bund at 100,* ed. Jack Jacobs (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001).
[91] Pickhan, "Yiddishkayt and Class Consciousness," 258-259; Roni Gechtman, "Nationalising the Bund?"
[92] For an account of this political clash, see Gechtman, "A 'Museum of Bad Taste'?"; Yoav Peled, "Lenin on the Jewish Question: The Theoretical Setting," *Political Studies* 35 (1987): 61-78.
[93] Jack Jacobs, *Bundist Counterculture in Interwar Poland* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009).
[94] Gechtman, "A 'Museum of Bad Taste'?," 64.
[95] Isabelle Tombs, "Erlich and Alter, 'the Sacco and Vanzetti of the USSR': An Episode in the Wartime History of International Socialism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 23, no. 4 (1988): 531-549. Shimon Redlich, "The Erlich-Alter Affair," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 9, no. 2 (1979): 24-45.
[96] The Bund in Australia was given assistance by Arthur Calwell in publicising the murders of Erlich and Alter. Slucki, *International Jewish Labor Bund*, 140.
[97] Ibid., 157-158. Clare Fester, "Migrant Politics and the New Australians Council, 1955-59" (Monash University, 2013), 27-42. The two factions previously had an uneasy alliance, see Slucki, *The International Jewish Labor Bund after 1945*, 140.

Communist Party and communism more generally gave them very different political priorities. The Jewish antifascist left was very happy to work with the peace movement, left churches and trade unions, and left writers and artists during this period. A large portion of these allies were in some way affiliated with the Communist Party or were at least to some extent fellow travellers.[98] These affiliations precluded the Bund from making the same connections. They found their allies on the centre and right of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), drawing them deeper into an anti-communist politics and establishing a primary political allegiance to the ALP.[99]

The Australian Jewish antifascist left for their part did not acknowledge any influence of Bundist thought on their own. This was likely the result of two factors: Firstly, the real history of the Bundist movement and their politics was likely obscured through its interpretation in communist dogma. *Jewish Life* for instance, curtly dismissed the Bund in 1948 as 'nationalist and petty bourgeois in ideology and leadership.'[100] Secondly, in the post-war world the Melbourne Bund were known in the Jewish community for their emphasis on anti-communist politics as well as a certain dogmatic clannishness. The Bund, as a forceful and organised Jewish political party pushing their own particular politics and quite unconcerned with Jewish 'unity', were viewed with horror in polite Jewish society.[101] The JCCFAS, along with other Jewish leaders, blocked their communal affiliation for many years.[102] In sum, despite there being formal similarities between the philosophies of the two Jewish left groupings, in post-war Australia their politics were put into practice in very different ways. While as we saw in the last chapter, the Jewish antifascist left proffered a critical analysis of the classed nature of Australian society, on the whole they were less likely to highlight class divisions in Australian Jewish communities than the Bundists (this was likely tied to their own varied class composition; not an insignificant number of pro-Soviet Jewish antifascist left activists were also successful business owners).[103] Though as Slucki suggests, the

[98] See Chapter Four of this thesis.
[99] For an account of these dynamics, see Fester, "Migrant Politics."; Slucki, *International Jewish Labor Bund*, 151-159; David Rechter, "Beyond the Pale: Jewish Communism in Melbourne," (University of Melbourne, 1986), 148-149.
[100] Morris U. Schappes, "Resistance Is the Lesson," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 6 (1948).
[101] A. Shulman, "The Melbourne Bund - A Skit," *Australian Jewish Forum* 6, no. 44 (1946). Also see the incident at the Kadimah as outlined in Chapter Four.
[102] Slucki, *International Jewish Labor Bund*, 148.
[103] Sam Goldbloom, interview by Suzanne Rutland, 12 April 1988, State Library of New South Wales, Suzanne Rutland collection, CY MLOH 437/135; Rothfield, *Many Paths to Peace*; Itzhak Gust, *Such Was Life: A Jumping Narrative from Radom to Melbourne* (Caulfield South, VIC: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004).

generalised upward class mobility of the Jewish community in the 50s also meant the Bund significantly tempered its previous class rhetoric.[104] Apart from anti-communism, the Bund's other major focus in Australia, reflective of their vision in Europe, was the promotion of Yiddish language and culture as an essential part of their vision of Jewishness.[105] As I explore below, while the Jewish antifascist left were also proponents of Yiddish culture, their cultural vision was wider in scope.

Jewish culture, diasporism and multilingualism

While Australian Jewish cultural institutions such as the Kadimah had existed for many decades, the 1940s saw a flowering of Jewish politics, arts and debate.[106] This decade saw a conscious effort to create Jewish 'culture', as something to be consumed, discussed and produced. Magazines such as the *Australian Jewish Forum*, *Unity*, *The Zionist* and even the *AJO* (which despite its religious definition of Jews, also highlighted Jewish 'cultural' products) were evidence of both a robust political debate but also an attempt to search out and define and create Jewish arts and literatures that transcended a solely religious criterion of Jewishness. Despite their political differences, all these magazines had common cause and commitment to debating and defining Jewish culture and politics.

As discussed in the previous two chapters, a key impetus for these changes was a new transnational Jewish solidarity occasioned by the Holocaust. As we have seen, a major component of this was a literature of the Holocaust which was written and circulated through Jewish communities worldwide. The flourishing of Jewish 'culture' was also occasioned by the transformation of Australian Jewish communities by pre-war German and Austrian refugees and post-war Holocaust survivors. As noted by Richard Haese, the background of many refugee families meant they had 'brought with them an appreciation of art and a cultural breadth rare anywhere in Australia.'[107] This brought them into close contact with Australian artists and writers keen for both an appreciation

[104] Slucki, *International Jewish Labor Bund*, 165-167.
[105] Ibid., 144-145.
[106] Susan Bach, "The Kadimah: 1911-1961," (Monash University, 1979).
[107] Richard Haese, *Modern Australian Art* (New York: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1982), 235.

of high culture and European spurs to cultural innovation. In addition, as evidenced by *Unity's* overseas relationships, closer connections to international Jewish communities, particularly those in the UK and the US, led to increased literary and artistic production. As noted by Emily Alice Katz, the heightened role of and appreciation of Jewish 'culture' in the context of the US echoed a general post-war 'culture' boom occasioned by the rise of mass cultures of consumption, increased wealth and leisure time and an increase in the levels of higher education.[108] As in the US, many Jews in Australia were well positioned to ride this post-war economic boom, particularly through their roles in the clothing industry and their enthusiastic embrace of professional roles through higher education.[109]

This 'culture' boom was embraced by the Jewish left who saw the emergence and shaping of Jewish 'culture' as a key aspect of their political vision. Unlike the relatively overt (though often internally contested), outlining of a progressive Jewish culture by *New Life* and *Jewish Life*, *Unity* did not proffer an explicit progressive Jewish cultural project. As I discuss further in Chapter Six, it was the younger Jewish antifascists, mostly Communist Party members who formed the leadership of the Kadimah Youth Organisation (KYO) and the Jewish Council youth section, who were more successful in prioritising and creating progressive Jewish cultural expression. *Unity* often seemed to celebrate Jewish culture qua Jewish culture, but a closer look reveals an often implicit ideal of Jewish culture as diasporic, multilingual and multicultural. Like *New Life* and *Jewish Life* (as outlined in the previous chapter), *Unity* refused to hierarchise types of Jewishness and rejected a crude Jewish nationalism which tied Jewish culture inextricably to a certain language. We can see these implicit ideals emerge more clearly through an examination of *Unity's* approaches to Hebrew and Yiddish.

As discussed above, since the 1930s the Zionist movement with its associated Hebraism was in the ascendant in Australia. By the late 1940s the movement was coming to

[108] Emily Alice Katz, *Bringing Zion Home: Israel in American Jewish Culture, 1948-1967* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 13-16.
[109] Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Rose Bay: Brandl & Schlesinger 1997), 259-273; Medding, *Assimilation to Group Survival*, 18-26. Although it covers an earlier period Adam Mendelsohn's book is a compelling analysis of how Jewish economic fortunes have been tied to the clothing business internationally. Adam Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York: New York University, 2015).

dominate a majority of spheres of Jewish life.[110] In an article translated for *Unity's* second issue, Pinchas Goldhar, a non-Zionist, outlined a comprehensive critique of the way Zionism was advanced in Australia:

> With them it is merely a matter by which to facilitate the process of assimilation, to have ready access to the melting-pot as a minority with the status of an own homeland like all other minorities… That is the reason why Zionism here is so bereft of spirit, without any Jewish verve. And the whole work of the Jewish Zionist movement is concentrated exclusively around money-collecting activities.[111]

Goldhar contrasted this mode of Zionist activism negatively with how it was practiced before the war in Eastern Europe, where there was a focus on promoting Hebrew language and culture. He suggested that ultimately Zionism was not capable of combating antisemitism and bringing respect for Jewish culture and values. This was because of its conception of the '"negation of the *Galut*," with its empty relation to everything in Jewish life outside Eretz Israel, and with its negative attitude to Yiddish and all cultural and social achievements of the Jewish communities in the dispersion'.[112] In Goldhar's rendering, Zionism promoted only one mode of idealised Jewishness, disparaging other Jewish traditions, cultures and modes of living.

The three-sided battle between English, Hebrew and Yiddish was a subject of lively and impassioned debate during this period, representing in many ways a debate over the projected future for Jewishness in Australia.[113] One important flashpoint for this debate was the establishment of Mt Scopus Memorial College in 1949 in Melbourne, the first co-educational Jewish day school in Australia. An editorial from *The Zionist* in August-September 1948 made clear the prevailing Zionist sentiment. The occasion for the editorial was a vote of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (VJBD) carried by an

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[110] For instance, see M. Kusher, "The Jewish Cultural Conference: Critical Comments," *Australian Jewish Forum* 8, no. 71 (1948).
[111] Pinchas Goldhar, "Jewish Antisemitism," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948).
[112] Ibid.
[113] There is a long history of Jewish campaigns against Yiddish. After the *maskilim* of the Jewish enlightenment, these campaigns were taken up by the Zionists. Dovid Katz, *Words on Fire: The Unfinished Story of Yiddish* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 176-186, 232-238. For an examination of both the importance of language to the ideology of Zionism along with a history that contradicts that ideology in Palestine, see Yael Chaver, *What Must Be Forgotten: The Survival of Yiddish in Zionist Palestine* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004); Liora R. Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920-1948* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

'overwhelming majority' to exclude Yiddish from the compulsory part of the curriculum of the new school, while including Hebrew.[114] In *The Zionist's* rendering:

> Yiddish lost its importance in our daily life both through linguistic assimilation of East European immigrants in English-speaking countries, and through the physical annihilation of East European Jewry. Hebrew, on the one hand, became the official language of the nation … [and] the living language of the Jews residing in our spiritual, cultural and political centre. Yiddish, on the other hand, becomes more and more a matter of sentiment.[115]

This point of view represented a typical argument for the Zion-isation of Jewish communities worldwide. Such a view is echoed through to today, with one example provided by this chapter's epigraph. In this rendering, Jewish communities outside of Israel can only be secondary and in the service of Israel as the idealised centre of Jewish life.[116]

Unity was not anti-Hebrew or opposed to Hebraic literature and culture. In November 1949, it ran an article celebrating the tenth anniversary of the 'Sifriat Hapoalim' publishing house. [117] This publishing house in Palestine was created by the socialist Zionist movement Hashomer Hatzair. As well as publishing a wide array of literary and scientific works, it was well known for publishing Marx and Engels, Lenin and other important Marxist works in Hebrew. The article ended with the confident statement that 'Sifriat Hapoalim' will continue to develop a 'genuine and progressive modern Hebrew

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[114] For a rather partisan history of Mt Scopus during this period, see Benzion Patkin, *Heritage and Tradition: The Emergence of Mount Scopus College* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1972). Benzion Patkin was the nephew of Aaron Patkin and the driving force behind Mt Scopus' establishment. There were differing views within the JCCFAS on the establishment of Mt Scopus. Norman Rothfield and the majority of the council were opposed whereas Walter Lippmann was in favour and Joseph Redapple became the school's first treasurer. Ibid., 106-116.

[115] "Editorial - Yiddish in the Day School," *The Zionist,* August-September (1948). For a rather damning assessment of the treatment of Yiddish at Mount Scopus in the mid-1950s, see Yavkev Pat, "How Jews Live in Australia (Impressions from a Visit in 1956)," in *Third Australian Yiddish Almanac Melbourne* (Melbourne: Jewish Cultural Centre & National Library "Kadimah", 1967). English translation by Reyzl Zylberman available at http://future.arts.monash.edu/yiddish-melbourne/download/--documents/almanac-3-how-jews-live-in-australia.pdf . For more on the political travails of Yiddish in Melbourne from a Bundist perspective, see Sender Burstin, *Yiddish Melbourne Observed: Memoirs and Commentaries of a Dedicated Yiddishist and Bundist*, trans. Ben Burstin and David Burstin (Caulfield East: Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, 2013). For the point of view of the Zionist leadership of the school on Yiddish, see Patkin, *Heritage and Tradition*, 134-136, 173-176. For a more general overview of Yiddish in Melbourne, see Andrew Markus and Danielle Charak, eds., *Yiddish Melbourne: Towards a History* (Melbourne: Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, 2008).

[116] For a critical exploration of the ideological role of Zionism in the context of Holocaust education in Jewish schools, see Jordana Silverstein, *Anxious Histories: Narrating the Holocaust in Jewish Communities at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015), 99-131. For a critical history of Australian Zionism and the Australian Jewish relationship with Israel, see Barbara Bloch, "Unsettling Zionism: Diasporic Consciousness & Australian Jewish Identities" (University of Western Sydney, 2005), 120-190.

[117] "Great Cultural Institution in Israel," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1949).

culture.'[118] Hebrew culture here was not figured as a teleological goal for Jewishness, instead it was imagined as part of a broader progressive socialist project.

A piece published in *Unity* titled 'The Yid and the Hebrew' by the author David Martin further illustrates this point.[119] Martin takes Arthur Koestler's exaltation of the 'Hebrew' as opposed to the 'Yid' as his starting point.[120] He suggested that Koestler employed the term 'Yid' as would an antisemite to denote a passive 'grovelling individual', whereas he used the term 'Hebrew' to denote a 'modern Maccabean'. Koestler sought to drive a wedge between the two. Martin suggested that Koestler made two mistakes: firstly, he did not see 'how much the Hebrew is, in fact, a Yid'; secondly, he had a 'fundamentally reactionary conception of Heroism'. Martin suggested that much of Hebrew culture in Israel was heavily indebted to and interconnected with Yiddish culture.[121] The division between the 'diasporic Jew' and the 'New Hebrew' was much overstated by a Zionist narrative.[122] There was no necessary contradiction between the two languages or two cultures. In Martin's progressive internationalist framework, a 'Hero' was not a thing 'isolated in an unheroic world' which needs 'the baseness of others to appear glorious'. Instead Martin pointed to the heroism of those in the Spanish Civil war, suggesting from his own experience that '[i]n the trenches before Madrid you could hear Yiddish and Hebrew spoken in one and the same company of the International Brigade' — an example par excellence of Jewish multilingual antifascism.[123]

Despite *Unity* being an English language magazine Yiddish held a special place in its implicit cultural vision. Yiddish was spoken by many of the contributors, including the

[118] Ibid.
[119] David Martin, "The Yid and the Hebrew," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1949). David Martin joined *Unity's* editorial board on his arrival in Australia, having been a former literary editor for *New Life*.
[120] Koestler was something of a bête noire of the Jewish left internationally, see A.B. Magil, "Koestler's Evil Journey," *Jewish Life* 4, no. 4 (1950).
[121] For an elaboration on this theme in the interwar period, see Naomi Brenner, *Lingering Bilingualism: Modern Hebrew & Yiddish Literatures in Contact* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2016).
[122] Chaver, *What Must Be Forgotten*. For a discussion of the sexual politics of the ideological conflict between Yiddish and Hebrew, see Naomi Seidman, *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). See also Ronit Lentin, "A Yiddishe Mame Desperately Seeking a Mame Loshn: Toward a Theory of the Feminisation of Stigma in the Relations between Israelis and Holocaust Survivors," *Women's Studies International Forum* 19, no. 1/2 (1996): 87-97.
[123] Martin, "The Yid and the Hebrew."

editor Hyam Brezniak who had a life-long passion for Yiddish literature and poetry.[124] *Unity* had a focus on reviewing, translating and promoting both local and international Yiddish literature and culture.[125] Judah Waten, one of the key translators of Australian Yiddish literature into English, wrote an article for *Unity* in 1948 on 'Yiddish Literature in Australia' which was something of a programmatic statement. He suggested that the new Yiddish literature in countries such as the US, Argentina and Australia:

> has been an expression of the continuation in other lands of the culture of the home countries. But a living literature must not remain static: it must adapt itself to the new environment if it is to survive. In Australia, Yiddish has as yet been the only vehicle through which the Jew has expressed the deepest feelings and aspirations of his people.[126]

Waten went on to describe the class nature and anti-assimilationist quality of this literature: '[t]he Yiddish writers have painted the life of the Jewish people without capitulating to the so called superior culture of the ruling classes of their adopted country.' In other words, a living Australian Yiddish literature was a part of a progressive internationalist, cultural pluralist vision. As such, *Unity* was not just a venue for the translation of Yiddish into English, it also covered the reverse. Goldhar had a keen interest in bringing Yiddish culture and progressive Australian literature into conversation, writing a long article on 'Australian Literature', notably translated from the Yiddish by Nita Bluthal and Stephen Murray-Smith for publication in *Unity*.[127] Goldhar had also translated Australian authors such as Henry Lawson, Vance Palmer and Katherine S. Prichard into Yiddish.[128]

Indicative of the importance of Yiddish culture to the Jewish left at this time and their embrace of a multilingual model of Jewish culture was a review by George Berger of a book called *Royte Pomerantsen*, a selection of classic Yiddish humour, written in

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[124] Hyam Brezniak, interview by Hazel de Berg, 29 April, 1975, National Library of Australia, Hazel de Berg collection.
[125] Dr. Joachim Schneeweiss, "Whither the Yiddish Theatre," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 3 (1949); Pinchas Goldhar, "The Funeral," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1949); Hertz Bergner, "Yosel Birzstein's First Book of Poetry," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1949). This was especially the case with Holocaust accounts and memoirs, as discussed in Chapter One. For a larger account of transnational Yiddish literature during this period, see Jan Schwarz, *Survivors and Exiles: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015).
[126] Judah L. Waten, "Yiddish Literature in Australia," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 3 (1948).
[127] More on this in Chapter Five.
[128] "Book Review: Goldhar's Collected Works," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1950).

Yiddish but transliterated into the roman alphabet.[129] For Berger, having a transliterated version of this book meant that the formal qualities of the language and the way it was told were preserved while making it accessible to those who were not educated in the Hebrew aleph-bet or the Yiddish alef-beys but could understand spoken Yiddish 'quite well'. Berger suggested that the book 'can also be more than a selection of Jewish humour to many of us; it is a splendid text-book for improving one's knowledge of Yiddish.'[130] Berger's interest in Yiddish was replicated by other German speaking refugees in Australia, particularly those associated with the Jewish left milieu.[131] As discussed in Chapter One, this interest in Yiddish culture from German and Austrian Jews represented a post-Holocaust revaluation of the worth of Eastern European Jewish cultures.

Despite their general enthusiasm for the diversity and importance of Yiddish culture, this strand of the Jewish left were not Yiddishists.[132] For them Yiddish was not essential to a Jewish culture, nor was it sacred, unique or untranslatable.[133] In an article reprinted in *Unity* from *New Life* titled 'Words and the Tricks They Play', 'L. Chaim' the pseudonymous author suggested that:

> There is a magic in words because they are more than a mere combination of letters. They drag in their train a whole history of a people, and this is especially true of Yiddish, which has grown and thrived not only by expressing the feeling and memory of past traditions but by absorbing within its vocabulary, words and phrases from all the environments in which the Jews have settled for several centuries past. These absorptions have enriched the language and made it

[129] George Berger, "Book Review: An Unusual Monument to an Unusual People," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no.1 (1949).
[130] Ibid.
[131] Alfred Ruskin, "The Melbourne Scene," in *Community of Fate: Memoirs of German Jews in Melbourne*, ed. John Foster (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 103; Robert Exiner, "From the Spree to the Yarra: Memories of an Emigration," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 12, pt. 3 (1994): 536-558. German Jews speaking Yiddish in Melbourne are also featured in Pinchas Goldhar, "Café in Carlton," in *Southern Stories, Poems and Paintings* (Melbourne: Dolphin Publications, 1945). The interest in Yiddish, as not just culturally but politically important was echoed in a review of a new textbook by Morris Schappes in *Jewish Life*: 'Now of course Yiddish is a language, and the fight for respect for that language is part of the struggle for the equality of the Jewish people, and therefore is part of the class struggle'. Morris U. Schappes, "Yiddish Grammar in English," *Jewish Life* 4, no. 2 (1949).
[132] Goldhar is the Yiddishist exception here, see Pam Maclean, "'Jewish Life Appears to be Frozen, Static, Like a Puppet Play': Pinchas Goldhar's Struggle for Yiddish Cultural Authenticity in Australia," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 23, pt. 3 (2017): 491-500. For a partial history of Yiddishism as a cultural-political movement, see Katz, 264-278. See also Cecile Esther Kuznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[133] See Frances Butwin, "Book Review: A New Translation of Peretz," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 3 (1948).

> infinitely susceptible of expressing shades and varieties of meaning without which it would have been just a dialect of German.[134]

This was an articulation of Yiddish not as a component of national separatism, but as reflecting a history of relatedness and interconnectedness.[135] Although celebrating Yiddish language and culture, as we saw above, Waten too did not see Yiddish as essential to a dynamic ongoing Jewish culture. He stated:

> it is not to be concluded that Jewish literature in Australia will always find expression in the Yiddish language. As English becomes the language of Jewish people of the second and third generations, it is probable that there will arise an Australian Jewish literature in English… It is certain that the work of Jewish writers in English will be profoundly influenced by the work of Yiddish writers in Australia.[136]

This was indicative of the transnational Jewish left's cultural outlook which validated and encouraged Jewish cultures 'created in Yiddish, Hebrew or, for that matter, in any other language and in any land where Jews live and work.'[137]

Waten's notion of a Jewish literature in English was evidence of a cultural and political optimism. In this rendering, an ongoing Jewish culture, as in Mushin's projection of an ongoing Jewish politics, did not require: a separate Jewish language as in Yiddishism or Zionism; a separate national self-conception tied to a separate state as in Zionism; or a separate territory as in territorialism, Zionism and for that matter Birobidjan. An ongoing Jewish politics and culture could be forged through a continued struggle against antisemitism and racial oppression along with other oppressed groups and progressive forces in society. Far from being an endorsement of assimilationism, Waten's formulation suggested the dynamic futurity of diasporic Jewish politics and cultures formed in relationships with other languages, cultures and peoples.

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[134] L. Chaim, "Words and the Tricks They Play," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1948).
[135] In the same issue of *New Life* as the original article was printed was an article by J.B. Jackson which defended Yiddish as a living language and culture that was, on the whole, politically progressive. However, Jackson clarified: 'Let it not be thought that we are advocating anything in the nature of a "Back to Yiddish" movement, as if Jewish culture in its widest sense is only to be regarded as such if it expresses itself in the Yiddish language. Jews in England or in the US are an integral part of the life of their countries, and will remain so. They make their contribution to English and American culture. But at the same time they are, as Jews, contributing in a special way to that Jewish culture which must be regarded as the total sum of the cultural achievements of individual Jewish communities in many lands and many languages. Not "Back to Yiddish" but let's not turn our back to Yiddish, where it still lives!' J.B. Jackson, "Yiddish," *New Life* 1, no. 2 (1947).
[136] Waten, "Yiddish Literature in Australia."
[137] J.B. Jackson, "A Matter of Importance: A Reply to Mr Koenig," *New Life* 1, no. 6 (1947).

While *Unity* represented a Popular Front turn to a left-wing vision of a Jewish culture and consciousness that could be expressed in 'non-Jewish' languages, it did not seek to denigrate or replace Jewish languages. Yiddish was a living Jewish language and an important aspect of Jewish culture as was modern Hebrew. In line with an emerging multiculturalism and multilingualism in the Jewish community, *Unity* advanced an implicitly cultural pluralist ideology within a framework of progressive internationalism.[138] This internal Jewish multiculturalism which entailed a cultural revaluation in light of the Holocaust and a continuing struggle against antisemitism was a concomitant of a wider anti-assimilationist, non-nationalist Jewish left politics.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have continued to trace the politics and philosophy of the Australian Jewish antifascist left in the immediate post-war period. The previous chapter was concerned with outlining the Jewish antifascist left's response to antisemitism, relationship to communism and its critique of an assimilationist, class divided society. This chapter focused on how the Jewish antifascist left interacted with and differentiated itself from the major contemporaneous political currents in the Jewish world, with a major focus on Zionism. The Jewish antifascist left strove to create a non-nationalist Jewish political subjectivity that embraced and validated the dynamic futurity and diversity of Jewish diasporic communities. One of the main features of this subjectivity was its essential alliance with non-Jews. This meant a rejection of Jewish liberation figured through Jewish nationalism. It also meant a cultural vision which embraced a multilingual model of Jewish culture that was formed in relationship with both international Jewish cultures and non-Jewish cultures.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Jewish antifascist left movement developed a critical theory of antisemitism as related to the wider political and economic structures of Western societies. In this chapter we have seen how they proffered a non-assimilationist, non-nationalist Jewish politics. I suggest however that the international

[138] For a brief personal account of the then emerging multiculturalism within the Jewish community, see Miriam Kuna, "Castles in Caulfield," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 16, pt. 3 (2002): 317-318.

Jewish antifascist left's embrace of 'unity' politics meant that it was susceptible to the uncritical reproduction of Zionist ideology, presenting no significant challenge to an envisioning of the Yishuv's struggle as anti-imperialist in the lead up to 1948. In the Australian case this meant there was no basis for a sustained and coherent challenge to Zionism in the period immediately following this, despite Israel's growing position as an ally of Western imperialism. I have suggested that it was the settler colonial nature of the Zionist enterprise, as a project of eliminationist dispossession, that generated a mystificatory ideology where intra-Jewish solidarity seemingly trumped anti-racist principles.

Such an analysis may be more useful than two other ways of looking at the Jewish antifascist left's support for the dispossession of Palestinians: that it was an inconsistency in their principles, a sort of realpolitik and emotional blind spot in an otherwise salutary global anti-colonial ideology; or that it was in fact part and parcel of an ideology that while pretending to universal application, primarily privileged the foreign policy imperatives of the Soviet Union, and secondarily privileged Jewish (figured as European) struggles. My analysis suggests that though both of these angles contain an element of truth, tacking too closely to either side obscures our historical vision. To delve further into these questions in the next three chapters I turn to an analysis of the Australian political and cultural context and explore how the Jewish left positioned itself within Australian nationalism and its settler colonial imaginary.

Chapter Four: The Anti-German Migration Campaign and the Fall of the Jewish Antifascist Left

FLIP: It's Nazis we're talking about, not Germans.

Laurence Collinson, 'Traitor Silence'[1]

MATTHEW: My main interest is the good reputation of the Jewish community.
SIM: On what does this good reputation depend?
MATTHEW: Silence.

Laurence Collinson, 'Traitor Silence'[2]

On February 26th 1951, on a warm summer's night, over 2,500 people crammed into the Sydney Town Hall, a venue supposed to hold only 2,000 people. Inside the Hall, before the meeting began, the crowd chanted 'we want Evatt, we want peace'. Outside the Hall over 1,000 people clamoured to get into the packed meeting. As the police barred the entranceway, those outside, according to various reports, were regaled with a version of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' by a woman in a negligee from the fourth-floor window of a nearby hotel. As the crowd banged on the doors the woman switched to a rendition of 'O Come All Ye Faithful'.[3]

Whether the woman was meaning to encourage the crowd, dissuade them or antagonise them is unknown but her choice of songs remains highly ironic as most of the crowd were not in fact Christian, but Jewish. Most of them were, in the parlance of the time, 'New Australians': immigrants who had arrived in the 1930s as refugees from Nazi Germany or post-war migrants escaping a devastated Europe.[4] The 'Evatt' the crowd

[1] Laurence Collinson, "Traitor Silence," (The Hanger Collection of Australian Playscripts, University of Queensland Library, ca. 1953), 6.
[2] Ibid., 28.
[3] "Lively Scene at Meeting: Protest against German Migrants," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 February 1951; "Evatt's Huge Sydney Rally," *The Argus*, 27 February 1951; "6000 Flock to Meeting," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 2 March 1951.
[4] "Lively Scene at Meeting: Protest against German Migrants." In contrast to the Germans who were being offered assisted passage, Jewish Holocaust survivors in the post-war period had to pay their own way and were sponsored by Jewish community organisations in Australia. Very few were accepted

were chanting for was H.V. Evatt, soon to become the leader of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and the most prominent supporter of the Anti-German Migration Campaign (AGMC).[5] The public meeting at the Sydney Town Hall was the culmination of months of protest and agitation aimed at preventing a migration deal between Prime Minister Robert Menzies' government and West Germany which would see tens of thousands of non-Jewish Germans come to Australia. As other historians have noted, what is striking about this campaign is that it was the first time the Jewish community had organised publicly against Australian government policy.[6] This was at a time when Jews were in a precarious position within Australian society. Australian antisemitism was at a high point in the late 1940s and Australia's official immigration policies were still based on racial hierarchies. Immigration was restricted for Jews up until the early 1950s.[7]

This chapter examines the Anti-German Migration Campaign (AGMC) of 1950-1952, in particular the role of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS). It outlines the background and context of the campaign and argues that it was informed by a transnationally constituted Jewish antifascist political imagination. This transnational imagination was informed principally by an intense post-Holocaust engagement with European and particularly German politics. This engagement was mediated through the political memory and experience of recent migrants; through the influence of international organisations; and through the Jewish press. In the AGMC, a distinctive Jewish political subject position was forged in the context of an ambivalent positioning of Jews within a changing racial landscape. By virtue of the widespread popular antifascism after World War Two, the Jewish left had achieved a hegemonic position within the Jewish community. The AGMC was a campaign driven, especially in Melbourne, by a left analysis of fascism and antisemitism. The end of the AGMC was interrelated to the challenging of this antifascist left hegemony. My analysis of the contested nature of the politics of the campaign reveals deeper tensions, conflict and

through the DP program. For details on Jewish migration to Australia during this period, see Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney, NSW: Collins Australia, 1988), 174-256.

[5] After Ben Chifley died Evatt became ALP leader on June 20 1951.

[6] Philip Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists Down Under," *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 119 (2002): 73-92; Suzanne Rutland and Sophie Caplan, *With One Voice: A History of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies* (Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1998), 55.

[7] Suzanne Rutland, "Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria: A Case of Racial or Religious Bigotry?," *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no. 77 (2003): 69-79.

contradictions within Australian Jewish discourse over Australian nationalism, Jewish nationalism and political assimilationism.

'A real contribution to the spread of justice and good will in the world': the political context of the AGMC

In response to a serious labour shortage after World War Two the Australian government established a mass migration scheme from Europe.[8] There was also a strong settler colonial imperative to the scheme. An editorial from the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1950 made an explicit comparison between the contemporary era and 'the early days of colonial settlement', stating: 'if we are to have moral right and the means to hold this continent, we must people it and make full use of its resources'.[9] Although there was a strong government preference for British migrants, a serious shipping shortage after the war and a lack of willing migrants, made large-scale migration from Britain impossible.[10] In 1947, the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, took the opportunity to take migrants from the Displaced Persons (DP) camps of Europe.[11] By 1950, the Immigration Department had an annual target of 200,000 migrants. The Secretary of the Department, Tasman Heyes, referring to the urgent need to populate Australia, described this as 'our survival target'.[12] However, by 1950 the International Refugee Organisation, which had run the DP camps and had organised for the migration of millions, was starting to wind up its operations. The Australian government needed to look for new sources of migrants to fill its ambitious quota.[13]

The post-war migration program was always framed by the Cold War. The program was sold to the Australian public with the idea that Australia needed to 'populate or perish', intimating strongly that Australia risked invasion from non-white and/or communist forces to the north if the population did not grow and economically develop.[14] The post-

[8] Andrew Markus, "Labour and Immigration 1946-9: The Displaced Persons Program," *Labour History*, no. 47 (1984): 73-74.
[9] "Successful Migration Means Nation-Wide Effort," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 April 1950.
[10] Markus, "Labour and Immigration," 75-79.
[11] Ibid. See also Jayne Persian, *Beautiful Balts: From Displaced Persons to New Australians* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2017).
[12] NAA: A434, 1950/3/45637, "Memorandum for the Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department from T.H. Heyes, 20 April 1951."
[13] Ibid.
[14] For example, see "Calwell: Populate or Perish," *The Daily News*, 18 June 1948.

war migration program, in particular the scheme for DPs, was heavily biased in favour of right-wing and anti-communist migrants and against communist and left-wing migrants.[15] Jews were also discriminated against in this scheme.[16] When the Nazis were defeated at the end of World War Two, an estimated twelve million ethnic Germans or *Volksdeutsche* fled or were forced to leave their former homes in Eastern Europe and migrate to West Germany (what was to become the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949).[17] The millions of *Volksdeutsche* living in West Germany, often in dire conditions, soon became seen as a major security issue and political liability.[18] In February 1949 the Tripartite Working Party on German Refugees (representing the French, British and American governments) approached the Australian government to take some of these *Volksdeutsche* refugees to assist with the stabilisation of West Germany.[19]

After winning the December 1949 elections the new Liberal Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, announced in February 1950 the government's consideration of a German migration scheme to begin in 1951.[20] This was subsequently developed into a scheme to take 100,000 German migrants over a four-year period.[21] This bilateral agreement was concurrent with Australia's attempts to involve West Germany in efforts to scupper the plan for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to coordinate international migration.[22] A telegram sent to London and copied to multiple international governments, including West Germany, outlined Australia's concerns that 'pressure in the ILO for "Universality" and "Non-discrimination"' would 'expose governments to criticism on the grounds of discrimination'.[23] The bilateral migration agreement

[15] Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land* (Sydney: Pluto Press Australia, 1988), 70; Douglas Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945-1960" (Victoria University, 2011), 176-78. Jayne Persian suggests that '[i]n Australia, as in other settlement countries, the issue of race tied in neatly with that of politics.' Jayne Persian, "'Chifley Liked Them Blond': DP Immigrants for Australia," *History Australia* 12, no. 2 (2015): 96–98.
[16] Suzanne Rutland, "Subtle Exclusions: Postwar Jewish Emigration to Australia and the Impact of the IRO Scheme," *The Journal of Holocaust Education* 10, no. 1 (2001): 50-66.
[17] Mark Aarons, *Sanctuary: Nazi Fugitives in Australia* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1989), 116. Andrew Demshuk, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[18] Angelika E. Sauer, "Model Workers or Hardened Nazis? The Australian Debate About Admitting German Migrants, 1950-1952," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 45, no. 3 (1999): 428.
[19] Aarons, *Sanctuary*, 116.
[20] Sauer, "Model Workers or Hardened Nazis?," 429.
[21] "Evatt's Huge Sydney Rally."
[22] Sean Brawley, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigration to Australasia and North America, 1919-1978* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995), 272-279.
[23] NAA: A9857, 352/6, "Telegram from Canberra to Bonn, 6th September 1951."

represented, then, not just a Cold War benefit to West Germany, and the Western powers more generally; it also represented an aspect of Australia's continued effort to avoid international scrutiny and interference with its racially discriminatory immigration policy.[24]

The Immigration Minister, Harold Holt, openly promoted the German migration scheme as part of the Cold War battle. He argued that by accepting German migrants and helping to alleviate the security situation in West Germany, Australia would be making 'a real contribution to the spread of justice and good will in the world'.[25] The government, recognising possible resistance, prioritised winning the support of the Returned and Services League (RSL) — a conservative social and political organisation representing Australian returned soldiers — for its mass German migration scheme.[26] The vigorously anti-communist leaders of the RSL were won over to the idea, accepting the Cold War logic of the policy.[27] The announcement provoked an immediate reaction from groups in the Jewish community, who eventually escalated their private protests to the Minister to very public protests, often organised in conjunction with non-Jewish left groups including sections of the ALP, church groups and trade unions.[28]

H.V. Evatt, the man for whom the mass meeting at Sydney Town Hall had been chanting, was seen as a strong defender of civil liberties, as well as representing a peaceful alternative to Menzies' warmongering.[29] The debate around the German Migration Scheme was taking place against the background of an increasingly

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[24] For a history of this policy as it pertained to the international arena, see Brawley, *The White Peril*.
[25] Harold Holt, "Immigration Minister Says: 'Volksdeutsche Are Not All Bad'," *The Argus*, 14 September 1950. As well as the assistance to West Germany's Cold War aims, the government consistently emphasised the value of the migrants as their labour power, see NAA: A9306, 353 Part 1, "Address by the Minister for Immigration, Hon. H. E. Holt, M.P., on the Government's Migration Programme to the Jubilee Citizenship Convention, 1951." The government's migration politics and implied political/racial hierarchy here were closely reflected by the ALP aligned leadership of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. "Minutes of a Meeting between Mr R Broadby, Secretary of the ACTU, Mr. A.S. Leibler, Mr. G Casper and Mrs C. Isaacson," ca.1951, State Library of Victoria, Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies Collection, MS 9352 Y, Box 7.
[26] G. L. Kristianson, *The Politics of Patriotism: The Pressure Group Activities of the Returned Servicemen's League* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1966).
[27] Sauer, "Model Workers or Hardened Nazis?," 429. The membership viewed the policy less favourably. The Federal Executive had to overturn the defeat by the NSW branch of a pro-German migration motion, see ibid.
[28] Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists," 79-84; NAA: A434, 1950/3/45637, "Report on Melbourne German Migration - Jewish Meeting by H. Beilby, 21 November 1950."
[29] For Evatt's role in opposing the Communist Party Dissolution Act, see George Williams, "The Suppression of Communism by Force of Law: Australia in the Early 1950s," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 42, no. 2 (1996): 220-40.

Manichean world. 1950-1953 was the hottest period of the early Cold War.[30] In September 1950, Menzies broadcast a speech preparing Australia for compulsory military training and a large borrowing program to finance a military build-up.[31] After referring to 'a gang of wreckers right here in Australia', Menzies somewhat apocalyptically said 'if the evil day dawns on which the last great world struggle begins, we must all be prepared to fight wherever it is essential that the enemy be met and overcome.'[32]

Evatt, as Minister for External Affairs from 1941 to 1949, was widely seen as directing a relatively independent foreign policy, even if in actuality this policy never deviated too far from the US's imperial program in the post-war period.[33] Before losing office in 1949 the Labor government never took the threat of war initiated by the Soviet Union seriously either in its public pronouncements or defence policy. Because of this stance, Evatt and the ALP were routinely attacked as pro-Soviet or pro-communist by the press and the Liberal Party.[34] Thus Evatt, a well-known opponent of Menzies' anti-communist crusade, represented a defence of civil liberties and a strong proponent of peace.[35] The enthusiasm for his presence at the meeting and the chanting for 'peace' indicates the connection of the German migration question to wider political issues, particularly a concern to avert a third world war.

With 'the enormous condescension of posterity', it is easy to dismiss the AGMC as irrational.[36] The German and *Volksdeutsche* migrants did have strongly held political

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[30] Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000); Barbara Carter, "The Peace Movement in the 1950s," in *Better Dead Than Red: Australia's First Cold War: 1945-1959, Vol.2*, ed. Ann Curthoys and John Merritt (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986).
[31] This program of borrowing and military spending was one of the major causes of the 1951-1952 recession, see Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions," 44.
[32] Robert Menzies, "The Defence Call to the Nation: First Broadcast by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, K.C., M. P., 20th September 1950," *Current Notes on International Affairs* 21, no. 9 (1950): 658-669.
[33] Dean Ashenden, "Evatt and the Origins of the Cold War," *Journal of Australian Studies* 4, no. 7 (1980): 73-95. For a differing view see Christopher Waters, "The Great Debates: H. V. Evatt and the Department of External Affairs, 1941-49," in *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats - Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941-1969*, ed. Joan Beaumont, David Lowe, Christopher Waters, and Garry Woodard (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2003).
[34] Meredith Burgmann, "Hot and Cold: Dr Evatt and the Russians, 1945-1949," in *Australia's First Cold War*, ed. Ann Curthoys and John Merritt (Sydney, London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 108.
[35] Kylie Tennant, *Evatt: Politics and Justice* (Sydney, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1970), 262.
[36] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963). Phillip Adams prompted Norman Rothfield, of the JCCFAS, into such an assessment in a 2005 radio interview, see "Norman Rothfield," podcast audio, *Late Night Live*, (original broadcast 27 October 2005), available at http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/norman-rothfield/3371206

beliefs and many were indeed Nazis and war criminals.[37] Despite a high proportion of German migrants having Nazi sympathies, however, most of them were alienated from Australian society, and remained politically inactive after arriving in Australia.[38] This seems to be exactly the case for the German immigrants studied by the sociologist Jean Martin in 1953.[39] But from the perspective of 1950, that was not at all clear or predictable. There were far right movements in Australia such as the New Guard in the early 1930s; antisemitism was still a significant factor in Australian political culture; some of the DPs who were coming from Eastern Europe were spotted with SS tattoos and had harassed Jews in migrant reception centres; and Eastern Europeans were being actively recruited to fight the communists in the unions.[40]

The Jewish community knew that the screening processes for prospective German migrants would be far from adequate. They were aware that many Nazi collaborators, war criminals and fascists had got through the screening applied to DPs, and that the Australian immigration screening procedures lacked the language skills, access to information and indeed the political priorities to screen out Nazis.[41] It did not help when Sir John Storey, the chairman of the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council said that Nazi Party membership would not be a barrier to entry.[42] All of this meant that Jews had very good reason to fear a large influx of German and *Volksdeutsche* migrants.

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[37] Aarons, *Sanctuary*, 155-61.
[38] Although there is evidence of German Nazi cells operating in South Australia in the early 1950s, see ibid., 160-61.
[39] Jean Martin, *Refugee Settlers* (Kingsgrove, NSW.: Halstead Press, 1965), 95-97.
[40] Lyn Richards, *Displaced Politics: Refugee Migrants in the Australian Political Context* (Department of Sociology, La Trobe University, 1978); Martin, *Refugee Settlers*, 95-97; Rutland, "Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria."; Aarons, *Sanctuary.* Mark Aarons and others have established that many Eastern Europeans who migrated as part of the DP scheme were war criminals and committed fascists. Some of these went on to be active in right-wing politics in Australia, see ibid. The JCCFAS wanted to mount a public campaign around the Nazi and fascist DPs in late 1947 but were reined in by others in the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, see William D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History: Volume 2, 1945 to the Present* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 400. There is a remarkably similar history with UK immigration policies of the time. These also mirrored Australia's purposeful exclusion of Jewish refugees, see David Cesarani, *Justice Delayed: How Britain Became a Refuge for Nazi War Criminals* (London: Mandarin, 1992). See also Christoph Schiessl, *Alleged Nazi Collaborators in the United States after World War II* (New York: Lexington Books, 2016); Harold Troper and Morton Weinfeld, *Old Wounds: Jews, Ukrainians, and the Hunt for Nazi War Criminals in Canada* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
[41] Andrew Menzies, *Review of Material Relating to the Entry of Suspected War Criminals into Australia* (Canberra: Australian Government Public Service, 1987), 63-75; Aarons, *Sanctuary*, 89-100. In one notable instance Sam Goldbloom, who was to become one of the most prominent figures in the JCCFAS, disguised himself as a plumber, sneaked into the shower block at Bonegilla and took photos of the scars under migrants left armpits, where they had removed their SS tattoos, see ibid., 97-98.
[42] "Nazi Party Followers as Settlers," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 November 1950.

For Angelika Sauer, the AGMC was a Cold War political dispute.[43] Although this chapter also comprehends the Cold War as a determining factor, I suggest that Sauer's analysis shows little understanding of the culture and politics of Australian Jewish communities. I show below that the AGMC was reflective of popular Jewish antifascism.

Transnational discourses: debating the de-Nazification of Germany

The AGMC was the product of the widespread antifascist consciousness in Australia that had particular purchase in the Jewish community and persisted through World War Two into the post-war years. Soon after Holt's public announcement that the government was considering a mass migration agreement with the West German government, the JCCFAS started discussing mobilising a major campaign 'among non-Jews' against German migration.[44] Such a stance was not controversial within the Jewish community. The *Australian Jewish News* (*AJN*), the more popular of the two major Jewish weeklies in Melbourne, editorialised against the German migration scheme stating: '[w]hat concerns us more is the horrible possibilities of seeing in this country a thriving Bund organisation complete with jackboots and a faithful replica of Der Stuermer on our newsstands.'[45]A delegation from the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the peak representative body of Australian Jews, was sent to see Holt to express dissent to any proposal for mass German migration.[46] The NSW Association of Jewish Ex-servicemen and Women passed a resolution expressing 'serious concern' with the government's mass German migration plan.[47] German migration was a key issue in Rabbi Sanger's High Holyday sermon, where he stated forcefully: '[l]et no-one bring to this great Commonwealth the curses of Europe, the sparks of hatred which kindled the fires that laid Europe waste — racial hatred, national

[43] Sauer, "Model Workers or Hardened Nazis?"
[44] See "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 21st February 1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).
[45] "Is the New Broom Sweeping Clean? (Editorial)," *Australian Jewish News*, 24 February 1950. The *Australian Jewish News* was broadly sympathetic to the JCCFAS through the years of the AGMC, see Sender Burstin, "The Board, the Council and German Immigration (First published in *Undzer Gedank 1952*)," in *Sender Burstin: Yiddish Melbourne Observed*, ed. Ben Burstin and David Burstin (Melbourne: Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, 2013).
[46] "No German Migration This Year," *Australian Jewish News*, 10 March 1950.
[47] "Unanimous Resolution on German Immigration," *Australian Jewish News*, 10 March 1950.

bigotry and anti-Semitism.'[48] A 1948 survey had found that 83 percent of Melbourne Jews were against German immigration.[49] The grounds were thus laid for a campaign that had widespread support across many sections of the Jewish community.[50]

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the politics of the Jewish left was informed by a hegemonic antifascism which had a sophisticated international political analysis. As such the AGMC was also informed by a transnational political imagination based on an understanding of West German society and politics and a political ethic of memory centred on the Holocaust. As outlined below the Jewish antifascist imagination that informed the AGMC was mediated through international Jewish organisations, the international Jewish press, the international left, and the experiences and politics of Holocaust survivors.

The students of Cologne University and the failed de-Nazification of West Germany

A key example of the workings of this transnational discourse occurred in an exchange between students at the universities of Cologne and Melbourne in 1951. In mid-1951, an issue of the Melbourne University student newspaper *Farrago* ended up in the hands of a group of students at Cologne University in Germany. Inside the magazine they found an article reporting on a speech by Maurice Ashkanasy, who was then President of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (VJBD). Ashkenasy had delivered this speech to a public meeting at Melbourne University co-hosted by the ALP club and the Jewish Students society. The report of his address was entitled 'Jewish Students Denounce Mass-Migration: "Germans Will Betray Us"'.[51] The discovery of this article by the

[48] Rabbi Dr. H. M. Sanger, "Points from the Pulpit," *Australian Jewish Review* 11, no. 6 (1950).
[49] Oscar Adolf Oeser and Samuel Battle Hammond, *Social Structure and Personality in a City* (Routledge and Kegan Paul London, 1954), 84.
[50] There are two notable exceptions to this widespread support. Firstly, the fanatical anti-communist, Newman Rosenthal, who was head of the Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen (VAJEX), published an open letter to the RSL and the government condemning the AGMC and its communist links and disassociating VAJEX from the campaign. Holt made good use of the letter to dispute the unanimity of the Jewish community's support of the AGMC. Rosenthal was widely condemned, including by his own organisation who eventually forced his resignation over the issue. Although they were not as fanatical, Rosenthal's successors were also very anti-communist, see Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists," 85-86. The second source of opposition was the Jewish Labour Bund. This is discussed in further detail below.
[51] "Jewish Students Denounce Mass-Migration: "German Students Will Betray Us"," *Farrago*, 28 March 1951.

Cologne students led to numerous meetings and many hours of discussion. Finally, the students decided to write to *Farrago* to dispute Ashkanasy's claims.[52] The German students' response to the article, as well as the subsequent reply to their letter by the Jewish Students Society, reveals the wider issues at stake within the AGMC.

The German students' letter was indicative of a general post-war drive in German society to forget, move on and forge a new politics of consensus.[53] In the letter they denied that the whole nation was still indoctrinated by Nazism. They insisted that the majority of Germans only wanted unity and peace in a new vision of Europe and explained the poverty and destitution of *Volksdeutsche* refugees in Germany. They suggested that the Australian students should visit Germany and that they could come to understand and know more about each other; in the meantime, they suggested continuing a correspondence to promote mutual understanding.[54] Michael S. Cohen replied on behalf of the Jewish students' society. He expressed disbelief that the majority of young Germans, who established their values during the Nazi period, had completely 'rid themselves of the Nazi ideology'. He said there might be a minority of students who have genuinely done this, but it was doubtful that it was a generalised trend – anecdotal evidence they had received in fact indicated the exact opposite. Cohen argued that those who were not brought up under Nazism would make suitable migrants and underlined that their opposition was not to Germans as a whole but against a specific age group. He continued: '[O]ur statements on those matters have never been and are not now bitter. We have suffered too much for 2,000 years from bitter discrimination against us and we shall never indulge in it ourselves, but we feel that to allow Nazis into our country would be tragic.'[55]

Cohen was well justified in his disbelief regarding ideological de-Nazification. 1952 opinion polling in West Germany revealed that 25 percent of Germans had a 'good opinion of Hitler', while 37 percent said that it was 'better for Germany to have no Jews on its territory'.[56] The students from Cologne did not appear to be Nazi sympathisers, but the politics revealed by their letter in fact reinforced rather than undermined the political reasoning behind the AGMC. Their letter was indicative of a serious refusal to

[52] "German Students Ask for Understanding," *Farrago*, 19 September 1951.
[53] Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (Columbia University Press, 2002).
[54] "German Students Ask for Understanding."
[55] "German Students Ask for Understanding: Jewish Students Reply," *Farrago*, 19 September 1951.
[56] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (Random House, 2011), 58.

accept any measure of collective responsibility for the war, destruction, enslavement and mass murder of the Nazi regime, a regime enabled and supported by very large sections of German society.[57] It was this refusal of responsibility and avoidance of repentance that made any cooperation with West Germany, let alone a migration agreement, repugnant to the antifascist values of the Jewish community. These values were built on the traumatic personal and collective memories of the Holocaust. As Ashkanasy underlined in an open letter to Harold Holt: '[t]o many Jews the prospect of large numbers of Germans being received and welcomed as "New Australians" was an insult to the memory of their dear ones who perished at the hands of the Nazi murderers.'[58]

According to Norbert Frei, the founding of the West German state had as its concomitant a pervasive and passionately felt desire to provide amnesty for the great majority convicted for Nazi crimes. Konrad Adenauer, the first chancellor of West Germany, himself called for a post-war 'tabula rasa'.[59] The German students' requests cannot be read as a simple request for understanding and a disputation of prejudice. In context they read as both a protestation of innocence and a request reflecting a consensus wish within West German politics to wipe the slate clean.[60] Such a request to the Jewish community in Australia represented an obvious denial of justice, but also indicated a continuation of fascism within West German society, a fascism that needed to be combatted on an international level.

Such a need was often expressed stridently in the pages of the Jewish international press, with many of these articles reprinted in Australia. In 1948, an American Rabbi, Dr S. S. Schwarzschild, was sent to Germany by the World Union for Progressive Judaism to serve for two years as the Liberal Rabbi for Berlin. At the time there were around 7,000 Jews living there, making it the largest Jewish community in Germany.

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[57] The most recent historiography covering the Nazi regime, indicates the extent to which Nazism was pervasive within German society and was 'enthusiastically embraced' by the majority of Germans, see Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford University Press Oxford, 2010), 257. For an interesting discussion of historiographical debates around the extent of the German people's complicity in the Holocaust, see Norman G. Finkelstein, "Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's 'Crazy' Thesis: A Critique of Hitler's Willing Executioners," *New Left Review*, no. 224 (1997): 39-88; Norman G. Finkelstein and Yehuda Bauer, "Goldhagen's "Hitler's Willing Executioners": An Exchange of Views," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (1998): 123-26.

[58] "Mr. Ashkenasy Attacks Migrant Plan," *Australian Jewish News*, 1 September 1950.

[59] Frei, *Adenauer's Germany*, 5-6.

[60] Though this consensus was not completely unanimous or pervasive, see Sean A. Forner, *German Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democratic Renewal: Culture and Politics after 1945* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

He was a popular and well-respected Rabbi across both East and West Berlin. His farewell sermon, however, was the source of great controversy. In it he pledged never 'to set foot on German soil again'.[61] On his way back to the US, he passed through London and was interviewed by a journalist from the *Jewish Chronicle*. He told the journalist that his vow was based on his 'conviction that the German people as a whole had failed to show the feeling of remorse and shame that might have been expected at Nazi crimes against the Jews.'[62] He observed that there had been a resurgence of nationalism and overt antisemitism, and that both East and West Germany were using the cover of the Cold War 'to foster their own unchanged aims of nationalism and expansionism.'

The resultant article was eventually republished in the *AJN*.[63] Schwarzschild chose to speak to the *Jewish Chronicle,* a London newspaper that not only had a large circulation in the UK but also syndicated its content to Jewish newspapers overseas, including to the *AJN*. The *Jewish Chronicle* in the post-war years had a major focus on European politics, in particular on Germany. Many of the *Jewish Chronicle* articles written on the farce of de-Nazification in Germany and the resurgence of nationalist and right-wing forces found their way to the pages of the *AJN*. In between 1950 and 1952, these articles were often coupled with sympathetic items about the AGMC.[64]

In 1950 this strong line against West Germany was common across international Jewish politics. In mid-1950 the World Jewish Congress (WJC) facilitated a representative conference of German Jewry for the first time since the war. Summarising the main concerns of the conference, the WJC declared that 'Germany and any German government … must accept collective responsibility for the crimes committed against the Jews and for their consequences.' The German government was called upon to redress the wrongs of the Nazi regime against the Jews. The WJC also called for the German people to 'accept the facts of the extent and enormity of their crimes against the Jews' and argued that it was necessary for the German government to publish an official

[61] "Rabbi Vows Not to Return to Germany," *The Jewish Chronicle*, June 2, 1950.
[62] Ibid.
[63] "Dr. Schwarzschild's Pledge on Germany," *Australian Jewish News*, 1 September 1950.
[64] See David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 204. Oftentimes there was a significant delay in between original publication and republication in the *AJN*. For instance, this article was first published in the *Jewish Chronicle* on June 2 1950, while it only appeared in the *AJN* on September 1 1950. This was also the day that Ashkanasy's open letter to Holt was published on the front page. This indicates that articles from overseas were very much chosen in line with local political events.

record of the Nazis' persecution.[65] Almost concurrently, in July 1950, the Rev. Dr A Cohen, President of the British Board of Deputies, laid out the agenda for the first Commonwealth conference of Jewish communities. On this agenda, alongside the issue of Israel, was future co-ordination between Jewish communities, Jewish education, and most prominently the failure of de-Nazification. Cohen suggested that the conference would address 'what can be done in the face of this disturbing situation, not only to overcome a menace to the Jewish remnant which is living under these conditions, but also to neutralise an evil which imperils the future of mankind'.[66] The politics of post-war Germany was thus a central feature of global Jewish consciousness.[67] An article published in the *AJN*, reprinted from *World Jewish Affairs*, summarises the connection between the Jewish world's post-war concern with Germany and a popular international Jewish antifascism: 'This remains a problem of Jewish concern, even after the last Jew has left Germany. As a nation, the Jewish people in Israel and elsewhere can only survive in a democratic world.'[68]

The Jewish Left, the Communist Party and the AGMC

If Australian Jewish communities were acutely aware — through an international Jewish press and global Jewish co-ordination and organisation — of the failed de-Nazification of Germany, then the Jewish left were particularly adept at amplifying this message and expounding their antifascist analysis (see, for example, Figure 3). The JCCFAS was the leading organisation on the Jewish left, and the leading proponents of a militant antifascist politics within the Jewish community. The JCCFAS was more willing than others in Jewish representative bodies to have a wider political analysis and position in international affairs. It was also more inclined to build alliances with unions,

[65] "Germany Must Accept Collective Responsibility," *The Australian Jewish Review* 11, no. 4 (1950). Despite Cold War pressure the WJC continued to speak out against West Germany as 'not worthy of democracy's trust' until at least 1951, see "Well-Known Ex-Nazis Appointed to West German Foreign Office," *Australian Jewish News*, 10 August 1951.
[66] The Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, "Commonwealth Jewry in Conference," *Australian Jewish News*, 28 July 1950.
[67] For example, Hasia R. Diner suggests that Germany's responsibility for the Holocaust and the failed process of de-Nazification featured strongly in American Jewish public discourse. Hasia R. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009), 216-65.
[68] "German Responsibility- Past and Present," *Australian Jewish News*, 17 March 1950.

groups and international speakers from the left. An example of this was the JCCFAS' relationship with the peace movement.

On April 16th 1950, 10,000 people crowded into the Melbourne Exhibition Building for the opening rally of the Australian Peace Congress, a major national event organised by the Australian Peace Council (APC).[69] Although recent scholarship disputes the allegation that the APC was purely a communist front, many delegates, union representatives and speakers were certainly communists or fellow travellers.[70] As well as other international speakers, the star of the show was the Red Dean, Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury and a well-known socialist and supporter of the Soviet Union.[71] Norman Rothfield, then president of the JCCFAS, was one of the speakers at the opening rally. Rothfield, speaking 'as an individual Jew',[72] argued that 'when Jews thought about war […] they thought in the first instance in terms of 10 million Jews surviving after the slaughter of six million Jews, and the way in which politicians were now trying to bring about the re-armament of Western Germany.'[73] Here Rothfield posited a Jewish subject position that drew political lessons from the Holocaust that lead to a particular position on a key issue in international affairs.

[69] "Tremendous Enthusiasm at Peace Congress," *Australian Jewish News*, 21 April 1950.
[70] Kim Thoday, ""A Harder Thing Than Dying": Peace Activism and the Protestant Left in Australia During the Early Cold War," in *Fighting against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Phillip Deery and Julie Kimber (Melbourne: Leftbank Press, 2015); Douglas Jordan, "The Trojan Dove?: Intellectual and Religious Peace Activism in the Early Cold War," (Victoria University, 2004).
[71] See Dianne Kirby, "Ecclesiastical McCarthyism: Cold War Repression in the Church of England," *Contemporary British History* 19, no. 2 (2005): 187-203. While in Melbourne for the Peace Congress Johnson also addressed a JCCFAS 'human rights rally' public meeting along with other speakers from the congress and JCCFAS speakers. This event elicited both public and private condemnation, with the Council losing the trust of previous prominent members and supporters. "Dean at Human Rights Rally," *Australian Jewish News*, 21 April 1950; "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 18th April 1950, 26th April 1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).
[72] This would have been to avoid associating the JCCFAS too clearly with the Congress.
[73] "Tremendous Enthusiasm at Peace Congress." Rothfield also had firsthand experience of West German society. After travelling there, he wrote an article for the *AJN* in 1951 stating: 'I wandered all over Germany and spoke to Germans in all walks of life. Speak to a German for ten minutes and marvel at his industry and politeness. Drink beer with him for an hour or more and you find a different man! You see how deeply ingrained in him are fifteen years of Hitlerite propaganda. Many Germans I met know all about the atrocities which were perpetrated — knew of the torture and mass murder — of the chambers and the crematoria. Not five out of a hundred expressed any shame or concern at these crimes. Their greatest resentment was at the attempts — now abandoned — of Denazification.' Norman Rothfield, "Why Screening of Germans Will Fail," *Australian Jewish News*, 8 June 1951.

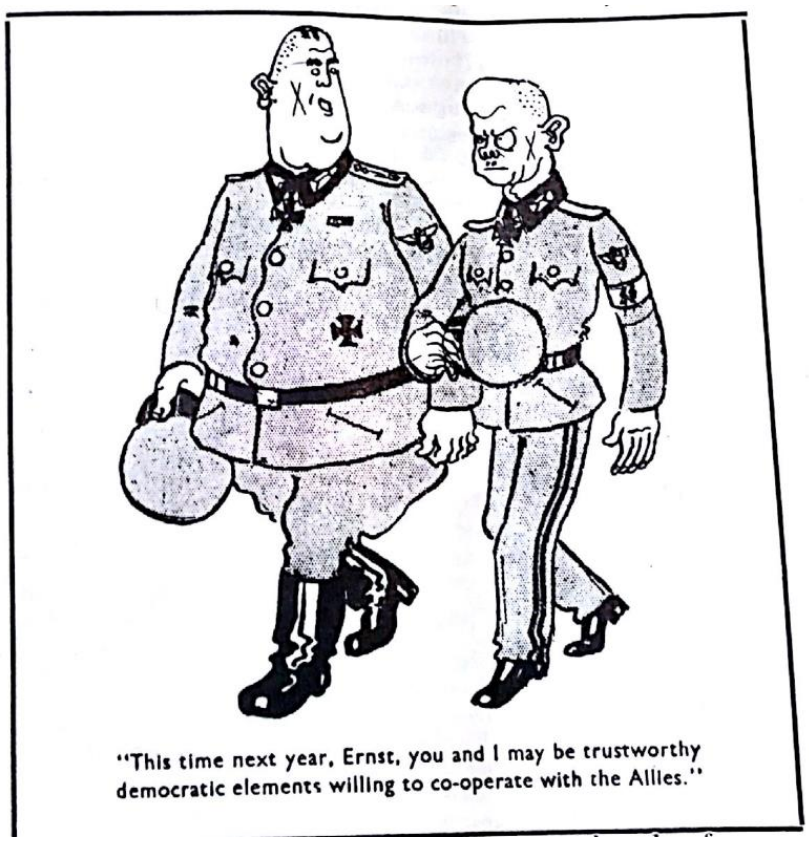

Figure 3 — Cartoon satirising the Western powers political rehabilitation of former Nazis in West Germany, "The Joke Comes True," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 3 (1951).[74]

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Jewish left's analysis of antifascism often placed them in a tacit alliance with the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and with the cause of the Soviet Union. The JCCFAS had close connections with the CPA through a number of its most prominent executive members and spokespeople, including the communist author Judah Waten, who acted as a principal intermediary between the Council, the CPA and communist-linked groups.[75] The JCCFAS was an active opponent

[74] Originally published in London's conservative *Daily Express*.
[75] For example, see "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 3rd April 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). At this stage Waten was not a party member. The radical Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett, who travelled to and reported from Germany in the immediate post-war years, was a prominent ally of the JCCFAS in the AGMC. Burchett featured as a speaker at the Melbourne Town Hall public AGMC protest meeting as well as numerous JCCFAS 'drawing room meetings' and fundraisers. Burchett also drafted one of the JCCFAS' AGMC pamphlets, see Wilfred G Burchett, *Cold War in Germany* (World Unity Publications, 1950); "Protest against Nazi Migration to Australia - Advertisement," *The Age*, 18 November 1950; "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes,

of the Communist Party Dissolution Bill, and the two organisations had common cause in their objection to the large number of Fascists and collaborators who been selected as migrants as part of the DP scheme.[76] But the CPA had a more ambiguous stance on the issue of German migration. In the years 1950-1952, the years of the public AGMC, *The Guardian*, the CPA's Melbourne weekly, ran only six articles on the German migration issue, two of them reports of public meetings.[77] This may be partly explained by the CPA's concentration in these years on fighting Menzies' Communist Party Dissolution Bill, the major political issue of the era, and literally a fight for their own survival.[78]

There was, however, another political factor that dampened their enthusiasm for the campaign. The CPA was running a propaganda line on West Germany at the time that differed markedly from the analysis of the JCCFAS.[79] Rather than being unrepentant Nazis or Nazi sympathisers manipulating the Cold War for their own ends, as in Schwarzschild's analysis, the CPA claimed that 'West Germans' were trying to actively resist being manipulated into the Cold War by US capitalism.[80] This was echoed in the line they took on German migration. The CPA's focus in articles such as 'Menzies' Secret Plans to Recruit Nazis for Army' was on the enemy being the US, and Australian ruling classes as the architects of war and working-class immiseration rather than a

19th September 1950, 3rd October 1950, 28th November 1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

[76] "Jewish Council Statement on Bill," *Australian Jewish News*, 26 May 1950; Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions," 160-209.

[77] See "Menzies' Secret Plans to Recruit Nazis for Army," *The Guardian*, 15 May 1952; "German Minister Secretly in Australia for Migrant Deal," *The Guardian*, 17 May 1951; "Feeling Rises against Importation of Nazis," *The Guardian*, 8 March 1951; "Menzies & Co. Want to Nazify Australia," *The Guardian*, 1 March 1951; "Nazi Migrants Will Be Dangerous 5th Column Here," *The Guardian*, 15 February 1951; "Nazi Officers Form Organisation Here," *The Guardian*, 22 September 1950.

[78] Evidence suggests that as well as Menzies' attempt at banning the party, government contingency plans were being drawn up, in the event of war, to inter up to 16,000 communists and communist supporters, see L.J. Louis, "Pig Iron Bob Finds a Further Use for Scrap Iron," *The Hummer*, no. 35 (1993).

[79] Jordan suggests that the involvement of leading ALP figures in the campaign limited the extent to which the CPA could also be involved in the AGMC, as this period was an era of intense enmity and distrust between the ALP and CPA, particularly within the union movement, see Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions," 216. Indeed in 1949 Evatt was being personally denounced as an imperialist lackey by the CPA. However by late 1951-1952, the party was on the defensive and adapted a much more conciliatory approach to the ALP, see Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement, 1920-1955* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1975), 213-214. 269-271

[80] "West Germans Sign Resolution against Use of Atomic Bomb," *The Guardian*, 2 June 1950; "West Germans Unite to Fight U.S. War Pact," *The Guardian*, 5 June 1952; "Germans against War, Says Young Australian," *The Guardian*, 17 January 1952. This line reflected Soviet foreign policy imperatives aimed at German unification, see Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), 350-359; Gerhard Wettig, "The Soviet Union and Germany in the Late Stalin Period, 1950-3," in *The Soviet Union and Europe in the Cold War, 1943-53*, ed. Francesca Gori and Silvio Pons (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

historical or political analysis of German fascist indoctrination.[81] Its opposition to German migration was couched within a general anti-migration stance, unlike the JCCFAS who always publicly supported the mass immigration scheme.[82]

Douglas Jordan suggests that the CPA used the JCCFAS as a vehicle to pursue the AGMC.[83] Evidence does point to the communist-aligned faction having a controlling influence in the JCCFAS by around 1950.[84] However, this faction operated for the most part autonomously from the CPA.[85] The JCCFAS thus undertook their own analysis, made political decisions and created their own propaganda based on their understanding of international politics. Although the JCCFAS was certainly conscious of the Cold War background of the policy, the propaganda line for the most part emphasised the dangers of the migrants themselves and the failure of de-Nazification in West Germany.[86] Thus the politics of the JCCFAS in the AGMC were a specifically Jewish politics, a product of a Jewish antifascism that was determined partly by Cold War politics but was joined inextricably with an historical understanding of Nazism and an ongoing political commemoration of the Holocaust. The differentiation of the Jewish antifascist left's discourse from other sections of the Jewish community during this period is explored further below.

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[81] "Menzies' Secret Plans to Recruit Nazis for Army," *The Guardian*, 15 May 1952.
[82] For the CPA's anti-immigration policy, see "Conflict in the Unions," 160-245. For the JCCFAS' support of mass immigration, see *German and Volks Migration Will Flood Australia with Nazis* (Melbourne: Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1950).
[83] Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions," 210.
[84] Itzhak Gust, *Such Was Life: A Jumping Narrative from Radom to Melbourne* (Caulfield South: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004), 210, 15-16.
"Meeting Jewish National Groups Sydney, 11 November 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).
[85] Gust, *Such Was Life*, 210. Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 101-02.
[86] *German and Volks Migration*; Walter Lippmann, "Our Approach to German Migration," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 3 (1951). For JCCFAS consciousness of the Cold War political background to the implementation of the German migration scheme, see "Mr. Goldbloom Indicates- the Dangers of German Migration," *Australian Jewish News*, 25 August 1950. The JCCFAS drew on works by prominent sociologist Charles Price on the nature of the impact of transnational pan-German ideology on Germans in Australia. This was crucial evidence for the AGMC's linking of West Germany's failure to de-Nazify with an antifascist struggle against potential German migrants to Australia. In their reckoning if Nazi ideology was still active in Germany, this would have a strong effect on Germans in Australia. "The Menace of German Re-Armament, Immigration," *Australian Jewish News*, 27 July 1951; Charles Price, *German Settlers in South Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1945). Though by November 1951, the Jewish communist fraction had decided to push to 'continue the agitation against German Nazi migration, but to skilfully change this over to a campaign against German and Japanese rearmament as a preparation for war.' "Meeting Jewish National Groups Sydney, 11 November 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

‘People who not only experienced Fascism themselves, but attempted to practice it’: the AGMC, Holocaust survivors and the Bund

As well as utilising connections with left-wing groups and individuals, the JCCFAS sought to reach out to and mobilise Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors. Their participation in the AGMC adds another crucial dimension to our analysis of the transnational nature of the campaign. It was their memory and traumatic experience of the Holocaust that was being mobilised in Australia. The JCCFAS was largely made up of Anglo-Jews, more established Eastern European migrants and some pre-war German and Austrian migrants. Ernest Platz was the only prominent member who had been imprisoned in a concentration camp.[87] As part of foregrounding the experience of Jews in the Holocaust, the JCCFAS attempted to collaborate with Holocaust survivors in Melbourne. The politics of this were not straightforward. The post-war migrants from Poland and Lithuania were considered to be unintegrated with the rest of the community.[88] The JCCFAS’s main (political) connection to these Holocaust survivors was through Mendel Balberyszski. Balberyszski and his family were originally from Lithuania, where he was a highly active participant in the Jewish community and a leading member of the Folkspartei, a Jewish political party.[89]

As we have seen, the Bund in Melbourne was very hostile to the JCCFAS because of its communist connections, but Balberyszski came from a different political perspective and was initially willing to work with the Council on a common cause. After arriving in Melbourne in December 1949, Balberyszski became a founding member and the chairman of a new group called ‘The Association of Former Nazi Victims’ or the

[87] Rechter, “Beyond the Pale,” 116.
[88] See “Rabbi Dr. Sanger Comments on Communal Problems,” *Australian Jewish News*, 30 June 1950.
[89] Theo Balberyszski and Deborah Zuben, in *Fun Himen Blayene Tsu Bloye Teg (from Leaden Skies to Blue Days): 45 Stories of Growing up in Jewish Carlton 1945-1975*, ed. Julie Meadows (Melbourne: Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, 2014), 218. Balberyszski and his family were survivors of the Vilna Ghetto and were imprisoned in labour camps in Estonia and Latvia following the ghetto’s destruction. Balberyszski wrote the only comprehensive eyewitness account that covers the history of the murder of Vilna’s Jews from the beginning of the German occupation, to the liberation of the eighty-four survivors from Klooga concentration camp in Estonia. He worked on it through the 1950s and it was first published in Yiddish in Israel in 1967. An English translation was completed by Mendel’s son Theodore and published in 2010, see Mendel Balberyszki, *Stronger Than Iron: The Destruction of Vilna Jewry 1941-1945, an Eyewitness Account*, trans. Theodore Balberyszski (New York and Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House Ltd, 2010), xiii. Significantly, although the *Folkspartei* had a similar focus on non-territorial Jewish autonomy and the importance of Yiddish culture, it differentiated itself from the Jewish Labour Bund by its middle-class base and liberal rather than socialist political program. Robert M Seltzer, “Jewish Liberalism in Late Tsarist Russia,” *Contemporary Jewry* 9, no. 1 (1987): 58-61.

Katzetler society.[90] In August 1950, Balberyszski, representing the *Katzetler* society, appeared at a JCCFAS sponsored meeting on German migration at the Kadimah, the centre of Yiddish culture and community in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton.[91] At the crowded meeting Platz, a member of the *Katzetler* society as well as the JCCFAS, told of his own experience in Buchenwald and the murder of 21 members of his family in the Holocaust. He implored the audience not to be scared of telling their neighbours of the dangers of German migration, implying that they should relate their experiences of the Holocaust to non-Jews as part of the AGMC. Balberyszski for his part 'described the Nazis as cannibals, and said they should be kept in cages'.[92]

Following this public meeting, Balberyszski discussed with Waten the organisation of a deputation to Canberra, regarding the German migration scheme, of former victims of concentration camps. Although this deputation appears to have never taken place, a meeting was held between the JCCFAS executive, the JCCFAS youth section and the *Katzetler* society to explore its possibility.[93] The JCCFAS demonstrated a strong interest in engaging with the Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors, discussing the idea of issuing statements and propaganda in Yiddish and having another meeting at the Kadimah purely in Yiddish.[94] They also attempted to engage the Bialystok and Warsaw *landsmanschaftn* centres in holding fundraising events for the AGMC.[95]

The growing power of the anti-communist Jewish Labour Bund, however, created serious problems for the JCCFAS and the AGMC in mobilising this community. The JCCFAS had made use of the facilities at the Kadimah for many years and enjoyed

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[90] A Yiddish word meaning concentration camp prisoner. For an account of the formation of this group, see Stanley Robe, "Wiedergutmachung," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 11, pt.1 (1990): 180-182. For a discussion of the formation of *Katzetler* societies in the US context, see David Slucki, "A Community of Suffering: Jewish Holocaust Survivor Networks in Postwar America," *Jewish Social Studies* 22, no. 2 (2017): 120-121.

[91] "Meeting Protests against German Migrant Plan," *Australian Jewish News*, 25 August 1950.

[92] Ibid.

[93] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 19th September 1950."

[94] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 7th March 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

[95] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 14th March 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). *Landsmanschaftn* can be loosely translated as 'associations of townsfolk'. The Bialystok and Warsaw *landsmanschaftn* were presumably targeted because they were two of the larger societies in Melbourne. For a history of the international spread of Bialystok *landsmanschaftn* after the Holocaust, see Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010). See also Jenny Wajsenberg, "Landsmanschaft Postscript: The Bialystoker Centre in Melbourne, Australia 1927-1977," *Holocaust Studies* 16, no. 3 (2010): 57-78.

friendly relations with its executive. Following the Bund's takeover (of the Kadimah) in December 1950, however, the JCCFAS was progressively excluded from the Kadimah, beginning with the ousting of 'veteran Kadimah workers' who were associated with the JCCFAS.[96] In March 1951, Platz reported in his regular column 'Yarra Whispers' in *The Hebrew Standard* (one of Sydney's Jewish weeklies) that the new Kadimah committee had voted to censure the Kadimah Youth Organisation (KYO) 'because their opposition to German migration was too strong.'[97] A month later, five members of the Kadimah executive resigned in protest, giving a statement to the Jewish press, which read in part:

> The Bundist leadership of the Kadimah Committee does not want to fight against German migration. The representatives from the Kadimah to the Board of Deputies voted with the small minority on the Board not to be active in the campaign against German migration as planned by the Board of Deputies.

Their statement also objected to the exclusion of the JCCFAS from the Kadimah's Warsaw Ghetto Uprising commemoration, and the ongoing attacks on the KYO.[98] The KYO was a large organisation that had a significant membership in common with the JCCFAS youth section. Its leadership and a significant minority of its members were communists.[99] The Bundist-dominated Kadimah committee's major objection was not to the AGMC as such but its perceived alignment with both Jewish communists and a pro-Soviet position in the Cold War.[100] The JCCFAS actively responded to the Bund's opposition. In May the Council published a reply in the Yiddish section of the *AJN* to an attack on the JCCFAS by the Bund. They resolved to increase their activities aimed at winning support from the Yiddish-speaking community and instructed Waten to organise 'a number of public and private drawing room meetings in North Carlton'.[101]

The increasing conflict in the Melbourne Jewish community came to a violent head in July 1951, spelling the end of any co-operation between the JCCFAS and the *Katzetler* group. The *Katzetler* society had invited the JCCFAS to participate in a public meeting

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[96] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 119. It is important to note that at this time the Bund only represented about ten percent of the Kadimah's membership, but they were highly organised. Ibid, 131.
[97] "Yarra Whispers," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 2 March 1951. Platz only lasted in his role as 'Melbourne correspondent' for a year. Although he was obviously a talented writer and journalist he did not shy away from a very left and pro-JCCFAS bias.
[98] "Yarra Whispers," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 20 April 1951.
[99] Lou Jedwab, "The Kadimah Youth Organisation in Melbourne: Reminiscences 1942-53," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 12 pt.1 (1993): 179-187.
[100] Burstin, "The Board, the Council and German Immigration (First Published in *Undzer Gedank 1952*)."
[101] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 1st May 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

in early July at the Kadimah. The meeting was called to protest the KYO's decision to send a delegate to the Berlin Youth Festival in East Berlin.[102] The ostensible reason for the *Katzetler* society hosting this meeting was to object to any Jew on principle having any contact with Germany.[103] Balberyszski, who was chairing the meeting, and Bono Wiener, a prominent Bundist leader, endorsed this position to enthusiastic applause.[104] Norman Rothfield, a leading figure in the JCCFAS and part of the communist-aligned faction, endorsed the KYO's position and suggested that 'as in the case of Jews attending the Nuremberg trials, the main question was not whether to go to Germany, but what was the purpose and use of going there.'[105]

As David Rechter suggests, the issue of the Berlin delegation was something of a pretext for a final Bundist attack on the KYO.[106] The night of the *Katzetler* meeting, the KYO had been locked out of the building by the Kadimah committee; in protest they decided to hold their meeting in the foyer. The meeting was violently attacked by the Bundists, who tried to force them out of the building, causing scenes of chaos. The KYO eventually dispersed their meeting and mingled in with the *Katzetler* meeting.[107] As Rothfield and Lou Jedwab, a leader of the KYO and the JCCFAS youth section, addressed the crowd they 'were greeted with cries of "Heil Hitler" and counter cries of "Schumacher",[108] accompanied by the fascist salute, and were subjected to a barrage of interjections when they took the platform.'[109] Jewish communism here was being overtly associated with Nazism. The conduct of the Bundists that night was widely condemned; a subsequent public meeting of over two hundred people, called by five former presidents of the Kadimah, passed a motion condemning the attack on the KYO

[102] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 26th June 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). This delegate was to go under the auspices of the Melbourne Jewish Youth Council, a broader representative youth body, that at this point was heavily influenced by Jewish antifascist politics. Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 132.
[103] "N. Rothfield Tells Katzetlers," *Australian Jewish News*, 6 July 1951.
[104] "Ugly Clashes Marred Katzetlers' Meeting," *Australian Jewish News*, 6 July 1951.
[105] "N. Rothfield Tells Katzetlers."
[106] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 133. The following month at a Melbourne Jewish Youth Council public meeting Jedwab noted that 'nothing had been heard from the Kadimah Committee about the Berlin Festival since the news had been received of a Bundist delegation at Frankfurt'. "MJYC Protests against Kadimah K.Y.O Action," *Australian Jewish News*, 10 August 1951.
[107] "Ugly Clashes Marred Katzetlers' Meeting."
[108] A reference to Kurt Schumacher, then leader of the Social Democratic Party in Germany. He was famous for calling communists 'red-painted Nazis', see Patrick Major, *The Death of the KPD: Communism and Anti-Communism in West Germany, 1945-1956* (Clarendon Press, 1998), 43. See also Arthur D. Kahn, "Kurt Schumacher: Pied Piper of the Marshall Plan," *Jewish Life* 2, no. 3 (1948).
[109] "Ugly Clashes Marred Katzetlers' Meeting."

as ‘unprecedented and a violation of fundamental democratic principles and the traditions of the Kadimah.’[110] Platz wrote of the *Katzetler* meeting that ‘the writer of this column was intimidated by three people who not only experienced Fascism themselves, but attempted to practice it at the Kadimah.’[111] It is notable here that the AGMC was not the only political activity to which the new leadership of the Kadimah objected; they also condemned the KYO for engaging in activity they considered too ‘political’ such as ‘a symposium on conscription and a talk on aborigines’.[112]

In this case the transnational dimension of the political imagination was very much working against the JCCFAS, the KYO and the AGMC. The Bundists, many recently arrived from Eastern Europe, and having experienced first-hand communist repression, were appalled by the pro-Soviet attitudes they found in some sections of the community.[113] Their experiences compounded Bundist attitudes to the Soviet Union which had soured considerably after the early 1940s murder of Bundist leaders Victor Alter and Henryk Erlich, as discussed in the previous chapter. The incident at the *Katzetler* meeting is evidence, not just of the force of antifascism in the Jewish community but of the contestation of its meaning. That this central political contestation within the Jewish community took place at a meeting of Holocaust survivors is no coincidence. The conflict represented a struggle over the meaning of the Holocaust and the political legacy of antifascism. For the Jewish communists antifascism meant sympathies with the Soviet Union; for the Bundists it was the very opposite. If the JCCFAS had previously established Jewish left antifascism as hegemonic, then this hegemony was very quickly and at times violently coming to an end. The ending of this

[110] Rechter, “Beyond the Pale,” 133.
[111] “Yarra Whispers,” *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 13 July 1951.
[112] The Bund appear to have been in league in this attack with the right-wing revisionist Zionists, represented by Jehudah Honig, see David Burstin, “Carlton, a Yiddish Shtetl,” Yiddish Melbourne website, available at http://future.arts.monash.edu/yiddish-melbourne/memories-david-burstin/. The State Zionist Council were party to this attack too, moving an amendment to establish a new ‘non-partisan’ Kadimah youth group. “Kadimah Meeting Votes in Turbulent Atmosphere,” *Australian Jewish News*, 31 August 1951.
[113] Rechter, “Beyond the Pale,” 129. John Goldlust estimates that approximately 4-5,000 Polish Jews in Australia, survived the war in the Soviet Union. He outlines the varied, yet overall negative, experiences of Polish Jews in the Soviet Union during this period. John Goldlust, “A Different Silence: The Survival of More Than 200,000 Polish Jews in the Soviet Union During World War II as a Case Study in Cultural Amnesia,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 21, pt. 1 (2012): 13-60. See also Mark Edele, Sheila Fitzpatrick, and Atina Grossmann, eds., *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017). Moshe Ajzenbud, a prominent Melbourne Bundist wrote a scathing memoir, thinly veiled as a novel, about his time in the Soviet Union, first published in Yiddish in 1956. Moshe Ajzenbud, *The Commissar Took Care*, trans. Leah Ajzenbud (Fitzroy, VIC: Globe Press, 1986).

hegemony, as with its establishment, was to a large extent the result of transnational factors: a contest over memory and European politics which played out in the newspapers and halls of Jewish Australia. The AGMC as well as the JCCFAS was destined to suffer as a result. However, despite their increasingly contested hegemony, the Jewish antifascist left found a distinctive political voice through the AGMC.

'People whose emotions are stronger than their loyalty to Australia': Jews as political subjects in the AGMC

The Jewish left and others in the political leadership of the Jewish community found it difficult to know how to position Jews and Jewishness in relation to the campaign. As noted above, it was the first (and for all intents and purposes, only) major public campaign opposing government policy that was initiated and driven largely by the Jewish community. The spokespeople and literature of the campaign had not just to negotiate antisemitism within the wider community but also to carefully position their arguments in order to avoid claims of 'bitterness' and 'sectionalism'. To have a real influence and impact the AGMC needed to appeal to non-Jews.[114]

The AGMC served as something of a testing ground for Jewish 'governmental belonging' in Australia. Ghassan Hage defines 'governmental belonging' as 'the feeling that one is legitimately entitled in the course of everyday life to make a governmental/managerial statement about the nation.'[115] In a meeting between Perth community leader Rabbi Louis Rubin-Zacks and Paul Hasluck, then Minister for Territories, Hasluck warned Rubin-Zacks that any Jewish campaign against German migration could create an antisemitic backlash. Rubin-Zacks wrote to ECAJ president Ben Green following his meeting with Hasluck:

> Would he suggest that Jews, for the fear of anti-Semitism, should accept the position of second rate citizens, and lose their self-respect as human beings? I, for one, would absolutely reject such a contention, and informed him that the overwhelming majority of Jews felt the same way.[116]

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[114] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 21st February 1950."
[115] Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1998), 46.
[116] Benjamin Green quoted in Rutland and Caplan, *With One Voice: A History of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies*, 55.

As outlined in previous chapters, such a statement represented a new post-war attitude of Australian Jewry, no longer content with the 'ostrich' approach to dealing with antisemitism.

Immigration Minister Holt, clearly worried about the growing influence of the AGMC, issued a press release the day after the big protest meeting at the Sydney Town Hall. Holt said that the public meetings had highlighted 'the sectional character of the opposition to the Government's policy':

> Sponsored by members of the Jewish community, whose bitterness towards the German race is certainly understandable, they have attracted to their platforms a few public figures, Dr. Evatt being the most conspicuous of them, who, while highly vocal on the danger of Nazis being admitted to this country, have been strangely silent on the danger of Communists slipping through the screening net.[117]

Thus, whilst avoiding overt antisemitism, Holt painted the AGMC as a joint venture between emotional and irrational Jews and communist sympathisers. 'Sectional' here implied Jews acting in self-interest rather than in the interests of the nation as a whole.[118] Holt used a similar line of attack in a newspaper debate with JCCFAS member Ernest Platz (noted above for his role as a prominent campaigner in the AGMC). [119] In September 1950, Platz engaged in a heated debate with Harold Holt over the issue of *Volksdeutsche* immigration in the pages of Melbourne newspaper *The Argus*. Drawing on his own experience in Buchenwald, Platz outlined the cruelty he and other Jews suffered at the hands of *Volksdeutsche* and their key role in disseminating antisemitic propaganda in Eastern Europe.[120] Holt in reply emphasised his sympathy but also tried to use Platz's personal experience in an effort to discredit him, stating that Platz's feelings of 'bitterness' were 'gaining the upper hand' over 'calm reasoning'. [121] In a similar vein, the official RSL magazine accused Jews of being 'people whose emotions are stronger than their loyalty to Australia.'[122]

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[117] NAA: A9306, 353 Part 1, "Press Statement by the Hon. H.E. Holt, M.P. Minister for Immigration, 27 February, 1951."
[118] Ibid.
[119] Tennant, *Evatt*, 263.
[120] Ernest Platz, "'Volks' Spread the Goebbels Plan," *The Argus*, 12 September 1950.
[121] Harold Holt, "Immigration Minister Says: 'Volksdeutsche Are Not All Bad'," *The Argus*, 14 September 1950.
[122] Quoted in Lippmann, "Our Approach to German Migration."

The government and RSL's strategy here played on anti-communist paranoia, and constructions of Judeo-communism, to contest Jewish governmental belonging.[123] They also sought to feminise the Jewish AGMC as sectional, bitter and emotional as against a rational masculine properly governmental subject.[124] Both of these ideas played on tropes originating in nineteenth century Europe which racialised Jewish bodies as physically unable to serve in national armed services, making them both inherently disloyal and ineligible to claim full citizenship status.[125] Hage suggests that 'whiteness' in Australia is something that can only be fully achieved when accompanied by governmental belonging.[126] It is apparent that a genuine national subject in this period had to be figured as fully white, rather than 'marginally white', and as rational and masculine.[127] The government's discourse was countered by the Jewish community, but not in these same terms. The counter-arguments did not necessarily rest on a claim to proper whiteness, or a purely rational masculinity. Although some of the rhetoric did express these ideas, the discourse of the JCCFAS appealed to a historical account and an internationalist antifascist politics informed by a political ethic of memory.

The opening of the JCCFAS's 1952 pamphlet *Keep Australia Free From Nazis* begins with the following paragraph:

> We Australians should oppose the present government plan to bring thousands of young Germans to this country. It is natural because Jews have suffered most under Fascism, they should be the most vigilant and outspoken against the Nazi threat wherever and in whatever form it arises. The introduction of Nazi Germans into this country — educated and reared under Fascism — is a matter which concerns all Australians who cherish their democratic ideals and traditions. It is not a question of "Jewish vindictiveness" or "Jewish racialism" (for we welcome any Germans who are anti-Nazis), but of the economic and political security of all Australians.[128]

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[123] For a discussion of the JCCFAS and Judeo-Communism, see Phillip Mendes, "Constructions of Judeo-Communism and the Unravelling of the Melbourne Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1949-1950," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 20, pt. 1 (2010): 110-122.
[124] In Wendy Brown's theorisation governmentality is figured as regimes of masculine domination predicated on calculability, predictability and control. The objects of these regimes of control are feminised. Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 193.
[125] Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 40-59.
[126] Hage, *White Nation*, 57.
[127] Jon Stratton, "Multiculturalism and the Whitening Machine, or How Australians Become White," in *The Future of Australian Multiculturalism: Reflections on the Twentieth Anniversary of Jean Martin's the Migrant Presence*, ed. G. Hage and R. Couch (Sydney, NSW: Research Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sydney, 1999).
[128] *Keep Australia Free From Nazis* (Melbourne: Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1952).

This paragraph was in part an answer to the attacks made on the Jewish campaign as emotional, vindictive and discriminatory. The pamphlet thus began on a defensive note with 'We Australians', a claim to the universal, national claims of the campaign. The next sentence switched from the universal to justify the particular Jewish interest in antifascism. The following sentence switched back to a universal claim, merging antifascism with nationalism through an appeal to Australian 'democratic ideals and traditions.'[129] This is a language familiar to us from Chapter Two and the discussion of the Jewish left's spearhead theorisation of antisemitism. The last sentence disputed claims of 'Jewish vindictiveness' or 'Jewish racialism' and once again appealed to a national subject, 'all Australians'. However, in the middle of this passive sentence, a 'we' was inserted in parentheses that was clearly Jewish. Thus, despite the intentions of the paragraph outlined in the first sentence — to speak as, and appeal to, a national subject — by the time the reader arrived at the last sentence it was clear that they were reading the arguments of a distinct Jewish political position associated with those taking the lead in the campaign. This was an attempt to claim Jewish governmental belonging through the use of antifascist Popular Front style oppositional rhetoric that both embraced and pushed the limits of progressive nationalism. The difficulties of speaking from such a subject position are illustrated in the ambivalences of the paragraph.

Throughout the 1940s, the JCCFAS and associated groups were not shy about confronting antisemitism. However, in line with the Jewish left's more critical turn in the last years of that decade, the AGMC represented a qualitative break in the development of their public discourse. Previously there was a defensive emphasis on persuading Australians that Jewish stereotypes and conspiracies did not align with reality, and that Jewish Australians should be welcomed into Australian society.[130] In the AGMC the Jewish antifascist left, leading the Jewish community, was self-posited as a political subject, operating with political autonomy from an Australian state which sought to delegitimise and contain their political activity.

[129] A common trope of the Australian post-war left at the time, see Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists*, 196. See also Chapter Five of this thesis.
[130] Brian Fitzpatrick, *Refugees: Hitler's Loss, Our Gain* (Melbourne: Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1944); Len Fox, *Australia and the Jews* (Melbourne: Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 1945).

‘Finkanasy’s ragtime bund’ and the new strategy

The attack on the JCCFAS came not only from the Bund, but also from the anti-communist right of the Jewish community. This attack was led by the anti-communist ALP member and barrister Maurice Ashkanasy, the president of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (VJBD) through much of this era and beyond. His motley alliance, with Leo Fink (prominent Zionist and the head of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society in Melbourne), the Bund; VAJEX (Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen); and other conservatives, was dubbed ‘Finkanasy’s ragtime bund’ (hereafter, the Jewish right), a play on the title of a popular song of the time — ‘Alexander’s Ragtime Band’.[131] Following a series of events whereby the JCCFAS ran afoul of Ashkanasy and the VJBD, Ashkanasy, formerly a patron of the JCCFAS’ fundraising appeal, turned solidly against the JCCFAS, denouncing them as pro-communist.[132] He waged a yearlong campaign against the JCCFAS, eventually manoeuvring to dissolve the joint Anti-German Migration Committee to prevent the JCCFAS’ involvement.[133] Phillip Mendes suggests that although Ashkanasy and his allies were also in favour of the

[131] Burstin, “The Board, the Council and German Immigration (First Published in *Undzer Gedank 1952*).”; “Yarra Whispers,” *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 29 June 1951.
[132] Mendes, “Constructions of Judeo-Communism.”
[133] “Vic. Board of Deputies- Zionist Amendment Defeated: Campaign Set-up Scrapped,” *Australian Jewish News*, 8 June 1951. The committee was designed to have two VJBD representatives, and two JCCFAS representatives under the chairmanship of the chairman of the Public Relations Committee of the VJBD, Sam Cohen, who was affiliated with the JCCFAS. In a fit of panic about the ineffectiveness of the new post-dissolution replacement ‘the Public Relations Bureau’, the VJBD voted to re-establish the Joint Anti-German Migration Committee in November 1951. However, the attacks on the JCCFAS and their strategy did not cease, the new Joint Committee never properly met, and the JCCFAS appear to have decided that working through the structures of the VJBD was more trouble than it was worth, preferring to carry out their own campaign, see “Overwhelming Vote Recreates A.G.M. Committee,” *Australian Jewish News*, 23 November 1951; “Jewish Council Withdraws from Board,” *Australian Jewish News*, 27 June 1952; “Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 24th April 1952,” (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). Although this decision seems have been a rational reaction to the Jewish right’s anti-communist fervour and obstinacy, the JCCFAS as a whole was far from faultless in this whole debacle. The JCCFAS under the leadership of the communist aligned faction had become dogmatically pro-Soviet refusing to countenance the possibility of Soviet antisemitism. This led one of the most prominent and respected JCCFAS members, Walter Lippmann, to resign from the JCCFAS executive. In a letter to the JCCFAS executive he suggested that Ashkanasy’s crusade was only part of the reason for the JCCFAS’ fall from grace; the communist aligned faction had operated in a thoroughly unstrategic way alienating the Jewish community. Lippmann especially condemned the JCCFAS’ refusal to condemn the oppression of Jews in Eastern Europe. Walter Lippmann, “Letter to the President & Executive of the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism, 30 May 1953,” (Lippmann collection, 1953). Itzhak Gust, and Norman Rothfield both members of the pro-communist faction, later too admitted that they had made serious strategic mistakes. Norman Rothfield, *Many Paths to Peace* (Fairfield: Yarraford Publications, 1997), 38-43; Gust, *Such Was Life*, 214-16.

AGMC, their objection to the JCCFAS' involvement was because of its association with communism and refusal to follow proper procedure.[134] In what follows I suggest there were also serious ideological differences over how to prosecute the campaign. These differences illustrate the distinctive Jewish left antifascist ideology developed by the JCCFAS.

Firstly, in contrast to the JCCFAS strategy of public mobilisation and grassroots engagement with left civil society and trade unions, the major prong of Ashkanasy and the Jewish right's strategy was to try and develop a closer relationship with the virulently anti-communist RSL, to persuade them to alter their policy on German migration. In a particularly rowdy meeting in June 1951, the VJBD voted to dissolve the joint Anti-German Migration Committee. The *AJN* reported that Mr E. Joseph, President of VAJEX, arguing in favour of the dissolution motion said: '[O]nly ex-servicemen should approach [the] RSL on anti-semitic issues. Other Jewish approaches would be "like a red rag to a bull." RSL State leader Joyce is not anti-semitic'. The *AJN* reported that this remark was met with 'widespread laughter, but "hear, hear" from Mr Ashkanasy.' Joseph then stated that 'all [Joyce's] adverse statements were only the results of pinpricks and provocation. The motion would enable such approaches.'[135]

In late July, as a result of this new strategy the VJBD claimed that 'cordial relations [had] been established' with the RSL, the issue of German migration had been discussed and 'progress [had] been made'.[136] Less than a month later, George Holland, the head of the RSL, on his return to Australia from Europe, completely contradicted this claim. He suggested that Australia needed to act quickly to snap up German migrants before they all went to America and Canada, stating: 'we are in the market for migrants to-day, and many of the best possible types are in Germany.'[137] In September 1951, the RSL not only supported the call for German migration but attacked Jewish migrants as 'doubtful security risks'.[138] The JCCFAS condemned the utter failure of the RSL engagement strategy, a view that was also echoed by the *AJN*, who editorialised

[134] Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists," 86.
[135] "Vic. Board of Deputies- Zionist Amendment Defeated: Campaign Set-up Scrapped." For more on the VJBD's RSL engagement strategy, see "Victorian P.R. Committee Activities," *Australian Jewish News*, 6 July 1951.
[136] "P.R. Committee's First Public Meeting," *Australian Jewish News*, 27 July 1951.
[137] "R.S.L. Head Says Bring Germans," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 August 1951.
[138] "Combating Mass German Migration Needs United Jewry," *Australian Jewish News*, 14 December 1951; "E.C.A.J. Replies to R.S.L.," *Australian Jewish News*, 14 September 1951.

that the RSL was acting as a government attack dog, and that 'it shows it is far better for us to be fearless and to stand up to untruth and bias, not to shrink away from them'.[139]

Hand in hand with the approaches to the RSL, the second major change in strategy mooted by the VJBD was to begin opposing German migration as a whole, rather than focusing on particular categories of Germans. This new approach was highly controversial. From early on in the AGMC, the JCCFAS had emphasised that their objection was not to German migration as a whole. Their approach to the campaign emphasised the need to avoid slipping into a negative racialisation of Germans. Their argument was a political one: that the generation of Germans being proposed for migration, those aged 21-35, were those educated under the Nazi regime and hence thoroughly indoctrinated.[140] As outlined throughout this chapter, much of the force of the AGMC came from an acute awareness of West Germany's failure to de-Nazify. This failure was understood in political terms rather than as a racial or cultural inevitability. The JCCFAS emphasised in their AGMC pamphlet that 'in this struggle we acknowledge the great achievements of the German people in former times, and look forward to the day when we can welcome back a repentant and democratic Germany into the comity of nations.'[141] A pamphlet issued by 'A group of Progressive Jewish Youth' circa 1950, most likely the communist leadership group of the KYO (a group allied with the JCCFAS), also emphasised a rather crude but thoroughly political and historical rather than racial or cultural explanation of Nazism. The Holocaust and the war crimes of the Nazis, they stated, were 'what the people who produced Goethe and Schiller descended to after a short period of conditioning by monopoly capitalism.'[142]

There were certainly elements of the AGMC's discourse that did racialise the Germans or skirted very close. Rather than utilising the discourse of an antifascist, anti-racist left nationalism like the JCCFAS, these elements fell back on an exclusivist racial nationalism. This nationalism depended on an appeal to whiteness as the basis of Jewish governmental belonging and German exclusion. Erwin Frenkel writing in the *Australasian Jewish Review* said: '[S]everal decades ago the Australian people decided

[139] "Editorial- Inspired Statement?," *Australian Jewish News*, 14 September 1951.
[140] For example, see "Mr. Goldbloom Indicates- the Dangers of German Migration."
[141] *Keep Australia Free from Nazis.*
[142] *Stop! Fascism Here* (Melbourne: A Group of Progressive Jewish Youth, n.d. ca. 1950). For a discussion of economic theories of fascism in the US context, see Christopher Vials, *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 70-89.

in favour of a White Australia. Today it faces a much more important issue: IS AUSTRALIA TO REMAIN WHITE AND HUMAN OR IS IT TO BECOME WHITE AND GERMAN?'[143] Abram Landa, a prominent member of Sydney's Jewish community and NSW MLA, said at a public protest meeting: '[W]e would not admit the Japanese because of the White Australia policy, but to me … the Germans are as black as those coloured people we try to exclude.'[144] Ashkanasy, in his speech at Melbourne University, quoted approvingly Oscar Oeser, a prominent professor of psychology, as saying: '[F]undamentally, Germans are authoritarian, arrogant, and quite unable to understand the democratic, and, above all, the British way of life.'[145]

Along with the attempted political alliance with the RSL, the Jewish right seemed to embrace the exclusivist, racial nationalism the RSL was so well practiced in.[146] Part of the VJBD's post-dissolution strategy was a much vaunted new pamphlet 'fully and objectively setting out the case against German immigration', of which 50,000 copies were to be printed at considerable cost.[147] A draft of the pamphlet was eventually circulated revealing the VJBD's new policy of not just opposing Nazi indoctrinated Germans but opposing all German migration, a policy which could only be justified on racial grounds. In a critical memo on the pamphlet, Waten outlined a number of objections to its contents including that 'German history and thought are dealt with in an unscholarly and one-sided manner, designed to bolster up the racial case against Germans.'[148] He also noted that '[t]here is no outright condemnation of the present Nazi movement in Germany, nor of Dr. Adenauer and the restored Nazi gerbils, who are principal agents of re-militarisation … in Germany.'[149] The JCCFAS read the pamphlets contents as 'a danger to the Jewish communities of Australia', and urgently communicated to the Jewish public and the VJBD their reasoning as to why its

[143] Erwin Frenkel, "Did Niemoller Win?," *The Australasian Jewish Review* 11, no. 6 (1950). Frenkel was an avowed Zionist, see "We Certainly Agree with Mr. Frenkel," *Australian Jewish Outlook* 1, no. 7 (1947).
[144] "Every Jew and Every Citizen Has a Duty," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 21 September 1951.
[145] "Jewish Students Denounce Mass-Migration: "German Students Will Betray Us"." Christopher Vials has discussed this sort of racialised of analysis of fascism as prevalent amongst liberal antifascists in the US who asserted the fundamental goodness of the American character. Vials, *Haunted by Hitler*, 85-86.
[146] For a discussion of the racism of the RSL, see Rutland, "Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria."; Kristianson, *The Politics of Patriotism*. For a representative sample of RSL discourse from their monthly Victorian magazine, see "Get Tough with the Communists: Traitorous to British Race," *Mufti*, July 1950.
[147] "P.R. Committee's First Public Meeting."; "Anti-German Migration Campaign," *Australian Jewish News*, 28 September 1951.
[148] "Memo on Public Relations Committee's Booklet," ca. December 1951, State Library of Victoria, Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies Collection, MS 9352 Y, Box 7.
[149] "Memo on Public Relations Committee's Booklet."

publication should be prevented.[150] Sam Goldbloom, a prominent JCCFAS activist, publicly condemned the new VJBD policy, as embodied by the pamphlet's opposition to all German migration, as 'dangerous'.[151]

The antifascist values of the Jewish left clashed very obviously here with the exclusivist nationalism of the Jewish right. The JCCFAS strategy relied on winning left and union support for their campaign, attempting to shape Australia's future through an appeal to popular antifascism. Although there were certainly contradictions and ambiguities in this strategy, antisemitism here was viewed as the product of fascism and the enemy of democracy, allowing the JCCFAS to inhabit a larger anti-racist, pro-civil liberties and pro-peace political space. As discussed in Chapter Two, their particular theorisation of antisemitism suggested that the Jewish community's struggle was bound up in an international struggle for justice and democracy. The Jewish right's (failed) strategic alignment with the RSL, and their Cold War positioning, meant a repudiation of the earlier hegemonic left antifascism of the Jewish community. They attempted to fall back on an exclusivist, racialised nationalism. Although this strategy failed in the short term, there was another type of exclusivist nationalism in the ascendency within the Jewish community. This was a transnational politics par excellence, which also served to displace the left antifascist hegemony.

'Israel had no alternative but to deal directly with Germany on this issue': Israel, Zionism and West Germany

On January 7th 1952, 10,000 protestors took to the streets of Jerusalem. Attempting to storm the Israeli parliament, they threw stones at the police lines guarding the building. The police responded with tear gas, some of which filtered through smashed windows into the parliament. In chaotic scenes the police then poured petrol down the streets and set it alight in order to ward off the protestors. Two hundred protestors and 140 police were injured in the stand-off. Four hundred people were arrested. The protestors, led by

[150] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 11th December 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).
[151] "Combating Mass German Migration Needs United Jewry." Thankfully the VJBD eventually saw sense and shelved the pamphlet, see "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 15th January 1952," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

the right wing leader Menachem Begin, were trying to prevent a crucial parliamentary vote authorising Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to negotiate with West Germany for Holocaust reparations.[152] To the demonstrators chanting 'No truck with Hitler's heirs', accepting reparations from West Germany was akin to accepting blood money in return for legitimating a regime still dominated by Nazis.[153] The protestors were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the vote and the Israeli government entered into negotiations with West Germany. This issue provoked major debates among Jews worldwide, not least in Australia.[154]

The issue of German reparations was central to breaking the alliance between the Australian Zionist movement and the Australian Jewish antifascist left. Israel and Zionism were, and still are, central to the transnational Australian Jewish political imagination. Zionism was highly contested in the Jewish community through the 1930s and 1940s, but with the 1948 War and the establishment of the state of Israel, Zionism was firmly established as a pervasive aspect of the transnational Jewish political imagination.[155] As discussed in the previous chapter, the JCCFAS, in the lead up to the establishment of Israel, were its strong proponents, seeing a defence of Israel as inextricable from the fight against antisemitism. [156]

The debate over negotiations between West Germany and Israel over Holocaust reparations, was largely concurrent with the AGMC.[157] It is important to note the

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[152] "341 Hurt in Wild Rioting in Israel," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 1952.The other major players in the protests were the Israeli left, with both the Communist Maki party and the Marxist Zionist party Mapam opposing the agreement. Michael Brecher, "Images, Process and Feedback in Foreign Policy: Israel's Decisions on German Reparations," *American Political Science Review* 67, no. 1 (1973): 76. The JCCFAS sympathised with and had contacts with the Mapam party at the time. "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 11th July 1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

[153] "341 Hurt in Wild Rioting in Israel."; Brecher, "Images, Process and Feedback."

[154] Brecher, "Images, Process and Feedback."; Suzanne Rutland, "Debates and Conflicts: Australian Jewry, the Claims Conference and Restitution, 1945–1965," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 28, no. 3 (2014). For an article with a pro-negotiations slant, see Jacob Tovy, "Talking after Auschwitz? The Public-Political Struggle in Israel over the Negotiation of a Reparations Agreement with West Germany, 1951–1952," *Holocaust Studies* 23, no. 4 (2017): 483-504.

[155] For a useful overview of Australian Zionism in this period, see Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Rose Bay: Brandl & Schlesinger 1997), 295-323. The exception to this was the anti-Zionist Bund. However, they too eventually, reluctantly supported the State of Israel, if not the Zionist ideology, see Burstin, "Bund, Zionism and the State of Israel (First Published in *Undzer Gedank 1966*)," in *Sender Burstin: Yiddish Melbourne Observed*, ed. Ben Burstin and David Burstin (Melbourne: Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, 2013).

[156] See Burgoyne Chapman, "The Vindication of []," *The Australian Jewish News*, 21 July 1950; Philip Mendes, "The Australian Left's Support for the Creation of the State of Israel, 1947-48," *Labour History* (2009): 137-148.

[157] For example, see "Israel and Germany," *Australian Jewish News*, 21 July 1950.

international dimensions of this debate. The main issue in Israel was gaining funds for the new state to be able to build vital economic and social infrastructure. However, Israel also positioned itself as representing world Jewry. It was negotiating on behalf of all Jewish people, laying claim to the heirless property and wealth stolen in the Holocaust. A proportion of the money was to be distributed internationally, including to Australia's Jewish institutions, through the Jewish Claims Conference.[158] The issue caused much controversy in Australia. Through the first half of 1952, the ECAJ (the peak national representative body), based in Victoria that year, resolved not to support Israel having direct negotiations with West Germany. [159] The New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, clashing with the Victorians, supported Israel's position.[160] This made the Australian Jewish community, for a short time, one of only three Jewish communities in the world to oppose direct negotiations with West Germany.[161] At the half yearly conference of the ECAJ in February of 1952, Leo Fink, the head of the Jewish Welfare Society and a critic of the JCCFAS, summed up the Victorian case:

> Australian Jewry was in a different situation to the Jewish communities in other countries, as it was actively engaged in fighting German migration… we [can] not approach Australian authorities expressing opposition to German migration to this country and on the other hand, favour direct negotiations with Germany on reparations.[162]

That a critic of the JCCFAS took such a stance is indicative of the depth of feeling associated with the AGMC and the strength of the campaign.[163]

The Zionist faction, previously peacemakers on the VJBD, eventually turned on the JCCFAS, precipitating the Council's resignation from the board. Previously, West Germany's non-recognition by Israel meant that on an international level there was no contradiction between strong support of Israel and a vigorous campaign against the West German regime. This allowed the Zionist movement in Australia to support the Jewish left and the AGMC. While Israel did not recognise West Germany formally until

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[158] Rutland, "Debates and Conflicts," 159.
[159] The ECAJ switched between being based in Melbourne and Sydney every two years.
[160] Rutland, "Debates and Conflicts," 159-60.
[161] "Votes of Reparations Discussion with Germany," *Australian Jewish News*, 25 January 1952.
[162] Fink is being paraphrased here by the journalist. "ECAJ Conference Discusses Reparations, Migration," *Australian Jewish News*, February 15 1952. Lippmann suggested, in an interview decades later, that Fink, a native of Bialystok, was not a Bundist but had political sympathies with the Bundists. Walter Lippmann, interview by Suzanne Rutland, 4 September 1984, State Library of New South Wales, Suzanne Rutland collection, CY MLOH 437/157.
[163] For the Jewish antifascist left's stance here, see I Perl, "Selling out to Germany," *The Clarion: A Progressive Jewish Monthly*, no. 1 (1952).

1965, the reparations agreement represented a significant rehabilitation of West Germany's image on the international stage.[164] Israel's decision to negotiate was eventually accepted by Jewish communities and organisations worldwide.[165] The Jewish establishment's acceptance of West Germany as a legitimate and necessary state within the new Cold War order was conditioned by Israeli foreign policy. Representative here was the realpolitik stance of the prominent Zionist Samuel Wynn, who is reported to have said 'that Israel had no alternative but to deal directly with Germany on this issue'.[166] By July 1952 the ECAJ had reversed its stance, reflecting a similar realpolitik.[167] It is thus no coincidence that the resignation of the JCCFAS from the VJBD over the issue of protests against the visiting West German ambassador closely followed Israel's new position on negotiations. The Zionists' realpolitik analysis meant the JCCFAS' position on West Germany was increasingly anomalous.

That political positions on West Germany were still in flux through 1952, with Victorian Jewry expressing an internationally anomalous position, points to the purchase of the left antifascist hegemony within the Jewish community. Even as the JCCFAS itself was being progressively marginalised, the arguments of a left antifascism were still significant and influential. The eventual resolution of the ECAJ and the resignation of the JCCFAS, however points to a new supremacy of Israel and Zionism, within a Cold War context, in the mainstream Jewish transnational political imagination. With the agreement signed for reparations from West Germany to Israel and the international Claims Conference, the financial future of the Australian Jewish community and its welfare and educational institutions became tied to both countries.[168] The Soviet Union's increasing opposition to Zionism, and Israel's growing strategic orientation towards the US, meant that Zionism was increasingly aligned with anti-communism.[169] The speed at which the change occurred is indicative of both the force

[164] Brecher, "Images, Process and Feedback." For a discussion of West German reparations payments in the context of Israel's economic dependence on an alliance with Western powers and Israel's strategic alignment with West Germany, see Joel Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There?: Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 70-75.
[165] Dr. Nahum Goldmann, "The Germans- Who Will Talk to Them?," *Australian Jewish News*, 4 January 1952. "Votes of Reparations Discussion with Germany."
[166] "ECAJ Conference Discusses Reparations, Migration."
[167] Rutland, "Debates and Conflicts," 160.
[168] Suzanne Rutland, "Debates and Conflicts."
[169] Irene L. Gendzier, *Dying to Forget: Oil, Power, Palestine, & the Foundations of U.S. Policy in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Uri Bialer, *Between East and West: Israel's Foreign Policy Orientation, 1948-1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 206-255. For a

of international events in the politics of the Australian Jewish community and the large changes in consciousness that were occurring. As Rechter suggests, an increased Jewish focus on Israel, the Soviet Union's escalating anti-Zionism and antisemitism, and the politics of the Cold War in the Jewish community, effected a 'radically altered… Jewish political atmosphere'.[170]

'It was a most disappointing protest': the end of the AGMC

Re-arming West Germany was a key part of US and Western Europe's Cold War strategy.[171] The JCCFAS' unwavering position on German rearmament soon placed them on the other side of the Cold War, as the mainstream institutions of Western Jewish communities acceded to Western foreign policy imperatives. The London *Jewish Chronicle*, despite its keen attention to West German politics and focus on the failure of de-Nazification, took a Cold War stance and justified German rearmament in a 'long and torturous' article in late 1949; an editorial stance which generated much controversy.[172] In the US, mainstream Jewish groups tended to grudgingly accept German rearmament as a 'realistic necessity', whilst outright opposition to German rearmament was left to groups on the Jewish left, often associated with the American Communist Party.[173] In this same period in Mexico, Argentina and Canada, Zionists and mainstream Jewish institutions turned aggressively against pro-Soviet Jewish antifascists and communists.[174]

discussion of the gendered politics of this figuration, see Michelle Mart, "Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy: Images of Israel, 1948–1960," *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 3 (1996): 357-80.

[170] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 136.

[171] Robert McGeehan, *The German Rearmament Question: American Diplomacy and European Defense after World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006).

[172] Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry*, 204-205.

[173] Diner, *We Remember*, 227-28.

[174] Adina Cimet-Singer, "The Last Battles of Old-World Ideologies in the Race for Identity and Communal Power: Communists Vs Bundists Vs Zionists in Mexico, 1938-1951," *Estudios Inderdisciplinarios de America Latina y el Caribe* 5, no. 2 (1994): 59-84; Lawrence D. Bell, "Bitter Conquest: Zionists against Progressive Jews and the Making of Post-War Jewish Politics in Argentina," *Jewish History*, no. 17 (2003): 285-308; Ester Reiter, *A Future Without Hate or Need: The Promise of the Jewish Left in Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016), 123-149; Norman Erwin, "Confronting Hitler's Legacy: Canadian Jews and Early Holocaust Discourse," (University of Waterloo, 2014), 214-238.

Similarly in Australia, the JCCFAS' strong line on West German rearmament was initially very popular.[175] However, by 1952 their strong position on West Germany, as well as their refusal to condemn Soviet antisemitism, ultimately led to the separation of the JCCFAS from the VJBD and their increasing political isolation in the Jewish community.[176] Samuel Wynn summed up the establishment Jewish community's emerging new consensus Cold War view. In the debate over the JCCFAS' planned protest against the West German ambassador, he stated: 'Now the Council was fighting against 56 nations of the U.N. and against the Australian government policy approved by both Parties. This is not a fight against anti-Semitism but a childish futile demonstration.'[177]

The ascendance of Jewish anti-communism and the purging and disowning of the Jewish left meant a fundamental change in Australian Jewish politics and identity. A representative example here is Ashkanasy's declaration about the JCCFAS: 'We cannot stop them calling themselves Jews, but we can say that they are not authentic. Let us declare them bogus for they are utterly non-Jewish and pro-Communist.'[178] As perspicuously noted by W.D. Rubinstein it is at this juncture that we can assess a certain continuity between the pre-World War Two Jewish establishment, and the post-war leadership of people such as Ashkanasy.[179] While there had been a seeming change in orientation towards a new Jewish consciousness and a repudiation of the 'inconspicuous' approach to combatting antisemitism, a fundamental conservativism was reasserted. Whereas the old leadership saw themselves as utterly loyal to the British empire, the new leadership, by way of Israel's geopolitical positioning within Western imperialism, could transfer their political loyalties to 'Israel-centred "Jewish

[175] For example, see "German Re-Armament (Editorial)," *Australian Jewish News*, 29 September 1950.
[176] The JCCFAS was eventually disaffiliated from the VJBD over their refusal to call off a protest against the visiting West German ambassador, see "Board Ultimatum to Jewish Council – 'Toe the Line or Get Out'," *Australian Jewish News*, 20 June 1952. The JCCFAS were not entirely politically isolated at this point as their line on West German rearmament was endorsed by the left leaning youth groups, see e.g. "MJYC Resolution on German Rearmament," *Australian Jewish News*, 27 June 1952.
[177] "Board Ultimatum to Jewish Council – 'Toe the Line or Get Out'." The Zionists then commanded the largest voting bloc in the VJBD and had previously paid a peace-making role between the JCCFAS and the anti-communist right wing bloc, often favouring the JCCFAS, see Burstin, "The Board, the Council and German Immigration (First Published in *Undzer Gedank 1952*)." For details on Wynn's life. see Allan Wynn, *The Fortunes of Samuel Wynn: Winemaker, Humanist, Zionist; a Biography* (Cassell Australia, 1968).
[178] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 144.
[179] Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, 9.

peoplehood"' within the new geo-political framework of the post-war world.'[180] In other words, the quashing of an independent Jewish political subjectivity by the new Jewish right was necessary to reaffirm Jewish political loyalty to the Australian state under Cold War warrior Menzies, and within an evolving new US-led Western imperialism, which featured a special place for Israel.[181] Whereas Zionism in Australia, for a short period, signified an anti-imperialism, by the early 1950s it was firmly entrenched as its opposite. The forces of Jewish anti-communism and Zionism were thus joined in forcing a radical circumscription of Jewish politics and identity.[182] As per Pinchas Goldhar's critique of Australian Zionism, as outlined in the previous chapter, Jewish nationalism had become a route towards a different sort of assimilation.[183]

The AGMC did not end completely with the dissolution of the joint Anti-German Migration committee. The JCCFAS continued a campaign of public meetings and initiated a mass petition against German migration, which garnered the support of prominent ALP MPs, union leaders, academics and churchmen.[184] In September 1952, a full two and a half years after his initial announcement, Holt announced that an agreement had been signed with West Germany to take approximately 5,000 German migrants per year. Over the next decade approximately 50,000 Germans would be

[180] Ibid. Rubinstein here refers to the concept of peoplehood that became common in the US post-war as a means of conceptually aligning American Jewish interests insolubly with Israel's interests. Noam Pianko, *Jewish Peoplehood: An American Innovation* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2015). This 'peoplehood' concept was dissimilar to the Jewish antifascist internationalist version.

[181] Which is not to say that the relationship between Israel, the US, the UK and Australia was always one of straightforward unanimity and co-operation during this period. The US and Israel's 'special relationship' was only properly consolidated after the 1967 war. Beinin, *Was the Red Flag*, 75. The Menzies government very closely backed British foreign policy imperatives in the Middle East through the 1950s, see Chanan Reich, *Australia and Israel: An Ambiguous Relationship* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 17-102. See also Gendzier, *Dying to Forget*; Zach Levey, *Israel and the Western Powers, 1952-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

[182] Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 138-145.

[183] A 1949 letter, from Ashkenasy to the Secretary of the Immigration Department, Tasman Heyes, is revealing in this regard. Ashkenasy (paraphrased here by Rutland) outlined that although the Jewish community was completely opposed to an 'assimilation' that meant 'the abandonment of their religion' and 'included the natural extension of love of Zion', in his rendering (again paraphrased by Rutland) the 'Jewish community strongly supported the government's policy of assimilation, meaning that [inter alia] new immigrants should give their complete allegiance to the British crown'. Suzanne Rutland, "The History of Australian Jewry, 1945-1960," (University of Sydney, 1990), 344.

[184] "Important Public Meeting (Advertisement)," *Australian Jewish News*, 20 July 1951; "Good Response to Petition against German Migration," *Australian Jewish News*, 26 October 1951. The Cold War and the Jewish right's activism also had an impact on the JCCFAS' previous close relationship with the ALP in Victoria. In 1951 the ALP limited JCCFAS contacts with local branches over a perceived infraction relating to the German migration petition. Many allege this was engineered by Ashkanasy, himself an influential member of the ALP right. Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 147; Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists," 89.

sponsored to immigrate to Australia.[185] The ECAJ sprang into belated action, announcing public protest meetings to be held in each capital city.[186] Following these meetings, the AGMC appears to have petered out. Mendes suggests that the ECAJ's strategy changed to an emphasis on private lobbying, focusing on restricting the numbers of Germans entering rather than opposing the scheme in toto.[187] This approach suggests a certain level of ideological compromise, but also a recognition of the incapacity, as well as unwillingness, of the ECAJ to carry out an effective public protest campaign without the JCCFAS. A letter from J.L. Komesaroff to the *AJN* following the Melbourne public protest meeting in December 1952, suggested that: 'For most of us who attended … it was a most disappointing protest. The workers who have been carrying on the *main* battle against Fascism and Anti-Semitism were totally ignored.'[188] Komesaroff doubted the ability of the new Public Relations Bureau to effectively campaign on the issue:

> [T]hey are an unknown quantity as far as Church leaders, Union Leaders, Editors of the country press, Rotary Clubs and country Labour branches are concerned. The Jewish Council *is* known to every worthwhile organisation. It has the experience, machinery and ability to lead and assist in our communal struggle against German Migration, and to combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism in this country — but our Board of Deputies does not make use of them.[189]

It is clear that the separation of the JCCFAS from the VJBD and ECAJ also meant a drastic reconfiguring of the mainstream Jewish community's relationship with the left, the union movement and civil society. While some have claimed that the big decrease in German immigrants from the numbers originally announced — 25,000 per year, down to 5,000 per year — were a result of the strength of the campaign, historians such as Suzanne Rutland have suggested that an economic downturn in 1951-1952 may have

[185] "German Migrants," *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 5 September 1952; Suzanne Rutland, "Nazis Unwelcome! The Jewish Community and the 1950s German Migrations Scheme," in *National Socialism in Oceania: A Critical Evaluation of Its Effect and Aftermath*, ed. Emily Turner-Graham and Christine Winter (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), 219. For a discussion of the proportion of *Volksdeutsche* origin migrants that came to Australia as part of this intake, see Kristy Ann Kokegei, "Australian Immigration and Migrant Assimilation, 1945-1960," (University of Adelaide, 2012), 208-212.
[186] "German Migrants."; "Jewish Action Has Prevented Govt. Sponsored Germans for Australia," *Australian Jewish News*, 7 November 1952; "Protest Meeting on German Migration," *Australian Jewish News*, 5 December 1952.
[187] Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists," 90.
[188] J.L. Komesaroff, "Letter to the Editor," *Australian Jewish News*, 19 December 1952. Emphasis in original.
[189] Ibid. Emphasis in original.

also played a role in this revision.[190] Holt certainly seems to have been worried enough about the AGMC to threaten the ECAJ and the JCCFAS in a private meeting, that if the campaign continued the government could intervene to stop Jewish organisations from sending money to Israel.[191] The government here had played an effective game of 'divide and conquer' by attacking 'Jewish communists' as a means of neutering the AGMC and fostering a more quiescent Jewish leadership.[192] Mark Aarons notes that despite the end of the campaign, over the years following, allegations about fascists, Nazis and war criminals arriving in Australia persisted. The evidence grew stronger and the 'government's response more deceitful as many Nazis became active supporters of the Liberal Party.'[193] It is crucial to note here that the purging of the Jewish antifascist left was not only determined by international factors. In the Australian context, it was concurrent with a downturn in working-class struggle and industrial action, and a large upturn in political repression.[194] The defeat of the Jewish left took place in the context of a wider program of political repression, achieved here very effectively with the aid of the Jewish right.

Along with the effective dissolution of the public AGMC, the Jewish right's attitude towards independent anti-imperialist Jewish political action was made obvious in its approach to the JCCFAS' 'unauthorised' protest against the visit of Nazi pianist Walter Gieseking in March 1952.[195] Rather than endorsing a public confrontation with Gieseking as a matter of principle, this protest was judged to be inviting antisemitism, and endangering the respectability of the Jewish community.[196] It was this affair that

[190] "Jewish Action Has Prevented Govt. Sponsored Germans for Australia," *Australian Jewish News*, 7 November 1952; "Protest Meeting on German Migration."; Rutland, "Nazis Unwelcome!," 230; Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists," 88.
[191] Rothfield, *Many Paths to Peace*, 38; Aarons, *Sanctuary*, 150. The timing of these threats is disputed by historians, see Mendes, "Jews, Nazis and Communists Down Under," 90.
[192] Walter Lippmann, "Before It Is Too Late," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 4 (1951).
[193] Aarons, *Sanctuary*, 151.
[194] Allan Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere and Communist Cultural Discourse in Cold War Australia," (University of Queensland, 1993), 40-42. Tom O'Lincoln, *Into the Mainstream: The Decline of Australian Communism* (Sydney: Stained Wattle Press, 1985), 53-94. Whereas the period of 1945-1947 was a high point of industrial struggle and 1947 was the zenith of communist power in the ACTU. Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists*, 181, 201-202.
[195] See Ernest Platz, "Rommel and Gieseking," *The Clarion: A Progressive Jewish Monthly*, no. 1 (1952).
[196] "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 4th March 1952, 11th March 1952," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1); "Vic. Board Statement on Nazi Pianist," *Australian Jewish News*, March 7th 1952.

was dramatised by Laurence Collinson in the unperformed play 'Traitor Silence' which provides this chapter's epigraphs.[197]

In an interview with Rutland, many years later, Sam Goldbloom, a prominent JCCFAS activist, made damning assessments of the end of the AGMC and its ongoing significance for the culture and politics of the Jewish community.[198] He suggested that: the real campaign against the JCFFAS in the Jewish community began with the JCCFAS refusing to accept the government dictate to end the AGMC; the split between the VJBD and the JCCFAS brought about the dismantling of strong links between the Jewish community and civil society and trade union movements; and following the split, there was a serious demise of liberal and progressive ideas within the mainstream Jewish community, 'McCarthyism became absolute'.[199] Goldbloom recalled that in this period to be anything other than one hundred percent supportive of Israel or supportive of the Australian government of the day — to harm the goal of the community being an 'Israeli outpost in the South Pacific' — became unacceptable. [200]

Conclusion

The AGMC was the product of a transnationally constituted left antifascist hegemony within the Jewish community. The memory of the Holocaust, and the impact of transnational antifascism, created a transnational Jewish political subjectivity with a political discourse that was not confined to that of Australian nationalism. There was a widespread consensus in Jewish communities worldwide about the dangers of West Germany and the failure of de-Nazification. This consensus was given expression

[197] Laurence Collinson, "Traitor Silence," The Hanger Collection of Australian Playscripts, University of Queensland Library, ca. 1953. Collinson, a young gay Jewish communist, was employed for a short time by the JCCFAS, where amongst other things, he set up a drama group with the Youth section. "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Annual Report 1952-1953," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). He also contributed to the short lived JCCFAS affiliated Jewish left magazine, *The Clarion (1952)*, see Laurence Collinson, "New Europe," *The Clarion: A Progressive Jewish Monthly, no. 1 (1952).* For more on Collinson, see William Hatherell, "The Brisbane Years of Laurence Collinson," *Queensland Review* 13, no. 2 (2006): 1-12; Graham Willett, "Moods of Love and Commitment: Laurence Collinson in Melbourne," *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 83 (2009): 77-91.

[198] Sam Goldbloom, interview by Suzanne Rutland, 12 April 1988, State Library of New South Wales, Suzanne Rutland collection, CY MLOH 437/135.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid. As noted in the introduction this defeat of the Jewish left was not a total defeat.

through international Jewish organisations and the international Jewish press. The campaign was based on a sophisticated analysis of West German politics and the failures of de-Nazification. The JCCFAS's association with communism, support for the Soviet Union, and their unwavering opposition to the West German regime, meant their politics increasingly differed from mainstream Jewish organisations and the anti-communist right, placing them on opposite sides of the Cold War.

However, their analysis also differed significantly from the CPA line. They developed a distinctive Jewish antifascist left political position. The JCCFAS attempted to foreground the memory of the Holocaust in their campaign through engaging with Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors. They had some success in this endeavour but ultimately the Jewish Labour Bund's fanatical anti-communism halted this collaboration. The experience and memory of the Holocaust survivors, escaping not just the legacy of fascism but also communist repression, meant the transnational dimension of the political imagination in the Jewish community could also work strongly against the JCCFAS. This was also the case with Zionism, the ultimate successor to left antifascism as the hegemonic ideology of the Jewish community. Up until 1952, the Jewish antifascist left and the Zionist movement worked in a loose alliance. With Israel and West Germany entering into formal negotiations over Holocaust reparations, the Zionist movement accommodated itself to a new Cold War realpolitik ending the common anti-German cause it had with the antifascist left.

I have suggested that the AGMC was not a straightforward assertion or product of 'governmental belonging'. As articulated by the Jewish left, it represented the assertion of a Jewish political subjectivity through a particular antifascist version of nationalism. The legitimacy of this political claim was contested by the government and conservative groups such as the RSL, who sought to dispute the rationality of the campaign, painting it as emotional and sectional. Throughout the 1940s, the Jewish community, the JCCFAS and other left-wing groups made claims to belonging in Australia as loyal, productive and contributing citizens. These were public arguments against antisemitism and for Jewish migration. The AGMC and its associated propaganda represented a qualitative break with this earlier public discourse. Although the propaganda was often framed within a progressive nationalist language, a transnational antifascist political imaginary was a major constitutive element of the thinking, action and organisation of the AGMC.

The Jewish right, in the ascendency in the early 1950s as a result of the Cold War, had a more conservative strategy which depended on an exclusivist nationalism to claim a governmental belonging based on whiteness. Whiteness should be understood here in its geopolitical dimensions. The conservative Jewish push to escape antisemitism through an embrace of whiteness was enabled through a new congruence between Zionism, anti-communism and Cold War foreign policy. This meant a new post-war Jewish respectability politics involved purging the Jewish left along with claims that they were no longer authentically Jewish. The terms of Jewishness were redefined to exclude elements which would prevent Jewishness from becoming compatible with whiteness, figured here as achievable through political loyalty and quiescence. As Zionism became congruent with anti-communism, Jewish nationalism and a new form of Jewish assimilationism became conjoined, edging out alternative political formations.

The short term failure of the Jewish right's strategy itself demonstrates both the barriers to whiteness for Jews in this period, betrayed by their supposed allies the RSL, and also the failure of attempts to effectively racially other German migrants.[201] A 1948 survey showed non-Jewish German migrants were consistently rated by Australians as more desirable than Jewish migrants.[202] As Rutland suggests, one of the most salient points to take from this entire affair was that while 50,000 Germans ended up being sponsored by the government to migrate to Australia during the 1950s, there were restrictions on Jewish migration until the mid-1950s. Fewer than 25,000 Jews, largely sponsored by Australian and American Jewish organisations, were allowed to migrate to Australia in the entire period from 1946-1959.[203]

If this thesis was ordered chronologically, the end of the AGMC would form the end of my narrative. However, this thesis seeks to avoid replicating other historical narratives that indicate an absolute finality to the defeat of the Jewish antifascist left in this period. Thus, the following two chapters analyse the Jewish antifascist and Australian cultural landscape in the period from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s. While I suggest that there was a strong relationship here between contemporaneous political developments and cultural products, they do not map neatly onto each other. Indeed, issues were raised in

[201] For an overview of the very quick rehabilitation of the image of Germans in the Australian media following World War Two, see Gisela Kaplan, "From "Enemy Alien" to Assisted Immigrant: Australian Public Opinion of Germans and Germany in the Australian Print Media, 1945-1956," in *German-Australian Cultural Relations since 1945*, ed. Manfred Jurgensen (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995).
[202] Oeser and Hammond, *Social Structure and Personality*, 64.
[203] Rutland, "Nazis Unwelcome!," 230; Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 405.

Jewish antifascist writing and painting that were not central to Jewish antifascist political organising. Thus, having examined how the Jewish antifascist left positioned itself with regards to a shifting Australian racial and political landscape constituted through migration policies and larger geo-political forces in this chapter, in the following two chapters I look again at this landscape. This time however, I focus on how the Jewish antifascist left related to Australian cultural nationalism and settler colonialism. In these chapters I focus on the cultural politics of the Jewish antifascist left. It is in the creative works associated with Jewish antifascism, rather than in political campaigns, that we find the most significant engagement with issues such as the relationship between settlers and Indigenous people in Australia; and it is here that we can find a deeper understanding of the Jewish antifascist imagination.

Chapter Five: Jewish Antifascism, Australian Cultural Nationalism and Settler Colonialism

The fact that I, for example, am an Australian settler is not a product of my individual consciousness. Rather, it is a historical condition that preceded me. Neither I nor other settlers can will our way out of it, whether we want to or not. No doubt our respective individual consciousnesses affect how each of us responds to this shared historical positionality, but they did not create it and they cannot undo it.

Patrick Wolfe[1]

The road to an Australian literature, read by an Australian audience, is not a self-conscious Australianism clamant for more and better gum leaves. The poet can afford to twang his lyre without draping himself in flags; you will know his note when you hear him sing.

Brian Fitzpatrick[2]

'A Nazi Writes Home' by 'L.F.' was published in *Unity* in July 1951.[3] It was a fictional letter of furious irony from 'Fritz', a Nazi in Australia, to another Nazi named 'Hans' in Germany, reporting on his experiences. Fritz described how he initially hated the egalitarianism of Australia but then realised how brutally Aboriginal people were treated. He then celebrated Australia as an exemplary country of white supremacy or as 'Fritz' put it, 'the true Aryan theory'. Fritz ran through the different ways that Aboriginal people were discriminated against and segregated in a typical country town he had visited:

[1] Patrick Wolfe, "Recuperating Binarism: A Heretical Introduction," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3-4 (2013): 263.
[2] Brian Fitzpatrick, *Songs & Poems* (Melbourne: Wilke & Co., 1931), 5.
[3] L.F., "A Nazi Writes Home," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 4 (1951). The effect of anonymising the piece was to tie it more closely to the editorial position of *Unity*. There is certainly no distancing disclaimer accompanying the piece as there had been for other articles in *Unity* on controversial subjects.

> They try to rent houses… Occasionally they get an old ruined hovel, but they are not allowed even that for long… They try to get in the dances but the doorkeeper bars the way. Under some Social-Democratic Education Minister, the colored children were some years ago allowed into the school. But the whites quickly organised a strike. I do not like strikes. But I like that strike. It soon sent the colored children back into their ghetto.

Fritz suggested that 'Australia is a land where the principles of National-Socialism are not altogether foreign.' As I detail further below, although the article was satirical in genre, it was a clear statement of solidarity between Jewish antifascism and Aboriginal struggles of the period.

In the previous chapter I ended by highlighting the persistence of the racialisation faced by Jewish people in Australia in the 1940s and early 1950s, emphasising their undesirability as immigrants and the antisemitism of Australia. In this chapter I build on this analysis while emphasising the structural position of the Jews in Australia as settlers. Lorenzo Veracini suggests that rather than a binary relationship between settlers and Indigenous people, in settler colonial situations there is a third structural position, that of the migrant. In his account, although both migrants and settlers move from one place to another, often staying there permanently, only settlers attempt to recreate their original society in the new place, actively displacing the sovereignty of Indigenous people and constituting a new political order. Migrants face an already established political order which they variously 'subvert, accommodate to, or are coopted by'.[4] Although all migrants ultimately benefit from the dispossession of Indigenous people, they can only be 'coopted within settler colonial political regimes' on an individual basis.[5] Veracini does not discuss how or why various migrants are accepted or not accepted into the polity, nor does he countenance a measure of collective agency in how various migrant groups negotiate their inclusion within the political order and their relationship to settler colonialism. While Veracini's discussion is useful, my analysis here stems instead from Patrick Wolfe's position that under conditions of settler colonialism, being a settler is not a matter of choice or consciousness: one is either a settler or Indigenous and one does not have degrees of 'settlerness' which can be

[4] Lorenzo Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present* (New York Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 42.
[5] Ibid., 40.

indexed according to a volitional scale. The designations of settler and Indigenous are structural positions.[6]

In Veracini's account the possibilities of non-Indigenous people acting or not acting in solidarity with Indigenous people to resist 'settlerism', the practice and ideology of settlers eliminating Indigenous people in order to replace them, is a matter for the individual.[7] Counter to this emphasis on individual deviation from or acceptance of the norms of settlerism, and taking inspiration from scholars such as Eric L. Goldstein (who has worked on Jewish positioning in the changing US racial order), I suggest that by aiming for inclusion within 'whiteness' or a national settler polity, migrant or ethnic groups can collectively collude with an oppressive regime of racialisation, exclusion and elimination.[8] Jewish people in this rendering are not passive objects defined solely through a changing governmental racial discourse. They deploy varied political and cultural ideologies which involve differing notions of race, religion and ethnicity to partially shape their own positioning within Jewish and non-Jewish discourse.[9] In both the US and Australia this positioning takes place within a racial regime determined by settler colonialism.

Veracini and Wolfe both highlight that settlerism functions as a displacement of internal social conflict. Veracini suggests that settlerism relies on the constitutive fantasy of a society without wage labour and without set class relations.[10] In Australia the change from a colonial to a settler colonial regime thus involved the institution of a new political order which imagined 'an egalitarian, classless society' and a 'conflict-less body politic'.[11] Wolfe too emphasises the effect of frontier ideology in the 'suppression

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[6] Wolfe, "Recuperating Binarism." See also Candace Fujikane, "Introduction: Asian Settler Colonialism in the U.S. Colony of Hawai'i," in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i*, ed. Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).
[7] Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, 40; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409. 'Settlerism' is a term employed by Marcelo Svirsky, see Marcelo Svirsky, "On the Study of Collaborative Struggles in Settler Societies," *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 4 (2014): 434.
[8] Which is not to analyse these groups as being able to act as a monolithic whole, see Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). See also Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxiii-xxvi; Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
[9] Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*.
[10] Lorenzo Veracini, "Ian Turner's The Australian Dream and Australia's "Settler Transition"," *Journal of Australian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2016): 305.
[11] Ibid., 306.

of divisions within settler society', suggesting that this flows through to the post-1970s ideology of multiculturalism where, despite a society riven with racialised structures of exploitation and domination, these differences are suppressed and contained through the imagination of, in Alex Trimble Young's wording, a 'pluralist yet ultimately unified national polity.'[12]

In this chapter, I draw on Andrea Smith's formulation of the three pillars of white supremacy to suggest that not only were Jewish people of this period subject to a structural racism, they were at the same time participants in furthering an eliminationist ideology which buttressed white supremacy. Smith provides us with a materialist framework for understanding what she calls, in the US context, the three pillars of white supremacy. These are firstly, 'slaveability'/anti-Black racism which anchors capitalism; secondly, genocide which anchors colonialism; and thirdly, Orientalism which anchors war.[13] Australia does not have the same history of slavery as the US, so for our purposes we can focus on Smith's two other pillars to explicate the Australian relationship between whiteness, racialisation, immigrants and Indigenous people.[14]

Smith's logic of genocide aligns with Wolfe's logic of elimination. In this figuration Indigenous people must be removed to enable the settler's exploitation of the land. This logic underpins an ongoing genocidal structure.[15] Smith's third pillar is Orientalism; she draws on Edward Said to suggest that the racism experienced by immigrants to the US is underpinned by a broader geopolitical context — in this case the US position as global hegemon. Orientalism serves to other and exoticise immigrants from certain countries or religions. It marks 'certain people or nations … as a constant threat to the

[12] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999), 168 cited in Alex Trimble Young, "Settler Sovereignty and the Rhizomatic West, or, the Significance of the Frontier in Postwestern Studies," *Western American Literature* 48, no. 1-2 (2013): 118. Multiculturalism in Wolfe's rendering means for Indigenous people 'what has changed is not the assimilationism but the ethnic profile of that whose mimicry constitutes assimilation — assimilation just looks different.' Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*, 206.
[13] Andrea Smith, "Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy," in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Daniel Martinez HoSang, Oneka LaBennett, and Laura Pulido (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 68.
[14] This is not to say that slavery did not exist in Australian history, see Tracey Banivanua-Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Indentured Labor Trade* (University of Hawaii Press, 2007). There is an ongoing historical discussion about whether the forced and unpaid labour of Indigenous people in Australia constituted forms of slavery, see Clare Corbould, "Black Internationalism's Shifting Alliances: African American Newspapers, the White Australia Policy, and Indigenous Australians, 1919–1948," *History Compass* 15, no. 5 (2017): 3.
[15] Smith, "Indigeneity," 69-70.

wellbeing of empire'.[16] Immigrants can become symbols of a perceived civilisational or moral challenge to the culture and values of Western society. Crucially Smith notes that although her pillars of white supremacy are interrelated they are also distinct, allowing for an account in which those who are oppressed or subjugated under one logic can also participate in another. For our purposes, the most important example of this would be that someone who is negatively racialised under an Orientalist logic can still participate in the settler colonial project, benefitting from and furthering a racial and political order constituted in an ongoing way by the exploitation of stolen land.[17] Rather than a simple white, non-white binary, different logics of race apply to racialised groups based on the material foundation of their racialisation.[18] This materialist account of the different logics of white supremacy allows for a historically grounded understanding of racialised subjects' agency and interaction.

In line with Goldstein and Smith I suggest that, like other migrant groups, Jewish people were not passively defined under these discourses; they struggled often in a contested and contradictory manner to collectively self-define themselves in relationship to both antisemitism and settler colonialism. Jewish antifascist literature provides a lens through which to examine some of these complexities. Jewish antifascist cultural expression of this period was at once the product of a settler subjectivity but also provides evidence that migrant or racialised non-Indigenous people can have some measure of limited collective agency in negotiating their position within the dominant racial order.

This complex negotiation of the positioning of Jewish subjectivities within the Australian racial order manifested in often highly contradictory ways in Jewish cultural production of this period. As argued in previous chapters, elements of Popular Front antifascist ideology tended towards a cross-class emphasis on the defence of Enlightenment values, suppressing class politics in the defence of national 'democracy'.[19] In the case of Jewish antifascism in Australia, this often meant a discourse highlighting a struggle of progressives or democrats against reactionaries

[16] Ibid., 69.
[17] Ibid., 70.
[18] Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London and New York: Verso, 2016).
[19] For an analysis of different ideas of 'democracy' within 1930s European antifascist discourse, see Tom Buchanan, "Anti-Fascism and Democracy in the 1930s," *European History Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2002): 39-57.

rather than a framing in explicit class terms. This emphasis on the national-popular cross-class fight against fascism meant that Jewish antifascists were susceptible to the reproduction of settlerist ideology which similarly promised a vision of egalitarian and multi-ethnic national belonging which could guarantee Jewish safety without the prospect of class conflict. As we will see below this was also key to the Australian cultural nationalist movement. However as suggested in previous chapters, there were also more critical strands to Jewish antifascism which particularly emphasised an internationalist anti-racism and anti-imperialism. These more critical frameworks for thinking the transnational place of Jewish antifascism provided openings for Jewish solidarity with Aboriginal struggles (as well as other anticolonial struggles).

In this chapter I introduce two short stories and a short article from *Unity* magazine to highlight three interrelated and overlapping threads within antifascist Jewish discourse in relation to Indigenous people and settler colonialism. I then outline further the wider cultural context of these ideas, including a burgeoning Australian cultural nationalism, debates within the wider Australian left and the cultural impact of Aboriginal activism and global decolonisation. In the following chapter I move to an analysis of *Jewish Youth* magazine and the work of Judah Waten, both of which are key to understanding and defining Australian Jewish left cultural expression of this period. Through this analysis I sketch, schematically, the mixed imbrication of Jewish antifascist cultural expression, Australian cultural nationalism and settler colonialism.

'What good was it to the black man to be an Australian?': three modes of engagement with settler colonialism

While 'A Nazi Writes Home' made reference to the genocide in Tasmania as 'a magnificent example' of racial extermination, the piece should not be read as a direct comparison between a past genocide of Aboriginal people and the Holocaust.[20] Instead it suggested that the contemporary government policies of repression, elimination and exclusion of Aboriginal people were pleasing to and along the lines of Nazi reactionary anti-egalitarian racial thinking. The analogy was not historical but current, the Nazi characters in the story being evidence of an ideology still very much in play and in need

[20] L.F., "A Nazi Writes Home."

of combatting in the post-war world. The context of 'A Nazi Writes Home' should be understood with reference to the antifascism of *Unity* turning further towards a critique of imperialism and colonialism, as well as multidirectional comparisons being made between the Holocaust, fascism and anticolonial struggles.

The other major context for 'A Nazi Writes Home', and indeed the context which conditions all the cultural expression discussed in this chapter and the next, were the substantial changes in the situation of Aboriginal people in the immediate post-war years, the wave of union organising and mobilisation in the Pilbara and in the Northern Territory in particular. As discussed by Deborah Wilson, Australia's war efforts meant large numbers of Aboriginal workers were employed in the north-west, receiving proper wages, while a similar situation occurred in the Northern Territory for Aboriginal people employed by the military. This experience of relative equality with white workers was a major spur for a wave of organising across pastoral stations after the War.[21]

One of the main conduits for the national publicisation and support of these campaigns were activists involved in the Communist Party, associated trade unions and civil society groups. Evidence of this is the highlighting in 'A Nazi Writes Home' of Fred Waters, an Aboriginal union leader, whose plight became a cause célèbre across Australia, spread particularly through left and trade union networks.[22] As noted by Bain Attwood the campaign around Waters resulted in the formation of the Melbourne based Council for Aboriginal Rights (CAR). The Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS) became affiliated to the CAR and sent a delegate to meetings regularly. This was one site of many where Jewish antifascists had the opportunity to become acquainted with Aboriginal activists through left connections.[23]

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[21] Deborah Wilson, *Different White People: Radical Activism for Aboriginal Rights 1946-1972* (Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Publishing, 2015), 39-42.

[22] Douglas Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics and the Trade Union Movement, 1945-1960," (Victoria University, 2011), 300-302. One of the prominent co-sponsors of a major public protest meeting on the matter, along with Canon Farnham Maynard and Doug Nicholls, was Alan Marshall who I will discuss later in this chapter. Bain Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines* (Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 132-136.

[23] Ibid., 132-136; "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 14th March 1951, 25th July 1951," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1). The large civil society peace congresses and campaigns around peace, and civil and human rights including the fight against the Communist Party Dissolution Bill were also occasions of participation from both the Jewish Council and Aboriginal activist groups. E.g. "19 Illawarra Delegates Attend Peace Congress," *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, May 4 1950.

For the character Fritz, the banishment of Waters, 'who dared to demand that aborigines be treated as human beings', caused him to 'laugh with joy', while similar mirth was inspired by the atrocious treatment of the Aboriginal artist Albert Namatjira.[24] This highlighting of Aboriginal agency and resistance meant 'A Nazi Writes Home' was a significant advance on the discourse of a previous article written by Rt. Rev. Dr. E. H. Burgmann for *Unity*. Burgmann's article titled 'Civilisation is not Enough', although noting that 'our present occupation of Australia has been at the price of the lives of an interesting and innocent race', discussed Aboriginal people in a sympathetic though ultimately assimilationist mode. Burgmann furthered the idea of the dying or doomed race, utilising this trope to prompt questions about the survival or extinction of Western civilisation.[25] It is notable that the assimilationist discourse employed by sympathetic white reformers of the time was criticised in 'A Nazi Writes Home'. The discourse of Christian missionaries treating Aboriginal people with 'benevolence' was praised by Fritz as 'clever deceptive phrases' as their methods were leading to assimilation and the elimination of Aboriginal people. The idea of 'half-castes' as opposed to 'real aborigines' in assimilationist discourse, was pilloried by 'L.F' as akin to Nazi racial science.[26]

By drawing attention to Nazism as a transnational racial ideology with a clear analogue in Australian government policy, 'L.F.' not only drew a clear link between the ongoing fascist threat and the white supremacist racial order of Australian settler colonialism but crucially opened a space for antifascists to see clear continuities between their politics and the struggles of Aboriginal people and their allies. There was an explicit linking here of the oppression of Jews, African American and Aboriginal people in phrasing such as: '[t]hey go to the cinema, but they are forced to sit in the Jim Crow section. The

[24] L.F., "A Nazi Writes Home."
[25] Dr. E.H. Burgmann, "Civilization Is Not Enough," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949). For an appraisal of this idea in settler literature, see Hamish Dalley, "The Deaths of Settler Colonialism: Extinction as a Metaphor of Decolonization in Contemporary Settler Literature," *Settler Colonial Studies* 8, no. 1 (2018): 30-46.
[26] The distinction between 'full Aborigines' and lesser or 'part Aborigines' was a mainstay of the discourse of this period even amongst progressive allies of Indigenous people. The CPA nominally retained these distinctions until 1954, see Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions," 256; Bob Boughton, "The Communist Party of Australia's Involvement in the Struggle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Rights 1920-1970," in *Labour & Community: Historical Essays*, ed. Raymond Markey (Wollongong: University of Woolongong, 2001); Padraic Gibson, ""Struggle with the Aborigines against Australian Imperialism!" - the Making of the Communist Party of Australia's 1931 Manifesto on Aboriginal Oppression," Paper presented at Workers of the World: the 15th Biennial Labour History Conference, University of Queensland, 2017.

ghetto.' The sentence about the strike also indicates the positioning of Nazism as part of a reactionary ideology aimed at stemming the progressive social change associated with the organised working class. The effect of 'A Nazi Writes Home' was to place the oppression of Aboriginal people within an international antifascist framing and, by doing so, implicitly suggest that antifascists needed to join in solidarity against the racial 'traditions' of Australia and the policies of the Australian state.

While 'A Nazi Writes Home' stands out for its clarity and ferocity, it was not a wholly isolated or anomalous representation of these politics. 'Where a Man Belongs' is a short story by David Martin, published in the same issue of *Unity* as 'A Nazi Writes Home'.[27] It engaged with similar themes, albeit in a different mode. Martin's story was very much in the 'strange Jew in strange Australian environs' genre of Pinchas Goldhar.[28] 'Where a Man Belongs' is the story of Mr Cowen, a Hungarian Jewish migrant who travels to a country town to sell frocks manufactured in Melbourne.[29] The name 'Cowen' as we later learn is an assimilated version of 'Cohen', while his new first name 'Jack' replaces 'Jacob'. The first lines of Martin's story indicate the forced and uncomfortable nature of the putative egalitarianism expected of new settlers in Australia.[30] Cowen wakes up with a 'stale taste in his mouth' from a night of drinking: 'he was unused to beer and had done it only to be matey'. Cowen is not immediately comfortable inhabiting a settler subjectivity. In terms that recall the figure of the Western frontier common to both Australia and North America, for Cowen 'this was the first time that he had come so far west, and already he regretted his curiosity'. In the first half of the story Martin highlights Cowen's statelessness as well as his inability to make adjustments in his thinking suitable to the new country he has found himself in. Cowen is alienated by the manners and social customs of the new society, and feels self-conscious about his clumsy use of slang as he attempts to fit in.

[27] David Martin, "Where a Man Belongs," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 4 (1951).
[28] See Pinchas Goldhar, *The Collected Stories of Pinchas Goldhar: A Pioneer Yiddish Writer in Australia* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2016).
[29] Martin, "Where a Man Belongs."
[30] An excellent representation of the violent and coercive nature of this pseudo-egalitarianism is in the classic Australian film and novel 'Wake in Fright'. See Docker's analysis of the film's depiction of a masculine 'inclusive coloniser cosmopolitanism' in John Docker, "Epistemological Vertigo and Allegory: Thoughts on Massacres Actual, Surrogate and Averted—Beersheba, Wake in Fright and Australia," in *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*, ed. Frances Peters-Little, Ann Curthoys, and John Docker (Canberra: ANU e-press, 2010), 64.

In the second half of the story, Cowen receives his letter of naturalisation, bringing a wave of relief as well as reflections on the precarious 'guilty innocence' of the immigrant alien with no citizenship rights or permanence. Buoyed by this news Cowen imagines his new Australian life, feeling a new sense of connection and belonging to the people he encounters as he walks through the town exclaiming '[a]n Australian … fair dinkum!' Cowen then crosses a bridge and comes across an Aboriginal man living in poverty in a 'little humpy'. In an extraordinary scene Cowen goes under a fence and gives the man some tobacco for his pipe and:

> a feeling as of pity welled up in Mr. Cowen. Also a consciousness of the strangeness of their meeting: here were they, the oldest and the newest Australian, and the new one had a right to be sorry for the old one. A right to be sorry! What good was it to the black man to be an Australian? What good indeed? Only to be left, rotting and abandoned, with a slum all to himself at the edge of the town.[31]

After smoking the tobacco, the Aboriginal man asks Cowen if he 'belong this place?' Cowen initially shakes his head in a gesture we can interpret as half a negative answer and half a shake to himself regarding the difficulty of answering the question. He then answers: 'Yes I belong here … But I've come a long way. I am a Jew. You don't know what that is, I suppose?'[32]

The title of Martin's story here comes into focus. In the Aboriginal English evoked here, asking where you 'belong' also meant asking where you come from and which group you are part of.[33] Cowen still buoyed by his naturalisation, regards himself now as a new Australian, and thus has 'a right to be sorry', a peculiar phrase that Martin has Cowen repeat twice. Cowen here takes on a certain sense of 'governmental belonging': as an Australian he feels a new sense of responsibility, pity and power. He also apprehends the nature of his Australianness and its contingent racial character anew, recognising the very different racialisation experienced by a new Australian such as himself and the 'oldest' Australian.

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[31] Martin, "Where a Man Belongs."
[32] Ibid.
[33] This question in fact has multiple interpretations, depending upon how the term 'belong' was being used: '[I]n Central Australian Aboriginal English, *belong* is used as a preposition to mark possession and purpose (comparable to *of* and *for* in Australian English).' Farzad Sharifian, "A Cultural-Conceptual Approach and World Englishes: The Case of Aboriginal English," *World Englishes* 25, no. 1 (2006): 14 paraphrasing Harold Koch, "Central Australian Aboriginal English: In Comparison with the Morphosyntactic Categories of Kaytetye," *Asian Englishes* 3, no. 2 (2000).

The feeling of national and governmental belonging that Cowen could achieve was barred to the constitutively excluded 'black man'. The idea of the 'Australian' was only possible through settler colonisation. While Martin's story could have ended here, the twist in the tale comes at the end with the Aboriginal man's answer: '"Jew", he said, nodding his head with sober deliberation. "I know Jew, him belong fellas kill Jesus?" Mr Cowen turned and walked quickly back to the fence and the bridge.' Martin, rather than falling into a mystical or doomed image of Aboriginal people, typical of Australian literature at the time, turns this image on its head allowing the Aboriginal character the particular modernity of antisemitic prejudices.[34] Cowen's sense of governmental belonging involving pity towards this man is suddenly and rudely upended and his Australianness brought again into question. He is turned back to the symbolic, potentially violent ambiguity inherent in the structures of national belonging, 'the fence and the bridge.'

One reading of Martin's story is that it pessimistically suggests that idealistic notions of Jewish-Indigenous solidarity against an interlinked racially oppressive order are an impossibility. There is too much distance between a Jewish man struggling desperately to find belonging through assimilation into white supremacist settler colonialism, and an Aboriginal man with an imbibed Christian consciousness and no interest in, or anything to gain at this juncture, from anti-racist solidarity. I suggest however that the depiction of this unhappy encounter of mutual misunderstanding indicates a broader interrogation of the historical and political forces which made this encounter possible. Its outlining of the Jewish migrant's position as a settler was a necessary precursor to any real politics of anti-racist solidarity.

As discussed above, there is a tendency within some scholarship to a flattening of racist practices, suggesting that all non-white people are equally and in the same way the victims of a monolithic notion of racism, instead of seeing that 'their historical

[34] While this was an anti-Jewish trope that preceded modern antisemitism, in the Jewish antifascist analysis these older tropes had been reconditioned to perform a significant ideological role in modern manifestations of racial antisemitism, see Julian Rose, "That Crucifixion Story," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 1 (1949; Suzanne Rutland, "Postwar Anti-Jewish Refugee Hysteria: A Case of Racial or Religious Bigotry?," *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no. 77 (2003): 69-79. John Docker critically assesses the cultural milieu associated with *Meanjin* in particular at this time, for viewing Aboriginal culture through anthropological discourse, instrumentally, in a version of the 'noble savage' trope, representing an authentic and organic connection with the land as against the technologically alienated relations of mass society. John Docker, *Australian Cultural Elites: Intellectual Traditions in Sydney and Melbourne* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1974), 89-94.

oppressions are not the same'.[35] These differing histories come into focus when we recognise the transnational or international dimension of Martin's story. Rather than a simple story of an ethnic Hungarian coming to Australia, Cowen's past as a stateless refugee is foregrounded: 'he was a Hungarian when last he had a passport'. Martin here already problematises the notion of nationality and belonging, or rather recognises the immense political problem thrown up by antisemitism, European nationalisms and the production of millions of stateless people. That no justice was forthcoming for Jews from the new post-war creation of West Germany is also highlighted: 'Mr Cowen's claims for compensation from the German Government for the robbery of his old business were collecting dust in Bonn.' In the moment of joy over his naturalisation Cowen recalls 'the old days'. Cowen says in an oblique reference to the Holocaust, 'the old days were dead, they had been killed.' Reflecting the post-war Jewish antifascist worldview, Martin's story was not a depiction of a world that had made a clear break from Nazism and the Holocaust; rather, the injustices, consequences and ongoing threat of fascism were foregrounded.

The story, typical of Australian Jewish antifascist literature of the period, despite the very characteristic Australian small-town setting, takes a global, transnational perspective and by doing so problematises the very fact of Jewish participation in settler colonialism. Martin's story asks sincerely: what were Jewish migrants doing there? How did they get there and what situation had they come into? The most important question posed by the story is to ask what degree of agency Jews have to criticise, question and position themselves differently from participation in settlement and white supremacy. Martin highlights the constructed, political and contingent nature of belonging in a particular Australian racial order in a transnational perspective. Cowen and the unnamed Aboriginal man meet as subjects produced through broad and powerful historical events and structures. Martin's story is broadly representative of a mode of Jewish literary engagement with Indigenous people during this period that aimed to produce a social critique and appraisal of differing racial positionalities.[36] While certainly not a clear statement of antifascist or antiracist solidarity, this mode of

[35] Dean Itsuji Saranillio, "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: A Thought Piece on Critiques, Debates, and Indigenous Difference," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3-4 (2013): 282. An example of this flattening approach is in Catriona Elder, Cath Ellis, and Angela Pratt, "Whiteness in Constructions of Australian Nationhood: Indigenes, Immigrants and Governmentality," in *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004).
[36] This mode will be further explored with reference to Judah Waten's works in the following chapter.

expression problematised Jewish participation in Australian settlement by drawing attention to the differing experiences of racialisation encountered by Jews and Aboriginal people. This was achieved by an attempt to view these issues from a transnational perspective, conditioned by a transnational or migrant audience.

The third piece which highlights another mode of contemporaneous Jewish engagement with these themes is a book review published in the November-December 1949 issue of *Unity*. Entitled 'Henry Lawson in Hebrew', this was a review of a book titled *Eretz Chadasha* [New Land], containing 22 selected stories of Henry Lawson translated into Hebrew by Chaya Kaufman and published by Sifriat Poalim (the left-wing Israeli publishing house mentioned in Chapter Three). The reviewer 'H.B' (very likely Hyam Brezniak) noted that:

> They may have something in common, the man of the new Jewish State and the man of the Australia of which Henry Lawson wrote. Lawson belonged to a time when the country was in the making. He expressed pain, struggle and triumph, and because of that the "Australian classic", as he is called in the translation, can catch the imagination of the young people of Israel, who came to drain the swamps and build from a barren soil, who through sweat, pain and struggle could see the birth of a new nation. [37]

The reviewer continued, suggesting that Lawson was 'among the first to build the new Australian literature', and that '[t]his was the literature which became national in its character and which is also an inspiration to those people who also are in their first struggles for a life which produces new traditions and literature to give expression to the new man on new soil.'

I suggest that the mode of engagement here was an uncritical embrace of a settler subjectivity tied to the ideals of cultural nationalism.[38] As discussed in Chapter Three, in Zionist discourse the idea of 'a barren soil', draining the swamps and making the desert bloom were ideological tropes used to project an image that the land in Palestine was either vacant or unproductive until the arrival of European Jewish settlers. This was meant to indicate that either the land was literally vacant — a 'land without a people, for a people without a land' — or that, as per Locke, that those who made the land

[37] H.B., "Henry Lawson in Hebrew," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1949).
[38] As discussed above, settlerism represents a certain mystifying form of bourgeois nationalism, putatively egalitarian but in reality, suppressing of class contradictions within settler society and eliminationist against Indigenous people.

productive by mixing their labour with the land had a greater moral claim to it.[39] In any case, this idea was often combined in Zionist ideology with the idea of making 'New Jews'.[40] In this sense Zionism was only one expression of a very popular notion (originating with the Haskalah) amongst European Jews that Jews were in an abnormal position within society: stuck in 'non-productive' economic positions in either finance, commerce or trade on the one hand or *luftmenschen* (people living on nothing) on the other.[41] This was deemed a social effect as well as a cause of antisemitism and thus to combat antisemitism Jews needed to become economically 'normal' people. In some ideologies this meant a normal distribution across class society. In the Soviet Union it meant Jews becoming proletarians. But in many visions, it was infused with a romantic pastoralism and culminated in the idea of Jews returning to the land to redeem themselves physically, spiritually and economically through agricultural labour.[42]

As we have seen in previous chapters, the idea of the 'New Jew', with a new type of united Jewish consciousness and a new Jewish culture was also prevalent amongst post-war antifascists, although Jewish antifascists for the most part had a different analysis of antisemitism and methods for its combat. In the review by 'H.B.' we have a celebration of the typical Zionist idea of the 'New Jew' forged in the struggle to colonise Palestine but it is in the context of a discussion of Henry Lawson. Without going into the content of Lawson's writing, it will suffice for us to note that Lawson's work was at the centre of the 1940s and 1950s revival of the idea of an egalitarian, anti-authoritarian, typically Australian cultural tradition.[43] This tradition made particular reference to the bushmen

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[39] Wolfe, *Traces of History,* 217, 225. Cole Harris, "How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 1 (2003): 171.
[40] Tamar Mayer, "From Zero to Hero: Masculinity in Jewish Nationalism," in *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, ed. Tamar Mayer (London: Routledge, 2000); George L. Mosse, "Max Nordau, Liberalism and the New Jew," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992): 565-581; Yitzhak Conforti, ""The New Jew" in the Zionist Movement: Ideology and Historiography," *Australian Journal for Jewish Studies*, no. 25 (2011): 87-118.
[41] Wolfe, *Traces of History,* 224-229. This idea was heavily gendered, see Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 221-312.
[42] See Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). For an examination of how these ideologies were formed and functioned in practice in Belorussia in the early 1920s, see Andrew Sloin, *The Jewish Revolution in Belorussia: Economy, Race, and Bolshevik Power* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), 83-113.
[43] John Docker, "Culture, Society and the Communist Party," in *Australia's First Cold War: 1945-1953,* ed. Ann Curthoys and John Merritt (North Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 188-189; Allan Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere and Communist Cultural Discourse in Cold War Australia," (University of Queensland, 1993), 121, 181, 328. This movement was certainly not one dimensional and there were different debates and tendencies within it, as discussed below.

of the 1890s. As will be discussed later in the chapter, some of the key cultural nationalist definers and promoters of these ideas were very close to the Jewish left in this period. We would be remiss to think that 'Henry Lawson in Hebrew' was an indication of a broader trend of Zionist or Yishuvist enthusiasm for, or appropriation of, Australian discourse celebrating 'pioneer culture' and the particular masculine nationalist tropes shared by 'the Bushman' and the Zionist settler. Rather participating and helping to define Australian cultural nationalism during this period addressed two related concerns for Australian Jews and perhaps particularly left-wing antifascist Jews.

One concern was the need to encourage a new Jewish identity that was a decisive break with past internal and external conceptions of Jewish identity. As discussed in previous chapters, a new Jewish political subjectivity and cultural conception were seen as needed to face the social and political realities of the post-Holocaust world still riven with the dangers of fascism, reaction and antisemitism. Embracing elements of Australian cultural nationalism meant that such a project became possible in the Australian political and cultural context. The apparent ideals of cultural nationalism — including a break with British identity, so closely tied to British imperialism, and an egalitarianism posed against hierarchical social structures — could be understood as the embrace of progressive ideals against outmoded reaction.[44] As discussed further below there was a perceived homology between the celebration of certain Australian folk traditions and Yiddish folk culture, meaning that cultural nationalism was partly understood as opening a voice for marginal and 'ordinary' people. All of the above was very attractive for left-wing Jews of this period.

The second concern that aspects of Australian cultural nationalism could be seen to address was the position of Jews in relation to both a transnational and a particularly Australian racial order as discussed above. Abigail Bakan suggests that the establishment of Israel as a European settler colonial state, understood and coded as modern, white and beneficial for Western imperialism — was 'a ticket to Jewish whiteness' for white Jews internationally.[45] As we saw in the previous chapter, Israel's post-1950 geo-political positioning meant Zionism could easily slot into a new form of

[44] Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), xiii.
[45] Abigail B. Bakan, "Race, Class, and Colonialism: Reconsidering the "Jewish Question"," in *Theorizing Anti-Racism: Linkages in Marxism and Critical Race Theories*, ed. Abigail B. Bakan and Enakshi Dua (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 262. For a discussion of Theodor Herzl along these lines, see Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 301-312.

hegemonic political assimilationism tied to an embrace of Cold War politics and exclusivist whiteness in Australian Jewish communities. Although I would suggest that this had more to do with Israel's position within Western imperialism, a minor current of Australian Jewish discourse also invoked the type of settler solidarity present in 'H.B.'s' review.[46] There was an obvious homology here between pseudo-egalitarian settler ideology in Palestine, as refracted through the global Jewish diaspora, and an Australian settlerism. The celebration of the democratic and pioneering character of Australian literature acted as a means of cognitive mapping for Jews to negotiate their place within a narration of Australian settler colonialism. In the literature surveyed in this chapter it is this negotiation in an Australian context (rather than in Palestine/Israel) that is primary.

Goldhar's 'Australian Literature' and settler subjectivity

Settler subjectivity is necessarily riven with certain contradictions as regards the place of Indigenous people and the settler's own sense of belonging.[47] This was reflected in the Jewish embrace of Australian literature and cultural nationalist ideas. These contradictions are nowhere better illustrated than in an extraordinary feature article on 'Australian Literature' written by Pinchas Goldhar, and notably translated from Yiddish by Nita Bluthal and Stephen Murray-Smith for initial publication in *Melbourne University Magazine* in 1947 and republication in *Unity* in 1948.[48] As Goldhar had it, the problem with Australian literature was the opposite one to that of Yiddish literature. Yiddish literature had a language but no country, whereas Australian literature had its own country but not its own language. The problem of Australian literature was how to

[46] This settler colonial solidarity and settler colonial ideological homology has been explored in the US context, see Hilton Obenzinger, "Naturalizing Cultural Pluralism, Americanizing Zionism: The Settler Colonial Basis to Early-Twentieth Century Progressive Thought," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (2008): 651-669; Steven Salaita, *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).
[47] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 75-94.
[48] Pinchas Goldhar, "Australian Literature," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 5 (1948). The partnership of Stephen Murray-Smith, who would go on to be a prominent radical cultural nationalist, and Nita Bluthal exemplified the link between young Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals and activists, particularly as they met in left circles at Melbourne University. Rechter, "Beyond the Pale," 106-107. See also Amirah Inglis, *The Hammer & Sickle and the Washing Up: Memories of an Australian Woman Communist* (South Melbourne: Hyland House, 1995). This piece was also published in Goldhar's posthumous *Collected Writings* (1949) as a preface to his translations into Yiddish of various pieces of Australian literature.

differentiate it from English literature. Goldhar gave a very typical narration of the birth of Australian folk culture and the key place of Henry Lawson, suggesting that 'swagmen told their stories and wove their songs', and these stories passed around the country as yarns. The structure of these yarns was that of the short story, 'both in form and content it was uniquely Australian'. He further noted that Lawson was a master of Australian English, putting into writing 'the charms of Australian idiom, and, just as Mendele [the famous Yiddish writer, 1836-1917] did for Yiddish, he raised it to a high level of artistic expression.'[49] Goldhar suggested the similarities between Australian English and Yiddish literature, noting that both were anti-elitist projects of common people.

Echoing other Australian cultural nationalists of the period, Goldhar argued that there were two defining qualities of Australian literature – its 'pioneering tradition and democratic impulse'.[50] For Goldhar, these two 'progressive elements in Australian literature are interlinked'. 'Outback on the barren plains,' he suggested, 'in the grim struggle against nature, each man finds in the other a friend.' In a somewhat more critical manner this is what Veracini has discussed as the double imperative of settler egalitarianism, needing to form a pseudo-egalitarian collectivity to struggle for autonomy against the metropole on one hand (here the British empire) and the natives on the other.[51] In other words, 'the grim struggle against nature' signified the interlinked struggle to take possession of the land and eliminate the native.[52] Rather than locating Indigenous resistance as the barrier to the completion of the settler colonial project of elimination, Goldhar located it, perhaps in an unconscious analogy, in 'the strangeness of the Australian countryside, its flora and fauna'. He continued: 'Here we seem to find a primeval natural strength which would not be subdued, so that even after a century and a half of colonising, the white man is still a pioneer struggling with the unconquered forces of nature.'[53] It is striking here that Goldhar makes an explicit reference to the racial nature of colonisation, emphasises its incomplete nature and uses

[49] Goldhar, "Australian Literature."
[50] Ibid.
[51] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, 61 cited in Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 32.
[52] For a discussion of the pioneer legend in Australian mythology and the interlinked imaginaries of settler struggle with nature and with Indigenous people, see Ann Curthoys, "Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology," *Journal of Australian Studies* 23, no. 61 (1999): 6-10, 13-16.
[53] See also Pinchas Goldhar, "From the Carriage Window," in *The Collected Stories of Pinchas Goldhar: A Pioneer Yiddish Writer in Australia* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2016).

the military metaphor of 'conquering'. At first glance Goldhar's review of Australian literature seems a classic case of settler disavowal, whereby Aboriginal people are fully equivalent to 'nature' and 'flora and fauna' and thus not worthy of mention at all. However, the strangeness of Goldhar's article, suggestive of a broader settler cognitive dissonance particular to mid-century Australian 'progressives', is borne out in the section on the 'popular theme [of] the problem of the aborigines'. For Goldhar the prominence of this theme, in works by writers such as Xavier Herbert and Katherine Susannah Prichard,

> expresses the democratic and progressive spirit which is interwoven in Australian writing. The wholesale destruction and demoralisation of the aborigines following white colonisation is depicted with deep sincerity and understanding in a number of works. The Australian writer does not come out merely as a defender of the blacks, but tries to interpret their primitive psychology and present the colour problem as a question of human equality and brotherhood … The tragedy of the native peoples, downtrodden by the remorseless march of white colonisation, is so realistically dealt with in Australian literature that its equal is hard to find in any other literature of the New World.[54]

In this paragraph we have close together two different references to 'white colonisation' in different temporal registers. Firstly, it appears as something that seems to have happened in the past, but which led to the subjectless 'destruction of the aborigines'. Secondly, it is figured as an ongoing 'remorseless march' at once malevolent but also inevitable and irresistible. As suggested by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, this sort of phrasing of colonisation as an inevitability, producing a dying or doomed race antithetical to modernity, is a frequent settler colonial trope. This trope often coexists with other contradictory ideas about the plight of Native peoples, though all imagine the elimination of the Native in one way or another.[55] This phrasing of 'white colonisation' is close to its use in the passage quoted above where, in apparent contradistinction, it is clear that colonisation is an unfinished and continuing project , with Goldhar noting: 'even after a century and a half of colonising, the white man is still a pioneer struggling with the unconquered forces of nature.'[56] The closeness of this phrasing, naming what seems to be the same process, though in different temporal registers, bespeaks a certain anxiety about the constitutive (of Australian society and its cultural production) nature

[54] Goldhar, "Australian Literature." On Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo,* see Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream,* 53-57.
[55] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 8-9.
[56] Goldhar, "Australian Literature."

of settler colonisation as well as its ongoing and incomplete character.[57] If we read these passages closely together it seems Goldhar realised, perhaps only unconsciously, not only the violent racial character of colonisation but that the egalitarian and 'democratic' nature of the culture borne from settler colonisation was riven with unresolvable contradictions.

This is thrown into relief in the last section of the article where Goldhar suggested the importance of Australian literature on an international scale, the scale implicitly cast as the scale Jewish people should be, or already were, thinking on. Goldhar suggested that Australian literature,

> is a significant product of an age-old culture transplanted to foreign soil, and from it we can learn about the processes which have shaped the citizen of the New World. These have more than an academic interest for the Jewish people in these countries. They deeply affect our present existence and indeed the very future of Jewry.[58]

Like Martin's story we are left with a somewhat contradictory image of Australia's history of colonisation and the Jewish place within it. There was an unacknowledged tension here between progressive anti-racist values of 'human equality and brotherhood', and 'what shapes the citizen of the new world': an unavoidable settler positionality. Although significantly Goldhar's question was not what happens when Jews meet an Anglo-centric Australian culture; rather it was a global, transnational question for Jewry. What happens when Jews sought to continue the 'future of Jewry' as settlers in 'the new world'? The three most obvious candidates for this 'new world' conception being Australia, the Americas and Palestine.[59] The central anxiety was not simply about Jewish assimilation but about Jews becoming settlers.

These themes were also taken up in Goldhar's fiction. Part of the penetrating nature of Goldhar's stories was his deep pessimism about Jewish life in Australia.[60] While stories such as 'In a Quiet Street', involved a caustic class critique of exploitation of Jewish

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[57] Wolfe, "Recuperating Binarism," 259.
[58] Goldhar, "Australian Literature."
[59] These being the major sites of Jewish immigration to settler colonies in that period. Hasia R. Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Ronald Sanders, *Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration* (New York: Holt, 1988).
[60] See for instance the story about Goldhar related by the Yiddish writer Yehoshua Rapaport. Pam Maclean, "'Jewish Life Appears to be Frozen, Static, Like a Puppet Play': Pinchas Goldhar's Struggle for Yiddish Cultural Authenticity in Australia," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 23, pt. 3 (2017): 493.

workers by Jewish bosses, the majority of his stories tended towards a type of pessimistic moralism which made the answers provided by cultural nationalism attractive.[61] Goldhar's disillusion with the Jewish community as the source of his attraction to Australian cultural nationalism also illustrates something deeper about the turn of much of the left towards these ideals in this period too.[62] Stemming from a pessimism about attempts to transform society through forms of class politics, as discussed below, what many felt was needed was a sort of moral and spiritual reformation. [63]

'Art will be required to exercise its varied and subtle means': Southern Stories

Jewish left engagement with a reinvigorated Australian cultural nationalism, in the immediate post-war period, was not straight forward, nor for that matter was Australian cultural nationalism itself. As discussed by David Carter, although a type of Australian literary nationalism had been in existence since the 1890s, up until the mid-1940s there did not exist any authoritative discussion, compilation or even definition of a particularly Australian tradition.[64] *Southern Stories*, a compilation of stories, poems and paintings published in 1945 by Dolphin Publications, was one of the earliest publications to suggest that not only was there a distinct literary tradition, but that it was connected to a projected post-war dynamic future of a new, particularly Australian culture.[65] Dolphin Publications was a short-lived commercial venture of Judah Waten and Vic O'Connor, the communist, lawyer and painter. *Southern Stories*, their first

[61]E.g. Pinchas Goldhar, "Old Friends," in *The Collected Stories of Pinchas Goldhar: A Pioneer Yiddish Writer in Australia* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2016). One of Goldhar's most famous stories, and one of the only ones translated into English during his lifetime was 'Café in Carlton' published in *Southern Stories* (1945). As noted by Pam Maclean, this story strikes a different tone to most of Goldhar's oeuvre. There is more of a post-war optimism to the depiction of a Jewish community reinvigorated by the new arrivals while the critique is aimed at antisemitism and its psychological effects as in Goldhar's 'antisemitism' essay rather than at a perceived moral or character flaw of the main Jewish protagonist. Maclean, "'Jewish Life Appears to be Frozen'," 494.
[62] We can discern here the strong influence of Vance and Nettie Palmer on Goldhar. Nettie Palmer, "Tribute to Pincus Goldhar," *Meanjin* 6, no. 1 (1947).
[63] Goldhar, "From the Carriage Window."; Louis Esson, "The Drovers," trans. Pinchas Goldhar, *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 9 (1947); Goldhar, "The Pioneer," in *The Collected Stories of Pinchas Goldhar: A Pioneer Yiddish Writer in Australia* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2016).
[64] David Carter, "'An Important Social Duty': The Brief Life of Dolphin Publications," *Publishing Studies*, no. 6 (1998): 3-13.
[65] Brian Fitzpatrick, ed. *Southern Stories, Poems and Paintings* (Melbourne: Dolphin, 1945).

publication, was edited by Waten, with the painter and communist Noel Counihan and the famous historian and civil libertarian, Brian Fitzpatrick, both of whom were very close to the Jewish left in this period.[66] The collection sought to collate, define and exhibit a particularly Australian literary tradition.

Notably, out of the thirteen writers featured (such as Alan Marshall and Frank Sargeson), four were Jewish migrants. As well as a piece authored by Waten, there were stories by Herz Bergner and Pinchas Goldhar that Waten had translated from Yiddish. There was also a poem 'freely translated from the Yiddish' from Yossel Birstein. One of the pieces published in the collection, attributed to a Matt Turner, was actually written by Waten, making it five pieces by Jewish migrants.[67] The collection also had an art supplement that included paintings from Yosl Bergner's respective Jewish and Aboriginal series'. That the compilation featured 'dead Jews, hanged Jews, a Greek café, a miner in the narrow seam at Wonthaggi and a Communist funeral', and could be titled 'Southern Stories' and claim to represent an Australian tradition, was objectionable for some contemporary reviewers.[68]

Both Fitzpatrick, who wrote the introduction, and Waten, who wrote an essay on realist literature and painting for the publication, emphasised the democratic and progressive nature of the Australian tradition.[69] For Fitzpatrick the common denominator in the collection was:

> a lively sense that contemporary art and letters are functions of democracy. We all feel part of a tradition which can fairly be described as Australian. This, although we include three New Zealand writers and four Polish Jews. I do not think the term "Australian" is so narrow that it does not cover them.[70]

We thus have a rather remarkable definition of the fluid boundaries of an ongoing Australian tradition, neither needing to originate in Australia, be ethnically Australian or

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[66] Carter, "'An Important Social Duty'."
[67] David Carter, *A Career in Writing: Judah Waten and the Cultural Politics of a Literary Career* (Toowoomba: Association for the Study of Australian Literature, 1997), 54.
[68] ""Southern" Stories Belie Their Title," *The Advertiser*, 5 January 1946.
[69] Fitzpatrick's introduction was true to his own idiosyncratic Marxist account of Australian history and provided a materialist account of the development of Australian literature. Fitzpatrick clearly placed his social vision as exceeding that of the social democratic Australian Labor Party which he pithily described as 'enlist[ing] industrial workers, under banners attractively splashed with socialist slogans, for the task of Australian nation-building for others' profit'. Brian Fitzpatrick, "Introduction: The Australian Tradition," in *Southern Stories, Poems and Paintings*, ed. Brian Fitzpatrick (Melbourne: Dolphin, 1945), 14-15; Judah L. Waten, "Reflections on Literature and Painting," in *Southern Stories, Poems and Paintings*, ed. Brian Fitzpatrick (Melbourne: Dolphin, 1945).
[70] Brian Fitzpatrick, "Introduction: The Australian Tradition."

even to take as a subject Australian life, characters or society. Instead an Australian tradition here was defined formally as a realist tradition with a progressive orientation.[71] As we will see this definition of the Australian tradition was markedly different to the narrower one that developed in the early 1950s.

Waten outlined the need to further this aspect of the tradition to counter the threat of fascism. He emphasised the realist tradition as a transnational tool in the battle against fascism:

> And now with the final military destruction of the Fascist powers, this heritage of oppression, obscurantism and racial nonsense that fascism has bequeathed to the world must be combated, and every trace of it wiped from the face of the world. In this tremendous task, art will be required to exercise its varied and subtle means[.][72]

Waten went on to suggest that it was only through the 'rational examination of life' in the realist tradition in painting and writing that this was possible. He invoked the new realism of the Soviet Union (socialist realism) as progress from the nineteenth century realist tradition because of its emphasis on 'real active struggle to build the conditions of human happiness'. Notably Waten described similar progress in the Australian artistic tradition, suggesting that 'in Australia we now perceive an artistic upsurge, perhaps surpassing that of the 90s, based on the realistic tradition which is the dominant feature of Australian art'. The subjects for artists in this 'upsurge' such as Vic O'Connor, Yosl Bergner, Noel Counihan and Russel Drysdale were notably not confined to the bushman or a rural idyll, instead they were 'the sombre country street, the demonstration, the plight of the aborigines, the working man and woman'. Represented also by with the great writers of Australia such as Katherine Prichard, Vance Palmer and Alan Marshall, Waten claimed, 'the will to liberate Australia from the death grip of custom and prejudice, to assert the vigorous, democratic beliefs and aspirations of the working man flows like a strong undercurrent' through this new cultural movement. Waten emphasised an important connection to past traditions but also, resembling similar ideas in Jewish antifascism, a post-war and antifascist break with the past, tying Australian culture to the 'new humanism' of 'American painters' and 'Soviet artists' just as much as to 'Lawson', 'Furphy', 'McCubbin' and 'Streeton'.[73]

[71] Carter, "'An Important Social Duty'," 5, passim.
[72] Waten, "Reflections on Literature and Painting."
[73] Ibid.

Carter suggests that Australian cultural nationalism in the post-war period was a contingent and minority construction within and often counter to a larger national imaginary. It defined itself through being both marginal and mainstream; through being a hidden and struggling tradition, but also as the secret truth of Australian culture.[74] Whereas left cultural expression in the 1920s and 1930s hewed closer to an idea of the avant-garde seeking a radical break with bourgeois society, the post-war conditions were more propitious for an accent on forms of cultural continuity. Although this was certainly the case in *Southern Stories*, Waten's contribution suggests that antifascism was a key force in defining a consciously new strain of cultural nationalist activity in dialogue with an international (socialist) realist tradition in the process of reinvention. This was reflective of the radical and central role assigned to culture in Jewish antifascism, as assessed in previous chapters. In what remains of this chapter, I examine the wider cultural context of the Australian left, and particularly the place of anti-racist and anti-colonial ideas, before turning in Chapter Six to assess further how the Jewish antifascist left figured within this context.

Communist culture, Australianism and Decolonisation

It is possible to trace a multitude of connections between the Jewish antifascist left, communist or communist influenced cultural institutions, concerns with Aboriginal struggles and international issues of racism and decolonisation. In this section I first provide a sketch of some of the cultural debates and battles in this period, and then provide a condensed cultural history regarding the influence of these issues on Australian cultural production. This is crucial to understanding the political and cultural imagination of the Jewish left and associated cultural production as outlined in the following chapter.

Allan Gardiner suggests there was an ongoing struggle between what could be deemed a 'radical nationalist' wing and a more Marxist wing in the Realist Writers Group (RWG)

[74] Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 54.

in Melbourne in the early 1950s.[75] The RWG, formed in 1945 and consolidating in 1950, had counterparts in other capital cities, and was comprised of left-leaning writers, most affiliated with the Communist Party.[76] However up until a certain point the RWG acted autonomously from the party leadership.[77] The RWG faction grouped around Frank Hardy and Eric Lambert pushed for socialist writing tied directly to the experiences and struggles of the working class. Indeed, Hardy pushed for the RWG and the Party to organise a new factory and union-based grassroots infrastructure of working-class reading, writing and publishing.[78]

The radical nationalist faction in the RWG, grouped around Stephen Murray-Smith and Ian Turner, by contrast, saw their task as progressive writers as a continuing the (supposedly) democratic and egalitarian ideals of the 'Lawson' tradition of the 1890s. They aimed to further a nostalgic reverence for the 1890s and its unique masculine rural lifeways as an organic and authentic reference point against which modernity and the inadequate and non-'culturally specific' nature of urban Australian culture and society could be critiqued.[79] According to Docker, this meant an inbuilt elitism (as in the *Meanjin* project), whereby a certain class of writers and intellectuals stood ready to 'fertilise the national life, if the popular response was there'.[80] This was in some senses modified by the time of the establishment of *Overland* magazine in 1954, where Turner called for a focus on Australian writing on the urban working class.[81] However, as Gardiner suggests, this was not based on an orientation towards the working class as historical agent but on a perceived need to 'update and modernise' the 1890s tradition

[75] Gardiner suggests that the rank and file of the RWG were much more sympathetic to the Marxist faction, and critical of the ABS move to publish apolitical books. Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 85.
[76] Allan Gardiner, "Frank Hardy and Communist Cultural Institutions," in *Frank Hardy & the Literature of Commitment*, ed. Paul Adams and Christopher Lee (Carlton North: The Vulgar Press, 2003), 39. Gardiner notes that Frank Hardy was the leading figure in the RWG's founding, envisioning the group's bulletin as expanding into a major literary journal along the lines of the Soviet Union's *Novy Mir*. Ibid.
[77] Or perhaps more accurately, autonomously from the national Sydney based structures of the party. For discussion of this point, see Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 119-140.
[78] Gardiner, "Frank Hardy and Communist Cultural Institutions." For a discussion of the influence of the RWG on Hardy, the explicit direction of the CPA in the creation of *Power Without Glory* (1950) and the contradictory nature of applied Zhdanovism, see Jeff Sparrow, "Engineering Your Own Soul: Theory and Practice in Communist Biography and Autobiography," (RMIT University, 2007), 43-51.
[79] Docker, "Culture, Society and the Communist Party," 184-186; David Carter, "Capturing the Liberal Sphere: Overland's First Decade," in *Outside the Book: Contemporary Essays on Literary Periodicals*, ed. David Carter (Sydney: Local Consumption Publications, 1991). Murray-Smith and Turner were internationalist in their other political commitments, but their cultural project was nationalist.
[80] Docker, "Culture, Society and the Communist Party," 186, quoted in Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 60.
[81] On *Overland*, see Carter, "Capturing the Liberal Sphere."

by carrying over the ideals of rural Australian egalitarianism and strength of character to an urban population in need of moral and spiritual reformation.[82]

The appeal of cultural nationalism in this period, with a downturn in class struggle and an upturn in Cold War political repression, was that it was a means of maintaining a popular progressive cultural orientation without communism and without class politics.[83] For those communists who joined in the period of the Popular Front, cultural nationalism seemed a means of riding out this political repression and also a means of maintaining a broadly progressive politics while separating oneself from communism.[84] The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) leadership, and elements associated with it, maintained a continual thread of criticism of radical nationalism for its nostalgic orientation and lack of class critique.[85] However, the CPA itself was not averse to cultural nationalism and elements of national chauvinism couched in different reference points.[86]

The Australasian Book Society (ABS) was a battleground for these debates.[87] It is commonly painted as a type of communist front. In fact, it was quite the opposite. Australian publishing in the late 1940s was in dire straits and Australia's liberal bourgeois writers, such as A.A. Phillips and Leonard Mann, were willing to make an expedient alliance with the CPA to further a new literary infrastructure. As noted by

[82] Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere", 168.
[83] For a political overview of this period and its effect on the CPA, see O' Lincoln, *Into the Mainstream,* 53-94. For an anecdotal account of the everyday repression and marginalisation faced by communists in this period, see Inglis, *The Hammer & Sickle.*
[84] Carter, "Capturing the Liberal Sphere," 180. For Turner's own historicisation of the left turn to 'the concepts of nation and 'the common man'', see Ian Turner, "Australian Nationalism and Australian History," *Journal of Australian Studies* 3, no. 4 (1979): 6. See also Lorenzo Veracini, "Ian Turner's the Australian Dream and Australia's "Settler Transition"," *Journal of Australian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2016): 302-318.
[85] See Docker's outlining of Jack Beasley's critique of Henry Lawson. Docker, "Culture, Society and the Communist Party," 186-189.
[86] This was in some senses an accommodation to prevailing cultural tendencies, as well as needed as part of an argument for their influence and control in Australian cultural institutions. It was helpful to the Party to be seen as a continuation of a national tradition rather than a foreign imposition. The Party's 'Australianism' was also justified in terms of a stagist Soviet conception of literature, while also mirroring the nationalist chauvinist turn of Soviet culture under Stalin. There was also a prevailing idea that an Australian cultural nationalism would serve as a bulwark against American cultural imperialism. Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 47-48, 81, 134, 148; C. Vaughan James, *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (London and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1973), 1-14; Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 151-161.
[87] Significantly Ralph de Boissiere, the Trinidadian Australian communist writer, sided with the CPA in interventions in the RWG and the ABS in the early 1950s. He saw a better chance of resisting an uncritical embrace of Australianism in the approach of the Party as it retained a class politics and socialist realist orientation. Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 82-83, 86.

Gardiner, the priority of the ABS ended up being to promote a lowest common denominator literature that was 'national in form, nationalist in content'.[88] This was a compromise between liberal nationalist writers and the priorities of the party, mediated by radical nationalists such as Turner.[89] Gardiner suggests that the ABS 'might be called a liberal bourgeois front, masquerading as a far-left organisation only so long as the Party was of use to the liberals as a supplier of volunteer workers and of funds from affiliated trade unions.'[90] Throughout the 1950s there were significant clashes between the radical nationalist wing and the leadership of the Party over the publications of the ABS.

Gardiner notes that the first eight publications (in 1952 and 1953) of the ABS can hardly be deemed Australianist, as they did not take as their subject Australian characters in Australian settings expressing a particularly Australian 'structure of feeling'.[91] In marked contrast to this, almost all subsequent ABS publications up until the mid-1960s could be deemed Australianist. Both the radical nationalists and CPA Australianists were unhappy with this start to the ABS, and particularly that the more Marxist works, such as Ralph de Boissiere's and Walter Kaufmann's, were not set in Australia.[92] This was evident from CPA leader J.D. Blake's review of Kaufmann's *Voices in the Storm* (an antifascist novel set in pre-war Germany). Although Blake assessed the novel positively he finished his comments with a hope that Kaufmann's second novel 'will have as its subject Australian people'.[93] Jack Beasley in his 1979 memoirs of this period, suggests that de Boissiere's *Crown Jewel* (a novel of Trinidadian working-class anti-colonial struggle) was only chosen as the first ABS novel 'because no suitable manuscript of Australian life was available.'[94] In this narrow interpretation of realism and radical nationalism, Australian characters and settings had

[88] Ibid., 72.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., 72-73. For discussion of the role of grassroots CPA members, see also Jack Beasley, *Red Letter Days: Notes From Inside an Era* (Sydney: Australasian Book Society, 1979), 148-149.
[91] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128-135. Despite their Australian characters and setting, the S.F. Bannister books published in 1952 did not properly qualify, at least for the Party. The depicted moral failings of the characters and lack of any working-class solidarity meant an accusation of 'naturalism' over 'realism', and a disqualification from the 'Lawson' tradition. For a discussion of the Bannister controversy, see Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 102-118.
[92] Ibid.
[93] J.D. Blake, "Tribune Discussion Will Keep ABS on Right Track," *Tribune*, 9 September 1953, quoted in Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 95.
[94] Beasley, *Red Letter Days*, 137.

to feature — a stark contrast with the vision of Australian literature put forward in *Southern Stories* in 1945.

In the early 1950s there was strong evidence in both the RWG and associated left-wing cultural institutions, such as the New Theatre, of an embrace of non-Australianist themes. Works enthusiastically touted by the RWG in its 1953 bulletin — such as Nance McMillan's (AKA Nance Wills) anti-Korean war drama (written for the New Theatre), featuring a Black American character who turns on his commanding officer in sympathy with the Korean people's struggle — reflected non-Australianist themes of anti-imperialism, and anti-racism, including Jewish antifascist works by Judah Waten, Walter Kaufmann and Laurence Collinson.[95]

Works that expressed opposition to racism and colonialism shone through as counterweights to Australianist pressures from both radical nationalists and the leadership of the CPA. Though as the RWG editorial makes clear, the more Marxist, and to an extent orthodox wing of communist cultural politics created both the infrastructural and political space for these themes and social issues to be tackled. The RWG, the New Theatre and, to an extent, the ABS were all important in providing the infrastructure for the cultural expression of the Jewish left, as outlined below. Non-Australianist texts, grouped around anti-racist themes and produced through the influence of antifascist and anti-colonial struggles, created the discursive space for their co-consideration and for these ideas to assume greater currency in left-wing and progressive cultural circles.

As well as the RWG and the ABS, the New Theatre was another key venue for cultural expression. It was a left-wing theatre movement that had branches throughout Australia, but was particularly strong and active in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.[96] There were numerous Jewish connections. The prominent JCCFAS member Itzhak Gust played a

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[95] David Carter, *Always Almost Modern: Australian Print Cultures and Modernity* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013), 203-204. David Martin was also mentioned in the RWG editorial as in the previous year having, 'with regular publication of verse in working-class press, emerged as the most widely-read contemporary poet in Australia.' See Allan Gardiner, "Pushed into the Bourgeois Camp: David Martin and the CPA," *Overland Journal*, no. 142 (1996): 27-30; David Martin, ed. *New World, New Song: A Selection of Poems from the Left* (Sydney: Current Book Distributors, 1955).
[96] For histories, see Connie Healy, *Defiance: Political Theatre in Brisbane, 1930-1962* (Mount Nebo: Boombana Publications, 2000). Angela O'Brien, "The Road Not Taken: Political and Performance Ideologies at Melbourne New Theatre 1935-1960," (Monash University, 1989). Sydney New Theatre, *The "New" Years, 1932- : The Plays and Events of 75 Years of Sydney's New Theatre* (Newtown: New Theatre, 2007). Indeed, the New Theatre still exists in Sydney.

role in helping to fund the New Theatre in Melbourne.[97] Anecdotal evidence suggests that a good proportion of New Theatre audiences, particularly for antifascist themed plays, were Jewish.[98] There were a slew of antifascist and Jewish themed plays produced through the late 1930s, 1940s and 1950s mostly taken from US scripts. The Sydney New Theatre produced 'Sky Without Birds' by Australian left-wing playwright Oriel Gray in 1952. The play was notable for one of its central characters being a Jewish Holocaust survivor, with his trauma, memory and the antisemitism directed against him in Australia, being principal themes.[99] The young gay Jewish communist, Laurence Collinson, was heavily involved in the New Theatre in Brisbane, including as set designer and actor.[100] Notably, he wrote a one act Jewish family drama called 'Friday Night at the Schrammers' performed in Brisbane in 1948. The play dealt with family conflict over issues of assimilation, religion, antisemitism and politics.[101] As discussed in Chapter Four, Collinson's major theatrical work of this period was 'Traitor Silence', written in 1952-1953 but never performed.[102] The play still stands as an excellent encapsulation of Jewish antifascist politics of this period and political and class tensions within the Jewish community.[103] Despite never being produced we can still suggest that the anti-racist, antifascist and pro-working class struggle orientation of the New Theatre

[97] Jock Levy, interview by Wendy Lowenstein, 2 June 1995, Communists and the Left in the Arts and Community Oral History Project Series, National Library of Australia.
[98] This was at least in the estimation of the Australian intelligence services. Phillip Deery and Lisa Milner point towards a 1937 CIS report on a Melbourne production of Clifford Odets' 'Till the Day I Die', an antifascist play banned by authorities in Melbourne and Sydney after intervention from the Nazi government. According to the report, over '60 percent of the 1200' member audience 'comprised foreigners or persons of alien extraction, jews predominating'. Phillip Deery and Lisa Milner, "Political Theatre and the State: Melbourne and Sydney, 1936-1953," *History Australia* 12, no. 3 (2015): 121. Fiona Capp points towards an ASIO report from 1949 which also highlighted Jews as 'predominating' among those of 'alien extraction' in the audience. Fiona Capp, *Writers Defiled: Security Surveillance of Australian Authors and Intellectuals, 1920-1960* (Ringwood, Vic: Mcphee Gribble, 1993), 31.
[99] Healy, *Defiance*, 165-166. Oriel Gray, "Sky without Birds," in *Plays of the 50s*, ed. Katharine Brisbane (Sydney: Currency Press, 2007). Gray was a CPA member but left the Party in 1949. Michelle Arrow, *Upstaged: Australian Women Dramatists in the Limelight at Last* (Sydney: Currency Press, 2002), 147-148.
[100] See Michele Elizabeth Anderson, "Barjai, Miya Studio and Young Brisbane Artists of the 1940s," (University of Queensland, 1987), 110-139; NAA: A6126, 689, "Collinson, Laurence Henry," (1950-1964).
[101] William Hatherell, "The Brisbane Years of Laurence Collinson," *Queensland Review* 13, no. 2 (2006): 9; Laurie Collinson, "Friday Night at the Schrammers," in *Australian One-Act Plays*, ed. Greg Branson (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1962).
[102] By this time Collinson had moved to Melbourne, see Hatherell, "The Brisbane Years."
[103] Another major connection between the Jewish left and the New Theatre in Sydney was through Jock Levy who began his theatrical career producing antifascist plays with the Jewish Youth Theatre (JYT) but moved over to the Sydney New Theatre after the JYT lost their premises. Jock Levy, interview by Wendy Lowenstein, 2 June 1995.

opened up discursive space for the possibility of presenting works such as these, and thus the conditions for their writing.[104]

Although Australianist works such as 'Reedy River' were huge successes for the New Theatre, I suggest that this was balanced by productions such as those detailed below as well as numerous plays with a focus on workers' struggle.[105] There was something of an inbuilt internationalism to the New Theatre as they were heavily reliant on sourcing scripts from overseas, mostly from the US, but also from the UK and the Soviet Union.[106] As noted by Connie Healy, plays with anti-racist and anti-colonial themes assumed a new importance in the immediate post-war years in a mode that was not typical of the 1930s.[107] Post-war Aboriginal struggles as well as global decolonisation made a significant impact on the theatre's output.[108]

Two of the most famous New Theatre productions on Indigenous issues were tied directly to Aboriginal political struggle. 'White Justice' was an Aboriginal ballet produced jointly by the Melbourne New Theatre and the Australian Aborigines League in 1946.[109] It was based on contemporary Aboriginal struggle in the Pilbara and dramatised economic and sexual exploitation of Aboriginal people as well as their joint struggle with white unionists against the repressive legal apparatus of the state.[110] 1947 saw the first production in Sydney of what was to become a New Theatre mainstay 'Rocket Range'.[111] Written by communist Jim Crawford, the play was part of a popular campaign led by Aboriginal and left organisations against weapons testing ranges in

[104] See also the unperformed 'Judgement' by Mark Siegelberg in the Melbourne New Theatre Archives, (Arts Centre Melbourne, 2001.040.395.)
[105] Healy, *Defiance*, 110-123.
[106] For an exploration of aspects of this transnational interchange amongst radical theatres in Australia and the UK, see Cathy Brigden and Lisa Milner, "Radical Theatre Mobility: Unity Theatre, UK and the New Theatre, Australia," *New Theatre Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2015): 328-342.
[107] Healy, *Defiance*, 149.
[108] Of particular note here are works by Mona Brand, Ralph de Boissiere, Nance McMillan and Dymphna Cusack, see Mona Brand, *Enough Blue Sky: The Autobiography of Mona Brand, an Unknown Well-Known Playwright* (Potts Point, NSW: Tawny Pipit Press, 1995); O'Brien, "The Road Not Taken," 167, 188-192; Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 141-156. Arrow, *Upstaged*, 180-181; Ken Goodwin, "Dymphna Cusack as a Precursor of Commonwealth Literature," *Kunapipi* 26, no. 2 (2004): 122-135; Marilla North, "Cusack, Ellen Dymphna (Nell) (1902-1981)," National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.
[109] The Australian Aborigines League (AAL) was a revived form of William Cooper's pre-war organisation led by Cooper's protégé Doug Nicholls along with Eric and Bill Onus as its central figures. Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines*, 194.
[110] O'Brien, "The Road Not Taken," 142.
[111] Healy, *Defiance*, 151-154.

central Australia.[112] This campaign drew together anti-war and anti-imperialist ideas with support for Aboriginal groups being dispossessed from their land and/or subject to grave health effects as a result of the weapons testing.[113]

As described by Deborah Wilson, 'Rocket Range' was notable for being centred on Aboriginal agency, with seven Aboriginal characters and only one white policeman character.[114] The play not only functioned as a protest play against white oppression but also to educate audiences about the Aboriginal ways of life taught to Crawford through his own close relationships with Aboriginal people in Northern Queensland.[115] Wilson's analysis highlights the play's attack on Australian nationalism and patriotic pride. In the last scene, after the white policeman's brutal murder of one of the central Aboriginal characters, the 'policeman reloads his gun and buckles his spurs as Advance Australia Fair is played in the background'.[116] This scene highlights how Aboriginal struggle and its cultural effects, as mediated through the left at this time, interrupted and questioned a left nationalist cultural project. The invocation of 'Advance Australia Fair' was thoroughly ironic, highlighting the disjuncture between its high-minded ideals and what was presented as a fundamental truth of Australian society: its basis in violent dispossession.[117]

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[112] Jim Crawford was the author of another short play titled 'Refugee', written in Melbourne but first staged by the Brisbane Eureka Youth League in 1947. O'Brien, "The Road Not Taken," 161. Although very crude, it was a genuine effort to interrogate issues of antisemitism and featured multiple Jewish characters. Jim Crawford, "Refugee: A Play in One Act," The Hanger Collection of Australian Playscripts, University of Queensland (1946).

[113] For an overview of this campaign including the role of 'Rocket Range', see Wilson, *Different White People*, 95-181.

[114] It should be noted that unlike in 'White Justice', Aboriginal characters were normally played by white people. Although notably in the Brisbane production the Aboriginal warrior 'Namalka' was played by Bob Anderson, a prominent Aboriginal trade unionist. Healy, *Defiance*, 151-152. For a discussion of attempts in this period by white people to write beyond a white subjectivity, see Delys Bird, "The Politics of Race and the Possibilities of Form in the Work of Katharine Susannah Prichard," in *Frank Hardy and the Literature of Commitment*, ed. Christopher Lee and Paul Adams (Carlton North: The Vulgar Press, 2003). Another notable play centred on Aboriginal characters and their fight against dispossession was 'Fountains Beyond' written by George Landen Dunn and first produced by the Sydney New Theatre in 1942 and restaged by the Melbourne New Theatre in 1946, featuring Eric Onus. O'Brien, "The Road Not Taken," 152-155.

[115] Healy, *Defiance*, 65.

[116] Wilson, *Different White People*, 128-129. Noel Counihan played a role in the campaign through drawing satirical cartoons. Ibid., 131-132.

[117] See also the 1951 Melbourne production of 'Out of the Dark: An Aboriginal Moomba', a project of the Australian Aborigines League, featuring an all Aboriginal cast. Sylvia Kleinert, ""Jacky Jacky Was a Smart Young Fella": A Study of Art and Aboriginality in South East Australia 1900-1980," (Australian National University, 1994), 215-224; John Ramsland and Christopher Mooney, "Out of the Dark: The First Successful All-Black Musical Aboriginal Celebrity and Protest," *Victorian Historical Journal* 78, no.1 (2007): 63-79. Notably the script was written with the help of the then famous author Jean Campbell who had previously written two books largely set in the Melbourne Jewish community and was employed

Oriel Gray, who wrote 'Sky Without Birds', also wrote three plays for the New Theatre about the plight of Aboriginal people. [118] They were all, to an extent, criticised for political shortcomings by others in the New Theatre. A representative example is the Melbourne New Theatre management committee's negative assessment of 'Had We But World Enough' for portraying Aboriginal people as 'mere passive victims in the struggle'.[119] This sort of cultural and ideological intervention was not an anomaly of this period. Gardiner points us towards a 1953 incident played out in the pages of the CPA's national newspaper *Tribune.* The story 'Clara' by Roland Robinson, then recently published in the short story anthology *Coast to Coast* (1952) came in for serious criticism by Eric Lambert for its depiction of Aboriginal characters, setting off a back and forth between Robinson and Lambert, and culminating with Lambert publishing his own re-written version of the story in *Tribune*.[120]

Robinson claimed he was truthfully representing the 'inescapable degradation' of Aboriginal people in order to rouse the audience to pity and societal self-reflection. Lambert countered that Robinson's brand of realism only reproduced existing ideology, and that realism needed a conscience in order to better express 'the whole truth' of society:

> Aborigines [sic] I met at the Youth Carnival, at the Assembly for Human Rights, and elsewhere, convince me that there are Aborigines [sic] who resist the role that the politicians have thrust upon them. I say the ruling classes don't mind how many stories we write about the Aborigines [sic] — as long as we keep quiet about the fact that they are proud intelligent people who will take their part in winning a better life; that they need more than our pity, and have much to give us.[121]

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by the JCCFAS to do a radio show on 3XY. Gavin De Lacy, "Three Neglected Women Writers of the 1930s: Jean Campbell, 'Capel Boake', and 'Georgia Rivers'," *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 83 (2009): 27-42; Jean Campbell, *The Babe Is Wise* (London: Hutchinson, 1939); "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Executive Committee Minutes, 28th November 1950," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

[118] Gray made a direct connection between carrying on the antifascist fight and addressing racial injustice at home. Arrow, *Upstaged*, 144. Gray's most famous play 'The Torrents' was in some respects a feminist subversion of the typical masculine rural nationalist tropes surrounding the myth of the 1890s. Ibid., 22-27.

[119] Gabriela Zabala, "Voices Unheard: The Representation of Australian Aborigines by Left-Wing Playwrights 1940s-1960s," *Australasian Drama Studies*, no. 60 (2012): 48.

[120] Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 108-109.

[121] Eric Lambert, "Yes, We Want Better Realism," *Tribune*, June 24 1953. In another piece in the same exchange Lambert pointed to the case of Fred Waters (the Aboriginal strike leader referenced in 'A Nazi Writes Home'), 'only a few Sundays ago on "Aborigine [sic] Sunday" some of the greatest hypocrites in the land were telling us how they pitied the Aborigine [sic]. But let an Aboriginal leader like Fred Waters fight for his people and then he is promptly exiled to Haast's Bluff, where he would have probably died had he remained.' "Eric Lambert Replies to Roland Robinson on Short Story," *Tribune*, 18 February

We can see here the direct connection between the growing power and influence of Aboriginal resistance and activist groups in the post-war era and a cultural reassessment by elements of the left, of a 'doomed race' ideology inextricable from continued dispossession and settler colonialism. It is also notable that Lambert, in his critique of 'Clara', drew together the Aboriginal struggle with global struggles for decolonisation, suggesting that millions were in the process of ending their own oppression and that 'that fact is at the core of every social situation today'.[122] As well as the texts highlighted above, this further suggests the impact of global decolonisation on the changing nature of cultural discourse of this period and the discursive space opened up by it for the co-consideration and potential solidarity of anti-racist liberation struggles.

While the CPA of this period has been criticised by cultural historians such as Susan McKernan for its commitment to socialist realism, seen as crude censoriousness or political correctness, these examples show that communists correctly saw that artistic production was always already ideological.[123] To critique and then intervene in the artistic process thus meant a conscious interruption of the reproduction of dominant ideology. In these cases, it meant understanding that depictions of Aboriginal people as passive (or doomed) victims was a product of racist ideology and served to reproduce their oppression. Although much of CPA cultural criticism of this period was indeed crudely dogmatic and Stalinist, criticism such as Lambert's was not directly taken and

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1953. A similar controversy surrounded the publication of Bert Vickers's novel *The Mirage* by the ABS. Those more committed to socialist realism fought unsuccessfully for changes such as a positive hero rather than Vickers' doomed and despairing 'half-caste' main character. Stephen Murray-Smith and Leoni Sandercock, eds., *Ian Turner: Room for Manoeuvre: Writings on History, Politics, Ideas and Plays* (Richmond, Vic: Drummond, 1982), 137. As suggested by Rich Pascal the guiding assumption of Vickers' novel was that 'half-caste' Aboriginal people were not really Aboriginal anymore and lacked any cultural continuity. Rich Pascal, "Narrating the Nowhere People: F.B. Vickers's the Mirage and "Half-Caste" Aboriginals," *Antipodes* 27, no. 1 (2013): 56. Gardiner following Adam Shoemaker suggests that Donald Stuart's *Yandy* (1959) stands apart from other white literature produced about Aboriginal people during this period as particularly sensitive and well realised. Stuart was an ABS author who based *Yandy* on 'his direct participation in the Pilbara strike.' Adam Shoemaker, *Black Words, White Page: Aboriginal Literature, 1929-1988* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1989), 92-93 cited in Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 243.

[122] "Eric Lambert Replies to Roland Robinson on Short Story." Jordan notes that from 1945 onwards the CPA newly prioritised Aboriginal issues, consistently linking this to support for the post-war struggles for decolonisation of all colonial empires including Australia's imperialism in Papua New Guinea, see Jordan, "Conflict in the Unions," 256.

[123] See Susan McKernan, *Australian Literature in the Twenty Years After the War* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 24-25. This sort of cultural criticism was very similar to Jewish communist critiques of depictions of African American characters during this period. For example, see Eve Merriam, "Jewish Short Stories, Review of This Land, These People, Edited by Harold U. Ribalow," *Jewish Life* 5, no. 4 (1951). For a reassessment of Jewish left Zhdanovism in the US context, see Max Kaiser, ""A New and Modern Golden Age of Jewish Culture": Shaping the Cultural Politics of Transnational Jewish Antifascism," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* (2017): 8-9.

mindlessly copied from official Soviet theory. Instead it involved a complex dialectic between dogma and political and social developments. In this case CPA criticism of texts that reflected racist ideas about Indigenous people was directly influenced by the activities of Aboriginal industrial and political campaigns.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a theory of how migrants, and particularly Jewish migrants, fit within an Australian racial order determined by settler colonialism. It has noted that Australian Jewish communities are not monolithic — they contain a multitude of different economic, social, ethnic and political divisions — but this does not mean that Jewish Australians become or do not become settlers on an individual basis. In my analysis, all non-Indigenous people are settlers but settlers, in this case migrant settlers, have a certain amount of collective agency in how they position themselves in relation to the reproduction of the racial ideologies of settler colonialism. I have suggested that this was contingent on the impact of Aboriginal political struggle and anti-colonial struggle internationally. Antifascist Jews encountered the settler colonisation of Australia as a problem through the lens of a settler subject position. However, in doing so they deployed Jewish antifascist ideas and cultural resources in struggling to understand this problem. Because of the sometimes anticolonial, antiracist transnational perspective gained from these cultural resources and an antifascist worldview, ideas which could be deployed in solidarity with Indigenous people occasionally shone through. Despite an inescapable structural position as settlers, Jewish political subjectivities could, given the right conditions, partially break from the reproduction of the racial ideologies produced through settler colonialism.

Accordingly, I have outlined three differing threads of Jewish antifascist thought in relation to settler colonialism. Firstly, one thread analysed the shared reactionary racist paradigm of Australia and Nazi Germany to suggest that Australia was a racist state that needed to be opposed by Jewish antifascists. A second thread problematised the notion of the Jewish migrant in the role of settler, asking what political situation the Jewish migrant was entering into and becoming complicit in. A third thread took authorisation from Australian cultural nationalism and sometimes Zionism for the reproduction of

settler colonial tropes that both justified Indigenous dispossession and furthered a pseudo-egalitarian mystificatory ideology.

Pinchas Goldhar's essay on 'Australian Literature' allowed us to look further into the ideology of Australian cultural nationalism and its attraction for Jewish antifascists; its folk character and apparent egalitarianism provided some answers to pressing social issues for Jewish migrants, but it sat uneasily with an anti-racist politics of progressive internationalism. Turning then to the project put together by Waten, Counihan, Fitzpatrick, and others in their political and creative milieu, I suggested that the *Southern Stories* version of cultural nationalism adhered to a politics and aesthetics of progressive realism, with Jewish antifascist writers and artist contributors central to this cultural vision.

Also noted, however, was how this vision was at odds with one of two broadly defined visions of progressive cultural expression in the late 1940s and early 1950s: an Australianism that looked towards an emphasis on national character as a replacement for class politics; and a more amorphous internationalist branch of culture operating in a space opened up by Marxist ideas, Aboriginal struggle and global decolonisation. This was a space for a thinking together of colonialism, settler colonialism and fascism thus potentially engendering new resistant solidarities. Finally, this chapter noted how in the case of Aboriginal people, the CPA was able to appraise the role of cultural representations in reproducing racial oppression. I suggested that while this appraisal would not have been possible without the upsurge in Aboriginal political struggle, the CPA and its associated cultural infrastructure provided an important venue for anti-racist cultural production. With this context, we can move in Chapter Six to an assessment of the cultural project of *Jewish Youth* and the anti-racist works of Judah Waten.

Chapter Six: Defining a Jewish Antifascist Minor Literature

We must attack reaction, no matter whence it comes. Dutch aggression against the Indonesia Republic is our concern, as is also the lynching of negroes in America, or the maltreatment of Aborigines in Australia … We Jews can only be secure in a secure world. It is a world situation of conflict and strife together with a situation in Australia of intense class conflict which lays the ground for a campaign of anti-Semitic prejudice greater than any previous attacks in this country against a racial or religious minority.

Norman Rothfield, 1947[1]

On the grounds of their shared marginality the categories of migrant writer and Australian writer could be conceived as complementary rather than contradictory, with the former as a unique kind of qualification for entry into the latter.

David Carter[2]

In January 1947 Pinchas Goldhar died from a heart attack, aged 46. At this time Goldhar was the most famous and influential Yiddish writer in Australia. His loss was deeply felt by the Kadimah Youth Organisation (KYO) and the editors of the Melbourne-based *Jewish Youth*. Their editorials noted, 'Goldhar always took a special interest in the work of the Kadimah Youth, and it was largely under his inspiration that "Jewish Youth" was born.'[3] Goldhar was important because he,

> well understood that the further development of Jewish culture is inseparable from the struggle against reaction, which has again begun to rear its head against our people in this country… His life and death will be an inspiration to the increasing number of Jewish young people who wish to play their part in defence of their culture, and who realise that this is an inseparable part of the struggle against those who seek to undermine our very existence.[4]

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[1] Quoted in William D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History: Volume 2, 1945 to the Present* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991), 13.
[2] David Carter, *A Career in Writing: Judah Waten and the Cultural Politics of a Literary Career* (Toowoomba: Association for the Study of Australian Literature, 1997), 54.
[3] "In Memory of Pinchas Goldhar," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 7-8 (1947).
[4] "Comment: Pinchas Goldhar," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 9 (1947). As noted by Maclean, Goldhar was closely associated with the left. His first book, published in 1939, was illustrated by Noel Counihan, and both Vance Palmer and Brian Fitzpatrick spoke at the launch. Pam Maclean, "The Convergence of Cultural

This is a neat summation of the project of *Jewish Youth* itself; Jewish culture was envisioned as an active political project, pitched against an antisemitism intimately connected to wider political forces of social reaction. In light of the context analysed in the previous chapter, this chapter discusses how this project meant *Jewish Youth* developed into the site of a 'minor literature' rather than a contributory or national literature, and demonstrates how the magazine expressed the ideals of Jewish antifascism analysed throughout this thesis. I then examine how the writings of Judah Waten dealt with cultural nationalism and settler colonialism, reflecting some of the contradictions of Jewish antifascism as well as the contingent nature of its wider and more critical potentialities.

'[L]earn seriously what it means to be a Jew': *Jewish Youth*

The space opened up by Waten and his collaborators in *Southern Stories* for the expression of Jewish experience and migrant subjectivity in dialogue with wider Australian cultural expression, is key to understanding the place of *Jewish Youth*.[5] *Jewish Youth* is evidence of an alternative cultural trend to the folksy jingoism of a bourgeois cultural nationalism fixated on the rural idyll. *Jewish Youth* formed part of a cultural project that emphasised the progressive realist and democratic part of Australian cultural nationalism and made space within an invented tradition for the introduction of critical new voices, political subjectivities and modes of social critique.

Jewish Youth was a trilingual magazine published in Melbourne in English, Yiddish and Hebrew from 1946 to 1947. It started as a publication of the KYO and in its last few issues became the organ of the Melbourne Jewish Youth Council. It aimed to be a pluralist magazine representing and appealing to a wide spectrum of Jewish thought, culture and politics. There were two overarching concerns and preconditions for the magazine: firstly, a strong idea of the importance and relative autonomy of youth culture and politics; secondly, as discussed in Chapter Three, a general post-war

Worlds — Pinchas Goldhar," in *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, ed. W.D. Rubinstein (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 133.

[5] See Carter's discussion of Waten's project of clearing a space within Australian literature for the migrant voice without 'losing the marks of its cultural difference'. Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 194.

emphasis on the importance of culture as transformative.[6] These ideas were both merged in a generalised opposition to conservative and assimilationist establishment forces within the Jewish community. Like *Unity*, *Jewish Youth* explicitly positioned itself as part of a post-Holocaust reassessment of a global Jewishness and advocated solidarity among Jews in facing fascism and antisemitism. As noted throughout this thesis, the conditions for Jewish cultural expression in this period were transnational ones. This was frequently reinforced in the pages of *Jewish Youth,* which was expressive of an Australian and transnational cultural imagination. Thus, the writings of this milieu can best be understood with reference to both Australian literary culture and conditions of production, as well as transnational Jewish themes and concerns.

While there were multiple articles and columns that focused on Australian and international struggles against antisemitism, fascism and racism, *Jewish Youth* had a strong emphasis on poetry and prose writing and the promotion of Jewish culture more generally. An analysis of its contents provides vital background to an understanding of the cultural import of Jewish antifascism in Australia. Key Jewish left cultural figures were involved in the publication; Judah Waten and Yossel Birstein were on the editorial board as well as writing for the publication, whilst items were published by Walter Kaufmann, Herz Bergner, Pinchas Goldhar, and Yosl Bergner. I briefly outline the contributions of these writers and artists below, but first it is necessary to discuss the cultural milieu and conditions in which they were brought together in *Jewish Youth*.

In the first two or three years after the War it was possible for a young Jewish person to have sympathies with pro-Soviet Jewish antifascism, Zionism and Yiddishism with no particular sense of contradiction or mutual exclusivity between the three.[7] While battlelines became more clearly drawn amongst older Jewish political actors representing differing positions, *Jewish Youth* itself is evidence of a somewhat more pluralistic political culture amongst young Jewish progressives.[8] As outlined by Lou

[6] For the importance of 'youth', see Harry Stein, "Youth Problems," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946); J.B., "World Youth Conference: Interview with Bert Williams," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946).
[7] An interesting example here is a glowing review in English of the Hebrew play, 'This Earth', about Jewish pioneers in Palestine, which was translated into Yiddish and performed by the David Herman Kadimah Theatre group in Melbourne. Senia Rosenberg, "Theatre Review," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946). For more on the David Herman Theatre, see Arnold Zable, *Wanderers and Dreamers: Tales of the David Herman Theatre* (South Melbourne: Hyland House, 1998).
[8] Though as we saw in Chapters Three and Four these ideologies became almost completely divergent and counterposed in the early 1950s. Symptomatic of this was the decline of the KYO itself. Lou Jedwab, "The Kadimah Youth Organisation in Melbourne: Reminiscences 1942-53," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 12 (1993): 186-187.

Jedwab, a former leader of the organisation, the KYO was a relatively large organisation of hundreds of Jewish youth ranging from ten to thirty years old and segmented by age in three separate groups. Only a minority of the group were actively committed to only one particular Jewish political ideology. In general, KYO members were interested in Zionism, Yiddishism and Jewish antifascism as proud Jewish movements which answered urgent political and existential questions for the Jewish people. The KYO was the centre of a vibrant social and cultural world involving theatre, social events, classes, talks and debates. They regularly had hundreds of people attending events.[9] As Jedwab notes, the most prominent faction within the KYO, which was consistently elected as its leadership, were the pro-Soviet Jewish antifascists.[10] As discussed below, this was reflected in the editorial positions taken by *Jewish Youth*. However, this did not mean the enforcement of one dogmatic perspective.

In its blistering first editorial the editors of *Jewish Youth* expressed (in a similar mode to that of *Unity*) the necessity for a new politics of Jewish unity and a heightened Jewish consciousness against fascism. They decried elements of the current leadership of the Jewish community as 'smitten by the bug of complacency' and suggested that 'there is more than a suspicion that they belong to that strata of society which possesses more than its fair share of worldly goods'.[11] The political future of the Jewish people was still extremely precarious, with *Jewish Youth* calling for 'justice for the Jewish survivors of Hitlerism' still languishing in DP camps and demanding the opening of Palestine to greater Jewish immigration.[12] These concerns would be expressed throughout the run of the magazine.

The most obvious sign of *Jewish Youth's* cultural and political pluralism was in the trilingual form of the magazine itself which was, as far as I have been able to ascertain, unique to any Jewish publication at the time (and since). The importance of this trilingualism was spelled out in the first issue, in terms not too far from those of *Unity*, *Jewish Life* and *New Life*: 'we will present without prejudice the work of all Jewish writers and thinkers in whatever country they live and whatever their language'.[13] However, this multilingualism was to an extent in tension with a strong Yiddishist

[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] "Comment by the Editors," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 1 (1946).
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

cultural emphasis in the magazine. The magazine featured numerous exhortations to read the Yiddish sections, and the KYO formed Yiddish reading groups to encourage the learning of Yiddish. In the opening editorial Yiddish was deemed to be necessary to Jewish culture in Australia:

> The Australian Jewish boy or girl who lacks a knowledge of Yiddish, the living language of millions of Jews throughout the world, the language of the Polish Jewish people who were massacred by Hitler, and the language of the Soviet and American Jewry, is to an extent barred from full access to the soul and life of his people. And in general, a lack of knowledge of Hebrew cuts one off from a fuller view of the life of the Jewish people in Palestine. But the Australian Jewish youth who speak neither of these languages must not be lost to our people. The literatures of both of these languages are so rich and extensive that many examples are to be found in English translations. A great deal is always lost in translation, but these examples of our heritage provide a starting point for our English-speaking young people. It is only through a knowledge of our culture that we can learn seriously what it means to be a Jew.[14]

Despite this stated Yiddishism, I argue below that in practice the magazine functioned to promote a multilingual Jewish culture, and indeed like *Unity* held a privileged place for the promotion of a new Jewish culture in English.

My analysis here focuses on the English language section due to the vast majority of *Jewish Youth's* original content being published in English. While the Hebrew section certainly should not be entirely discounted from an analysis of *Jewish Youth*, it was certainly the smallest, and likely least read section of the magazine.[15] As per Goldhar's critique of Zionism in Australia, *Jewish Youth* desired to add some cultural depth to Australian Zionism, urging Jewish youth to learn modern Hebrew and appreciate Hebrew poetry.[16] The contents of the Hebrew section however certainly reflected Goldhar's critique of the poverty of Australian Hebraism in this period. It featured poetry from important Hebrew poets such as Bialik and Rahel as well as contemporary poets such as David Shimoni.[17] The only significant original pieces written for the section was an article praising *Jewish Youth's* trilingual nature by Semitic studies

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Modern Hebrew was not widely learned or understood in Australian Jewish communities before 1948. Pinchas Goldhar, "Jewish Antisemitism," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948); Benzion Patkin, *Heritage and Tradition: The Emergence of Mount Scopus College* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1972).
[16] See discussion in Chapter Three.
[17] Bialik was also introduced and translated in the English section which featured an excerpt of 'The City of Slaughter', Bialik's famous poem about the Kishinev pogrom of 1903. The version featured here was translated into English from Bialik's own Yiddish translation of his original Hebrew. M.R., "On the 12th Anniversary: The Songs of Bialik," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946).

professor at the University of Melbourne, Morris David Goldman and later a short tribute to Pinchas Goldhar by H. Rubinstein.[18] In a similar mode to *Unity*, while *Jewish Youth* gave strong support to the Yishuv, it emphasised Jewish-'Arab' unity and criticised the idea of Palestine as the ultimate destination of the Jewish people.[19]

The Yiddish section was more vibrant, larger and contained original pieces by Yossel Birstein and Pinchas Goldhar, as well as contemporary poetry and prose from contemporary overseas Yiddish writers such as Der Nister and Dovid Bergelson, both members of the Soviet Union's Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAFC), as well as older canonical writers such as Sholem Aleichem. The English section was certainly privileged despite the trilingual nature of the publication. It contained the editorials, political articles and letters. It featured multiple translations from Yiddish and Hebrew writers such as I.L. Peretz, and Aleichem as well as contemporary Yiddish writers such as Bergelson and Sholem Asch. Whereas within a Yiddishist imagination Yiddish was a Jewish lingua franca, the situation of Jews in post-war Australia meant in practice this role was increasingly assigned to English, not least because of the interest in Jewish culture and politics from Jews who did not come from Yiddish-speaking backgrounds.

One indication of this was in the KYO's approach to new arrivals, with *Jewish Youth* urging their readers to help settle new Jewish migrants and teach them English.[20] This suggests there was an acceptance of the idea of a majority English speaking Jewish community in Australia. This was reflected in the KYO's cultural activities. The enthusiasm for Yiddish culture encouraged by *Jewish Youth,* rather than competing in a zero-sum game with other languages, produced a flow on enthusiasm for Jewish cultural expression in English. A *Jewish Youth* editorial noted, for example, that the success of the KYO Yiddish dramatic group at a 1946 concert led to 'people … clamouring for an English group', a wish which was shortly fulfilled.[21]

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[18] Morris David Goldman, "Our Future is in Our Hands," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 1 (1946); H. Rubinstein, "My Debt to Pinchas Goldhar," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 7-8 (1947).
[19] "Comment by the Editors," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946).
[20] "In the News," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 5-6 (1946). Another reason for the prominence of the English section is one that draws our attention to the power relations inherent in language use. Issues three and four of the magazine were issued only in English. Although the government's assimilationist rhetoric was largely bluster, they did enforce a prohibition on the publication of foreign language magazines or newspapers without express permission. This led to a temporary period of forced monolingualism for *Jewish Youth*. Notably Vic O'Connor acted as the legal representative of *Jewish Youth* in this matter, see NAA: A6122, 153 REFERENCE COPY, "Kadimah (Jewish Youth Organisation in Victoria)," (1946-1953).
[21] Alex Rosenberg, "From the President of the KYO," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 5-6 (1946).

Jewish Youth was intensely interested in the possibilities for Jewish cultural expression in English. English, however, was understood not as an inevitable replacement for Yiddish but as an additional and co-existing means of Australian and transnational cultural dialogue with Jews as well as non-Jews. For instance, multiple poems were published by the Canadian Jewish poet Abraham M. Klein. His poetry on themes of the horrors of war and fascism were introduced in issue two with a quote declaring that 'the Jewries of English speech have at last found … a poet of their own'.[22] *Jewish Youth* played a role as a self-conscious cultural arbiter, featuring in the English section (sometimes self-referential) articles which made clear its multilingual and transnational cultural project. 'Jewish contributions to art in Australia', for example, published in the first issue of *Jewish Youth*, outlined the multiple audiences of 'those who are writing in Yiddish on specifically Jewish themes, and others who write in the English language on themes Jewish and otherwise', and noted that the case was similar for Jewish painters who 'are making a definite contribution to Jewish and Australian culture'. [23] The article made specific mention of Goldhar and Herz Bergner, suggesting that their 'fame has spread far beyond Australia, and their stories have won acclaim in the Jewish press throughout the world'.[24] The article went on to detail the successes of Goldhar, Herz Bergner, and Birstein (all writers for *Jewish Youth*), publishing to acclaim in English translation in Australia as well as in the international Yiddish press.

An article later in the same issue reflected a similar type of cultural criticism. In an article titled 'Bergner, Jewish Painter: An Appreciation' the artist (and co-owner of Dolphin Publications) V.G. O'Connor discussed Yosl Bergner's work within the context of the fight against fascism.[25] O'Connor, along with Noel Counihan, was closely associated with Bergner, and all were members of the Contemporary Art Society and the Communist Party as well as frequently exhibiting together.[26] While Bergner's work is discussed further below, it is here crucial to note O'Connor's framing of Bergner as an important Jewish antifascist artist responding to the Holocaust in both an Australian and international context, underlining the link between the production of a new Jewish culture and the struggle against fascism. O'Connor noted that:

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[22] Abraham M. Klein, "Ballad of the Days of the Messiah," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946).
[23] M.R., "Jewish Contributions to Art in Australia," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 1 (1946).
[24] Ibid.
[25] V.G. O'Connor, "Bergner, Jewish Painter: An Appreciation," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 1 (1946).
[26] Yosl Bergner, *What I Meant to Say: Stories and Travels as Told to Ruth Bondy*, trans. Valerie Arnon (Tel Aviv: Hed Arzi Book Pub, 1997), 95-99.

> as cultural magazines begin to arrive from overseas, particularly from the Soviet Union, and from America, it can be seen that artists all over the world have been moved by the same idea … This is very good, for it shows that there is a growing group of artists who will add another chapter to Jewish culture, and will help to ensure that the suffering of the last decade shall never again come to their people or any other people.[27]

The cultural criticism of overseas writers and artists was also evidence of a commitment to being part of crafting new threads in transnational Jewish culture informed by antifascism. Mark Kronenberg's critique of I.J. Singer's *The Family Karnovsky* (1943) was a typical post-Holocaust Jewish antifascist cultural critique that would not have been at all out of place in a magazine such as *Jewish Life*. While extoling the virtues of Singer, and certainly not dismissing his novel entirely for political incorrectness, Kronenberg suggested that it was essentially a negative book which 'depicts graphically the failure to achieve an ideal' [the Haskalah] but did not 'really advance new ideas'.[28] This was an expression of impatience that Jewish cultural expression had not caught up to new social realities and a new post-Holocaust Jewish consciousness. Kronenberg's review was an assessment in English of a major work by a canonical Yiddish writer published only in Yiddish. This suggests that the review was primarily written for a bilingual audience, but also that this piece of cultural criticism was an important work in itself, not dependent on a knowledge of the original novel. The review functioned as an interface between Yiddish literature and English language literature and cultural criticism.

Jewish Youth's Yiddish to English translations suggested a similar sensibility. The opening editorial suggested that English translations were merely an ersatz stand in for a full appreciation of Jewish culture. In practice, however, the original translations published by *Jewish Youth* were clearly impressive cultural works in themselves, functioning to bring famous Yiddish works to an English speaking audience, both Jewish and non-Jewish, but also to contribute to the world of Jewish literature as a whole, which was characterised by translations between multiple languages.[29] One of the most striking examples of the artful nature of these translations are Margaret

[27] O'Connor, "Bergner, Jewish Painter."
[28] Mark Kronenberg, "I.J. Singer: Introducing Jewish Writers," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 4 (1946).
[29] For historical overviews of Jewish literature as world literature, see Lital Levy and Allision Schachter, "Jewish Literature/World Literature: Between the Local and the Transnational," *PMLA* 130, no. 1 (2015): 92-109; Lital Levy, "Reorienting Hebrew Literary History: The View from the East," *Prooftexts* 29, no. 2 (2009): 127-172. For an overview of the post-war Yiddish literary world, see Jan Schwarz, *Survivors and Exiles: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015).

Birstein's translations of two short stories by the famous Soviet Yiddish writer and JAFC figure David Bergelson.[30] The first story 'Reward and Punishment' was a consummate Jewish antifascist celebration of the Soviet Union's defeat of fascism, featuring a romance between a Red Army officer and a Jewish concentration camp survivor and partisan. The second, 'Among the Partisans', in a similar vein, was about a caring relationship that developed between a 'strong, broadly-built Russian' partisan and a Jewish toddler.[31] The major translation work produced by *Jewish Youth* was a heart stopping story of two young Jewish children during the Holocaust, written by Sholem Asch. The story 'It is Commanded We Live' was 'translated for the first time into English from the "Morning Freiheit" by Margaret Birstein and H. Ross' and took up most of the English section of issues seven and eight. The translation was obviously a major undertaking, of which the editors of *Jewish Youth* were very proud, touting its forthcoming publication in prior issues.[32]

Jewish Youth then, in practice and rhetoric, took upon itself the task of inventing, publicising and creating the conditions for a new Jewish culture, envisioned on both a transnational and local scale. Rather than simply re-publishing Jewish literature from overseas as a means of strengthening Jewish culture, the magazine itself became a central organ for the creation of a new Jewish culture in Australia, formed in dialogue with the international Jewish world. While *Jewish Youth* certainly had an international outlook, it also focused on Australia and was also sometimes hyperlocal, containing Melbourne Jewish news and sometimes gossip or in-jokes related to the KYO.[33] In this

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[30] Margaret Birstein was born Margaret Waisberg. She left Frankfurt after Kristallnacht and learnt Yiddish with Yosl Birstein who she married when she was 18 in Melbourne; '[s]he was with him for the rest of his life, and translated almost all of his work into English'. Andrew Firestone, "Yossel Birstein's Melbourne Years," http://www.yosselbirstein.org/pdf/about/YBs_Melbourne_Years.pdf.

[31] David Bergelson, "Reward and Punishment," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 1 (1946); David Bergelson, "Among the Partisans," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 3 (1946). 'Reward and Punishment', named for a central concept in Judaism, was originally published in Yiddish as 'Loyn un shtrof' in *Einikayt* and then republished in the *Morning Freiheit*. These stories remain untranslated and unpublished in English outside of Birstein's translations for *Jewish Youth*, see Roberta Saltzman, "A Bibliography of David Bergelson's Works in Yiddish and English," in *David Bergelson: From Modernism to Socialist Realism*, ed. Joseph Sherman and Gennady Estraikh (London: Legenda, 2007). For the role of *Einikayt* during the War, see Dov-Ber Kerler, "The Soviet Yiddish Press: Eynikayt During the War, 1942-1945," in *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism During the Holocaust*, ed. Robert M. Shapiro (Hoboken, NJ: Yeshiva University Press in association with KTAV Publishing House, 2003).

[32] "Comment by the Editors," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 4 (1946). One indication of how Yiddish translations sat in the cultural worldview of *Jewish Youth* was an article by 'M.R.' on Sholem Aleichem's great success in Russian translation. According to the author Aleichem 'felt himself to be part of the great Russian culture and Jewish literature to be inseparable from the general Russian literature.' M.R., "Sholom Aleichem in the Russian Language," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 3. (1946).

[33] For example, see Ida Ginter, "K.Y.O. News," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946); "In the News," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 3 (1946).

sense it functioned as a method of community-making on multiple levels. In issue number four, for instance, the editorial expressed a wish to feature more content on 'day to day issues that confront our youth in Australia … we believe that a cultural magazine cannot be a living force unless it is able to link the fruits of culture with everyday matters – matters that concern us, right here in Melbourne, in Australia.'[34] In other words the magazine was not envisioned as a vehicle of transmission of 'Jewish culture' in Yiddish, Hebrew and in translation, to young people who lacked it. The aim was for the magazine to act as a forum for the ideas of Jewish young people in Australia to be publicised, encouraged and debated, and for this to be in dialogue with the ideas and culture of past and present Jews internationally. Jewish culture was not an imposition from elsewhere but something to be generated in local contexts as part of a transnational and indeed transhistorical conversation.

The issues referred to as 'confront[ing] our youth in Australia' were above all political, connected to the need to fight war, fascism and antisemitism. Like the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS) these political concerns were mediated through strong associations with the non-Jewish Australian left. The articles that were published on Australian manifestations of antisemitism were strident. An article on 'Anti-Semitism in the Australian Press', for example, decried the daily antisemitic press attacks on Jewish refugees and strongly linked antisemitism and political reaction.[35] It held that 'Jewish youth can play an important part in the struggle against anti-Semitism if they form stronger bonds with the progressive youth and their organisations in Australia.'[36] As well as politics and international affairs, the KYO was connected in to key discussions around Australian arts and literature. One of the many talks given by Australian left-wing writers to the KYO was a talk by Alan Marshall and Frank Dalby Davison on the new publication *Twenty Great Australian Stories* (1946), a collection edited by Waten and O'Connor and published by Dolphin Publications.[37]

[34] "Comment by the Editors," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 4 (1946).
[35] As suggested by Rubinstein, antisemitism, in the four or five year period following the war, was 'arguably the most extreme and far-reaching in Australian history'. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia*, 388.
[36] M.R., "Anti-Semitism in the Australian Press," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 3 (1946). See also "Gullett and Antisemitism," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 9 (1947).
[37] "From the President of KYO," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 2 (1946).

Dalby Davison on another occasion gave a talk on Henry Lawson, evidence of the KYO's engagement in the cultural nationalist ideas of the time.[38]

As Lou Jedwab outlines, this was just one of the many talks given to the KYO in the period 1945-1948. His list includes a wide variety of Jewish speakers — from Norman Rothfield of the JCCFAS to Bundist Sender Burstin to Zionist Aaron Patkin — and also features non-Jewish cultural luminaries such as Nina Christesen who addressed the KYO on 'Russian and Soviet Literature', Noel Counihan who spoke on 'Realism in Art', and other well-known figures associated with the Communist Party such as Rex Mortimer talking on 'Social Realism in Art' and Kath Bacon on 'Conditions in S.E. Asia'.[39] The KYO was keyed into discussions of war, colonialism and racism on an international and national level. For instance, an editorial in issue four suggested that '[o]ne [talk] which will be remembered for a long time was Alan Marshall's informal talk on his sojourn in the north of Australia.' This trip was the basis for his 1948 book *Ourselves Writ Strange*, an account of Marshall's encounters with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and Queensland.[40] While the book was certainly flawed, it did represent a rare attempt by a non-anthropologist to write an anti-racist account of Aboriginal communities that was critical of government policy and written for a general audience.[41] We can surmise that Marshall's talk to the KYO potentially ran along similar lines.

The breadth of topics attended to by the KYO and *Jewish Youth* provoked some criticism from certain Jewish quarters who preferred that they kept to strictly 'Jewish topics'.[42] In the ninth issue of *Jewish Youth,* Margaret Birstein offered a passionate defence of the KYO's approach suggesting that keeping only to 'Jewish topics':

> betrays a lack of understanding of even the Jewish question. If we were to foster this attitude amongst our members, we would soon degenerate into a chauvinistic sect and end up in a dead end. We Jews can least afford to shut ourselves in water-tight compartments, ignoring the outside world, for, to-day, more than at any other time in our history, we are so much dependent upon the general flow of world events.[43]

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[38] Alex Rosenberg, "From the President of the KYO," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 4. (1946).
[39] Jedwab, "Kadimah Youth Organisation," 183.
[40] Alan Marshall, *Ourselves Writ Strange* (Melbourne: FW Cheshire, 1948).
[41] For a scathing contemporary review, see Ronald M. Berndt, "Review of Ourselves Writ Strange by Alan Marshall," *Oceania* 19, no. 3 (1949): 302-304. For a much more positive assessment, see Gavin Casey, "The Creeping City; Ourselves Writ Strange," *Meanjin* 8, no. 4 (1949): 244.
[42] As discussed in Chapter Four, this was brought to a head with the KYO's expulsion.
[43] Margaret Birstein, "The K.Y.O. Open Forum," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 9 (1947).

Thus, political and cultural questions for Jews were understood as necessarily imbricated with wider social and political questions, particularly as they pertained to racial oppression, nationalism, war and colonialism. This comes further into focus when we look at the KYO's association with other left-wing groups. The KYO had a close relationship with the Eureka Youth League, a youth organisation affiliated with the Communist Party. Harry Stein, reporting back from the Eureka Youth League conference for *Jewish Youth*, in a typical formulation of the time, suggested that youth needed to struggle for world peace and against nuclear bombs, and to 'battle hard against the remnants of fascism and those forces who would once again plunge the world into war'. He argued that 'to work for peace, it is necessary to eradicate fascism in such countries as Spain and Greece and help to develop democratic regimes there. Also to withdraw foreign troops now preventing the people of Palestine, Indonesia, Iceland, Egypt, India and many other countries from running their own affairs.'[44] As discussed in previous chapters, the threats of fascism and the struggles for post-war decolonisation were often drawn together as such.

The influence of African American struggles was also a large influence on the Australian Jewish left's attitudes towards issues of racial oppression in this period.[45] One of the more remarkable reviews in *Jewish Youth* was a feature book review by Yossel Birstein of *Lay My Burden Down* (1945), a recently published collection of oral histories of slavery in the US, 'told by thousands of ex-slaves themselves'.[46] This review was followed by the reprinting of selected excerpts from the book. While there was no explicit comparison drawn between Jewish experience and Black American experience in the review article, solidarity was certainly invoked. As Birstein noted: 'Although the coloured people of America are still struggling for freedom and equality, the abolition of slavery represented a great step forward in the history of mankind, an important step towards a more humane world.' The black struggle was thus one of

[44] Harry Stein, "A Youth Conference," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 5-6 (1946).
[45] See for instance Ruth Faerber, "Move up Can'tyer," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948); Paul Robeson, "Robeson," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1949); George Berger, "Books in the Fighting Line against Discrimination," *Unity: A Magazine of Jewish Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1948). This was in line with the enormous impact of African American struggles on both the Jewish left in the US but also on communist approaches to racial oppression and imperialism internationally. For example, see Carl Vedro, "The Menace of White Chauvinism," *Jewish Life* 4, no. 8 (1950). See also Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (Columbia University Press, 2002), 19-44; Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 103-121.
[46] Jossel Birstein, "Our Book Review "Lay My Burden Down"," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 4 (1946).

universal importance, implicitly representing progress against racism and oppression and for 'freedom and equality' for all oppressed people.

Lay My Burden Down resonated with the shared necessity for Black Americans and Jews to collect, record and invent new ways of representing and invoking their experiences of suffering and oppression. Birstein's review here was contemporaneous with the wide circulation of Holocaust survivor writing as discussed in Chapter One. Botkin, the editor of the collection, was an American folklorist from a Jewish background, and the volume of testimonies published represented only a small portion of the 'tens of thousands of reminiscences and stories' that were collected by 'hundreds of writers and journalists' as part of the New Deal Federal Writers Project in the 1930s.[47] Birstein's review thus serves as a link between the African American anti-racist threads of US Popular Front culture and post-war Australian Jewish antifascism. It also sheds some light on the resonance of folk culture in Australian cultural nationalism for left-wing Jews at the time, as discussed by Goldhar. Folklore or folk history in this rendering did not represent a racially or ethnically homogenous reactionary nostalgic ideal but was a means of recovering an oppressed past of racialised and marginalised groups and giving a voice to ordinary people.[48]

It is productive here to read *Jewish Youth* with reference to Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a 'minor literature', which they argue has three characteristics: the 'deterritorialization of the language, the connection of the individual and the political', and 'the collective arrangement of utterance'.[49] Deterritorialisation is achieved through linguistic experimentation in accentuating the characteristics of the minor (ethnic, subcultural or otherwise) usage of a majority language.[50] The connection of the individual to the political is a product of the fact that a minor literature, unlike a major

[47] Ibid. According to Jerrold Hirsch '[a]s a Popular Front intellectual, Botkin made it clear that he found repulsive the connection between the search for folk purity, the hatred of the allegedly impure, and the growth of fascism.' Jerrold Hirsch, "Rediscovering America: The FWP Legacy and Challenge," *Community Literacy Journal* 77, no. 1 (2012): 21. See also Susan G. Davis, "Ben Botkin's FBI File," *Journal of American Folklore* 122, no. 487 (2010): 3-30.
[48] This was echoed in Birstein's account of the development of Yiddish poetry in another issue of *Jewish Youth*, see Y. Birstein, "Bards of the Yiddish Language," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 5-6 (1946).
[49] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "What is a Minor Literature?," *Mississippi Review* 11, no. 3 (1983): 18.
[50] See Chana Kronfeld's critique of Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a minor literature as necessarily utilising a major language. Chana Kronfeld, "Beyond Deleuze and Guattari: Hebrew and Yiddish Modernism in the Age of Privileged Difference," in *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, ed. Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

literature, is not concerned with producing psychological portraits of the plight of individuals while pretending to universality. Instead in a minor literature each individual character portrayed cannot be separated from their social milieu, meaning their plight is always a venue for the discussion of wider social and communal problems and politics.[51]

The 'collective arrangement of utterance' similarly refers to the fact that given the paucity of great talents or major figures, works are produced in a self-consciously collective process. Unlike the writer in a major literature, who can pretend to the individualised figure of the great artist, the minor writer is intimately aware of their own social and political production. Seeking to consciously engage this 'collective arrangement of utterance', the minor writer often appeals to a collectivity not yet properly invented and in doing so helps to produce that collectivity: 'to force the means for another consciousness and another sensibility'.[52] David Carter notes that although in Waten's work there is some sense of linguistic experimentation in how he renders Yiddish dialogue in English, it is certainly subtle.[53] For the most part this is common across all of the literature surveyed here, which in hewing towards realism was not particularly concerned with linguistic experimentation.[54] Despite this I suggest that there are strong reasons to consider *Jewish Youth* and its milieu in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's formulation.

My own version of this formulation suggests that there are three related factors that make the antifascist Jewish literature moulded in *Jewish Youth* a minor literature: an oppositional political stance, most obviously against antisemitism and fascism, tied often to Holocaust memorialisation; a conscious political and cultural minoritarianism and resistance to assimilation; and a certain fluctuating multilingualism, tied to its

[51] There is a resonance here with Frederic Jameson's claims for how to read third world literature. Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text*, no. 15 (1986): 65-88. There are also direct echoes of one of the principles of socialist realism, that of 'typicality'.
[52] Deleuze and Guattari, "What is a Minor Literature?," 17.
[53] Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 67-71.
[54] Though as Carter suggests Australian socialist realism was in fact highly formally inventive and innovative. David Carter, *Always Almost Modern: Australian Print Cultures and Modernity* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013), 169-208. For a discussion of social realism in the US popular front, see Benjamin Balthaser, *Anti-Imperialist Modernism: Race and Transnational Radical Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 21-22, 57-64. For a striking reassessment of the postcolonial realist text, see Hamish Dalley, *The Postcolonial Historical Novel: Realism, Allegory, and the Representation of Contested Pasts* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 3-41. See also Christopher Vials, *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and U.S. Culture, 1935-1947* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009).

transnational situatedness and plurality of audiences. These three factors mean that this literature cannot be read simply as ethnic literature, giving voice to and representing a particular set of 'Jewish experiences' in Australia. Instead, following Deleuze and Guattari, I suggest this literature had a disassembling effect on what was taken to be majority or hegemonic culture; it was aimed not at simply diversifying the status quo or carving out a place within it, but at challenging and remaking Australian and international cultures through an ambitious program of antifascist social critique and cultural production allied with political movements. Jewish antifascist cultural expression cannot be understood without reference to the antifascist political project of constructing a progressive Jewish political subjectivity in alliance with non-Jewish progressive forces. *Jewish Youth*, in this rendering, may be seen as the venue for the development of a type of minor literature. It cannot be viewed simply as a contribution to Australian literature, or for that matter as part of the development of a strictly Jewish national literature.

My other reason for considering Deleuze and Guattari here is to suggest that the liberatory potential of a minor literature is fraught, if following Jodi Byrd, we consider the newly transformed collectivity imagined through this literature as premised on the erasure of Indigenous people. In Byrd's critical reading of Deleuze and Guattari she suggests that frontier and wilderness tropes are endemic to their critical theory, associating the potential for 'transformational new worlds' with striking out into new empty territory.[55] As discussed in the previous chapter it behoves us to question the extent to which the post-war Australian cultural boom formed a national imaginary which depended on settlerism as part of the source of its nominally egalitarian and transformational capacity.

I do not have the space here to assess the works of all the writers and artists associated with *Jewish Youth* and the Jewish antifascist cultural movement. However, before moving to consider the works of Judah Waten in more detail, it is worth noting others associated with *Jewish Youth* who went on to have successful artistic careers and who in different ways addressed Jewish antifascist and broader anti-racist and anti-colonialist themes through the late 1940s and the 1950s. Notably all these figures are men. This is not to say that there were not left-wing Jewish women writing and painting in this same

[55] Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 13-21.

period. However, they were not given nearly as much prominence. While other left-wing cultural infrastructure of the period increasingly featured the work of women, especially the New Theatre, the Jewish left lagged behind, perhaps an example of the doubled oppression faced by racialised women in Australian society.

The first writer to mention is Herz Bergner. His novel *Between Sky and Sea*, was originally written in Yiddish and serialised in English in *Jewish Youth* and then published by Dolphin Publications in 1946.[56] It was produced via a collective translation process characteristic of a minor literature, involving Herz Bergner, his nephew Yosl Bergner, Goldhar and Waten.[57] Its plot represents a tying together of Holocaust memory with a clear oppositional political protest. Pinchas Goldhar's works of this period, always framed with a social critique (and many published posthumously), were also central to a new Australian Jewish cultural expression.[58] Walter Kaufmann's *Voices in the Storm*, one of the first books published by the Australasian Book Society (ABS) in 1953, is a powerful, partly autobiographical, social historical novel chronicling the Nazis rise to power in Germany.[59] Kaufmann also wrote multiple short stories in this period expressing a transnational anti-imperialist politics.[60] Yossel Birstein was a key left-wing writer for *Jewish Youth,* who, after his migration to Israel,

[56] Herz Bergner, *Between Sky and Sea,* trans. Judah Waten (Melbourne, Australia: Text Publishing, 1946; repr., 2010); I. Kahan, "Three Australian Yiddish Writers," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 7, pt. 4 (1973): 288. Bergner was the brother of Melekh Ravitch, a key figure in the world of Warsaw Yiddish literature, who served as the long-time executive secretary of Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists in Warsaw, see Rebecca Margolis, "Remaining Alive in Silence? Melekh Ravitch as Yiddish Catalyst: Montreal, 1941-1954," *East European Jewish Affairs* 46, no. 2 (2016): 192-209. Ravitch famously visited Australia in 1933 and travelled to the Northern Territory. For a discussion of this, the third Bergner brother and Yosl Bergner (Ravitch's son), see Clive Sinclair, "The Kimberley Fantasy," *Wasafiri* 24, no. 1 (2009): 33-43.

[57] Yvonne Fein, "1: A Retrospective: A Morning with Judah Waten," *Melbourne Chronicle* 57, no. 1 (1988).

[58] "In Memory of Pinchas Goldhar."; "Comment: Pinchas Goldhar."; Judah L. Waten, "By the Editors: Tributes to Pinchas Goldhar," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 9 (1947); Maclean, "The Convergence of Cultural Worlds — Pinchas Goldhar."; "'Jewish Life Appears to be Frozen, Static, Like a Puppet Play': Pinchas Goldhar's Struggle for Yiddish Cultural Authenticity in Australia," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 23, pt. 3 (2017): 491-500.

[59] Walter Kaufmann, *Voices in the Storm* (Melbourne: Australasian Book Society, 1953). Kaufmann was awarded a grant by the Commonwealth Literary Fund to do research for *Voices in the Storm* in the Victorian State Library. Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 94. On Kaufmann, see NAA: A6119, 515. "Walter KAUFFMANN Volume 1," (1951-1959); "Walter Kaufmann, Dunera Boy," podcast audio, *Late Night Live*, (original broadcast 11 September 2014), available at http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/walter-kaufmann2c-dunera-boy/5736970; Alexandra Ludewig, "Walter Kaufmann: Walking the Tightrope," in *Australian Literature in the German Democratic Republic: Reading through the Iron Curtain*, ed. Nicole Moore and Christina Spittel (Anthem Press: London, 2016).

[60] Walter Kaufmann, *The Curse of Maralinga, and Other Stories* (Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers, 1959).

would go on to voice a critical viewpoint on Zionism.[61] We can add to this list the works of two writers who were not associated with *Jewish Youth*, but were associated with *Unity*, the JCCFAS, the Realist Writers Group (RWG) and the New Theatre: David Martin and Laurence Collinson, who both wrote on Jewish antifascist themes.[62]

Perhaps the most famous figure to emerge from this milieu was the painter Yosl Bergner, who was close to Goldhar and Birstein in particular.[63] Bergner, a frequent contributor to *Jewish Youth*, was along with Noel Counihan and Vic O'Connor part of a radical social realist faction within the Contemporary Art Society.[64] During the period 1942-1946 the vast majority of his paintings depicted the plight of Jews in Poland and Aboriginal people in Australia.[65] Bergner was the first Australian settler to paint urban Aboriginal people. Bergner painted them as complex modern subjects, displaced and dispossessed in a world of urban poverty inseparable from the wider social relations of Australia.[66] His achievement was to realise a multidirectional portrayal of Aboriginal people cast within a social critique. It is perhaps best summarised by Counihan in a 1943 letter to Bernard Smith: '[f]or the first time these abused people are being painted by a painter with an understanding of their sufferings and exploitation. It has taken a Polish Jew to interpret the aborigine [sic] realistically without patronage or sentimentality.'[67] It is within this lively critical Jewish antifascist cultural context constituted by the aforementioned works that we can assess the early 1950s texts of

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[61] Andrew Firestone, "The Poetry of Yossel Birstein: A Guide to the Poems of the Site," http://www.yosselbirstein.org/pdf/about/YB_Poetry.html; "Yossel Birstein's Melbourne Years"; "Poem," *Jewish Youth* 1, no. 1 (1946); Adi Mahalel, "Yiddish, Israel, and the Palestinians: Yosl Birshteyn's "Between the Olive Trees"," *Israel Studies Review* 30, no. 2 (2015): 71-91; Boris Sandler, "Yiddish Writers Monologues: Yosl Birshteyn," available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSPbGC8x1hs (Forverts, 2017); Shachar Pinsker, ""That Yiddish Has Spoken to Me": Yiddish in Israeli Literature," *Poetics Today* 35, no. 3 (2014): 325-356.

[62] Martin, *The Shepherd and the Hunter*; David Martin, *My Strange Friend: An Autobiography* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1991); Allan Gardiner, "Pushed into the Bourgeois Camp: David Martin and the CPA," *Overland Journal*, no. 142 (1996): 27-30; NAA: A6126, 689, "Collinson, Laurence Henry," (1950-1964); William Hatherell, "The Brisbane Years of Laurence Collinson," *Queensland Review* 13, no. 2 (2006): 1-12; Graham Willett, "Moods of Love and Commitment: Laurence Collinson in Melbourne," *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 83 (2009): 77-91; "Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism Annual Report 1952-1953," (University of Melbourne Archives, Norman Rothfield Collection, 2002.0014, Box 1).

[63] Bergner, *What I Meant To Say*; Frank Klepner, *Yosl Bergner: Art as a Meeting of Cultures* (Macmillan Education AU, 2004).

[64] Bernard Smith, *Noel Counihan: Artist and Revolutionary* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993), 162-200.

[65] Richard Haese, *Rebels and Precursors: The Revolutionary Years of Australian Art* (Melbourne: Allen Lane 1981), 150.

[66] Klepner, *Yosl Bergner*, 95-96.

[67] Quoted in Smith, *Noel Counihan*, 182.

Judah Waten which provide perhaps the best example of how the Jewish antifascist imagination could break from the racial ideologies of settler colonialism.

Judah Waten's 'The Loser is Black'

In the mid-1940s Judah Waten had a conversation with his close friend, the writer and editor Pinchas Goldhar. Waten had been attempting to write short stories set contemporaneously. He had an interest in writing about Aboriginal people and had written at least one story on the subject.[68] Speaking three decades later, Waten remembered that Goldhar was critical of his focus, suggesting that he did not know from the inside what it was like to be Aboriginal. Waten replied that what he did know was how Aboriginal people were treated and perceived from the outside by whites. Goldhar suggested that he should instead write about his own childhood and the Jewish world, he knew this world intimately but also had a perspective from the outside, given his ongoing association with the non-Jewish cultural and political world. This was the impetus for Waten to start writing the stories which would end up being collected in *Alien Son* (1952), his most successful and well-known book.[69] *Alien Son* is a semi-autobiographical work of fiction based on Waten's own childhood and told from a child's perspective. As outlined by Carter, *Alien Son* can be said to have invented the genre of Australian migrant fiction.[70]

Alien Son contains the story 'Black Girl' about Lily Samuels, the narrator's teenage Aboriginal neighbour, who he has a crush on. In the climactic scene of the story a local white teenager Tommy Jamieson attempts to sexually assault Lily and is fought off by Lily's father and brother. This is all witnessed by the narrator who is hiding behind a tree in the park. Throughout the story Lily is described in passages that foreground the male gaze such as: '[a] breeze fluttered her rose-coloured skirt and played with her black coppery-tinted hair. Her pink blouse tucked into her skirt tightly embracing her breasts and slender shoulders.'[71] The narrative voice of *Alien Son* is not straight

[68] Judah Waten, interview by Suzanne Lunney, Box Hill, Victoria on 27 and 30 May 1975, National Library of Australia, available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-215032167; Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 158.
[69] Judah Waten, interview by Suzanne Lunney, Box Hill, Victoria on 27 and 30 May 1975.
[70] Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 51-72.
[71] Judah L. Waten, *Alien Son* (Melbourne: Sun Books; repr., 1965), 139.

forwardly a first person point of view, instead it melds the child's point of view and the narrator's, as if it is somewhere in between a third person point of view and a later recounting by the grown up child.[72] Waten plays subtly with this ambiguity in 'Black Girl' so that what is at first read as something of an objective view of Lily becomes compromised by the end of the story and revealed more clearly as reflecting the child character's subjective position. After the scene has played out at the park, the child narrator says '[a] feeling of mingled guilt and shame swept through me. Not only Bert Johnson and Tommy Jamieson were to blame, but in some way I too. Then I remembered that I was long overdue at home, and I ran, my heart heavy with guilty secrets.'[73] Waten here combines a childhood coming of age story involving the guilt and confusion of childhood sexuality with a social critique. What seems to be at first a third person objective description of this Aboriginal character is revealed as contingent and indeed complicit.

Waten here is following Goldhar's advice, by making clear that he is writing from the outside and that this is a certain position infused with power. Waten's character is not only positioned as male, a boy looking at older teenagers for models of masculinity and sexuality, but also as a kind of junior settler. Waten's Jewish migrant child learns how to look at and assess Aboriginal people from older boys who are non-Jewish and more established non-migrant settlers. Akin to David Martin's story about 'Mr Cowen', we have depicted here an uncomfortable acculturation into a settler polity. Waten shows this acculturation as particularly gendered, modelled through male settler hostility to Aboriginal women. This story represents Waten's realisation of his position as an outsider in terms of Aboriginal people, and his own complicit positioning as a settler.

In 1953, around the same time as Waten was working on his first novel *The Unbending* (1954), discussed below, he also authored a play that was never performed titled 'The Loser is Black', where he returned to the character of a slightly older Lily Samuels.[74] As

[72] Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 61.
[73] Waten, *Alien Son*, 146.
[74] Waten sent the script for 'The Loser is Black' to the Theatre Council of Western Australia who sent it on to Stanley Middleton, Western Australia's Commissioner for Native Affairs. Middleton, thoroughly misunderstanding the play's politics, assessed that putting it on would not 'be of any advantage to natives in W.A.'. This viewpoint seems to have been unquestioningly accepted by the Theatre Council who rejected the play. Given the play's setting in inner-city Melbourne and Waten's close CPA links, it seems odd that he did not submit the play for a performance by the New Theatre in one of the Eastern capital cities. More archival research on this matter is required. "Letter from Theatre Council of W.A. To J.L. Waten," Papers of Judah Waten, MS 4536, Box 2, National Library of Australia (1953). On Middleton's

far as can be ascertained, this was the only play script ever written by Waten. It seems that he utilised this form to help him address the subject position problem outlined above: a production of 'The Loser is Black' would not have been only a creation of its writer, it would have been interpreted and represented by Aboriginal actors. Figured this way, Waten's play was a compelling social realist look at the gendered racism facing Lily. The play revolved around the theme, succinctly put by Lily's mother, that 'in their eyes you're an abo, and abo girls don't have to be treated right'.[75] One of the notable things about the dialogue and exchange between the mother character and Lily is how it mirrored contemporary discussions around Jewish identity, internalised antisemitism, and consciousness of racial discrimination. Waten used his insight into the microdynamics of racial oppression from his knowledge of the Australian Jewish world whilst still illustrating the distinct character of the dehumanising racism facing Aboriginal people.

Lily, a light skinned Aboriginal woman says she is 'just like all the other girls' at the factory where she works. She says that, people may talk behind her back, but 'they wont keep on saying it for long if I behave decent like'. Mrs Samuels replies: '[y]ou'll never be the same to them' and points out that Lily's friends in the factory 'haven't once asked you to their house … you know why they don't? They don't think you're human like, if you've got colour'. Later in the dialogue Lily complains about her brother and his friend being lazy and that 'all they give us is a bad name', to which Mrs Samuels replies 'all of us have a bad name, all of us. We got the bad name the day we was born.'[76] Waten through Mrs Samuels suggests that racism is systemic and not something which can be escaped through more respectable behaviour by Aboriginal people. She says in a warning to Lily's individualist approach, 'it don't matter what you do lil, but god sake don't go dog on your own. That's the worst you can do.'[77] As discussed in previous chapters, this idea as applied to antisemitism was a key tenet of the Jewish antifascist left.

The play was obviously based on Waten's knowledge of and association with Aboriginal people in Melbourne, likely through left connections. The character 'Mr

politics, see Angela Lapham, "Stanley Middleton's Response to Assimilation Policy in His Fight for Aboriginal People's Equality, 1948-62," *Aboriginal History* 40 (2016): 27-64.

[75] Judah L. Waten, "The Loser Is Black," Papers of Judah Waten, MS 4536, Box 9, National Library of Australia (ca.1953), 11.

[76] Ibid., 11-13.

[77] Ibid., 72.

Tucker' is a prominent Aboriginal activist and community figure who urges Lily to attend Aboriginal socials and protest meetings. The campaign for Fred Waters (discussed in Chapter Five) figures prominently: when Lily's brother Charlie questions Tucker on his alliance with white 'parsons', Tucker replies that '[t]hey're not a bad crowd Charlie. You oughtn't to laugh at them. They want to help us … There's plenty beside the parson fellows with us.' Charlie replies that talk is cheap. Tucker says 'you're not right. When the old fellow up north got sent away for that strike a lot of them helped to get him back. I took up a petition for him where I work and not one of the men refused to sign'.[78] We see here a direct rendering of a contemporary Aboriginal political struggle and its social ramifications. Waten's play is somewhat self-referential here in that he is indicating the political pathways Aboriginal people had available to them which involved relationships of solidarity with, rather than sympathy from, the non-Indigenous working class. 'The Loser is Black' was itself a result of Aboriginal industrial and political action and its ability to garner solidarity from non-Indigenous people.

Akin to Mushin's analysis (see Chapter Two) of the pressures placed on Jewish intra-group dynamics, Waten portrayed the particularly gendered pressures placed on Aboriginal families by racial oppression. This plays out through Lily's wish to date Blue, a white man, as a means of escaping her racial oppression. Lily develops a negative attitude towards Aboriginal men and Charlie is intensely resentful of this. Charlie thinks that Lily regards herself as too good/white for him, speaking of himself he says, 'Charlie's too black ain't he?'[79] 'The Loser is Black' is centrally concerned with the material survival and life prospects of the characters in the Samuels family. The family live in an urban poverty conditioned by their oppression. While Lily works in a factory, she has no way of fitting in more fully in white society or becoming friends with her workmates. Charlie was exploited as a boxer; in his words, his manager 'taught [him] all there is to know about the whites'.[80] Charlie's fate sees him go from hyper-exploited boxer to having a fundamental mistrust of whites, to being dependent on small time criminality for survival. This focus on the materiality of the struggle for survival makes 'The Loser is Black' a kitchen sink drama avant la lettre. The very first scene involves Lily cooking dinner whilst fighting with Charlie over the family's income; Lily

[78] Ibid., 17-18.
[79] Ibid., 22.
[80] Ibid., 27.

says '[o]nly mum and me go to work here. You don't bring nothing in.'[81] The central themes and drama of the play revolve around how the material circumstances and social and economic positioning of the central characters is played out through their race and gender.

Both 'The Loser is Black' and *The Unbending* (discussed below) can be said, in Stuart Hall's words, to be depictions of 'race [as] the modality in which class is "lived"'.[82] As outlined by Benjamin Balthaser, this reflected a great number of the major mid-century US proletarian novels which depicted race and class as intimately interconnected. In Balthaser's terms, many famous US texts by Jewish, Black and migrant authors in the 1930s and 1940s were 'exploration[s] of the ethnic and/or racial self through the classed structure of power'.[83] Both 'The Loser is Black' and *The Unbending* are Waten's attempts to put these models of the raced proletarian novel into practice in a specifically Australian context. As noted by Waten himself, Mike Gold, who wrote the raced proletarian novel ur-text *Jews Without Money* (1930), was a major influence.[84] We can also speculate that US novels which depicted social tragedies induced by systemic racism, such as the African American communist Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940), were also influential[85]

'The Loser is Black' ends with Lily stabbing Charlie to stop him interfering with her chances with Blue, who has obviously (to everyone but Lily) absconded after getting her pregnant. The play comes to a head with what we would now deem lateral violence.[86] It is made clear that this violence is an effect of the intensity of white racist oppression. While 'The Loser is Black' ends in a perhaps overly dramatic tragedy, what separates this drama from other settler narratives about Aboriginal people of the time is firstly its urban setting — Aboriginal people in inner-city Melbourne are seen as just as

[81] Ibid., 2.
[82] Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance," in *Black British Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. H.A. Baker Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 55 cited in Benjamin Balthaser, "The Race of Class: The Role of Racial Identity Production in the Long History of U.S. Working-Class Writing," in *Working Class Literature(s): Historical and International Perspectives*, ed. J. Lennon and M. Nilsson (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2017), 31.
[83] Balthaser, "The Race of Class," 52. These categories should not be taken as mutually exclusive.
[84] Judah L. Waten, "My Two Literary Careers," *Southerly*, no. 31 (1971): 83. For analysis of *Jews Without Money* (1930) along these lines, see Balthaser, "The Race of Class," 45-51.
[85] Richard Wright, *Native Son* (New York: Harper, 1940). The title of *Alien Son* also seems to be a reference to Wright's novel.
[86] On lateral violence, see S. Roberts, "Oppressed Group Behavior: Implications for Nursing," *Advances in Nursing Science* 37, no. 9 (1983): 21-30.

Aboriginal as people anywhere else. This marks an immediate distinction from contemporaneous literary works, written under the sign of the dying race trope, keen to force Aboriginal people into typologies of authentic, inauthentic, 'tribalised', 'detribalised' etc., all tropes aimed at eventual assimilation or elimination.[87] Secondly, the mother character and the activist character, despite not being able to control the eventual situation, are positioned as giving sage and positive advice; as providing a social answer, in the same vein as Jewish antifascism's answer to antisemitism, through appeals to the importance of strengthening group belonging and collective Aboriginal political activism.

'The Loser is Black' represented Waten's desire to delve more deeply into Aboriginal racialisation and oppression. We see an attempt to write beyond a settler subjectivity through the tools of social realist drama and through an analytic in which race and gender are envisioned as central determining factors conditioning exploitation and oppression.[88] As we will see below, Waten was doing similar work in *The Unbending*. Both 'The Loser is Black' and *The Unbending* succeed through their social and historical specificity. 'The Loser is Black's' Aboriginal characters are not simply Jews of a different skin colour, rather attention is paid to the manner in which Aboriginal racialisation and oppression is historically and politically distinct. Waten made clear that anti-Aboriginal racism, although it intersected with class exploitation, had its own social logic. 'The Loser is Black' represents a coming together of Waten's Jewish antifascist knowledge of the microdynamics of racial oppression and his effort to familiarise himself with the struggles of Aboriginal people.[89]

[87] See discussion above. On 'repressive authenticity', see Patrick Wolfe, "Nation and Miscegenation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, no. 36 (1994): 110-118.
[88] We can speculate that 'Rocket Range' was an influence on Waten to write a play featuring Aboriginal people as its central characters, and Yosl Bergner's paintings were likely influences on his attempt to depict the lives of *urban* Aboriginal people.
[89] According to Waten's semi-autobiographical *Scenes of Revolutionary Life* (1982) his engagement with these issues stretched back to seeing William Cooper, the famous Aboriginal leader give speeches at the Melbourne Assembly Hall in the 1930s. Judah Waten, *Scenes of Revolutionary Life* (Sydney and London: Angus & Robertson, 1982), 44.

'One fine happy band of mates': Judah Waten's *The Unbending*

The Unbending was Waten's first published novel and was one of the first books published by Australasian Book Society.[90] Waten wrote *The Unbending* in 1952-1953 and, despite being a historical novel set in Australia around World War One, it obviously expressed a number of contemporary themes. Firstly, it was plainly an anti-war novel, that fitted well with the politics of the peace movement.[91] Secondly, despite the Communist Party of Australia's (CPA) move towards a more accommodatory stance towards the ALP in the period after the referendum (on banning the CPA), Waten's novel was clearly positioned to ruthlessly criticise the ALP for its social role. The ALP was depicted as joining forces with the ruling class and having no faith in the working class to control its own destiny. Waten was especially damning of the pro-war and pro-conscription leading elements of the ALP. Thirdly, the novel was an interrogation of the terrible effects of political repression. While Waten's focus in *The Unbending* is on the repression faced by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) during World War One, the situation was clearly analogous to that faced by the CPA and its fellow travellers in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[92]

Waten's novel also expressed the Jewish antifascist politics of the time. The central characters are the Kochanskys, a Jewish family from Russia who migrate to Australia and move into the small district of Stirlington in Western Australia, near Perth. Hannah, the mother, and Solomon, the father, are very different character types and have differing attitudes towards establishing themselves in Australia and relating to their non-Jewish neighbours. Hannah is doubtful of Solomon's lack of firm principles or political commitments. He is an attractive man with a very appealing personality, but she and the novel are ultimately damning of his impracticality, and flights of fancy. He only occasionally has principles which pierce through his petit bourgeois mentality.

Hannah for her part is a strong character with firm political principles. We see by the end of the novel, against the background of the incredibly trying testing ground of World War One Stirlington (replete with xenophobia and political repression), that

[90] Judah L. Waten, *The Unbending* (Melbourne: Australasian Book Society, 1954).
[91] Ibid. The cover was notably drawn by Noel Counihan.
[92] On the history of the IWW in Australia, see Verity Burgmann, *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism: The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Hannah sees herself as fundamentally diverged from and disillusioned by her husband. She hopes to bring up her children according to her own values rather than Solomon's. Upon the family's move to Perth in the last pages of the novel, Hannah thinks:

> They were starting again, without illusions, not in a new land, but in a land which willy-nilly had become theirs. And although it was not at all as she had imagined it she had learnt greater, deeper truths about the new land in faraway Stirlington. Her sons would absorb those truths and despise the Mandys and the Johnsons.[93]

The 'Mandy' referred to here was their initial friend in Australia, a Jewish man who had become very wealthy and associated with the elite. Solomon has a rather rocky and uncertain relationship with him throughout the novel, looking to him for advice and seeking to emulate his success.[94] Johnson is the main villain of the piece, a wealthy conservative politician who runs the town and is the Kochansky's landlord. Waten's portrayal of the 1910s was largely historically accurate. While the family are targeted as Jews at certain points, they are just as often targeted as foreigners more generally. Their negative racialisation is worsened by their perceived association with IWW members, drawn together as disloyal or foreign to the body politic.[95] In this sense antisemitism is seen as being generated by imperialism and nationalism.[96]

As the quote above suggests, part of Hannah's political journey through the novel is to realise new 'truths' about Australian society and dispose of certain myths. While Waten's novel in proper socialist realist style exposes the complex classed nature of society, he also takes aim at particularly Australian ideologies which cover over this truth. In this sense he was positioning his novel as an intervention in the cultural debates taking place in the left and its associated cultural institutions of the time. As Carter notes, in the early 1950s Waten was far closer to the Palmers and their left liberal cultural nationalist literary circles than the Marxists of the RWG.[97] Nevertheless Waten's novel, published by the ABS, critiqued the putative myth of egalitarianism of

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[93] Waten, *The Unbending*, 302.
[94] For example Waten makes explicit that Solomon's reason for not associating too closely with Feathers, his revolutionary neighbour, was that 'to come even closer to Feathers and men like him meant to jettison all his dreams, all his aspirations … Kochansky still regarded his old friend Mandelstein [who notably changes his name to Mandy] as the ideal, the migrant who had proved the existence of the Golden Kingdom.' ibid., 157.
[95] Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 95.
[96] For an historical account of the development of antisemitism in Australia, see Jon Stratton, "The Colour of Jews: Jews, Race and the White Australia Policy," *Journal of Australian Studies* 20, no. 50-51 (1996): 51-65.
[97] Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 112. Despite not having a large amount of active involvement in the RWG, Waten's papers contain a full set of the *Realist Writer* as well as other associated publications.

Australian society and the idea of an essential Australian character. As discussed in the previous chapter, this was a myth used by radical nationalists such as Ian Turner and those associated with him as a tool of critique and mobilisation that could replace class politics. [98]

Crucially Waten himself was coming from a Jewish migrant positionality and saw that if one told a story from such a point of view one could more easily explicate how Australia was not truly a 'new land' with a classless society and boundless opportunity but was in fact a replication of the class societies of Europe in a new situation. While Aboriginal characters are absent from *The Unbending* and Aboriginal dispossession does not feature as a theme, it is notable that Waten has his central characters the Kochanskys, shipboard on their way to Australia, discuss the Indigenous people of the continent in the first two pages of the novel. In this section, a fellow migrant asks Solomon Kochansky if he is not worried about 'the blacks'; he has heard that they outnumber the whites. Solomon Kochansky, the dreamer of the classless society of boundless opportunity promised by settler colonial ideology, replies that in fact the blacks have nearly been 'killed off', a reiteration of the dying race trope.[99] Waten has the character think, in a rather ironic mode, '[h]aving satisfactorily disposed of this matter — it had momentarily cast a shadow over the promised land — Kochansky proceeded to buoy up hopes by recounting the great riches that were to be found there.'[100] Waten here recalls the theme of Martin's short story, tying together the ideology of settler classless opportunity with the constitutive exclusion of Indigenous people from this vaunted egalitarian polity.

Early in the novel Solomon gets told by his IWW neighbour George Feathers that he cannot trust Johnson and that '[t]he big lurk in this country is to make out we're all the same, see. We're all mates, rich and poor alike. You get it?'[101] Later another revolutionary character says to Feathers, who is experiencing the social pressures of WWI jingoism:

> You've always told me, George, that the boss class works the mateship business in this country…they're doing it now more than ever. That's how they're getting so many to join up… The arms makers and the dead, the masters and the slaves,

[98] In one instance Waten stages a direct confrontation between a revolutionary character and a character who idealises rural bush lifeways. Waten, *The Unbending*, 215-216.
[99] Ibid., 12.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., 46.

> the labour fakirs and the generals, all friends and mates now. One fine happy band of mates. Only the rich and the politicians will stay at home and their poor mates'll rot in foreign soil.[102]

Thus, Waten took aim at an ideological mystification that functioned to simultaneously, exclude and disavow Indigenous political claims, and paper over the classed structure of society.

Some of the dialogue speaks directly to the type of arguments then happening in the Jewish community and is strongly reminiscent of the discourse of Laurence Collinson's 'Traitor Silence' written in the same period of 1952-1953. In Waten's novel Hannah's approach to the rising xenophobia and political repression in the town is to assert that 'now more than any other time we must look the world boldly in the face. Otherwise we'll be spat on.' Solomon replies that they need to keep their heads down: 'the less we say the better. As long as we live here we must keep a tight control on our words'.[103] Of course, Solomon's approach proves self-defeating. When Solomon is caught up inadvertently in a brawl defending members of the IWW against attacks from right wingers, Mandy, his rich Jewish friend, cruelly severs his relationship with him suggesting that he 'place[s] the reputation of the community before anything else and any Jew who lowers it is deserving of the strongest condemnation'.[104]

Hannah's approach is to be far more openly critical and combative, which comes out in a scene where the family visit the synagogue in Perth. Waten emphasises the class divisions in the Jewish community, suggesting along the more radical lines of Jewish antifascist politics that Jewish working-class interests lay with an alliance with the working class more generally rather than with bourgeois Jews, Jewish politicians, or conservative Rabbis. Hannah becomes angry during the Rabbi's speech when he says that 'the loyal Jewish community would not hesitate to support the strongest means to win the war', including by endorsing conscription. Hannah rhetorically asks: 'How many more Kaddishes does the Rabbi want recited?'[105] Waten's politics here also touch on the Jewish antifascist critique of assimilation discussed in previous chapters. Upon a reproach from a member of the synagogue for not joining them more regularly and that being 'the beginning of assimilation', Hannah replies: 'Really I don't see how your

[102] Ibid., 95.
[103] Ibid., 139.
[104] Ibid., 278.
[105] Ibid., 177.

ideas differ very much from those we hear in Stirlington day in and day out from Christians… What does your Jewishness consist of, you might answer me that?'[106] This is an echo of the Jewish left line that the problem with assimilation was the imitation of 'reactionary ways', i.e. a political quiescence and the taking on of bourgeois values and morality.[107]

What brings Waten's novel and his play 'The Loser is Black', both written in 1952-1953, together is the depiction of the complex nature of racialisation's material and psychological impact. This also brings Waten's social realist project in alignment with the Jewish left analysis of antisemitism. Waten's is an account of how racism works at a historically specific point on everyday life, on different character types within a family, and the gendered dimensions of how racism affects one's economic and social prospects in society. This is played out within both family dynamics and on an individual psychological level to produce people's experience and ways of interacting with the world. What is common across these depictions is that although both an Aboriginal perspective and a Jewish migrant perspective are used by Waten to critique society, to gain what could be deemed a more critical and truthful perspective on the whole of society, Waten also made clear that this excluded or racialised perspective of his characters was no guarantee of gaining that larger social critique or of forming a political subjectivity with the capacity to challenge the existing power relations of society.[108]

As we have seen in 'The Loser is Black, Waten foresaw that the extent of Australian racism against Aboriginal people just as often meant a forcing of tragedy. This was also demonstrated in how Hannah and Solomon's migrant experience informs their actions in differing ways. Hannah has the benefit of her political knowledge of Russian history and society combined with her sceptical outsider's view of Australian society. Her understanding of the naked class conflict and open repression in Tsarist Russia becomes completely apposite in supposedly democratic and egalitarian Australia.[109] Solomon, on

[106] Ibid., 178-179.
[107] See discussion in Chapter Two.
[108] The project of *The Unbending* was misunderstood by contemporary readers, including by its defenders, see Carter, *A Career in Writing*, 73-99. Waten's approach aligned with Lambert's call for 'better realism'. Waten depicted not simply the truth of individual characters, but how their plights related to the whole truth of society. This approach necessitated breaking with bourgeois realism and its techniques. Ibid., 90-99.
[109] See for example the scene where Hannah asks the headmaster angrily, 'Mr Grogan: are you pedagogue or gendarme's agent?' Waten, *The Unbending*, 254.

the other hand, dreams of being able to emulate Mandy and use his wealth to escape any social stigma based on being Russian or Jewish; in other words, to participate in the fantasy that one can transcend race through class ascension. It is precisely Solomon's migrant positionality which makes him more susceptible to an individualist or petit bourgeois mentality.[110] Thus there was no straight line between a racialised subjectivity and an emancipatory collective political subject. As in Hannah's character arc, to journey from the first to the second required a wider social critique learned through political struggle.

Thus, in *Alien Son* the story 'Black Girl' had reflected a subtle understanding that the Jewish migrant perspective could not be the same as an Aboriginal perspective: a Jewish perspective represented a certain positionality within an exploitative and eliminationist socio-economic structure. 'The Loser is Black' and *The Unbending* then examined these subjectivities, asking how they were constituted and what social options were available to those wishing to resist racialisation. In social realist style, Waten demonstrated that only actions based in a wider social critique could offer successful resistance. Waten's depiction of the interlinked nature of race, class and gender as they played out in the lives of his characters reflected Jewish antifascism's tenet: that if one did not see racialisation as imbricated with the exploitation and oppression of class societies and imperialism, one ended up with the political dead end of a nationalist response. In the Jewish antifascist account, a political answer to racism and colonialism rested instead on solidarities that could stretch across groups whose racialisation stemmed from differing ideological formations based in war, exploitation and dispossession.

As suggested by Carter, Waten's engagement with the non-Jewish cultural world (including through Dolphin Publications and the ABS) made clear his claim for a migrant fiction as Australian literature. There is a strong continuity here, however, with Waten and Fitzpatrick's claims for this Australian literature as outlined in *Southern Stories*. Waten's clear inspiration to write socialist realist literature as in the US, which depicted the joint imbrication of race and class (and also here gender), meant his alignment with a more critical non-Australianist left-wing cultural movement as

[110] This is echoed by the Lily character, in 'The Loser is Black' who tries to choose an impossible path of racial escape after being presented with the extremely limited options available to Aboriginal women by the intensity of Australian racism.

outlined in the previous chapter.[111] Waten's production of these texts in 1952-1953 represents a high point of the Jewish antifascist imagination. Far from the production of simple propaganda or a crude roadmap for political action Waten's three texts here reflect what I would suggest is a fulfillment of his claim in *Southern Stories* for art to take its place within larger social and political questions through 'subtle and varied means'. As I have outlined above, the Jewish antifascist imagination at work here was conditioned by several complex factors, chief among them Aboriginal anti-racist struggle and its complex mediation through both CPA ideology and associated civil society activism.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have surveyed the magazine *Jewish Youth* and aspects of the oeuvre of Judah Waten. I established that *Jewish Youth* represented a similar political project to that of *Unity* in its Jewish antifascist ideology. *Jewish Youth's* project was not simply to be a contribution to or represent a section of an Australian national literature, nor did it seek to build towards a stably defined Jewish national literary project. Instead *Jewish Youth* produced a type of minor literature with a multilingual and transnational address. This minor literature charted a path between nationalism and assimilation, and was intimately tied to an oppositional politics, involving a particular mode of Holocaust memorialisation that critically assessed antisemitism as emerging from larger international power structures. This meant *Jewish Youth* was influenced by a number of contemporaneous progressive cultural and ideological forces. In an Australian context this meant an engagement with the wider world of the Australian left cultural sphere and its cultural nationalist threads. It also meant the strong impact of global anti-racist and anti-colonial ideas.

[111] Gardiner suggests that Waten in the late 1950s took a capitulationist perspective in the debates between the Party and the nationalists, conditioned by his new status within the CPA and the CPA's own accomodationist priorities at that time. Gardiner, "Ralph De Boissiere," 199-209. However, there was some continuity in Waten's critique. In a 1958 article for the *Tribune* Waten dismissed the idea of a 'squatter-gentry' or 'religious', 'reactionary' claim to the Australian tradition and had a particular dig at the liberal and radical nationalists claim to the tradition as 'a sense of mateship running through the community — a class collaborationist view in essence'. Judah L. Waten, "What Is the Australian Tradition? The Australian Tradition and Communism," *Tribune*, 22 October 1958.

The persistence of themes that problematised settlement and drew attention to the plight of Aboriginal people in Australia reflects the cultural positioning of this literary and artistic work. Through an understanding of the Holocaust and the consequences of fascism, a wider critical and anti-racist imagination was developed by Jewish antifascists. *Jewish Youth's* minor literature project was not separate from Australian cultural nationalism; in fact, the spaces opened through cultural nationalism, such as Dolphin Publications, were key to the emergence of the possibility of *Jewish Youth*. As I have outlined, Australian cultural nationalism of this period itself was split: on the one hand, 'Australianism' tended to reproduce settler colonial tropes of pseudo-egalitarianism and, on the other hand, many versions of this cultural nationalism reflected an anti-imperialist and anti-racist imagination which aligned with Aboriginal political movements to interrupt the reproduction of racial ideologies. *Jewish Youth* exceeded the boundaries of a narrowly defined cultural nationalism, representing one of the best examples of the non-Australianist wing of the new cultural expression of the period. As a minor literature it acted as an imaginative support to movements counterposed to the status quo. Jewish antifascist literature in this sense had a dialectical relationship with the project of constructing a non-nationalist and transnational Jewish political subjectivity.

I do not suggest that 'transnational' thinking is a byword for progressive or antiracist. As in Goldhar's 'Australian Literature', it could be a means by which to assert a 'Jewish as settler' futurity without explicitly addressing the dispossession inherent in settler colonialism. However, in another register more attuned to the problems of power, exploitation, dispossession and racism, the transnational scope of Jewish antifascist thinking, could be a method for seeing past 'Australia' as the only space to make political claims or as a 'natural' unquestioned setting for those writing or painting in Australia. The Jewish antifascist oeuvre more often than not reflected an anti-racist internationalism, making it open to being pushed and pulled by global anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles, including Aboriginal movements. The Jewish antifascist cultural expression that served to question and interrupt most forcefully the reproduction of settlerist ideology were the works of those such as Waten and Yosl Bergner which were based on engagement with Aboriginal people. The work of those such as Goldhar's reproduced some of the attitudes prevalent at the time, even within left circles, and showed the least faith in the possibility of class politics or that political change could

happen within the Jewish community. Here we can see the homologous nature of certain forms of cultural nationalism, settlerist ideology, and Popular Front antifascism in eschewing a class analysis for broader cross-class political categories of solidarity and identification.

The three texts by Judah Waten that I have assessed in this chapter indicate that an anti-imperialist Jewish antifascism could be deployed in wider anti-racist solidarity. Jewish antifascism's potential for reshaping Jewish subjectivities towards a challenging of settler colonial ideologies was dependent, however, on how it intersected with Aboriginal struggles within a wider political field. Waten's first step in developing Jewish solidarity with Indigenous people was to understand the structural position of Jewish people within Australian society as settlers. Waten's work suggests he understood the possibility of anti-racist solidarity between groups whose racialisation was based on different material bases of exploitation and oppression. By situating his depiction of the complex impact of racialisation within a wider critique of capitalism, imperialism and colonialism, he suggested that effective Jewish participation in a wider struggle against racism, was congruent with a critical antiracist Jewish antifascism that was willing to employ class politics in an effort to remake, question and disrupt Jewish communities and the foundations upon which they were built.

Conclusion

They are always singing the song of People and Nation, of akhdes [unity] and klal yisroel [the whole of the Jewish people], to make you forget your real hardships, to make you forget that there can be no akhdes between factory owner and worker, between landlord and tenant, between evictor and evictee!

Jewish Labour Bund poster for 1928 Polish Sejm elections[1]

This thesis has provided an account of Australian Jewish antifascist cultural and political thought by drawing on a range of unexamined sources, such as newspaper articles, magazines, pamphlets and creative works, to paint a vibrant intellectual and cultural portrait of the Australian world of Jewish antifascism, and consequently uncover a previously obscured history of radical Jewish thought in Australia. Utilising a partisan framework that focused on the transnational dimension of the political imagination, I have analysed the complex historical positioning of Jews within Australian white supremacy and settler colonialism. In doing so I have tracked the emergence of the Jewish antifascist left as a collective political subject and argued that it developed out of a complex political ethic of Holocaust memorialisation. In Chapter One I outlined how this ethic was multidirectional and geared towards a horizon of redemption and radical social change. This orientation, along with an understanding of the racist nature of the Holocaust, led to the opening of possibilities for new lines of political solidarity with other oppressed peoples.

The Jewish antifascist left rejected internalised antisemitism and respectability politics, and also developed a critical consciousness of, and approach to, Australian society. This thesis has argued that this consciousness was the result of a particular understanding of antisemitism as inextricably linked with fascism. In Chapter Two I showed how Australian Jewish antifascism was in alignment with a broader transnational Jewish antifascism, reflecting a Jewish internationalism. In this Jewish internationalist cultural politics, Jewish nationalism was countered with a view that Jewish cultures could be expressed and developed with equal validity and importance in multiple languages around the world. This thesis has suggested that the Australian Jewish antifascist left

[1] Quoted in Gertrud Pickhan, "Yiddishkayt and Class Consciousness: The Bund and Its Minority Concept," *East European Jewish Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2009): 259.

developed an understanding of antisemitism as a structural ideology within Australian society. Antisemitism was viewed as contingent and combatable through wider processes of political struggle with non-Jews against reaction and oppression more generally.

In Chapter Three, this thesis outlined how and why the Jewish antifascist left clashed with other contemporaneous Australian Jewish political movements and tendencies. The Jewish antifascist left's internationalist politics and cultural program put it at odds with Zionism, assimilationism and Melbourne's post-war Bundism. In this respect, the Jewish antifascist left pitched itself against the political assimilationism of the previous Jewish establishment. They rejected a definition of Jewishness as race, religion or nation; they instead understood Jews as an internationally distributed and diverse people, constituted through history rather than divine or national will. In their view this dispersed and diverse characteristic was a positive rather than negative formation. Against the political assimilationist and Jewish nationalist view, a Jewish antifascist politics transcended allegiance to any particular nation-state; instead they viewed Jewish antifascism as part of an internationalist progressive political struggle.

I have shown in addition how the history of the Jewish community in Australia and its political and racial positioning needs to be understood with reference to broader global structures of Western imperialism and settler colonialism. Chapter Four developed this argument, noting that while the embrace of Israel by the US and allied powers such as Australia in the global Cold War (and since) meant an ongoing disaster for the Palestinian people, it also had the effect of allying Zionism in Australia with a repressive Cold War political consensus. As such there came to be no contradiction between political allegiances to the Australian state, Western imperialism and Israel. Zionism came to authorise a drastic circumscription of Jewish identity and politics in Australia. The excision of the Jewish left from mainstream community institutions meant the severing of connections between the Jewish community and civil society groups, including those concerned with broader opposition to racism, colonialism and solidarity with Indigenous justice campaigns. This thesis has argued that the Anti-German Migration Campaign (AGMC) was both the most developed and public form of the assertion of an independent Jewish left political subjectivity, as well as the occasion of its rapid demise. The AGMC was the product of the transnationally constituted left antifascist hegemony within the Jewish community. As such, this thesis has suggested

that although this campaign at times articulated itself within a left nationalist framework, it was not confined to a nationalist discourse. The convergence of anti-communism and Zionism meant that the Jewish right could develop a new form of political assimilationism, making a claim to whiteness and governmental belonging through the destruction of an independent collective Jewish political subjectivity that challenged existing racialised power structures in alliance with a broader non-Jewish movement.

Part of Jewish antifascism's legacy for today's politics is its complex cultural and political resistance to racialisation. I have suggested that this resistance was always necessarily multilayered and dialectical. It emphasised: the strengthening of group belonging as a means of transcending the group; the deepening of Jewish consciousness in order to perceive more keenly the wider world; the formation of a Jewish political subjectivity as a necessary pre-condition for effective political co-operation with non-Jews; and the memorialisation of the specifically antisemitic racism of the Holocaust in a mode that was comparative and multidirectional. I have demonstrated in Chapter Two how these ideas came about in dialogue with the politics of the (long) Popular Front: in a moment where the threat of fascism meant a new approach to antisemitism. Jewishness was encountered anew as the site for the organisation of a certain type of progressive political subjectivity. This thesis has analysed both the potentialities and the limitations of this politics.

While 'unity' made sense as a call to intra-Jewish solidarity against outside antisemitism, it did not offer a viable defence against a near fatal attack from the Jewish right, carrying out the political repression of the ruling class inside Jewish communities. While the Jewish left was eventually forced to split from the mainstream, a combination of its own class composition and political orientation, the strength of anti-communist political repression, and its discrediting through its denial of Soviet bloc antisemitism, meant it could no longer provide a viable challenge to the Jewish right's communal hegemony. Thus, in Chapters Three and Four I have argued that a 'unity' politics could not mount a coherent or sustained resistance to Zionist Jewish nationalism. Envisioning the Yishuv's struggle as anti-imperialist in the lead up to 1948 led, for the most part, to disorientation or tacit support for Israel in the period immediately following this, despite Israel's growing position as a key ally of Western imperialism. In Chapter Three, particularly, I have suggested that it was the settler colonial nature of the Zionist

enterprise that generated its pseudo-egalitarian, and anti-imperialist sheen, leading to its misapprehension by the global Jewish left.

To further illustrate the nature of these ideological processes, in Chapters Five and Six I analysed the contradictions of the Jewish antifascist cultural output that emerged in relationship to mid-century Australian cultural nationalism. The emphasis on the national-popular cross-class fight against fascism meant that Jewish antifascists were susceptible to the reproduction of settler ideology in Australia, which similarly promised a vision of egalitarian and multi-ethnic national belonging without the prospect of class conflict. More critical strands of Jewish antifascism, however, emphasised an internationalist anti-racism and anti-imperialism and found alignment with, and informed, a critical current of Australian culture in the 1940s and 1950s. In Chapter Six, I charted the emergence of a Jewish antifascist minor literature, a multilingual project which transcended both Australian national literature and a Jewish national literary project. This thesis has suggested that this somewhat amorphous critical current of Australian cultural expression was evidence of class struggle politics, Jewish antifascism, anticolonial movements and resistance to settler colonialism all creating a space for new solidarities which could challenge established power structures.

These arguments have been supported by evidence drawn from a rich vein of expression in newspapers, magazines and other sources that warrant further attention. As noted in the introduction, these sources are not reflective of the work and influence of Jewish women during this period, and future scholarship could analyse these publications, coupled with other sources, to produce gender-related analyses. We still need social histories that examine more closely the class, gender and ethnic composition of Australian Jewish communities during the twentieth century along with their contending political groupings and fault lines. I hope the research conducted for this thesis provides a stimulus for further historical scholarship exploring class and power structures within ‘ethnic’ communities. Such histories may play a part in informing the new solidarities required to challenge fascism in all its guises.

* * *

This thesis has attempted to answer questions about Jewish politics that I first came to through my involvement with the Australian Jewish Democratic Society (AJDS), an organisation where I worked as a community organiser for three and a half years. This

was my entrée into the small but passionate world of the Melbourne Jewish left. Norman Rothfield, one of the organisation's founders, had passed away the year before I was employed. He along with Evelyn Rothfield and others carried through aspects of a politics that began with the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (JCCFAS) and carried through to the AJDS. This made the AJDS in certain respects the JCCFAS' successor organisation. It is to everyone who I worked with at the AJDS that I owe much of the impetus for writing this history. The questions about Jewish identity and politics, Zionism, antisemitism, the Holocaust and much more, that were raised through our activism were the starting points for many of the ideas that are developed through this thesis.

In April 2015, the month after I began writing this thesis and resigned from my position at the AJDS, the first 'Reclaim Australia' rally was held in Melbourne, an incident which turned out to be the first of many occasions for fascists to mobilise openly in Victoria over the past few years. Two years later Donald Trump was elected President with help from allies in the 'alt-right', emboldening fascists everywhere. In 2018, the far-right racist AfD become the third largest party in the German parliament, not to mention the rise of the far right and a resurgence of antisemitism elsewhere in Europe. Parallel to this, more cracks in the mainstream of Australian Jewish discourse are emerging, particularly influenced by the growth of the Jewish left in the US. It seems as if the notion that right wing Zionism is the only acceptable politics for a safe and flourishing Jewish community is gradually being displaced. Antifascism once again has become a highly relevant political framing for the Jewish left both in Australia and internationally.

As Jewish communities face such new political crossroads, I hope my reassessment of the legacy of the Australian Jewish antifascist left, including mistakes made and possibilities quashed, can help to inform future struggles. In my analysis, fundamental diasporic Jewish safety and flourishing can only come about through the formation of a Jewish critical class politics that is willing to challenge the structural inequalities of Jewish communities, to reorient solidarities away from allegiances to empires and nation-states and towards revolutionary movements aimed at finally abolishing racism, colonialism and capitalism. In settler colonies such as Australia and Israel/Palestine these movements would constitute a process of decolonisation led and determined by

Indigenous people. It is this vision that functions as the imagined standpoint of redemption from where I have attempted to consider the history analysed in this thesis.

I have written this history in accordance with a conceptualisation of the temporality of emancipatory movements as belonging together in a string of discontinuity, linked not causally but through a common emancipatory horizon. If the thought of the Jewish antifascist left can still provoke, challenge, convoke and inspire us today this suggests that it cannot be fully reduced to its discrete historical context. Thus, this thesis was written not simply to challenge previous renderings of this past, but also contemporary rendering of the present.

List of Sources

Primary Sources

The key primary sources utilised in this thesis comprise newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and literary works published by the Jewish antifascist left in the immediate post Second World War period in Australia. It also includes other contemporary national and international sources that illuminate this body of work. I identify key archives below, and then also cite individual references by kind.

Archives

Archive of Australian Judaica, University of Sydney

Australian Jewish Forum

Jewish Youth (in the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism papers, Box 5, Folder 2)

Newsletter of the Melbourne and Sydney Jewish Councils to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism (in the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism papers, Box 5, Folder 2)

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