Australia *

IN THE period under review (July 1, 1959, to June 30, 1960) industrial expansion continued, with some inflationary tendencies. Immigration was somewhat reduced. The coalition of the Liberal and Country parties, under Prime Minister Robert G. Menzies, continued its record term of office. Labor leader Herbert V. Evatt retired from politics to become a judge in New South Wales and was succeeded as party leader by Arthur A. Calwell. The Democratic Labor party, which had split from the Labor party in 1956, continued its separate existence; while it made little headway, the division made an early return of Labor to power unlikely.

Jewish Population

In 1959 Australia’s population was somewhat more than ten million. The Jewish population was estimated by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) at close to 67,000 (see p. 385). Melbourne, Victoria, had between 28,000 and 30,000 Jews; Sydney, New South Wales, between 23,000 and 29,000; Brisbane, Queensland, 1,750; Adelaide, South Australia, 1,300; Perth, Western Australia, 3,000; Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, 90, and Hobart and Launceston, Tasmania, 100. There were a few Jews in other provincial centers.

Immigration

Almost all of an estimated 1,500 Jewish immigrants—mainly from Poland, Israel, and Hungary—who arrived during the year settled in Melbourne and Sydney. The many thousands of Jews who had come to Australia in the immediate postwar period were fully integrated in the community, but the recent immigrants were mostly magyarized or polonized, and it was too early to assess the extent of their integration. The Federal government continued to be sympathetic and cooperative. The Australian Federation of Jewish Welfare Societies maintained close contact with JDC, UHS, and other world Jewish organizations.

Community Organization and Activity

The Jewish communities in each state—except Tasmania, which was represented by Hobart congregation—were organized in boards of deputies, which in turn elected ECAJ. Delegates to the boards came from congregations and

* For meaning of abbreviations, see p. 391.
Zionist, welfare, educational, ex-service, sporting, and social organizations. In Sydney and Melbourne some deputies were elected by direct vote. The boards coordinated communal activities, appeals, and relations with state governments, besides referring matters of general Australian Jewish concern to ECAJ for discussion with the Federal government or overseas Jewish organizations.

CJMCAG provided a total of A£150,400 ($338,400), of which about A£109,650 ($246,713) went for social services and A£40,750 ($91,688) for education. ECAJ was a constituent member of WJC and of the Consultative Committee of Jewish Organizations. The Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand maintained close links with the WZO and the Jewish Agency. Many other organizations maintained close contact with parent bodies overseas, and Australia was represented at meetings of the executives of WJC and CJMCAG.

**Youth Activities**

The National Union of Australian Jewish Students was active in all states. Zionist youth movements, including ha-Bonim, Betar, Bene 'Akiva, and ha-Shomer ha-Tzair, formed the Australian Zionist Youth Council. There were many active and well-organized sporting organizations in all states, and some synagogues also had youth groups. B'nai B'rith youth and Jewish scouts functioned in Melbourne and Sydney. Melbourne also had a Bundist youth group.

The visit of Judah L. Shapiro, then director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, in July 1959 was followed by the formation of committees to investigate the possibility of establishing Hillel foundations in the state universities of Victoria and New South Wales. A committee was established in Melbourne under the joint auspices of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies and Victorian B’nai B’rith and a drive for funds was scheduled for December 1960.

**Social Services**

Major social services were handled by welfare societies in each state, united in the Australian Federation of Jewish Welfare Societies. Hostels run by the welfare societies for persons awaiting permanent housing accommodated approximately 125 in Melbourne and 45 in Sydney, and homes for the aged housed some 80 in Sydney and 94 in Melbourne. In Sydney a successful Migrants Cooperative Housing Society was established. There were also facilities in Melbourne for assisting migrants to acquire houses. In both states there were societies which made small loans for the purchase of businesses and accommodations. The welfare societies also had staffs of trained social workers to help migrants with problems of rehabilitation, family relations, mental health, and adjustment to their new environment.

In Sydney a sheltered workshop, which had operated for five years, employed about 60 aged men and women, providing them with social activities and a supplement to their income. A similar workshop in Melbourne entered upon its second year with 35 employees. In Melbourne also a group
of young women formed Refuah, which supplied hospitalized Jews with frozen precooked meals for Passover and throughout the year. This was the first time kosher facilities were made available for Jewish patients.

The Australian branch of the United Restitution Organization continued to process claims against the West German government. After many preliminary difficulties, the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies succeeded in setting up a council comprising all organizations active in the welfare field.

**Education**

With the assistance of the Zionist Federation, Queensland maintained a part-time Hebrew school (160 pupils) and kindergarten. Available periods of instruction were nine per week. Perth had a kindergarten and a small day school (11 pupils), as well as one-day-a-week schools attached to the Orthodox (120 pupils) and Liberal (65 pupils) congregations. Adelaide's one congregation had 118 pupils in Sunday classes and 45 in each of two other classes during the week.

The Melbourne community's Mount Scopus College, with about 1,100 pupils, completed a new wing. Five hundred additional students attended three other day schools, Moriah College, the Adass Israel day school, and the Lubavitcher yeshivah. There were nine kindergartens.

Part-time schools were sponsored by several institutions. The (Liberal) Temple Hebrew school taught 600 children once a week. The Orthodox United Jewish Education Board provided a once-a-week program for about 255 pupils and six to ten periods weekly for another 300 pupils. In addition, it conducted correspondence courses for 70 children throughout Australia and the Pacific area. The enrollment in other part-time schools totaled about 1,200, including 100 students in the Bialik school and 500 in a Yiddish school.

One state high school offered Hebrew as part of its curriculum.

Sydney had one private Jewish day school, Moriah College, with about 160 pupils; another day school was opened in February under wider communal auspices but was not yet well established at the time of writing. The Orthodox New South Wales Board of Jewish Education provided for the teaching of 1,800 pupils once a week and some 80 pupils four times a week. Adass Israel had 60 pupils four times a week and Temple Emanuel (Liberal) approximately 500 once a week. Hebrew classes were conducted by the Zionist Council of New South Wales.

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

**Religion**

Suburban congregations in Melbourne and Sydney continued to grow. Rabbi Simon Herman arrived from London to become chief minister of the St. Kilda Hebrew congregation (Melbourne) and Lionel Singer, formerly of South Africa, took up duties as rabbi of the North Shore congregation (Sydney).
Leading rabbis in Melbourne and Sydney formed the Melbourne Beth Din (chairman, Rabbi Isaac Rapaport) and the Sydney Beth Din (chairman, Rabbi Israel Porush). The Adass Israel congregations in Melbourne and Sydney maintained their own rabbinical courts.

Throughout Australia synagogue membership included most Jews in any way committed to communal life.

Cultural Activity

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

ECAJ maintained a book club. Melbourne had three Jewish bookshops and Sydney one.

There were numerous discussions, lectures, symposia, and quizzes organized by synagogues, youth organizations, the National Council of Jewish Women, and WIZO. There were also lectures and cultural activities in Yiddish, and several dramatic groups, both in English and Yiddish.

Antisemitism

Australian Jews continued to enjoy full civic and political rights. There were Jewish members of parliament and judges in both Victoria and New South Wales. Israel enjoyed great prestige and favorable comment in all organs of opinion.

The worldwide outbreak of antisemitic manifestations which occurred from January to March 1960 (see pp. 209-13) extended to Australia. There were a number of incidents in Sydney and more in Melbourne, but few elsewhere. Most incidents consisted of the daubing of swastikas and anti-Jewish slogans on Jewish and public buildings. These were condemned by leaders of all parties, all the press, and all church groups.

Isolated cases of discrimination persisted. A few social and golf clubs did not admit Jews. Eric Butler, leader of a social-credit group in Melbourne, engaged in anti-Israel and anti-Jewish activity, and D. W. DeLouth in Queensland distributed antisemitic literature emanating from Swedish and other sources.

Allegations were made in Melbourne that the Melbourne Stock Exchange refused to admit Jews to membership, but this was denied by the exchange and by official Jewish sources.

Public relations were largely in the hands of the state boards of deputies and ECAJ, which cooperated with the Zionist movement and other interested bodies. Two left-wing organizations against antisemitism operated in Melbourne and one in Sydney.

Zionism and Relations with Israel

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

Israel's independence day was enthusiastically celebrated in all communities, the 1960 Melbourne celebration attracting approximately 5,000 people. Keren Kayyemet le-Yisrael Chairman and Jewish Agency Executive member Jacob Tsur spoke, as did Commonwealth Treasurer Harold Holt and Opposition Leader Arthur Calwell. Jacob Tsur led the 1960 United Israel Appeal.

The community's commitment to Israel was evidenced by the 17,000 JNF boxes in homes and offices and 7,500 individual pledges received by UIA, which raised approximately A£200,000 ($450,000). The annual income of JNF and WIZO came to some A£185,000 ($416,250). Four youth emissaries of the Jewish Agency continued training Zionist youth groups in leadership, organization, and culture, and the Zionist Federation maintained a training farm (hakhsharah) at Shepparton, near Melbourne. Between 1948 and 1960 Israel received approximately 300 settlers from Australia and New Zealand. Some 120 were graduates of the hakhsharah, while 30 other halutzim were not.

The Israeli legation was situated in Sydney but a new legation building in the Federal capital, Canberra, was nearing completion. Israel's minister in Australia was Moses Uval.

PERSONALIA

Julia Rapke, federal president of Australian WIZO and formerly a children's magistrate and an outstanding worker in women's organizations outside as well as within the Jewish community, died in Melbourne in October 1959.