THE Australian Jewish community was growing rapidly. During the period 1911-52 the total Jewish population of Australia was tripled, from 17,711 to 53,750. Of the latter number, 22,443 Jews resided in New South Wales, 26,060 in Victoria, 2,874 in West Australia, 1,492 in Queensland, and the remainder in South Australia, Tasmania, and the Federated Territories.

Between 1946 and June 30, 1953, 17,500 Jewish migrants arrived in Australia, increasing the Jewish population by nearly one-third. Of this number, 3,801 were sponsored by the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies and its constituents; 13,346 were sponsored by private individuals; 207 were estimated as International Refugee Organization (IRO) arrivals; 77 came under the Children's Scheme; and 69 were sponsored by the Welfare Guardian Society. The nationalities of the larger numbers of Jewish immigrants to Australia during this period were: Polish (3,399); Hungarian (2,209); Czech, 1,278; and Austrian, 1,275.

Communal Activities

Migration from nineteen different countries into a predominantly Anglo-Jewish community made it imperative to weld heterogeneous elements into one communal pattern.

Jewish Boards of Deputies in the six states worked to this end under the guidance of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ). When its new president, Sydney D. Einfeld, assumed office in Sydney in July 1952 the ECAJ issued a statement enumerating its future tasks. These included: close association with the Jewish Boards of Deputies in Australia; assistance in the development of Israel as a homeland for Jews, and as a spiritual and cultural center; support for democracy and rejection of all forms of totalitarianism of the right or left; opposition against large-scale German migration and of Nazis and undemocratic elements; constant vigilance against manifestations of anti-Semitism; appeal to Jewish youth to join in youth work and to prepare for sharing responsibility in communal affairs; invitation to the Jewish press to become the link between the leaders and the community.

German Migration

Australian Jewry continued its strong stand against mass German migration. When in September 1952 an immigration agreement with West Ger-
many was signed in Bonn by Australian Immigration Minister Harold Edward Holt, the ECAJ expressed its concern to the Australian government. Protests against mass German migration came from the Australian Association of Jewish Ex-servicemen and Women and in mass protest meetings held by the Jewish communities in Melbourne and Sydney in November 1952. Statements against German migration were made in the Federal Parliament in Canberra by government supporters as well as by Herbert V. Evatt, leader of the opposition Labor Party, who spoke against German migration and ineffective screening methods. Hostile demonstrations took place in Melbourne and Sydney in June 1952 when Germany's first Ambassador to Australia, Walter Hess, arrived. A controversy in the Jewish press and public arose when E. Aschner, a German Jew, took up his post as German consul general in Melbourne, which had Australia's largest Jewish community.

**Jewish Community Week**

The period commencing with the anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto (27 Nissan) and terminating with the anniversary of Israel's Independence (5 Iyar) had become a permanent feature in Australian Jewish communal life, known as Jewish Community Week (*Asseret Yeme Kehillah*). Functions were planned "designed to feature Jewish race, history, and institutions and to stimulate participation in communal activities; such functions might be made the opportunity to welcome new arrivals and to help them to become integrated into the fabric of communal life."

In all the Jewish communities memorial meetings and school assemblies were devoted to the memory of all Jewish victims of Nazi persecution on the anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. Rabbi I. L. Swift spoke in a radio broadcast on "The Spirit and the Meaning of the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto," and the ECAJ distributed a booklet on this topic throughout Australia, New Zealand, and some Pacific communities.

**Religious and Educational Activities**

The Jewish communities of Victoria and New South Wales were attempting to organize the observance of the dietary regulations more strictly. They wished to bring the price of kosher meat into line with the market prices for meat, and also to install approved casting-pens for new methods of Shechita compatible with the state laws.

Australia's first Jewish day school, Mt. Scopus College in Melbourne, extended its activities after a visit by Rabbi Yehuda Avida, one of Israel's foremost educators. Moriah College was established in Sydney as the first Jewish day school in New South Wales during 1952-53.

Educational authorities were studying the introduction of the Sephardic Hebrew pronunciation into all Jewish schools and classes in Australia. While the Perth community had decided to do so, no general ruling on this matter could be achieved, since Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie in London
had decided against it and a number of Australian congregations were under his jurisdiction.

Youth Activities

The formation of an Australian Federation of Jewish University Students followed an educational summer camp in Castlereagh in January 1953 attended by participants from all the Australian states and New Zealand.

State youth councils in Victoria and New South Wales rallied more Jewish youth; the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies made special constitutional provisions for youth representation on the Board.

Jewish sport activities culminated in a successful Interstate Sports Carnival in Perth during Christmas under the auspices of the Australian Jewish Amateur Sports Council. Perth was the first Jewish community in Australia to establish its own sports ground. The Sports Council also decided for the first time to send a team from Australia to the Maccabiah to be held in Israel during September 1953.

Social Welfare

The Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies, with branches in all the states, handled relief, welfare, social work, and rehabilitation throughout the community. The United Jewish Overseas Relief fund, which dispatched relief goods overseas valued at more than £100,000, amalgamated with the Jewish Welfare Society, which had also assumed responsibility for a special sponsorship scheme for Jewish orphan children under the care of the World OSE. The welfare societies were cooperating closely with the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and with the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS).

Reaction to Anti-Semitism Behind the Iron Curtain

At the time of the Prague trials (see p. 288) ECAJ President Einfeld declared that the official revival of anti-Semitism might be primarily intended to screen preparations for war. He expressed Australian Jewry's deep alarm over the Moscow purges.

These statements were featured by the Australian metropolitan and country press. Maurice Ashkanasy, president of the Victoria Jewish Board of Deputies, gave a broadcast on the Prague trials. A publication "The Prague Trial, its Anti-Jewish Implications" by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, based on reports from the Czech official radio monitored in London by the British Broadcasting Corporation, was sent to members of parliament in Canberra. An ECAJ Deputation to Richard G. Casey, Minister for External Affairs, expressed the anxiety of the Jewish community.
The stand taken by the ECAJ on behalf of the community was endorsed by the Boards of Deputies in Sydney and Melbourne.

**Anti-Semitism**

Neil O'Sullivan, the Minister for Trade and Customs, promised a closer check on importation of anti-Semitic literature originating mainly from Sweden.

In September 1952 the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne Dr. Mannix, denounced anti-Semitism; his statement was later repeated by other leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and also reprinted in connection with the outbreak of anti-Semitism in Russia, by the Victoria Catholic paper *The Advocate* on February 12, 1953, in an editorial, "Communism Versus the Jews." The annual meeting of the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches adopted unanimously the following resolution in February 1953:

In view of the declaration of the first general assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam (1948) that anti-Semitism is a sin against God and man, this Council notes with regret the apparent revival of anti-Semitism. It calls on Christian people to do everything possible to discourage this attitude and to promote friendly relations between Jews and Christians.

Efforts were being made in Sydney and Melbourne to form Councils of Christians and Jews on the lines of the Council in Britain.

**State of Israel**

Australian Jewry contributed nearly £140,000 ($313,600) to the United Israel Appeal. Plans were on hand for the establishment of Australian-Israel chambers of commerce. The ECAJ took steps in support of the decision to transfer the Israel ministry for foreign affairs to Jerusalem, against Egyptian interference with shipping to Israel through the Suez Canal, and against discrimination by Arab states against Australian citizens traveling with visas to Israel.

**Overseas Affairs**

The ECAJ became a constituent body of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany; it was also represented on the Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria and in this connection had made representations to Richard G. Casey, Australian Minister for External Affairs. Prior to the ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in May 1953 submissions were made to the Australian government in support of humani-
tarian causes vital to the Jewish people. The ECAJ also sought Australian support for the Convention on the Status of Refugees and for the implementation of the Genocide Convention. It was instrumental in arranging the departure from Australia to Bremen of M. Greber, a crown witness for the prosecution against Fritz Hildebrandt, since convicted as a war criminal.

Australian Jewry was affiliated with the World Jewish Congress and in close cooperation with the Board of Deputies of British Jews and other Commonwealth countries. It felt an increased responsibility toward Jews living in the Pacific area. Contacts with communities in India, Pakistan, Singapore, Hongkong, Indonesia, Indochina, Thailand, the Philippines, New Zealand, and other countries had prepared the ground for a conference in Australia organized by the ECAJ on behalf of the World Jewish Congress for the purpose of exchanging views on Jewish problems in the economic, educational, cultural, and religious fields.

**Personalia**

Abram Landa was elected on February 25, 1953, to the New South Wales State Cabinet and became Minister for Labor, Industry, and Social Welfare. He was the only Jewish minister in Australia.

**Wolf Simon Matsdorf**

**ISRAEL**

The period under review (July 1, 1952, through June 30, 1953) was for Israel one of consolidation rather than advance on the home front; economic stability appeared nearer, though still far in the future. On the foreign front Israel's position remained a difficult one, and its foreign policy was inevitably fraught with dangers for its security and even existence.

**The Domestic Scene**

President Chaim Weizmann of Israel died on November 9, 1952. Four weeks later, on December 7, Yitzhak Ben Zvi was sworn in as the second President of Israel.

**Government Crisis and Reorganization**

On September 17, 1952, both the Agudat Israel and Poale Agudat Israel (religious) Parties announced their withdrawal from the government coalition headed by Prime Minister David Ben Gurion of the Mapai (Labor) Party. A prolonged government crisis resulted, in which the problem of relations between religion and state upset the slender parliamentary majority of the coalition. On September 29 the prime minister started a series of