During 1994–95 Australia continued to be ruled by the Australian Labor Party (ALP) government of Prime Minister Paul Keating, and the country appeared to be slowly edging out of the grip of severe economic recession. In May 1994 the Liberal Party replaced its largely ineffectual leader, Dr. John Hewson, with Alexander Downer, the youngish product of a distinguished political family; but he committed a series of gaffes and was replaced in January 1995 by John Howard, a former party leader of unequivocally right-wing outlook. Speculation that Keating might call an early election was dampened in May 1995 with the release of a public-opinion poll showing the opposition coalition of Liberal and National parties, under Howard’s robust leadership, running 8 percent ahead of the ALP.

The federal Racial Hatred Bill passed the House of Representatives in November 1994 by 71 votes to 59. It contained a series of criminal and civil sanctions against racism that would complement the program of public education on racial issues administered by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. With the opposition hostile to it—demanding “a whole lot less interference and intervention, regulation and bureaucracy”—its ultimate fate in the Senate rested mainly in the hands of two Green Party senators, whose support was by no means assured. They agreed on the need to combat racial vilification but opposed prison sentences to punish threats of racial violence, damage to property, or intentional incitement of racial hatred. In May 1995, Attorney General Michael Lavarch told a television interviewer, “Maybe a version of the bill will ultimately pass which has the civil provisions and not the criminal provisions” opposed by the West Australian Greens.

Israel and the Middle East

Australia remained committed to Israel’s right to exist within secure borders and firmly supported the Middle East peace process. In April 1995, opposition leader John Howard, addressing the Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce in Melbourne, said that any government he led would be “uncompromising” in its friend-
ship for Israel and committed to that nation's "well-being and territorial integrity."

In March 1994 the federal government upgraded Ali Kazak, the PLO's representa-
tive in Australia, to "head" of the "General Palestinian Delegation." But it did not
grant him the full diplomatic privileges or immunity that he sought, causing Kazak
to claim that the government had been "scared by the Israeli lobby." Government
officials explained that any future diplomatic status would depend on the outcome
of the peace process.

In August 1994, Israel's Justice Minister David Libai and Australian attorney-
general Michael Lavarch signed a treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal
matters, which took effect in June 1995. A separate treaty signed by Australia and
Israel in 1976 covers extradition and the transfer of people in custody to serve
sentences.

In September 1994, Department of Foreign Affairs head Michael Costello ar-
anged a luncheon at which Dr. Nabil Shaath, planning and economic cooperation
minister of the interim Palestinian Authority, was guest of honor. Luncheon guests
included PLO representative in Australia Ali Kazak and Zionist Federation of
Australia officials, including president Ann Zablud and immediate past president
Mark Leibler. Discussion at the two-hour event ranged from the future of Jerusa-
lem, through the need for cooperation on water supplies, to the lack of a political
and bureaucratic infrastructure of the interim Palestinian Authority. Shaath was in
Australia to canvass economic and political support for the authority. He revealed
that he had asked Foreign Minister Sen. Gareth Evans if Australia could send
between 25 and 100 police and army experts to advise and train the Palestinian
security force in the Gaza-Jericho area. He hoped that Australia would contribute
aid totaling A$10 million a year. A spokesman for Senator Evans said later that the
government would consider Shaath's "informal" requests after it received them
formally.

On April 24 to 28, 1995, Australia played host for the first time to a meeting
connected with the multilateral Middle East peace talks, a workshop arranged by
Australian Foreign Affairs officials on rain-making techniques, held at the New
South Wales coastal resort of Terrigal. The workshop involved 29 scientists and
other experts from Australia, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, the Pales-
tinian Authority, Hungary, and the United States. The same month, Defense Minis-
ter Sen. Robert Ray named Israel as an important potential supplier of military
technology to Australia. During a four-day visit to Israel he discussed defense issues
and the peace process with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Defense Ministry
director-general David Ivry. Asked by a reporter whether openly dealing with the
Israeli defense industry might be controversial in terms of Australian trade with
surrounding Arab states, Senator Ray replied, "It might be just as controversial to
be trading and buying into those particular countries."

A survey of knowledge of Israel and the Middle East among non-Jewish students
on university campuses around Australia, carried out by the Australian Institute of
Jewish Affairs and the Australasian Union of Jewish Students, found high levels of
neutrality and indifference: 61 percent of the 700 respondents supported neither Israel nor the Arabs in the Middle East conflict, 27 percent said their sympathies lay with Israel, 12 percent with the Arabs; 37 percent of respondents believed that the Israel-PLO accord would lead to lasting peace in the region, while a comparable percentage expressed grave doubts. A clear majority of respondents supported the proposition that the Palestinians should have an independent state, although 42 percent had no opinion on the matter. Despite recent widespread media coverage of Middle Eastern affairs, only 30 percent of respondents accurately identified Yitzhak Rabin as Israel's prime minister. An analysis of results showed a generally positive correlation between conservative voting tendencies and support for Israel and a parallel correlation between left-of-center voting tendencies and support for the Palestinian cause and Arab countries in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism

Although anti-Semitism, often disguised as anti-Zionism, continued to be peddled by the Australian League of Rights and its various outlets, its impact on mainstream politics and on the Australian population remained minimal. The Australian section of Antisemitism World Report 1994, issued by the Institute of Jewish Affairs in London, reported that the number of anti-Semitic incidents in Australia had risen by some 50 percent during 1993. But two of Australian Jewry's leading antidefamation experts, Prof. W.D. Rubinstein, research consultant to the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs, and Prof. Bernard Rechter, chairman of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission, urged caution in evaluating that figure. Rubinstein said that "a few anti-Semitic remarks by extremists" did not indicate an upsurge in anti-Semitism among Australian opinion-makers or the general community. Rechter observed that "it is important to stress that the majority of the incidents are relatively minor on the scale of anti-Semitic incidents in other parts of the world. Many of the incidents were abuse and a bit of vandalism and not mob violence as in Europe." Petty vandalism in fact typified anti-Semitism in Australia during 1994-95.

Separate Molotov cocktail attacks late in 1994 on Melbourne's Yeshivah Center in East St. Kilda and on the nearby Reb Zalman-Brocha Jewish Lending Library were, police believed, probably the work of a Jewish person with a grudge. In January 1995, a fire, apparently deliberately lit, damaged the Adass Israel Synagogue in the Melbourne suburb of Ripponlea. In February an attempt to light a fire inside Temple Beth Israel, St. Kilda, was foiled by a cantor, and the Elwood Synagogue in Melbourne suffered minor vandalism. It was unclear whether these incidents were the result of deliberate anti-Semitic targeting or of random hooliganism.

In May 1994, ALP federal parliamentarian and veteran Jew-baiter Graeme Campbell, defending the policies of the anti-Asian Australians Against Further Immigration (AAFI), wrote in the Canberra Times that "it is indeed a pity that the
narrow ideologues of Judaism seem to have such an influence in Australian public life . . . the immigration policy of AAFI is very tolerant in comparison to what is practiced in Israel.” In November 1994, during a debate on the Racial Hatred Bill in the federal House of Representatives, Campbell (one of a handful of government members who opposed the bill) attacked Jewish “influence,” based on “a combination of money, position, relentless lobbying and the manipulation of their victim status. . . .”

As in past years, relations between the Jewish community and National Party leader Tim Fischer, deputy leader of the opposition coalition, were often strained over his views on Israel. On March 22, 1994, Fischer observed, “There’s a certain bitter irony that on the day Schindler’s List dominates the Oscars coverage with its portrayal of the horrific Holocaust, that the Israeli Army has killed and wounded Lebanese schoolchildren in southern Lebanon, well beyond the boundary of Israel.” He was referring to an attack the previous day by Israeli forces on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon, which left a schoolgirl dead and 22 children injured. Israeli ambassador to Australia Yehuda Avner commented, “It takes a particular kind of prejudice to draw a comparison by association between the premeditated doctrine of Nazi extermination . . . and Israel’s actions of self-defense . . . in the course of which a number of persons tragically fell victim.” Zionist Federation of Australia president Mark Leibler and Dr. Colin Rubenstein, editorial chairman of Australia/Israel Publications, denounced Fischer’s remarks as “outrageous.” In letters to the National Party’s federal president and to the New South Wales National Party chairman, Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Isi Leibler urged that the dispute with Fischer not be permitted to drive a wedge between the party and the Jewish community. In September, as a result of the controversy, Fischer resigned from the advisory board of the Middle East Center at Macquarie University, Sydney.

Controversy followed the awarding in June 1995 of Australia’s most prestigious literary prize, the Miles Franklin Award, to Helen Demidenko’s novel The Hand That Signed the Paper, which many Jews and non-Jews claimed offered an apologia for Ukrainian atrocities against Jews under Nazi occupation. In the novel, the “half-Ukrainian, half-Irish” author uses alleged oral testimony from her Ukrainian relatives, who justify their complicity in the Holocaust as reprisal for Jewish atrocities against Ukrainians in the Bolshevik era, including the great famine. When Demidenko was revealed to be plain Helen Darvill, daughter of English immigrants to Queensland, the affair blew up into a cause célèbre in Australian literary circles and in the Jewish community. Claims and counterclaims were hurled back and forth by those who accused Demidenko of gross anti-Semitism and demanded that the award be rescinded and by her defenders, who likened her case to that of Salman Rushdie. The controversy continued well into 1995.
Holocaust-Related Matters

Results of a survey entitled What Do Australians Know About the Holocaust? conducted in June 1994 among a random sample of 1,010 Australians by Irving Saulwick Associates on behalf of the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs and the American Jewish Committee, revealed fairly high levels of awareness. For example, asked “What were Auschwitz, Dachau, and Treblinka?” 85 percent correctly replied “concentration camps,” 72 percent knew that Jews were forced by the Nazis to wear “a yellow star,” and 96 percent could identify Hitler as the leader of Nazi Germany. At the same time, “Holocaust denial” was rejected by the overwhelming majority of respondents. Asked “Does it seem possible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened?” over 93 percent replied that they “feel certain that it happened,” while only 3.7 percent responded that it “seems possible that it never happened.” However, only 12 percent believed that Holocaust deniers should be penalized, while 81 percent favored freedom of expression. A majority of the Australians surveyed found that “the Holocaust makes clear the need for the state of Israel as a place of refuge for Jews in times of persecution.”

Holocaust Denial

In May 1994, Minister for Immigration Sen. Nick Bolkus announced that a visa application by British Holocaust revisionist historian David Irving, who sought entry to Australia to promote his latest book, had been rejected “on the basis that he does not meet the public criterion of good character in the migration regulations. ... For example, a deportation order or exclusion from another country for national security reasons.” Bolkus pointed out that Irving was deported from Canada in 1992 and banned from Germany in 1993.

In January 1994, the Australian Press Council dismissed a complaint against the Melbourne Age brought by Melbourne Holocaust revisionist John Bennett, who claimed that the paper had failed to allow space to David Irving’s views on the Holocaust. In its finding the Press Council reaffirmed a newspaper’s right to choose what to publish so long as fairness and community interest were not ignored. That same month Irving had a letter in The Weekend Australian (January 22–23, 1994), in response to an article by regular columnist Beatrice Faust who, he wrote, “has fallen for much of the mythology of the Holocaust” concerning the use of Zyklon B at Auschwitz.

Nazi War Criminals

In February 1994, Graham Blewitt, the last director of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU)—which from 1987 until its disbandment in 1992 probed 841 alleged war criminals (mainly Balts and Ukrainians) living in Australia—accused the Australian federal government of trying to suppress two major reports on the investiga-
tions. Both documents reportedly contain either evidence against suspects who were never charged or evidence that was suppressed in court hearings (there were three prosecutions in Australia, all unsuccessful). One report apparently describes how former federal attorney-general Michael Duffy refused to allow the SIU to pursue the investigation of a Melbourne man whose alleged crimes were said to exceed those of people who were charged. A spokesman for federal attorney-general Lavarch claimed that publication of the documents could lead to defamation suits and revive accusations against people the courts deemed innocent.

In November 1994, the book Occupation Nazi Hunter: The Continuing Search for the Perpetrators of the Holocaust, authored by Simon Wiesenthal Center director Ephraim Zuroff, was released in Australia coincidental with a visit by Zuroff. In his book Zuroff alleged that Australian Jewish leaders, especially Isi Leibler and Australian Jewish News editor Sam Lipski, had "gone soft" on war-crimes trials. This charge was supported by Zuroff's host in Australia, Rabbi Laibl Wolf, director of the Melbourne-based Institute for Jewish Development, which, with the Council of Orthodox Synagogues of Victoria, sponsored a public lecture by Zuroff. Lipski said Zuroff's accusation was a "complete distortion." Speaking from Jerusalem, Leibler said it was "outrageous for someone like Zuroff to come from overseas and accuse Australia of being soft on Nazis. No Jewish community has been more resolute than ours in a campaign to bring about legislation to try war criminals." Leibler said the work of the SIU had been handicapped by the "endless and unnecessary lists" with which Zuroff furnished it. Acknowledging that there were some Nazi war criminals still living in Australia, Leibler said he was prepared to do everything possible to bring them to trial, but little could be done where there was insufficient evidence to insure a conviction. The Melbourne Age (November 9, 1994) quoted former SIU director Robert Greenwood as saying, "I never received from the Wiesenthal Center one worthwhile witness. . . ."

In March 1995, right-wing Liberal senator Nick Minchin, during the discussion of the Attorney-General's 1993–94 report on the operation of the War Crimes Act, told the Senate that war-crimes investigations had been "an extravagant waste of taxpayers' money and an irresponsible exercise on the government's part. . . . All we had were prosecutions launched . . . against three old men living in Adelaide" (his constituents).

A conference entitled "Without Prejudice: Racism and Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Australia," sponsored by the Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs and B'nai B'rith, was held in Melbourne in June 1994. International speakers included Prof. Kathleen Mahoney, Canadian law academic and human-rights activist, and Antony Lerman, director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, London. The conference was well attended by representatives of various religious and ethnic groups and its proceedings were published.
JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The estimated Jewish population of Australia was 105,000.

A study entitled People and Place, edited by Bob Birrell, published in 1994 by the Center for Population and Urban Research at Monash University, Melbourne, reported the following data on intermarriage: "In 1981, 14 percent of Jewish males and 11.2 percent of Jewish females had married out. Between 1981 and 1991 the intermix rate for males and females increased only slightly to 14.5 percent and 11.6 percent respectively. The overall rate of outmarriage for Jews now stands at 13.1 percent." The study concluded that this was a "strikingly low" level. Intermarriage percentages for people of other faiths in Australia were as follows: Muslims, 6 percent; Greek Orthodox, 12.1 percent; Hindus, 13.5 percent; Buddhists, 15.6 percent; Catholics, 29.9 percent; Anglicans, 34.7 percent.

Jewish lay and religious leaders expressed surprise and some skepticism about the intermarriage figure, but Jewish demographers felt that the study vindicated their own analyses, which showed consistently lower intermarriage rates than communal leaders claimed. A recent study by John Goldlust entitled The Jews of Melbourne: A Community Profile, produced under the auspices of the Jewish Welfare Society, showed a Jewish intermarriage rate in Melbourne of 8.5 percent.

According to a report entitled Community Profile 1991 Census: South African Born, released by the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research in 1994, Jews comprised between 12 and 15 percent of the total 49,000 South African-born people living in Australia in 1991. More than half of the South African-born Jews lived in New South Wales; as a group, they represented about 20 percent of all South African-born people in that state. An estimated 10 percent of Sydney Jewry was from South Africa, as was about 4 percent of Melbourne Jewry, and 30 to 40 percent of Perth's 6,000-strong Jewish community.

Communal Affairs

British writer Chaim Bermant, one of many distinguished overseas Jews who paid communally sponsored visits to Australia during 1994, concluded, "If there is one corner of the Diaspora which does have a future, and a promising one at that, it is Australia. It is also the one Diaspora community still growing and I have no doubt that it will become the goldeneh medineh of the 21st century."

In August 1994, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), the community's paramount umbrella organization, celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding. At the ECAJ annual conference in December, Ann Zablud, who had succeeded Mark Leibler as president of the Zionist Federation of Australia (ZFA) in July, reportedly officially ended a period of intense rivalry with the ECAJ for the right to lobby the federal government on general Jewish concerns by conceding the
supremacy of the ECAJ. That rivalry had erupted during Mark Leibler’s presidency, but appeared to have subsided during the last months of his tenure. Subsequently claiming that she had been misreported, Zablud nevertheless appeared to acknowledge the ECAJ’s exclusive right to represent the community on issues not involving Israel with her statement that “the ZFA is a roof body representing Australian Jewry in all matters concerning Zionism...”

It was reported in March 1995 that Israeli expatriates living in Melbourne were considering forming a social and cultural center offering Hebrew-language material. Yakov Ekstein, head of the Victorian Aliyah Center, estimated the number of Hebrew speakers in Melbourne (native Israelis and their children) as between 8,000 and 10,000. Many did not identify with the local Jewish community, and attempts were being made to involve them.

The Israel-Diaspora Identity Crisis: A Looming Disaster, by ECAJ president Isi Leibler, was published in 1994 by the World Jewish Congress and Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs in both English and Hebrew versions. It was selected by the Israeli-based Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education as a mandatory text for intending shlihim (emissaries) to Diaspora communities.

Circumcision Controversies

In January 1994 Jewish communal leaders around Australia expressed concern at the Queensland Law Reform Commission’s surprise request to the local Jewish community to explain the rite of brit milah. The commission asked for the number of Jewish ritual circumcisions performed in Queensland each year, the procedures and precautions adopted by mohelim (ritual circumcisors) in Queensland, details of any complications arising, and details of any differences of opinion within the Jewish community regarding circumcision. This was believed to be the first time any governmental authority in Australia had questioned brit milah. Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies president Laurie Rosenblum deplored the “offensive inquiry” but noted that the law obliged him to cooperate. He subsequently placed before the commission 16 papers from medical and rabbinical authorities, including Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks of the British Commonwealth, explaining and justifying the practice. Rosenblum said he hoped that the weight of the evidence he had amassed would insure that brit milah was never again questioned in Queensland or anywhere else in Australia.

To general dismay and disgust on the part of Jews, the commission’s request prompted a bitter attack on brit milah in the Australian Jewish News (January 28, 1994) by features editor Dr. David Bernstein, a South African-born expatriate Israeli whose idiosyncratic opinions on a number of Jewish and Israeli topics had often inflamed mainstream communal opinion. Bernstein characterized male circumcision as a “barbarity,” “mutilation,” and “primitive” and linked it to the practices of female labial excision or infibulation performed by some ethnic groups which had been the focus of widespread concern. Bernstein’s remarks were publi-
cized in March by Melbourne Age columnist Pamela Bone, who attacked male circumcision along with female genital mutilation.

In March 1995, the Adelaide Advertiser reported that a Liberal member of the South Australian Parliament, Peter Lewis, had labeled draft legislation that would ban female genital mutilation "blatantly sexist" and said that he would offer an amendment banning male circumcision. During the debate on the bill in April, Lewis moved that all forms of genital mutilation regardless of sex should be banned, but that male circumcision would be exempt. That exemption clause had been included by Lewis in his amendment after consultation with Rabbi Ian Morris of the Beit Shalom (Progressive) Synagogue.

Religion

In August 1994 the controversial and outspoken Rabbi Boruch Zaichyk resigned as chief minister of the Mizrachi Congregation in Melbourne, after eight years of service and following a rift with the majority of the lay leadership. In September 1988, despite formidable opposition from other Orthodox rabbis in Melbourne, Zaichyk had established an eruv (an area defined by a physical boundary, usually constructed of wires or cables, within which Orthodox Jews may carry on the Sabbath and push baby carriages) centering on the Caulfield-East St. Kilda heartland of Jewish residence. From January 1, 1995, amidst protests from its mainly Mizrachi users, the eruv was suspended by the congregation's executive on the advice of Rabbi Feitel Levin of the Brighton Hebrew Congregation in Melbourne, who was associated with the Chabad movement. He claimed that the eruv contravened halakhah and was accordingly invalid. It was estimated that some 300 to 400 households were affected by the suspension. Plans to reestablish an eruv with the help of overseas experts were quickly announced by the Mizrachi Congregation. Rabbi Shimon Eider of Lakewood, New Jersey, was due in Melbourne in February to help Rabbi Levin reinstate that city's eruv.

At the same time (January 1995), the New South Wales Rabbinical Council was exploring the possibility of introducing an eruv in Sydney. A Rabbinical Council executive member said that plans to establish an eruv in Sydney could be hastened if an overseas expert, such as Rabbi Eider, were consulted and a feasibility study undertaken. Unlike Melbourne, where some rabbis would remain adamantly opposed to an eruv regardless of its overseas rabbinical imprimatur, all of Sydney's rabbis were expected to accept the ruling of an authority of Rabbi Eider's standing. Meanwhile, measures were in hand to insure the long-term viability of the eruv in Perth, Western Australia, which relied heavily on power lines: by the year 2010 all power lines in Perth were scheduled to be underground.

The death of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, in June 1994 in New York, received much publicity in the Australian general media. Tributes were paid by lay and rabbinic spokespersons, and by special arrangement members of the Melbourne Lubavitcher community crowded into the studios of
television station Channel Seven to view a satellite relay broadcast of the rabbi's funeral. Rabbi Yitzhok Groner of the Melbourne Yeshivah Center, an American whose brother Leibl was a close aide to Schneerson in New York, was widely regarded as a possible successor to the Rebbe.

In July 1994, a long-simmering dispute between Rabbi Groner and another Chabad leader, Joseph (Yossi) Gutnick, scion of a prominent Australian rabbinic family and an extremely wealthy businessman, boiled over on ABC television. Gutnick, who had reportedly agreed to help the yeshivah out of its financial deficit of about A$12 million by a donation of A$500,000, said on the "7:30 Report" that no such aid would be forthcoming if Groner brought "Melbourne into the [Lubavitch] politics of the United States" or promoted the idea that the Rebbe might return from the dead to be the Messiah. Groner had told the program, "The sages say [the Messiah] could be a living person or could be a person who passed away." Gutnick amplified his views in an interview with the Australian Jewish News (July 22, 1994). In January 1995 it was reported that he and his father-in-law, textile merchant and fellow Yeshivah Center executive member Max New, would underwrite the A$2.5 million which the yeshivah still owed, despite extensive cuts to its debts by the bank.

In September 1994, fire gutted Australia's largest synagogue, the Central Synagogue, in the Sydney suburb of Bondi, destroying 17 Torah scrolls. Initial assumptions of anti-Semitic arson proved unfounded: the fire was traced to malfunctioning equipment. Nevertheless, in October controversial American activist Rabbi Avi Weiss, national president of the Coalition for Jewish Concerns—Amcha, urged Australian foreign minister Sen. Gareth Evans during a news conference in New York to raise the issue of the Central Synagogue fire at the United Nations. Weiss had led a "solidarity prayer vigil" outside the Australian Consulate in Manhattan. That same month, Rabbi Selwyn Franklin of the Central Synagogue wrote to World Jewish Congress president Edgar Bronfman, urging that he make "immediate representations" to Senator Evans while the latter was in New York. "I am deeply concerned about the situation as the date upon which the synagogue was burned down was the day targeted by the Abu Nidal group for terrorist attacks on Jewish centers in Germany and the rest of the world," wrote Franklin. Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Isi Leibler, cochairman of the Governing Council of the World Jewish Congress, denounced Rabbi Weiss's action as "ill-informed, ill-advised and demeaning," and expressed concern that Rabbi Franklin had acted unilaterally.

In November 1994, the Sassoon Yehuda Synagogue in Hotham Street, East St. Kilda, was dedicated; it became the first permanent house of prayer for the Sephardi Association of Victoria, whose members had worshiped for 16 years in premises in the suburb of Malvern. It was hoped that the move to the core Jewish neighborhood of Melbourne would attract Orthodox Sephardim and younger people. The Sephardi Association had about 500 members, but there were about 6,000 Sephardim in the city, originating in various lands.

Rabbi Schulim Gutnick retired in 1994 after 32 years as chief minister of the
Caulfield Hebrew Congregation, Melbourne. Rabbi Eliezer Moskowitz was inducted as chief minister of (Orthodox) Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Rabbi Linda Joseph, a Melbourne native, who was ordained in 1994 by Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, was named minister of Bentleigh Progressive Synagogue, Melbourne, to take up duties in July 1995. She was thus due to become the first Australian female rabbi to serve a congregation in the land of her birth. (Another Australian, Rabbi Aviva Kipen, a graduate of Leo Baeck College, London, served a Progressive congregation in New Zealand.)

**Jewish-Christian Relations**

In January 1994, Australian Jewish and Catholic leaders joined to welcome the historic Israel-Vatican agreement paving the way for full diplomatic relations between Israel and the Holy See. Rabbi Raymond Apple, chairman of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews, whose headquarters had transferred to Sydney from Melbourne at the end of 1993, characterized the agreement as an "exciting act of justice and responsibility which recognizes Israel as a crucial element in Jewish self-identity." In March Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Isi Leibler joined prominent Christian clergy and the president of the Federation of Islamic Councils in signing an open letter to Prime Minister Paul Keating, urging adoption of a five-year plan to reduce unemployment. In February 1995 a Council of Christians and Jews was formed in Adelaide, convened by Jewish academic Dr. Evan Zuesse, senior lecturer in religion at the University of South Australia.

**Education**

A report entitled *The Crossroads of Crisis*, prepared in 1994 by the Coordinating Committee on Jewish Day Schools, disclosed that more than one in three students at Australia's Jewish day schools received fee relief, at a cost to the schools of over A$13 million a year. Newly arrived students from the former Soviet Union alone required A$3.3 million. The funding crisis in Jewish education was exacerbated by several factors: half of the money raised by the Australian Jewish community for the day schools was needed for capital expenses; government funding, which had declined in real terms in recent years, did not cover the cost of Jewish studies, a substantial component of the overall operating cost of the schools; and the schools' combined debt was about A$80 million. The report noted that this debt could be contained in the long term only by reducing the number of students requiring aid. Meanwhile, other educational sources confirmed that middle-class parents were taking children out of the Jewish day-school system in increasing numbers because they could not afford the fees and were too proud to request subsidies. Such sources warned that this might lead to a situation where only the very wealthy and the impoverished would be able to comfortably choose Jewish day-school education for their children.

Strong differences emerged when world Keren Hayesod chairman Shlomo Hillel,
based in Jerusalem, called on Australian United Israel Appeal (UIA) activists, early in 1994, to support local Jewish education. He said it was a "Zionist duty" to strengthen Jewish education in the Diaspora. In August deputy UIA federal president Sam Moshinsky said that the UIA would not follow the example of its British counterpart, the Joint Israel Appeal, and pledge money to local Jewish education. In December 1994 at the Executive Council of Australian Jewry annual conference, Isi Leibler warned that unless all local communal organizations, including the UIA, cooperated in solving the crisis in Jewish educational funding, they faced the "danger of disintegration of the Australian Jewish community."

**Culture**

Acclaimed young dramatist and director Barrie Kosky announced plans for a trilogy of plays concerning the Jewish experience in Australia: Jewish convicts in the 18th century; Jewish immigrants in the Gold Rush; and the Freeland League's proposal in the 1930s and 1940s for a substantial Jewish refugee settlement in the Kimberley region of north-western Australia. In November 1994 the first of Kosky's trilogy, *The Wilderness Room*, premiered in Melbourne.

*Mazl-Tov Cobbers*, a Yiddish-language musical about early Jewish settlement in Australia, featuring traditional Yiddish songs and scripted by Alex Dafner and Leon Gettler, opened in Melbourne in May 1995. (The Australian word *cobber*, meaning "comrade," is believed to derive from the Yiddish *chaver.* In June 1995 a single-performance opera entitled *Teddy the Jewboy*, based on the exploits of 19th-century New South Wales bushranger (outlaw bandit) Edward Davis, written by composer and poet Chris Mann, was performed in Brisbane. *Fires in the Mirror*, the one-woman play about the Crown Heights riots and the slaying of Melbourne scholar Yankel Rosenbaum, written and performed by the Afro-American actress Anna Deavere Smith, was staged in October 1994 as part of the 1994 Melbourne Festival.

Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*, based on a book by Australian author Thomas Keneally, opened in February 1994 to enormous publicity. It also generated a fierce debate in the Australian Jewish press after Dr. Mark Baker, high-profile lecturer in modern Jewish history at the University of Melbourne, accused the film of cheapening and sanitizing the true horror of the Holocaust. Most participants in the debate, including Holocaust survivors and *Schindlerjuden*, praised the film because of the sympathy for Jews which it generated.

In December 1994, the Australian Archive of Jewish Music, a joint venture of the Martha Jacobson Australian Center for Jewish Civilization and the Department of Music at Monash University, was officially opened. The second issue appeared of *Antipodi*, a Melbourne-based Russian-language periodical for Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In June 1995 an Australian radio broadcast of the hugely successful *Trial of God*, a mock trial with two opposing teams of speakers, staged in 1994 by the Melbourne-based Jewish periodical *Generation*, won the prestigious Gold World Medal at the international media New York Festival.
Publications

Among many noteworthy books published during the period were *The Secret War Against the Jews: How Western Espionage Betrayed the Jewish People* by Mark Aarons and John Loftus; *Australia and the Holocaust 1933-45* by Paul R. Bartrop; *A Case to Answer: The Story of Australia's First European War Crimes Prosecution*, dealing with the case of Ivan Timofeyevich Polyukovich, by David Bevan; *Australian Writing: Ethnic Writers 1945-1991*, which includes a discussion of Jewish writers, edited by Annette Robyn Corkhill; *Turn the Page*, an anthology containing stories by Jewish women in English, Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, and Russian, edited by Tova Grosman; *No Time to Grow: The Story of the Gross-Breeseners in Australia*, an account of the young people who between 1936 and 1938 trained at the Jewish Emigration Training Farm at Gross-Breesen, Silesia, by Wolf S. Matsdorf; *A Glance Over an Old Left Shoulder*, the memoir of an Australian Jewish leftist, by Harry Stein; *Crossing the Party Line*, the memoir of another veteran leftist and well-known Communist Party of Australia official, by Bernie Taft; *Child Survivors: Adults Living with Childhood Trauma*, the case histories of ten Australian survivors of the Holocaust, edited by Paul Valent, and a number of personal memoirs. A nonprofit Yiddish-language publisher, Koala Farlag, which aims to rectify the paucity of reading material in Yiddish for young children, issued *Dancing Dinosaurs* by Rebecca White.

Personalia

Two expatriate Australian Jews, both American citizens, received senior appointments in the Clinton administration: Martin Indyk as U.S. ambassador to Israel and James Wolfensohn as head of the World Bank. A former federal senator, Peter Baume, was named chancellor of the Australian National University, Canberra. Attorney Rachelle Lewitan became a Queen's Counsel, one of only six women QCs in Victoria (three of them Jewish). Victor, Samuel, and Eric Smorgon, with their partner Charles Holckner, heads of Australia's leading industrial dynasty, the mega-rich Smorgon Consolidated Industries (with net assets approaching A$1 billion and annual turnover of about A$1.5 billion), stepped aside in a sweeping management change that brought a new generation of the Smorgon family to leadership.

Among notable Jews who died in 1994 were internationally renowned scholar Eugene Kamenka, founding head of the History of Ideas Unit in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, in January, aged 65; Zionist Federation of Australia honorary treasurer Peter Fisher, in February, aged 43; Jonas Pushett, a pioneer of the Mizrachi movement in Australia and a founder of the Jewish Welfare Society in Victoria, in March, aged 96; veteran Perth communal leader Cecil Breckler, in August, aged 92; Michael Faktor, active in the United Israel Appeal and a former president of Masada College, a Sydney Jewish day school, in August, aged 54; Lou Jedwab, a longtime activist in left-wing Jewish
circles and founder of the Australian Jewish Democratic Society, in August, aged about 70; Lance Phillips, prominent Queensland communal figure, in August, aged 59; Queensland WIZO stalwart Jess Hoffman, in September, aged 90; Dr. Peter Wilenski, former Australian ambassador to the UN, in November, aged 55. Among prominent Jews who died in the first half of 1995 were Yiddish actor and broadcaster Yasha Sher, editor of *Di Yiddishe Naiies* (an optional supplement to the Melbourne *Australian Jewish News*), in April, aged 80; Melbourne communal figure Zelman Bornstein, in May, aged 85; Frank Knopfelmacher, retired Reader in Psychology at the University of Melbourne, a controversial right-wing theorist and anticommunist activist credited with influencing many of Australia’s leading contemporary conservative thinkers, in May, aged 72; Stanley Robe, Melbourne communal personality and Polish-language translator, in May, aged 86; Harry Rosenberg, one of Australia’s foremost biochemists, a founder and Orthodox prayer leader of the Canberra Jewish community, in May, aged 71; Sydney Einfeld, former federal and New South Wales state parliamentarian and leader of the Sydney Jewish community, in June, aged 85.

Hilary Rubinstein