Australia

National Affairs

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) government of Prime Minister Paul Keating remained in power throughout 1993, buoyed by its unexpected win in the March general election. Although the opposition Liberal/National party coalition seemed likely to sweep to victory, a massively unpopular proposal for a Goods and Services Tax (GST) proved the coalition's undoing at the polls. As a result of the coalition's defeat, Liberal leader Dr. John Hewson, principal architect of the GST, came under increasing pressure to relinquish his leadership.

A jubilant Keating intensified his divisive, overtly Anglophobic crusade for an Australian republic by the year 2000 and for a new national flag devoid of the Union Jack.

Australia continued in the grip of economic recession, which led to a continuing exodus from Victoria, the worst affected state, to Queensland, attractive for its warm climate and for its image as a recession-free state of enormous economic growth potential and employment opportunities.

Israel and the Middle East

Prime Minister Keating was in Washington in September, at the time of the Israel-PLO accord, but declined an invitation to attend the historic ceremony in order to prepare himself for his trade talks with U.S. officials. While not as ardent about Israel or Jewish issues as his predecessor, Bob Hawke, Keating did prove approachable and helpful on matters of interest to the Jewish community.

In June Minister for Foreign Affairs Sen. Gareth Evans announced that Australia was providing A$350,000 for emergency relief for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who were barred from working in Israel, and described the economic, social, and security situation in those areas as "now worse than ever." He revealed that Australian aid through UNRWA in 1992–93 totaled about A$3 million. Israeli ambassador Yehuda Avner termed Evans's statement on the occupied territories as "unnecessarily provocative and critical." In September Evans said that Australia would not give diplomatic recognition to the PLO until there was an independent Palestinian state. He said Australia could usefully contribute to the peace process.
in the multilateral negotiations on disarmament, water resources, and refugees, but could not play a meaningful role in direct bilateral talks between the Israelis and Arabs. In December he distanced himself from four ministerial colleagues, including Minister for Trade Sen. Peter Cook, who along with 81 federal and state Labor parliamentarians had signed a petition urging Keating "to take immediate steps towards recognition of the State of Palestine," an act which "would be further aiding the peace process and implementing an evenhanded Middle East foreign policy."

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Evans had at Avner's request been aiding Israel's efforts to establish relations with a number of Muslim Asian countries and was involved personally in arranging meetings between Jewish and Asian leaders, a revelation that led Jordanian ambassador to Australia Saad Bataini and PLO representative Ali Kazak to protest in the media that Australia's policy on the Middle East dispute was not evenhanded.

In February a report released by a group of six federal parliamentarians (three ALP, three Liberal), who had visited the Middle East at the end of 1992, called for a stronger affirmation by the PLO of Israel's right to exist within secure boundaries. It condemned rejectionist and fundamentalist elements on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides and recommended that the Australian government investigate ways to develop trade and other links with Israel.

Remarks throughout the year by Tim Fischer, leader of the National party and deputy opposition leader, gave cause for concern. In July, while on a tour of Arab nations, Fischer said that "the last thing Australia should be doing is making representations on behalf of Israel to Asian Muslim countries as Senator Evans did recently." He also described Israel as a major obstacle to Middle East peace and was reported to have said that Australia's friendly posture toward Israel was impeding the development of Australian trade with Arab nations. Fischer subsequently told Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Isi Leibler that the remarks relating to trade had been misrepresented, that he "sought to see an increase in trade with Israel as well as the Arab bloc," and he told the Australian Jewish News that Australia should increase trade with all the countries of the Middle East, "even with Iraq." Coalition colleagues, including leader John Hewson, distanced themselves from Fischer's stance. "We have a long-standing respect for, and understanding of, Israel's particular security concerns," Hewson said.

In August Fischer made headlines again when he expressed regret that Australia did not have "a more wide-ranging debate in Australia on the Middle East." He went on: "There is an extremely well-organized Jewish lobby in Australia which is better organized than the Arab lobby, and this is part of the equation influencing debate on the Middle East. [But] I will not be cowered and will continue to speak evenhandedly on the issue from time to time." Later in August Fischer said in a television interview that "they feel fairly sensitive about that term [lobby], so I [now] call them Jewish community representatives." Fischer would not respond when asked whether he thought they brought "unfair pressure" to bear on politicians.

El Al postponed plans to fly to Australia because the federal government refused
to allow the airline to use its own security staff, including armed soldiers and antiterrorist personnel, in line with the practice at El Al's other destinations. (The annual report of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, ASIO, said Middle Eastern terrorist groups had established an interest in Australia and may have conducted operational planning in the country.) Two Sydney Jewish businessmen, Colin Hendrick and Marcel Kalfus, set up a new airline, Australia Air International, with the intention of flying to Beijing and eventually to Tel Aviv, via China, taking only 18½ hours compared with the existing Australia-Israel flight time, via Rome, of 24 hours. The new company planned to approach El Al with a proposal for carrying El Al passengers from China to Australia.

At the request of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade confirmed that it would be monitoring the emigration of Jews from Syria and would make appropriate bilateral representations with the Syrian government on behalf of Jewish rights.

Peter Rodgers was named Australia's ambassador to Israel, to begin duty in January 1994.

**Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism**

The most worrying anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist organization continued to be the Australian League of Rights, with its several outwardly respectable offshoots operating under various guises. The league, whose main support was from elderly country dwellers, endeavored to exploit the continuing economic recession by influencing mainstream conservative organizations. There was concern that it had made headway within the rural-based National party, particularly in Queensland, but party leaders vowed to counter the league's influence. Western Australian Labor federal parliamentarian Graeme Campbell addressed a league seminar in Melbourne and declared that he didn't care if he was therefore called "anti-Jewish." Campbell had long been a maverick at odds with his party, attacking numerous causes and groups such as land rights for aborigines, the anti-uranium mining lobby, feminists, Muslims, and Zionists. The league distributed tapes of speeches by two anti-Semitic parliamentarians, Denis Collins, an Independent member of the Northern Territory Assembly, and Dennis Stevenson, an Independent member of the Australian Capital Territory Assembly.

Competing with the League of Rights, and attracting some defectors, were La-Rouchite bodies: the Citizens' Electoral Councils (which through their periodical *New Citizen* launched a vigorous campaign against the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission in Australia), the Rural Action Network, and the Victorian Community Alliance. The Confederate Action party, based in Queensland, promoted an agenda similar to that of the League of Rights and attracted some anti-Semitic individuals. It must be emphasized that the membership of these and other far-right and anti-Semitic organizations was tiny, and the alarmism expressed at their activities by some Jewish leaders appeared unwarranted.
Holocaust revisionism was promoted by many of the above groups as well as the British-Israel World Federation, the Immigration Control Association (Queensland), and the hitherto unknown Citizens for Restoration of Historical Truth and Freedom of Speech. Melbourne lawyer John Bennett, linked to the Institute for Historical Research in California, published the 20th annual edition of his legal handbook *Your Rights*, which again promoted anti-Semitism and publicized a range of Holocaust revisionist literature.

The Brisbane Hebrew Congregation and Perth's main Orthodox synagogue were defaced with swastikas and slogans, as was the North Eastern Jewish War Memorial Center in the Melbourne suburb of Doncaster. Petrol bombs were thrown at Sydney's Illawarra Synagogue. Harassing phone calls and hate mail were received by Jewish individuals, and there were reports of physical assaults on, and verbal insults directed at, Jewish pedestrians, including children. There were items in the media that Jews found offensive — prominent Sydney ABC radio host Andrew Olle, for example, told listeners that “gentiles cop a bucket for daring to enter the Israeli debate” — but, on the whole, Australia remained conspicuously free of serious anti-Semitism, which was, as ever, almost invariably marginalized.

A survey of the ethnic press in Australia, conducted by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, released its findings in a report prepared by Prof. W.D. Rubinstein and Peter Adler. About a dozen foreign-language newspapers published by the Arab, Croatian, German, Greek, Latvian, Polish, Serbian, and Ukrainian communities during 1991, 1992, and early 1993 were carefully monitored; they were found overall to be seldom concerned with Jewish, Israeli, or related issues and were also largely free of anti-Semitism or racism. However, there were some areas of concern, in particular the Sydney-based Arabic-language weekly *An Nahar*, loyal to the Syrian Ba'ath party, which the report described as one of the chief sources of anti-Semitism in Australia. (However, a successful complaint against *An Nahar* before the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board appeared to have stemmed at least temporarily the flow of such invective.) The *Australian Latvian News* was found to be insensitive toward the Holocaust and the role of Latvian collaborators with the Nazi regime. The Ukrainian *Bibnna Dumko* contained little of interest to Jews but gave extensive coverage to the Demjanjuk case, taking for granted Demjanjuk's innocence and his framing by Soviet evidence.

One of the most controversial events of the year was the decision of Minister for Immigration Gerry Hand, in February, to refuse a visa to notorious British historian David Irving, who sought to embark on an Australian lecture tour. Irving, a Holocaust revisionist who had appeared on platforms overseas with neo-Nazis, had come into conflict with German, Austrian, and Italian authorities, and had breached visa restrictions in Canada, was refused entry under legislation enacted the previous year to ban undesirables. That legislation had been used to prevent the entry of overseas members of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club and three activists from the former Yugoslavia. Irving was refused a visa not because of his revisionist views, but because, to quote Hand, "he is likely to become involved in activities disruptive
to the Australian community or a group within the Australian community.” Supporters of the ban argued that Irving had become more extreme in his views and more of a rabble-rouser since his previous visits in 1986 and 1987 and pointed out that his works were still freely available in Australia.

Nevertheless, the ban was widely misinterpreted as an attack on freedom of speech and as such was vociferously condemned by civil libertarians and others, including veteran Melbourne revisionist John Bennett, the League of Rights, and Irving's publishers, sheep farmers Murray and Jan Pope, who ran the Veritas publishing company from their property near rural Cranbrook, Western Australia, and were themselves league members. Irving, who announced that he would challenge the ban through the High Court, appeared, speaking from abroad, in televised interviews. In one he debated Melbourne Holocaust survivor Kitya Altman, one of the few Jews willing to engage in verbal confrontation with a revisionist, and he ascribed survivors' testimony about the existence of gas chambers to a form of mass hysteria.

Although most Jews supported the ban on Irving, a few openly voiced disapproval on the ground that the resultant publicity would prove counterproductive; they claimed that Irving should have been given the chance to condemn himself out of his own mouth. The entire episode proved a disquieting one for the Jewish community, and it was generally agreed that the reasons for the ban had not been adequately explained, which caused it to be perceived as a censorship issue. In response to the ban, Irving, who reapplied for a visa in midyear, made an 80-minute video entitled “The Search for Truth in History,” distributed by Veritas, in which he said he had been attacked throughout the world because the Holocaust had become big business, owing to compensation claims and the ambitions of the film industry. Narrowly awarded a G (general viewing) classification by the censorship board of the Office of Film and Literature, the video was shown in Adelaide and Brisbane, but planned screenings in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth were canceled following protests. Meanwhile, following representations by the Zionist Federation of Australia and the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, the federal government ordered an urgent investigation by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Trade Commission into the payment of export subsidies to Veritas. At year's end no decision on Irving's second visa application had been reached by Hand's successor as immigration minister, Sen. Nick Bolkus.

Nazi War Criminals

In May a jury of the South Australian Supreme Court in Adelaide unanimously acquitted Ivan Timofeyich Polyukovich of charges relating to the 1942-43 murders of up to 850 Jews at Serniki in Ukraine and of a Jewish woman and two Jewish children elsewhere. During his summing up, Justice Brian Cox told the jury that they might “throw into the scales in the accused’s favor . . . the possibility that he has been disadvantaged by the very long delay. It seems to me that there is a lot
to be said for the view in this case.” In a statement issued after the verdict, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) stressed that, while it accepted the jury’s decision, it continued to support the trial of individuals against whom strong *prima facie* cases of committing atrocities do exist. It avowed that “the Australian government acted responsibly in establishing the legislative means for the prosecution of individuals alleged to have committed crimes against humanity” and that “the fundamental issue is that individuals who perpetrate crimes against humanity, including genocide and murder under the cover of war, must be accountable for their actions.”

A spokeswoman for the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions said that the prosecution of another Adelaide man, Heinrich Wagner, would still proceed, because “each case is taken very much on its merits.” Meanwhile, one of the charges against Wagner, that of murdering a Ukrainian railway construction worker near the village of Ustinovka in 1943, was dropped. The remaining two charges were combined into one involving the deaths of about 104 Jews and about 19 children of Jewish fathers near the Ukrainian village of Izraylovka in 1942. Charges against a third Adelaide man, Mikolay Berezowsky, were dismissed in 1992.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**Demography**

Several important new sources of information about the demography and sociology of Australian Jewry became available in 1993. Based on the new data it appears that Australia is one of the few Diaspora communities actually increasing in size, as a result of both continuing immigration and favorable (perhaps uniquely so) fertility rates. In April the religion statistics of the April 1991 Australian federal census were released. Australia takes a national census every five years, and an optional question on religion is always asked. In 1991 the number of Australians declaring themselves to be Jewish by religion was 74,386, representing a 7.7-percent increase over the 1986 census figure of 69,089 Jews.

By state and capital city the census results were as follows, with state figures for 1986 and the percentile increase in parentheses: Australian Capital Territory, 530, all in Canberra (501; 5.8-percent increase); Victoria, 33,862, of whom 33,337 resided in Melbourne (32,385; 4.6 percent); New South Wales, 29,614, of whom 28,521 resided in Sydney (28,197; 5 percent); South Australia, 1,304, of whom 1,239 resided in Adelaide (1,144; 14 percent); Western Australia, 4,221, all in Perth (3,919; 12.8 percent); Tasmania, 234, of whom 132 resided in Hobart (160; 46.3 percent); Northern Territory, 143, of whom 54 resided in Darwin (98; 45.9 percent); Queensland, 4,278, of whom 1,212 resided in Brisbane (2,631; 62.6 percent).

As indicated, increases in Australia’s Jewish population were registered in all states, with extraordinary gains recorded in Queensland and other smaller centers.
However, the census figure of 74,386 is certainly an understatement of the actual number of Jews in Australia, since many Jews choose not to answer the optional religion question. If it is assumed that the number of Jews in the "no religion" or "religion not stated" categories is identical to the corresponding Australian national figures (24 percent of the population), the actual number of Jews rises to 97,947 and to almost exactly 100,000 (99,997) if other minor categories of omitted Jews are included (e.g., those absent abroad on census day). It is known from other sources as well that the census figure is much lower than the actual figure. The Jewish Welfare Society in Melbourne maintains a master list of 47,000 Jewish persons in the state of Victoria, constantly updated, which is believed to be only 95 percent complete. The number of persons in Victoria declaring themselves to be Jewish by religion was only 33,862 in 1991, suggesting a census undercount of up to 40 percent.

Information about intermarriage rates derived from the census is as encouraging as the Jewish population growth figures. In 1991 a total of 14.5 percent of Jewish men and 11.6 percent of Jewish women (average 13.1 percent) were married to persons who did not give their religious affiliation as Jewish. However, if spouses who declared themselves to be either of "no religion" or "religion not stated" are subtracted from these figures (some of whom, almost certainly, are ethnically Jewish), leaving only spouses who are declared adherents of another religion, the intermarriage rate declines to 11.6 percent for married men and 7.6 percent for married women (average 9.7 percent). Not only are these figures extraordinarily low for an English-speaking Diaspora community, they rose only microscopically from 1981, an increase of about 0.5 percent. Further, demographers believe that any increase can be largely explained by the recent immigration of Russian Jews, who have a higher intermarriage rate than Australian Jews.

Sociologists point to a number of reasons for the Australian Jewish community's low intermarriage rate, among them the heavily Orthodox orientation of the community, especially the influence of the Jewish day schools. As well, university students in Australia usually attend local institutions and live at home, often maintaining friendships from high school. Another factor is the pattern of Jewish residential distribution in Australia, with up to 85 percent of Australian Jewry living in Melbourne and Sydney, chiefly in stable, recognizably Jewish neighborhoods that have changed little in the past generation.

Another important study of Australian Jewry was released in 1993. This is a survey analysis of a random sample of 640 Jews in Melbourne, Australia's largest Jewish community, undertaken in 1991 by the Jewish Welfare Society and other communal organizations. A comprehensive report of the findings, *The Jews in Melbourne: A Community Profile*, by Dr. John Goldlust of La Trobe University, was released in 1993 by the Jewish Welfare Society. The *Profile* is the first such social survey of any portion of Australian Jewry in over 20 years; its 640 respondents were chosen from the Welfare Society's master list of 47,000 names.

Even more than the census figures, the Melbourne survey reveals a community with remarkably high levels of Jewish identity and almost no signs of the long-term
decline through assimilation and intermarriage so common elsewhere in the Diaspora. Perhaps the two most startling findings of the Melbourne survey are that only 8.5 percent of respondents are now, or have ever been, married to non-Jews, and that the number of children born to Jewish women respondents aged 40–49 (i.e., just completing their reproductive cycle) is 2.5 children per woman, a fertility rate above replacement level, perhaps unique in the Diaspora. The survey also found that 91.1 percent of children of respondents were receiving at least some education in a full-time Jewish day school, with 61.9 percent receiving all of their education in a Jewish day school.

**Former Soviet Jews**

The quota of 1,500 for Jewish immigrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was allowed by the Australian government under the special assistance category for the year ending June 30, 1993, was filled, and the government confirmed continuation of the program. As in the previous year, about 54 percent of the new arrivals settled in Melbourne, 45 percent in Sydney, and 1 percent in Perth, while a few families chose Adelaide or Brisbane. Owing to the recession, unemployment among these immigrants was extremely high — a problem compounded by their typical lack of fluency in English — which put considerable strain on communal welfare agencies. In an attempt to alleviate the situation, the Jewish Welfare Societies in the centers of settlement provided resources for teaching the newcomers English.

The Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies expressed hope that more immigrants would encourage their close Jewish relatives in the former Soviet Union to come to Australia, because there were not enough applicants to fill the 1,500 special slots allocated by the government for 1993–94. The Department of Immigration reported that many applicants had either withdrawn, found other destinations (including Israel), proved ineligible, or failed their medical examinations.

An agreement reached between the Frankfurt-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the German Finance Ministry now made thousands of Australian survivors of World War II death camps and of Nazi oppression in occupied Eastern Europe eligible for compensation. (Almost 20 percent of the Australian Jewish community are Holocaust survivors.) The agreement applied to those who were imprisoned in concentration camps for a minimum of six months, were in ghettos for at least 18 months, or lived in hiding under severe conditions for at least 18 months. Of the 10,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union who had arrived in Australia over the past 15 years, over 2,000 were now able to seek compensation, as could others from the Baltic states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The Jewish Welfare Societies in both Sydney and Melbourne received a rush of applications as soon as the agreement was announced.
Communal Affairs

The community was witness to an extraordinary public rift, conducted largely as a propaganda feud in the pages of the Jewish press, between brothers Isi Leibler, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), and Mark Leibler, president of the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA). At issue was the sphere of influence of each organization, specifically, the ECAJ’s outrage that the ZFA had encroached on issues that properly concerned the ECAJ, the community’s acknowledged representative body for almost 50 years. Those issues included anti-Semitism, multiculturalism, immigration, and welfare. The ZFA felt inclined to exert some clout and make representations to government in these areas, in addition to its traditional ones, because its growth had outpaced that of the ECAJ, which lacked the funds to match the ZFA’s professional infrastructure.

A statement issued early in May, signed by Isi Leibler and the principal officers of the ECAJ, acknowledged the ECAJ’s obligation to consult and cooperate with the ZFA specifically in relation to matters relating to Israel, but gave notice that it would not tolerate the ZFA’s usurping role. The ECAJ would refuse invitations by the ZFA to participate in appointments the latter had set up with government ministers on its own initiative, especially when they fell outside its recognized functions of “promoting the cause of Israel, supporting Zionist youth activities, encouraging the study of Hebrew culture and language and generating aliya.” Mark Leibler met the statement with defiance. He stressed that the ZFA would continue its attempts to combat anti-Semitism, having been instructed to do so by the World Zionist Organization, and defended the ZFA’s activities on the grounds that his organization had developed professional expertise and standing in Canberra. He claimed that his brother had trespassed on the ZFA’s sphere of influence when, in his capacity as a leading officer of the World Jewish Congress, he made diplomatic contacts with regional governments on behalf of Israel.

The flow of recriminations and counterrecriminations by the Leibler brothers and their respective supporters ended when Mark Leibler called a halt to the jousting. The consensus had swung against him, for his organization had clearly overstepped its mandate. Communal opinion was summed up by the Australian Jewish News: “In the interests of Australian Jewry there should be, and can be, only one representative roof body and it should be the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. The Zionist Federation of Australia should stop claiming to speak for Australian Jews as a parallel body to the ECAJ. Furthermore, the ZFA should withdraw completely from those external relations areas such as anti-Semitism, racism, immigration, and welfare which have nothing directly to do with Israel. And even on external matters that directly impinge on Israel, the ZFA, while receiving full recognition from the ECAJ as the key body in this area, should not lay claim to a unilateral mandate outside the ECAJ’s broad framework.”

Jewish women from across Australia, critical of the patriarchal nature of the community, attended a consciousness-raising conference in Adelaide in August. At
the ECAJ’s midterm conference in December, rabbinical authorities were urged to find halakhic solutions to the “tragic problems” facing agunot (wives whose husbands refuse or are unable to divorce them), called on Australian rabbis to introduce a prenuptial contract, such as that used by British chief rabbi Jonathan Sacks, and committed the ECAJ to press for the enactment by the Australian government of legislation on the marital issue. At the conference it was announced that an independent commission had been set up to review the ECAJ’s structure, in order to maximize its role as the community’s representative body and to ensure efficient decision making.

Religion

History was made at Sydney’s Orthodox Central Synagogue in February with the first ordination of rabbis by Australian authorities. The ceremony, in which smikhah certificates were presented to Rabbi David Freedman of Kehillat Masada Synagogue and Rabbi Chaim Perez of Kingsford-Maroubra Synagogue, was held under the joint auspices of the Sydney bet din, which initiated the ordination process, and the Rabbinical Council of New South Wales. Smikhah was conferred by a panel consisting of Rabbis Chaim Gutnick (president), Selwyn Franklin, and Marc Sevy.

In other congregational developments, Rabbi Michael Mandel retired as chief minister of the Orthodox Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Israeli-born rabbi Nir Gurewicz succeeded Reverend Avraham Sternfein as minister of the Orthodox Gold Coast Hebrew Congregation in Queensland. Hebrew Union College cantorial graduate Janece Erman Cohen assumed duties at Sydney’s North Shore Temple Emanuel as Australia’s first qualified female cantor. Plans for a new “Shabbat and Yom Tov” synagogue on the premises of Meadow Milburn Chabad House in the Melbourne suburb of East St. Kilda, begun as a Friday night minyan seven years previously, were approved by the local council.

The idea of forming a Conservative congregation in Melbourne, proposed at the October meeting of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria by businessman Ron Frankel, elicited little support and was rejected by Orthodox and Progressive rabbis. A widespread sense of optimism about the health of Australian Judaism was articulated by Rabbi Moshe Gutnick of the Mizrachi Synagogue in the Sydney suburb of Bondi, in an interview with the Australian Jewish News: “If we compare the Jewish community twenty, thirty, forty years ago to now, we find that the numbers of people are increasing. We are living in unique times, and what we are finding is that the younger generation are returning and bringing the older generation with them.”

Education

It was conservatively estimated that about 42 percent of Jewish children throughout Australia were receiving a Jewish day-school education. In the two largest
communities, Melbourne and Sydney, the figures were about 70 and 60 percent, respectively — this in a period of lingering economic recession. Melbourne's Jewish day schools experienced their largest growth at the junior-high-school level. Sydney's Moriah College reported record enrollments (the recession was not as bad in New South Wales as in Victoria), and the city's other Jewish day schools maintained or marginally increased their enrollments. Carmel College in Perth, Western Australia, continued to attract a significant proportion of that city's Jewish children. In Adelaide and Brisbane, where Jewish day schools serve only primary-age children, low but encouraging enrollment levels were reported. Overall, the numbers of Jewish children receiving day-school education grew during the year by about 1.8 percent. One formidable challenge for the day schools was improving the Jewish knowledge of students newly arrived from Russia, many of whom resisted the religious component of the curriculum and showed the effects of years of negative propaganda about Israel and Zionism by the Soviet regime.

Jewish studies at university level continued their forward stride. Dr. David Patterson, founder and former director of the since-renamed Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies (now the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies), visited Australia in midyear and exchanged ideas with academics involved in Jewish studies. The program at Deakin University, Geelong, was upgraded with the establishment of a Center for Jewish Studies. The existing center at Monash University, Melbourne, was renamed the Martha Jacobson Australian Center for Jewish Civilization, in memory of the wife of one of its benefactors, a prominent communal figure in her own right. Monash announced plans for the Ada and Toni Murkies Chair in Jewish Civilization, named for the benefactors who made it possible. A Center for Comparative Genocide Studies, which incorporates the Holocaust, was established at Macquarie University, Sydney.

**Jewish-Christian Relations**

A seminar on the theme "One Father," sponsored by the Dominicans and the Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), was held in Canberra in October, based on the "Guidelines on Catholic-Jewish Relations" issued by the Australian Catholic bishops in 1992. Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky, joint president of the Victorian Council of Christians and Jews, and Dr. Mervyn Doobov, an ACT communal leader, were prominent Jewish participants. Most activity in the interfaith area was undertaken by the state councils of Christians and Jews, but the ECAJ, represented by Sydney's Rabbi Raymond Apple (Orthodox) and Melbourne's Rabbi John Levi (Progressive), maintained active liaison with the Australian Council of Churches, emphasizing areas of mutual concern.

In July a delegation from the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, led by board president Michael Marx, met the new Anglican archbishop of Sydney, the Most Reverend Harry Goodhew, in a cordial exchange of views. It was the first time
the board had met the archbishop, who was thanked for his ongoing support for the state Council of Christians and Jews.

Controversy stirred in November when officials of the Australian War Memorial failed to invite rabbinic participation in the service for the entombment of Australia's Unknown Soldier, whose remains had been brought into the country from the World War I Western Front, a move that many observers interpreted as part of Prime Minister Keating's nationalist-republican agenda. Moreover, a Christian cross was displayed at the entombment ceremony, which was conducted by Christian chaplains in the Australian Defense Forces (ADF). Rabbi Apple, senior Jewish chaplain with the ADF and a member of the Defense Services Religious Advisory Committee, said that the ADF had accepted the committee's recommendation that a rabbi should take part, to reflect the composition of the chaplaincy during World War I, but the War Memorial had rejected it on the grounds that the content of the service was more important than the nature of the participants. Rabbi Apple described the subsequent "intrusion" of a cross at the service as "a bit inconsistent." Although the religion of the man buried is unknown, it is unlikely that he was Jewish, since none of the Australian Jews who fought in World War I appear to have been listed as "missing in action."

Jewish-Muslim Relations

Ali Kazak, the PLO's official representative in Australia (and self-styled "ambassador of Palestine," owing to diplomatic accreditation in Vanuatu), continued his anti-Israel invective in the media. He told an antiracism conference in Sydney — organized by the United Nations and the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission — that Israelis "behave just like Nazis." In the wake of the peace accord in Washington between Israel and the PLO, ECAJ president Isi Leibler, in Melbourne, initiated an hourlong telephone conversation with Kazak, in Canberra — an unprecedented exchange — during which the two men discussed issues of mutual concern, particularly the promotion of the peace process and the need to encourage dialogue between Jews and Arabs and Muslims in Australia. Acknowledging that the Jewish community and PLO representatives would continue to have major differences over aspects of the peace process, Leibler urged Jews and PLO supporters to concentrate on issues they held in common and to endeavor to neutralize extremist elements opposed to a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East. Kazak told the Australian Jewish News that he was eager to meet Jewish community leaders but had reservations about meeting Israeli ambassador Yehuda Avner. At the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference in Canberra, Kazak expressed confidence that the peace accord would be implemented, but confessed to a residual "caution and worry that Israel will not deliver once again."

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and the newspaper Arab World greeted the peace accord optimistically. Articles in the Australian Muslim Times ranged from hostility ("Let no one be fooled by this latest Zionist trickery . . . sell-
out of the Palestinian cause, travesty of justice and betrayal of intifada) to distrust of a "PLO-run, Israeli supported army," since it remained to be seen "whether the Palestinian Muslims now face an enemy more brutal than Israel itself." Articles in the usually troublesome An Nahar ranged from acceptance through wariness to an avowal that the intifada must be continued. Earlier in the year, Bilal Cleland, former secretary of the Victorian Islamic Council and former Victorian state representative on the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, contributed an article on problems facing Australian Muslims to the periodical Without Prejudice, published by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs.

**Culture**

A successful Jewish Festival of the Arts, comprising theater, music, dance, literature, and graphic and fine art, was held in Melbourne in March. It included an exhibition of contemporary works by Australian Jewish artists, to herald the establishment of a permanent collection of their works at the Jewish Museum of Australia in Melbourne. Operas by two distinguished Australian Jewish composers had their world premieres in October: George Dreyfus's Rathenau opened at the Kassel State Theater in Germany, and Larry Sitsky's The Golem was performed at the Sydney Opera House. Barrie Kosky, director of the innovative theatrical company Gilgul, directed Sitsky's opera. Kosky's own new contemporary opera, The Oresteia, opened in Melbourne. Also staged in Melbourne this year were Yiddish poet Avraham Cykier's monologue The Emperor of the Ghetto, about Lodz Judenrat president Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski, and a new play by controversial local dramatist Ron Elisha, Impropriety, about the son of a suspected Nazi war criminal, set in contemporary Berlin.

**Publications**

Noteworthy works published this year included Sleeve Notes, a collection of poetry by Alex Skovron; Looking for Unicorns, a novel by Doris Brett; and a memoir by veteran Communist activist Eric Aarons, What's Left? Philip Mendes, a prominent member of the left-wing Australian Jewish Democratic Society, published The New Left, the Jews and the Vietnam War, 1965–1972, a well-received examination of the disproportionate Jewish involvement in the Melbourne anti-Vietnam War movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Journalist Leon Gettler's An Unpromised Land describes the 1939 proposal of the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization for a settlement of about 50,000 displaced European Jews in the Kimberley district of northwestern Australia and the ensuing lobbying efforts of the league's representative. Although criticized by professional historians as superficial and inaccurate in some respects, this little book won the Lysbeth Cohen Memorial Prize of the National Book Council, a decision that drew a stinging protest from the president of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies. The biennial prize, which
was awarded to a recent book illuminating the Jewish contribution to Australia, has since been discontinued owing to lack of funds. Short-listed alongside Gettler's book were Leon Berk's *Destined to Live: Memoirs of a Doctor with the Russian Partisans*, Andrea Goldsmith's novel *Modern Interiors*, and Andrew Riemer's *Inside Outside*, an account of the author's family's experience as immigrants from Hungary.

**Personalia**

Australia/Israel Publications editor Michael Danby resigned to assume a senior position with the federal minister for industry, technology, and regional development. *Time South Pacific* editor Michael Gawenda quit to become assistant editor of the *Melbourne Age*. Isi Leibler, managing director and chief executive of Jetset Tours, acquired a 6-percent interest in the Channel Ten national television station, as part of the seven-member Oltec consortium led by Canadian businessman Israel Asper. Lillian Lieder was appointed a Queen's Counsel (senior member of the bar), one of only six women, four of them Jewish, ever to be appointed in Victoria. Henry Ninio was elected lord mayor of Adelaide and Michael Harrison deputy lord mayor. Melbourne billionaire Richard Pratt was installed as chancellor of the Swinburne University of Technology. Peter Redlich retired as chairman of the Victorian Arts Center. Holocaust survivors and *Schindlerjuden* Leon and Helen Rosner participated in the closing scene of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* at Oskar Schindler's grave on Mount Zion. Distinguished cellist Nathan Waks was appointed director of music at the ABC national broadcasting network. Dr. Peter Wilenski resigned as permanent secretary at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade owing to ill health. George Bush appointee Mel Sembler was replaced as U.S. ambassador to Australia.

Notable Australian Jews who died during the year included acclaimed author Nancy Keesing, in January, aged 69; Frances Rosenberg, one of the very few remaining members of the historic Jewish community in Geelong, Victoria, in January, aged 90; ECAJ honorary treasurer and former president Gerald Falk, a stalwart of several Jewish organizations in New South Wales and foundation president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in South Asia and the Far East (spiritual antecedent of the Asia-Pacific Jewish Association), in February, aged 74; renowned Swiss-born painter Sali Herman, in April, aged 95; Melbourne businessman and active communal figure Leon Liberman, in June, aged 45; German-born Walter Lippmann, prominent Jewish leader for decades, most notably as president of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, president of the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies, chairman of the Jewish Social Services Council, and treasurer of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils, in July, aged 73; and educator and French-decorated linguist Manuel Gelman, a founder of AJAX, fore-runner of the Victoria Maccabi Organization, in September, aged 83.

HILARY RUBINSTEIN