

UNITED JEWISH EDUCATION BOARD

CELEBRATING

120
YEARS



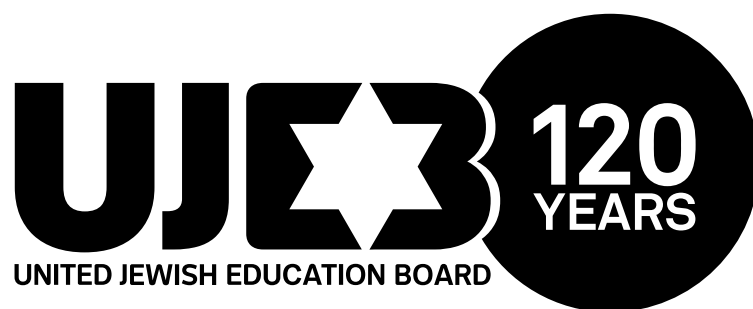
UNITED JEWISH EDUCATION BOARD

120
YEARS

GANDEL GROUP
AND THE
GANDEL FAMILY
CONGRATULATE UJEB
ON REACHING THIS WONDERFUL MILESTONE,
120 YEARS OF EDUCATING JEWISH CHILDREN IN THE
MELBOURNE COMMUNITY.
KOL HAKAVOD!



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FOREWORD

One-hundred and twenty is a significant number in our Jewish tradition. Most commonly it's our aspirational life-target – *ad me'ah v'esrim* we wish each other at significant life-cycle events, urging our friends and family to reach the ripe old-age attained by Moses.

Importantly, the Torah states that although Moses died at 120, "...his eye had not dimmed, and his vigour had not diminished". This important volume that documents the 120 year history of the United Jewish Education Board demonstrates that the organisation is still very much alive, vigorous and with much to celebrate at this important milestone.

Interestingly, a scan of the achievements and issues covered by this historical account also demonstrates that the more things change the more they stay the same. Financial constraints loom large over the period, as do communal issues such as alignment with other educational programs and schools. The vexed issue of religious instruction in government schools also occurs throughout the organisation's history.

In the same vein, the long list of UJEB's achievements follow a similar pattern. The popularity of after-school programs wax and wane and lead to centres opening, closing and opening again. Bar and Batmitzvah programs come and go, new programs are introduced and quickly gain popularity. With each passing decade, UJEB's activities adjust to accommodate the needs of the community.

Since its inception in 1895, the common theme for UJEB has been to adapt to the community's needs. Its mission: to educate and connect Jewish children with the broader community, has been at the forefront of its activities. As the modalities of instruction change, teachers and staff change, as do the students, the parents and the families.

The number of students who have passed through UJEB's classes is almost immeasurable. In 1895 there were 258 students enrolled in UJEB's classes; in 2015 UJEB reached 1,500 Jewish children. While change is mandatory in order to maintain relevance, growth underpins the organisation's strength and emphasises its increasing and constant relevance to the Jewish community.

Many, many community members and leaders have been educated by UJEB – the number must surely be counted in the tens of thousands. While UJEB doesn't have a physical presence in 2015 – as it operates out of existing facilities – it has an almost metaphysical presence, with the majority of Jewish homes in Victoria owing at least some part of their Jewish education (whether that be of the generation of the children, parents, grand-parents, or even great-grand-parents) to UJEB.

Education and Jewish practice are two sides of the same coin. One simply cannot exist without the other. For the Jewish community to exist in Melbourne, UJEB must also exist.

The conclusion drawn from the first 120 years is that the next 120 will not be without change that leads to challenges and successes. However, while no one can predict what Melbourne's Jewish community will look like in 2135 – the certainty is that UJEB will be part of the picture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This history of the United Jewish Education Board was prepared in two stages. The first stage was in 1994 in anticipation of the 1995 Centenary of the organisation. It was based primarily on Minutes (since 1928), Annual Reports, newspaper extracts, photographs and other ephemera retained in the office archive of the UJEB. Information about the earliest three decades was extracted from the *Jewish Herald*. Information regarding the more recent period had been supplemented by personal observation and material contributed by a multitude of interested persons; such has also been the process for this second stage as well, prepared for the 120th anniversary.

Access to early Australian Jewish newspapers was facilitated by Beverly Davis of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and staff at the La Trobe Library. Those who assisted in 1994 with provision of supplementary documentary material included former Education Director Kurt Rathner, Mrs Eva Joel and Eric Cohen. Especial thanks went to Mrs Edna Berliner – who attended the Rathdowne Street Hebrew Centre in the 1920s, and provided not only a wonderful photograph from that period, but also gave us the benefit of her memories of Jewish life throughout the decades since. I was particularly indebted to the Board and Executive for commissioning and supporting preparation of the Centenary history. President Jeffery Greenberg, Vice President Leanne Faraday-Brash, and Past Presidents Michael Hertan and Isi Plack took a personal interest in its progress, submitting comments on progressive drafts. Within the UJEB office, constant assistance was provided by Barbara Cohen, Sylvia Tinner and especially, Anita Wail, who laboriously interpreted my handwriting and produced the typed version on the brand new office word processor.

For the final stage of this history prepared for the 120th anniversary celebration, I have more than ever been reliant on personal recollections together with those of my colleagues Helen Zeimer and Rose Chester as well as (once again) Sylvia Tinner. From the Australian Jewish News Peter Haskin made available his file of UJEB photographs while Peter Nichols converted the original document to text so it could be reused. Ample assistance was provided by UJEB Executive Director Marlo Newton who also chased up the documentation of the past twenty years especially Annual Reports. Lisa Baron prepared the photographs for publication.

Special thanks are also due to Liz James, Howard Freeman and the other hardworking volunteers of the Australian Jewish Historical Society who trawled through and organised our archives preparatory to undertaking this work. Thanks to Liz also for arranging access to read the AJHS archives in the State Library of Victoria.

Regrettably not all the documentation I would have liked to use is actually extant. Some material appears to have been discarded or lost during office moves from one location to another. But additionally, in this instance I have found myself facing the problem that will undoubtedly face future historians in that the absence of a paper trail in the electronic era will make future historical research a more difficult task than was the case when written records could be readily accessed. So whilst I remind readers that errors and omissions are my own fault, I also crave forgiveness if something you expected is omitted – I may not have known of it because no record was available.

May all readers enjoy reading this history as much as I enjoyed preparing it.



Yossi Aron, August 2015.

THE UJEB: A HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS YOUNG

Prologue.

For most of the second half of the Nineteenth Century, Jewish education in Melbourne was largely provided through congregational facilities attached to the Melbourne, East Melbourne and St Kilda Hebrew Congregations respectively. There were also a series of largely ephemeral private institutions whereby certain individuals taught Hebrew and religion to children who received their general education in various private (and after 1874, Government) schools. The major communal educational initiative of the era was the Melbourne Hebrew School.

Although at times its administration was vested in a Board somewhat independent of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, the Melbourne Hebrew School was effectively a congregational initiative and generally controlled by the congregation. In the context of differing administrations and changing financial circumstances, there were times that it operated as a full day school offering secular and religious instruction, and times when it operated simply as a supplementary religious facility. Particularly during the period that it was only teaching Religious Instruction, it was little different from the religious classes provided by the East Melbourne and St Kilda Congregations. It was however reopened for its final period as a full time day school in the midst of the Depression of 1892. It then continued in operation until its final closure on 31 March 1895. In the context of the depressed Victorian economy which had affected so many prominent communal families, the inability of many students from poorer families to pay fees, and the competition from the newly reopened East Melbourne Hebrew School, the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation felt unable to meet the 200 Pound annual deficit. The Hebrew Education Board of the East Melbourne Congregation closed its school on the same date, and the three senior Ministers, the Reverends Abrahams, Lenzer and Blaubaum, called a communal meeting to discuss educational problems.

In the Beginning.

A meeting of about 70 gentlemen interested in the subject of religious education held at the Athenaeum Hall on 18 April 1895 led to the foundation of the United Jewish Education Board under the chairmanship of Isaac Isaacs, who was to be succeeded as President by Phillip Blashki (the first Treasurer). The Reverends Abrahams, Blaubaum and Lenzer, the Ministers of the three congregations (Melbourne, St Kilda and East Melbourne), were appointed as Vice Presidents. A committee of eight included Theodore Fink MLA, Alfred Harris, B H Altson, H F Barnett, A Davis, I Jacobs, P Perlstein and Rapaport.

Although it was actually founded in 1895, the genesis of the United Jewish Education Board can be traced back to the previous decade. Early in 1888 Jacob Goldstein, the headmaster of the East Melbourne Hebrew School reported that the numbers attending his school totalled 120 while at the Melbourne Hebrew School the numbers had fallen to as low as 39. He estimated that 258 children received Hebrew instruction at the three congregational and state schools, 100 received tuition privately and 250 children did not receive any Jewish education whatsoever. He believed the causes of the low state of Jewish education to be indifference, insufficient Jewish schools, the inconvenient location of existing schools, poor methods of teaching, and the feeling that girls had no need for Jewish instruction. To improve the standards he suggested that a healthier tone should be adopted by the community towards Hebrew, more schools should be established, and all the schools should be under one management, one headmaster, and a uniform method for which purpose a United Jewish Education Board should be organised. Teachers should be trained, classified and adequately remunerated, and should not teach privately except under special circumstances.

On 27 May 1888 representatives of the three congregations met at an education conference held in the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation Synagogue chambers to discuss the issue. A sub-committee to prepare "a scheme for the practical carrying into effect of the objects of the conference", chaired by Jacob Cantor, recommended that a general Jewish Education Board be established in Melbourne and suburbs as an independent organisation with congregational representation. A circular was



Isaac Isaacs, Barrister, Politician & Judge, 1931



Phillip & Hannah Blashki, 1892

to be forwarded to each Jewish family in Melbourne, requesting information as to the number, sex and age of their children, and whether they would attend a school established convenient to their homes.

Though the recommendations were unanimously adopted by conference delegates and the report was adopted by the Melbourne and East Melbourne Congregations, the Board of Management of St Kilda Hebrew Congregation subsequently voted against its adoption “as the school attached to the synagogue provides Hebrew and religious instruction for children of all parents whether members or not”. That specific comment was directed against the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation where interest in the united action was partially a product of the feeling that through its involvement in the Melbourne Hebrew School it was being forced to subsidise the education of non members. The latter did not contribute to congregational funds except for their school fees (some of which were remitted). However even in later years there would be limited participation by the St Kilda Congregation in the UJEB. Its synagogue school was kept as a separate institution even though the Revd. Blaubaum, and for over fifty years Revd (Rabbi) Danglow, were to be tireless workers for the advancement of the UJEB.

The Earliest Years.

In closing the Melbourne Hebrew School in the face of general economic depression, the intention of the congregation had been to cease financial involvement in education other than its Sabbath School. Rabbi Abrahams urged a change to this attitude. He considered that the type of education imparted in state schools was of particular significance to the Jewish denomination, since its children no longer possessed the alternative of a Jewish denominational school. The UJEB was instructing 230 children from across the spectrum of the congregations. On 9 December 1895 the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation agreed to a subsidy of Two Pounds per month, conditional on the East Melbourne and St Kilda Congregations doing the same. On 19 December the Board advised that the school would have to be closed unless it received a subsidy of Fifty Pounds. The Congregation agreed to pay Twenty Five Pounds and suggested that East Melbourne and St Kilda each pay half that amount. The annual report of 1896 noted that:

The executive desires to impress upon the members of the Jewish Community the good work being done by the Education Board in imparting Hebrew and religious education to hundreds of the Jewish youth in and around this city who but for the exertion of the Board would grow up untaught in the subjects mentioned, and the Executive therefore expresses a hope that every member of the community will see the necessity of assisting the Education Board by personally subsidising to its funds annually.

There was an interesting incentive for attending – free medical (ophthalmological) and dental treatment. This was welcomed by the *Jewish Herald* as upholding the religious principle relating a healthy mind to a healthy body, as well as popularising the school and thereby increasing its numbers.

In 1895, the Board engaged as headmaster S.A. Marks, formerly headmaster of the East Melbourne Hebrew School. The Education Department allowed the use of the Model School in Spring Street as a centre for Jewish education on Sunday mornings and weekday afternoons; additional classes were established at a number of State Schools, and Scotch College. The success of the new system was inferred from the fact that within a year there were 220 pupils attending at Spring Street; this was largely a product of the indefatigable Blashki's personal canvassing action.

Blashki's persistent approach was exemplified during an 1896 visit to the Model School by the 'prominent citizens' of the community such as parliamentarian E L Zox MLA, philanthropist J Kronheimer, reformer I Jacobs and communal stalwart P Perlstein. He told those assembled:

The School Board was doing their best to provide every child in Melbourne with Hebrew and Religious classes; all that was asked was that every child present should attend punctually and regularly and influence all his or her little friends and relations who were not learning Hebrew to attend school also.

The *Jewish Herald* reported that Zox also addressed the children:

One moment bringing smiles to the faces of the little learners and the next moment exhorting them in earnest terms to study their holy language and religion and in their activities through life to show themselves worthy scions of the Jewish race.

The involvement of prominent personalities of both the Jewish and general communities was to be a continuing feature of activity in the ensuing years. Major functions were arranged on a regular basis around Purim and Simchat Torah. One such function took place on 'Purim Kotan' in February 1897:

Punctually at 6.00 p.m. about 400 children sat down to a sumptuous tea, which in point of the good things provided left nothing to wish for and was deservedly appreciated by the little ones ... Entertainment included a charming song by Mrs M Brodsky and the piece de resistance with children was the magic lantern.

Those attending on that occasion included the Hon Mr Peacock, Minister of Education, the Hon Isaac A Isaacs, Attorney General, J Steinberg MLC, E L Zox MLA and Theodore Fink MLA.

At the 1897 Annual General Meeting, the Reverend (later Rabbi) Dr Joseph Abrahams succeeded Phillip Blashki as President. Revd. Abrahams was Senior Minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, and accordingly the senior contemporary Jewish religious leader. This was the commencement of a lengthy and almost uninterrupted period when a Minister of one of the three established congregations occupied the leading role at the head of the Board and/or (formally or informally) as Director of Education. However, the financial problems were already evident – of the total number of students there were 104 paying pupils and 307 receiving free tuition.

Four hundred children attended a gala Shemini Atzeret function at the Bourke Street Synagogue. They were addressed by the Revd. Abrahams and 'liberally entertained by the Congregation'.

Financial Difficulties – Even Then

The Annual Report of 1898 returned to the financial theme with comments which have a familiar ring even today – over a century later:

Considering the enormous amount of good work which the Board accomplished with the slender means at their disposal, they might reasonably expect that the regular subscriptions would at least be readily forthcoming. As a matter of fact, the greatest difficulty is experienced in collecting these funds which in many cases are available only when visited upon personally by members of the executive. The anxiety thus cast upon the executive in securing the necessary funds, hampers them in their endeavours to successfully cope with the higher obligations of their office. They earnestly trust that the subscribers will admit the force of this appeal and aid the labours of the incoming committee by regularly paying their contributions to the appointed collector. The moral and religious character of the rising generation is, to a large extent, moulded by the instruction conveyed by the Board. Hence, the recognition by the community of its obligation to give practical and continuous support to the Board can alone enable our school children to grow up conscientious Jews and citizens of good repute.

Formal examinations, which served as the basis for awarding prizes, were to be a feature of the UJEB school year for many decades. Examiners in the early period included Congregational Ministers, other Executive Board members, and where possible prominent outside personalities ranging from Isaac Isaacs to Departmental Inspectors.

The Examiners' reports were regularly published together with the Annual Report in the *Jewish Herald*; in 1898 the reports included the interesting comment that girls had done better than the boys, probably owing to greater regularity of attendance. The examiners' reports were also indicative of syllabus content and emphasis; younger classes were examined in Reading, Translation, Scripture, History and Religion. Upper classes had the additional subjects of

Grammar, Prayers and Blessings. The AGM was combined with the prizegiving in the hope of increasing AGM attendance. Revd Abrahams was particularly critical of the absence of honorary officers of congregations at the AGM, which he considered showed lack of appreciation of the significance of the Board and its work.

In 1899 there were 373 children on the Board's rolls. 75% attended on Sundays and weekdays at Spring Street and the remainder attended after school weekly classes at Lee Street and Faraday Street in Carlton; George Street, Fitzroy; Cambridge Street, Collingwood; King Street, West Melbourne; Punt Road, South Yarra; The Avenue, Albert Park and the University High School. Thanks to the assistance of the Headmaster of Scotch College, Dr Morrison, who co-signed a circular to parents, instruction was also provided for 11 out of 15 Jewish students at Scotch College.

The Melbourne Hebrew Congregation praised UJEB for its "good work" in instructing "hundreds of Jewish youth in and around this city ... who (otherwise) would grow up untaught in the subjects mentioned". The format of instruction was a local interpretation of the curriculum set down by the former Chief Rabbi of England, Rabbi N M Adler. The English impact was also evident in that the Education Board, called itself in Hebrew the Chevrat Talmud Torah, a name modelled on the Chevrot which were a feature of contemporary English Orthodox Jewry.

At the close of the Victorian era, the Gala Ball was a popular form of social entertainment, and had substantial fundraising potential as well. The AGM of 1900 was advised that a Ball in aid of the UJEB had raised 162 Pounds 8 Shillings; the year had begun with a balance of only 1 Pound Three Shillings and Sixpence and as a result of the Ball had ended with a comparatively healthy 81 Pounds 12 Shillings and Threepence in hand. The significance of the Ball income becomes particularly evident from the following five year table published in 1902:

No wonder that the Ball became an Annual Event.

| Year Ending | Subscriptions | Fees | Salaries |
|-------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1898 | £135-9s-6d | £48-2s-2d | £253-12s-2d |
| 1899 | £149-8s-0d | £47-6s-6d | £262-14s-0d |
| 1900 | £67-10s-0d | £62-6s-9d | £269-3s-5d |
| 1901 | £79-13s-0d | £39-10s-3d | £263-8s-7d |
| 1902 | £78-1s-6d | £37-16s-6d | £256-13s-10d |

1900's - THREE SHULES UNITE

Religion in state schools - The 1900 Royal Commission

The turn of the century saw the Board caught up in a major issue involving the whole Victorian Community – the suggested introduction of Scripture lessons in the curriculum of State Schools generally. This issue, which had been raised at intervals ever since the 1874 establishment of the system of ‘free, compulsory and secular’ education, now resulted in a Royal Commission to which Rabbi Abrahams was appointed as representative of the Jewish faith. Meetings under the aegis of the UJEB debated whether to oppose the proposal altogether, preferring the existing Act provisions keeping schools totally secular, or to support the introduction of ‘moral teaching’ in schools subject to the proviso that alternative classes be provided for Jewish children, if and when, New Testament Scripture were taught. In the end Rabbi Abrahams withdrew from the Royal Commission when it proposed to submit a ‘unanimous’ report favouring introduction of Scripture lessons, without a proviso for Jewish students.

UJEB and who is a Jew?

By 1901 the UJEB was feeling the impact of the major socio-religious problems facing the contemporary Jewish community – the question of mixed marriages and the problems of status of children of non-Jewish mothers. Though ostensibly halachically straight forward, the matter was in a sense more complicated than today because of the fact that in light of demographic realities (in what was on a world scale, a small isolated community) there were frequent instances of Jewish men marrying gentile women, but then keeping what was then considered as a Jewish household, and subsequently seeking a total family conversion, perhaps as the first boy approached the age of 13. The rights and wrongs of this situation were regularly discussed between the congregations and in the press. In June 1901 the UJEB resolved that all children in UJEB classes had either to be Jewish (i.e. of a Jewish mother) or be such that parents were actively seeking to have them converted. In 1909 Rabbi Abrahams commented to the Board that he felt it was to the advantage of children in the long term not to confuse them with a belief that they were Jews if afterwards they could not marry as such. Despite his view the above-mentioned earlier resolution regarding exclusion was rescinded, and to this day a policy of inclusion of all children desirous of a Jewish education still applies.



Simchas Torah Party of the United Jewish Education Board's classes at Austral Hall, 1905

Expansion and Development: The Twentieth Century

1901 saw concern over a new form of competition for UJEB – the Chedarim located at 212/214 Madeleine Street, Carlton, under the supervision of L Matenson, who inter alia regularly advertised in the *Jewish Herald* that he was able to supply the community with a broad range of Jewish books and religious requisites. There are interesting indications of social bias in the treatment of the Chedarim both by the Jewish Press and by the UJEB. When Rabbi Abrahams advised the Board that he intended to visit them and ‘see if he could work with them’, the *Jewish Herald* noted that despite the apparently expected atmosphere of an educational establishment having the old world name of a Cheder, visitors to Madeleine Street did not find:

a small dingy room, badly ventilated, filled with pale hollow eyed half starved children.

Rather it was a well lit and well ventilated facility with large rooms. The education of the 40 children emphasised fluency in reading; Rabbi Abrahams found ‘marvellous Hebrew fluency’, that children were equally good in translation, and there was a good knowledge of Scripture history, although children knew the key personalities as ‘Moishe’ rather than Moses, or ‘Yitzchack’ rather than Isaac. Boys could read the Haftarah. The Melamed was ‘a teacher of the old school’. It was believed by Rabbi Abrahams and the Jewish Press that those results were a product of the teaching 10-12 hours a week and greater parental interest; the *Jewish Herald* suggested that the UJEB should learn from the Chedarim not to accept any child just for one hour per week. When Rabbi Abrahams reported to the Board that the Chedarim seemed to be particularly successful in teaching at younger levels but that older classes were taught the correct time for putting on Tefillin rather than great moral and religious principles, Matenson replied that he would be happy to stand six of his senior students against students of the Board’s classes in an examination of their religious knowledge.

Revd Blaubaum of St Kilda became President in 1902. Despite another successful Ball which raised one hundred and eleven Pounds, he was concerned at the cost of teaching small groups in outlying schools which had become necessary owing to suburban communal expansion. It would have been feasible to teach 20 in Hawthorn for the same cost as the nine actually in the class.

In 1903 M Moses MA LLB was appointed superintendent of classes. With numbers down due to the ‘deplorable indifference’ of some parents, it was suggested that a free school be created with no charge for tuition and all funds sought from increased subscriptions. Sub-committees were set up to deal with finance and attendance. A suggestion that UJEB actually be funded by a small charge added to the price of ‘matzos’ suffered the same fate as an earlier suggestion that UJEB actually fund itself through a monopoly on Matzos supply.

Rabbi Abrahams was authorised to get from England a fresh supply of prayer books and Scriptures. He also introduced teacher training in the form of a requirement that teachers attend a lecture from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings prior to the commencement of classes.

The initial editorial of the *Jewish Herald* for 1904 recorded that:

Every facility for utilising the State Schools in the tuition of our children is afforded by the Education Department The system of education is in thorough accord with modern principles.... The children are here imbued with a thorough love and knowledge of Judaism as required by the Modern Jew

With the death of Revd Blaubaum, the Revd J Lenzer (East Melbourne) assumed the Presidency. His daughters, Lizzie and Emma, were now on the teaching staff. A new syllabus was received from the Chief Rabbi. When the Education Department advised that the Model School building was required by it for other purposes, the main Hebrew Centre school was transferred to Rathdowne Street, Carlton.

UJEB’s financial problems were mitigated in 1905 through receipt of a 100 Pound annual benefit from J Kronheimer. There were 160 enrolled at Rathdowne Street with an average attendance of 90. Classes were also conducted at the Faraday Street, Lithgow Street, Lee Street, West Melbourne, South Melbourne and South Yarra State Schools. There were now a total of 252 children on the roll. However there were only 110 subscribers – representing one fifth of the combined number of families, members of the three congregations.

The new superintendent suggested that more books of religious value be purchased as prizes – recipients would have the advantage in being able to refer to them in later life. Interestingly, although the usual supplier was J. Vallentine of London, he suggested that they could be acquired from the United States where a considerable variety were being published. This is the first indication of diversion from a totally English connection.

As in previous years, the emphasis on major functions continued. A Simchat Torah function took place on Sunday 22 October at the Austral Hall on Victoria Parade - which was to be a popular venue for such occasions for some years. The entertainment is of particular interest – once again it included the popular magic lantern (with a show of scenes of Venice) but it also included a gramophone recording of 'Chazonouth' as well as local talent both singing and instrumental (piano, cello and violin).

In 1907 Dr E B Levy resigned after 10 years as Honorary Secretary. Teachers were registered to comply with Education Department regulations relating to classes conducted on school premises. Rabbi Abrahams challenged those present at the AGM to name even one State School where three Jewish children attended but did not receive any Jewish education.

During the 1907 Presidency of Nathaniel Levi, the executive of UJEB resolved to reintroduce provision of secular as well as Jewish education. Levi had always regretted the demise of the day school, and strongly urged creation of a 'good Jewish College'. It was expected that with an increase in the number of subscribers, and provision of education to 150 children at a fee of 6d per week, the school would have an annual income of 646 Pounds against an expenditure of 500 Pounds. The proposal to establish a school was supported by Rabbi Abrahams and the Revd Lenzer but with the reservation that it be done outside the UJEB framework "so as not to endanger the achievements of the UJEB by embarking on a dangerous proposition". In November the UJEB constitution was amended to include provision of instruction in English as one of its purposes. However, Nathaniel Levi resigned owing to ill health in February 1908, and the matter lapsed.

As the UJEB celebrated its Barmitzvah year in 1908, Revd J Lenzer resumed the Presidency. For some years he was to advocate acquisition by the Board of its own school premises, which could double as a communal facility. Actually in its hundred and twenty year history, UJEB was never to purchase its own school premises (a fact which would have the advantage of maintaining a connection between school and synagogue for many who might otherwise make only occasional visits to synagogue premises). It would take almost all of UJEB's first one hundred years of existence before the administrative office would co-locate with a communal centre. Even then however community centres with synagogues and other facilities would prove more attractive than UJEB classes to many families.

In 1909 Minnie Kierson received the Dux Prize. Little did her teachers realise the extent to which the life of their prize student would be bound up with teaching for the Board.

As in previous years the 1910 Prizegiving/Purim function was a major social event incorporating extensive musical entertainment and plays. The *Jewish Herald* editorial at the time of the AGM strikes a familiar chord which echoes down the decades. Headed 'Our Cinderella' the Editorial lamented:

The indifference of the subscribers to the funds of the UJEB of Melbourne with regard to the purpose for which they give their money – as inferred from their resolute and consistent absence from the general meeting called by that body - is hardly short of phenomenal. It is indeed fortunate that a small band of earnest men have voluntarily taken the burden upon their shoulders and do the best they can to compensate for the general apathy, but it is a thankless and disheartening task to carry out unaided, unencouraged and unappreciated!

Sunday 25 September saw the opening of classes at the Try Society Hall in Hawthorn with the devoted teaching of Phoebe Myers. An initial attendance of 20 was soon to rise to 31; Miss Myers' absence from the Rathdowne Street centre was to lead to the appointment of Minnie Kierson as a pupil teacher, thus commencing her long UJEB teaching career.

1910's - BEGINNINGS

A Wave of Migration ... To St. Kilda

Despite the provision of classes in additional suburban areas, there was a decline in the number of students. Average attendance was now 127 (enrolment unstated). Mr Moses attributed the falling off in numbers 'to migration of families from Carlton and its neighbourhood to the suburbs, especially St Kilda'. Fortunately this also had positive impact when in February 1911 the St. Kilda Congregation contributed a 20 Pound grant to UJEB which it was hoped would become an annual benefit.

During 1912 enrolment at Hawthorn reached 35 and there were 28 pupils at a new Thursday afternoon classes in Brunswick. Mr Altson reported that attendances should have been greater, but when he approached parents to enrol their children he was advised in a tone still heard today, that the children had to learn piano or dancing or what not, and had no time to trouble about Hebrew or Religion.

A more pro-active approach was adopted. UJEB approached the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation with a request to inspect the member's roll to ascertain which parents had children of school age and whether those children were receiving religious instruction. The Melbourne Hebrew Congregation agreed to this request but not to the accompanying suggestion that the UJEB take over administration of the Sabbath school.

The UJEB was concerned with the quality of education as much as with pupil numbers. In the context of a feeling that 'anybody like UJEB should be able to show more extensive results than it does at present', the Boards of the Melbourne and East Melbourne Congregations conferred regarding establishment of a joint inter-congregational school. At the request of the UJEB action in this regard was deferred, but in return UJEB amended its constitution to provide for a Board comprised of president, vice president, treasurer and secretary to be assisted by a committee of twelve including four members to be appointed from each of the Melbourne and East

Melbourne Congregations. The Board also resolved in favour of bringing out a headmaster from England at a salary of 200 Pounds per annum, to be selected by a committee comprising the principal of Jews' College, the headmaster of the Jewish Free School and Dr Israel Abrahams. However opposition to this proposal was expressed by many including A Kozminsky (in a letter sent from Colombo, whilst he was en route to England) and J Kronheimer, on the grounds that this appeared as an attack on the very good work of Superintendent Moses, who was bearing the brunt of parental indifference. Accordingly no further action was taken.

Progress in the Face of Adversity

In 1914 the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation reported

that there is room for very much improvement in the mode of imparting Hebrew Instruction ... and further that means should be devised for reaching a large number of children who are at present not in receipt of any satisfactory or efficient education in Hebrew subjects.

But despite the exigencies of the war and a lack of funds, the committee adopted a positive approach:

It is earnestly hoped that the members of the Jewish Community will, by their subscriptions, assist the Board to carry on the good work imposed upon it. It is of paramount importance that the rising generation of Jews and Jewesses should have a thorough knowledge of their faith, and this can only be done by the community generally coming to the Board's assistance and providing for such instruction to be imparted as to fit them to occupy important positions in the Jewish world

תברת תלמוד תורה

United Jewish Education ~ Board. ~

ANNUAL EXAMINATION

1915.

CLASS *Latvian (I)*.

Special **PRIZE**

Presented by *The Board*

Awarded to *Morris Cohen*

For *General Excellence*

M. MOSES, M.A., LL.B., Superintendent.

March 19¹⁶
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Increased subscriptions were essential, as in February 1914 the financial situation had become so bad that insolvency was anticipated by September. A public meeting, house to house canvass, and fee increases were mooted as solutions, though it is uncertain from the record as to how the matter was actually resolved.

Careful reading of the above quotations as well as other contemporary documentation, reveals references to 'Hebrew education' and 'knowledge of faith', i.e. religious instruction. It is important to realise that in that era generally, the relationship between the two was much closer than today, when teaching of the Hebrew language has dual purposes – facilitating synagogue participation as well as knowledge of the language of Modern Israel. This was certainly the UJEB approach, based firmly on the syllabus set down by the Chief Rabbi. Concern about Hebrew linguistic knowledge early in the Century was the concern of the traditionalist fearing the inroads of reform. This is evidenced by an exchange at the 1915 congregational annual general meeting. In response to advocacy by Mr Goldsmith of use of more English in the services, Aaron Solomon advocated "the teaching of young children Hebrew and a knowledge of their religion so that they would be familiar with and more readily follow the services in the synagogue". To this Moses Greenbaum responded that he

"failed to see what good the United Jewish Education Board was doing. He knew of instances where pupils had been attending their classes for several years and could not even read Hebrew".

On the other hand Mr M Revelman advised that his children had attended classes for 18 months and he was pleased to note an improvement in teaching.

However the problem alluded to, was not just one of UJEB teaching per se. In a manner to be paralleled in the contemporary era when Jewish education must come to grips with the needs of a third post-Holocaust generation, UJEB was dealing with a third or fourth generation since the initial Victorian Jewish settlers had arrived from England, including amongst them many with a solid traditional knowledge. As the decades passed, knowledge of Hebrew appears to have declined in the community generally; there is clear evidence of this in both the congregational pressures for increased use of English in services, as well as the misspelling of Hebrew rife in contemporary publications and manuscript records. At the outbreak of World War I the use and knowledge of Hebrew in Melbourne appears to have declined to its nadir. However it was the very fact of the War which was to lead to its resuscitation, as refugees from Ottoman Palestine breathed new life into the Melbourne community.

Unfortunately for UJEB the newer arrivals with teaching potential did not necessarily work for the Board whose spirit they may well have found to be alien. In fact, as already mentioned, while by this time UJEB was the dominant force in Jewish education in Melbourne, there were alternatives, including a number of private teachers. The Chedarim had a religious orientation, but late in 1913 a Zionist school, under the auspices of the newly formed Hatechia Society, had commenced operation in Carlton. It was however to be criticised in the press by Mr A Liberman who saw a need for a Talmud Torah rather than a school only imparting Hebrew language;

I might as well send my sons to a Christian teacher of Hebrew as to a so-called Hebrew school

He felt that *the UJEB syllabus as a method of imparting religious instruction to the children is more calculated to advance their interest in Judaism.*

Nevertheless, in the interests of supporting all Jewish education, UJEB and Melbourne Hebrew Congregation President Phillip Cohen distributed the prizes at the July 1914 Prizegiving of the Zionist School held at the Freemasons Hall (and where interestingly the proceedings terminated not with the Royal Anthem but the Hatikvah).

More significant in the longer term were to be Hebrew classes with a strong Zionist emphasis, conducted from 1916 to 1929 by Mr Bar-Kahn, whose name was originally Kaganovitch. Bar-Kahn had been born in Russia, where he had acquired his Jewish education and initial teacher-training before migrating to Palestine where he worked as a teacher. With the entry of Turkey into the War, he had migrated to Melbourne where he became secretary of the Kadimah and organised his Hebrew classes. His past pupils later formed themselves into a "Bar-Kahn Ex-Students Group" whose principal aim was "to advance Hebrew education and culture within the Jewish community of Melbourne".

The Kronheimer Endowment

The outstanding item of the 1915 AGM was the report of receipt of a bequest from the J Kronheimer estate amounting to 5000 Pounds plus an annual benefit of 70 Pounds. The lump sum was invested by the Trustees (mostly in Board of Works debentures); among the Trustees was the Revd J Lenzer who had influenced his friend J Kronheimer as to the need for the bequest. The investment was obviously well arranged; at the commencement of the twenty first century UJEB was still receiving an annual benefit from this endowment. For some time the UJEB also adopted the name 'Beth Joseph' in memory of Kronheimer. In the years that followed consideration was given to its use for purchase of a property to house the Board and its classes, or for establishment of the 'Jewish College' which was mooted from time to time. Subsequent years also saw a note of caution arising from the fear that existence of this lump sum and the income guaranteed from it, would allow other potential donors/subscribers to refrain from carrying out their duty.

The Sunday before Passover of 1915 saw the first recorded Model Seder – in the form of a 'sider' (sic) at the Hawkesburn Centre. All the necessities were provided by parents. The President of the UJEB recited kiddush and grace after the repast; Mr Jacob Freadman led the pupils in other portions of the ritual.

New classes were established at Alfred Crescent, Fitzroy where 15 pupils were taught by Mrs Joseph Phillips (wife of the long standing Honorary Secretary of the Board). Nine students were taught at another new class in Princes Hill. Miss Miriam Albert was appointed to succeed Miss M Kierson when the latter was promoted at the central school. Former scholar, Eric Ettelsen, assisted Mrs Phillips at Hawthorn.

In 1916 the Board adopted a new set of bylaws (the third edition in its history) prepared by Dr A E Jones. The AGM of 1917 heard that 'marriage out of the faith' as well as 'the irreverent behaviour of young people in the synagogue' were products of the neglect of practice of Judaism in so many homes and the bad example set by parents generally, which made so difficult the task of Jewish education.

In NSW all denominations were able to give Religious Instruction in State Schools during school hours, and the question arose as to whether in Victoria it would be wise or expedient to agitate for change, as it would obviate the need for after hours attendance. Rabbi Abrahams was clear in his opposition:

Obviously it would be most dangerous to do anything of the kind, and it would be better to submit to any inconvenience than to make the attempt.

By 1918 Superintendent M Moses had retired due to ill health. He was presented with an honorarium amount of 75 Pounds. The Revd Lenzer assisted in his place – he was to serve as acting superintendent for four years until his death. Classes in the fledgling agricultural community at Shepparton were now supported by the UJEB.

To impress upon children the significance of the signing of the Armistice, the President Mr P Cohen, Vice Presidents Rabbi J Abrahams and Revd J Lenzer, Board Members Mr Crownson and Mr S M Lyons, and the Honorary Secretary J Phillips visited the Rathdowne Street school and addressed the scholars on the good work performed by the Allies.



Joseph Kronheimer

1920's - LANDMARK BEQUEST

Visit by the Chief Rabbi

The status quo was retained during the immediate postwar years, with the major featured events including the now annual 'sider' at Hawksburn, and the prizegiving functions which were combined with entertainment and/or the AGM. The most significant such event took place in the Masonic Hall in March 1921 when Chief Rabbi J H Hertz, on a landmark pastoral visit to Melbourne, distributed the prizes. He also visited UJEB classes and after conference with the Board and teachers agreed to arrange for modern publications and a complete list of Jewish educational material to be forwarded for teachers use and guidance.

For UJEB and much of the Melbourne community the visit by the Chief Rabbi was indeed the highlight of 1921. However 1921 was otherwise a difficult year for the Board. The death of Past President Revd J Lenzer, who had been acting superintendent for four years was closely followed by the resignation of Rabbi Abrahams owing to ill health. Attendance at the Rathdowne Street Centre fell, and Mrs J Phillips was appointed Headmistress and (interim) superintendent. In September a new centre was opened at Middle Park with 12 students.

In the absence of the long standing ministerial involvement of the Revd Lenzer and Rabbi Abrahams, it fell to Revd Danglow to determine the future direction of the Board. In January 1922 he recommended removal of the central school from Rathdowne Street to the premises of the East Melbourne Congregation; it was also agreed to immediately advertise for a superintendent. In March parents were invited to a conference where they could express views to enable UJEB to 'establish Jewish education in Melbourne on the soundest possible basis'.

Unfortunately there was only a small attendance in spite of the fact that 900 circulars were sent out. Mr B Harris told those assembled that children should not be 'asked' to go to class but should be 'told to go'. He offered three guineas to the child who would introduce the most new scholars to the classes and a further three guineas to the most successful teacher.

By June Revd Danglow had been appointed as Director and he threw himself into the task with great enthusiasm. Auxiliary committees of parents were established to assist in each centre. After a meeting of parents living in Carlton, Fitzroy and Richmond, Sunday classes were maintained at East Melbourne but Tuesday and Thursday afternoon classes were moved to the Druids Hall in Neill Street, Carlton, to obviate the need for children to walk home after dark through the Exhibition Gardens. The latter move increased the number attending from 23 to 64; introduction of a char a banc Sunday morning transport service increased Sunday numbers from 40 to 85. New classes were opened at Malvern Town Hall and at the Caulfield home of Mr and Mrs M Duband. Total enrolments were now as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| North of Yarra: | |
| East Melbourne/Druids | 108 |
| Princes Hill | 8 |
| Northcote | 25 |
| South of Yarra: | |
| Toorak | 50 |
| Middle Park | 16 |
| Malvern | 12 |
| Caulfield | 9 |
| Total | 228 |

In the context of those figures it is interesting to note that Hatchiah (A Zionist group teaching Hebrew language) with its emphasis on Hebrew language was teaching approximately 70 students, 5 days weekly, from 4 to 5 p.m. Phillip Cohen again attended the prizegiving at that school and apparently discussions took place regarding possible amalgamation with UJEB so as to resolve the situation where there were several schools under several Boards of Management. However this did not eventuate. A further three decades would elapse before UJEB would adopt the teaching of Modern Hebrew as a primary aim of its schools.



Scholars arriving at the East Melbourne synagogue on a Sunday morning, 1922 (known as a charabanc)



A group of students at Rathdowne Street School with Rev. Super, Rev. Mestel and U.J.E.B. Principal Newman Rosenthal, 1926



Mrs. Joseph Phillips, well known as Miss Phoebe Myers, who was in charge of the Rathdown-street Hebrew School.

The Brodie Era

The replacement of Rabbi Abrahams by Rabbi Israel Brodie as Chief Minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, represented a cultural change from Anglicised Judaism to one with a modernised and pro-Zionist view. It was also to impact on education in general and the UJEB in particular. Prior to his departure from England Rabbi Brodie foreshadowed his UJEB involvement:

The duties of the Rabbi are generally of a very varied kind But without doubt the chief place must be assigned to the promotion of Jewish education, not only among children, but also – and this is certainly as important – among adolescents.

Even today, UJEB can only echo this sentiment.

Soon after his arrival, he raised the issue of a need for greater communal support for the UJEB. Early 1924 had seen communal agitation for establishment of a Reform congregation; a letter to the editor of the *Jewish Herald* by Alfred A Mendoza had argued that the answer to Reform was not concessions but a good Jewish College with education modelled on English lines. The UJEB was facing a major financial crisis, and in December 1924 the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation voted to reintroduce payment of a subsidy (previously withdrawn in 1923) at a rate of 200 Pounds per annum. Rabbi Brodie became an honorary director and examiner for the Board; by 1930 he was to examine students as far away as Berwick and Geelong. He felt that his communal educational and Zionist involvement were important activities to strengthen feelings of Judaism, complementing his synagogue based rabbinical role. In 1926 UJEB found that the Rathdowne Street Centre needed not only to counter communal apathy but also the direct impact of an evangelising missionary movement, which set up an after-school 'station' down the road from the Centre and enticed pupils to attend by offering milk and biscuits and the promise of prizes (which turned out to be missionary pamphlets). Other UJEB classes during this period included those located at the Punt Road State School and Toorak Bowling Club.

From 1928 students from the Rathdowne Street Centre were regularly presented with the Intermediate and Leaving Certificates in Hebrew. In 1929 there were three for Leaving Honours, six for Leaving and ten for the Intermediate. The advent of the acceptability of Hebrew as an examination subject had a strongly positive impact on retaining both boys and girls at Hebrew school through their high school years.

Up to 1929, Phoebe Phillips (nee Myers) was Principal of classes in the suburbs south of the Yarra while Newman Rosenthal, who had first joined the Board in 1920 after coming from Ballarat to Melbourne, was responsible for classes north of the Yarra. Following a report by Rabbi Brodie into the system of class management generally, and the death of Mrs Phillips, the system was reorganised and Newman Rosenthal appointed overall principal. His tasks were defined by resolution of the Board:

That there should be a Principal of the classes of the Board whose duties shall be:

- 1. to attend to the organisation and control of all the activities of the Board*
- 2. to put into effect such proposals as shall be decided upon after consultation with the Honorary Director or with the Board*
- 3. to attend to the supervision, distribution and control of teaching staff*
- 4. to teach at such times and in such places as shall be decided after consultation with the Honorary Director*
- 5. to furnish to the Honorary Director, as required from time to time, full reports on the work of the classes, returns as to attendances etc. at the various centres, and generally such information as the Honorary Director may seek.*
- 6. to draw up in consultation with the Honorary Director a school curriculum which shall be followed in all the schools of the Board and no alteration shall be made in this curriculum either by the Principal or his staff, unless after approval by the Honorary Director.*
- 7. to recommend the appointment or dismissal of teachers.*

In making his reports to the Board, the Principal shall make them direct to the Honorary Director, but the Principal shall be in attendance when required at meetings, in order that he may assist the Board in any matter under discussion and may have the opportunity of answering any question or replying to any criticism that may arise.

By 1930 classes were held on congregational premises and the Kadimah Hall as well as in a number of state schools (but outside school hours). The latter included classes at Rathdowne Street Primary School on Sunday morning and four afternoons a week, Caulfield and Middle Park State Schools on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and Camberwell State School on Wednesday afternoon. The Board had also established a class at Geelong, and was responsible for classes at the Berwick Jewish Settlement. A small group was conducted at Methodist Ladies College: in 1928 a pupil (Miss Ettie Morris) received the annual Hebrew prize awarded by the Board.

1930's - BOTH SIDES OF THE YARRA

The European Impact

Nevertheless, while UJEB expansion proceeded, the communal diversity which resulted from immigration led to increasing moves towards diversity and independence in the Melbourne educational scene. The East Melbourne Congregation withdrew from the Education Board, and operated its own school independently. It hoped thereby to increase pupil involvement with the synagogue, but it led to a reduction of numbers in UJEB classes just at a time when the impact of the Depression was being felt on Board funds. The Board was also having difficulties with catering for the children of newcomers. Separate classes were also operated by the Carlton Hebrew Congregation, and during 1930 an experimental Talmud Torah for the children of newcomers was established by UJEB in Carlton taught by Mr. C. Yoffe. It was abandoned for financial reasons and the children absorbed elsewhere although the Principal, Newman Rosenthal, was worried as to the suitability of UJEB education generally for the needs of these children. He had other concerns as well, as evidenced by the last lines of his 1931 report:

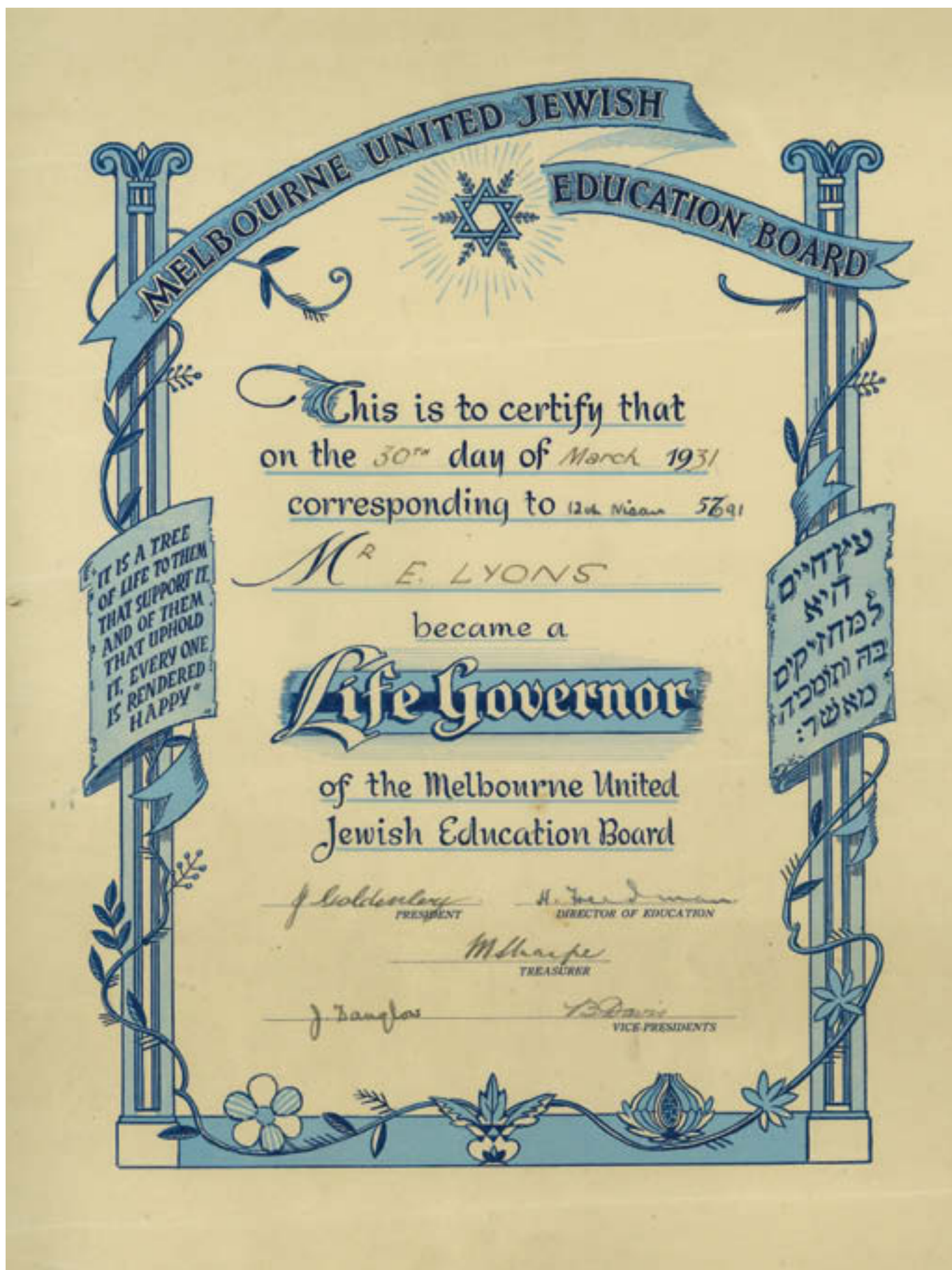
The economic depression has had a serious effect upon the home life of many of the children attending the Rathdowne Street Centre. One can only hope that, during these critical days, parents will spare their children as much of the misery and suffering as possible.

Following the opening of the Toorak synagogue, classes south of the Yarra were continued there rather than at the Toorak Bowling Club.

In the depths of the Depression, the 1931 deficit of 606 Pounds was partially offset by a 10% voluntary reduction in salaries and a 180 Pounds donation from the Council of Jewish Women. In May 1932 a conference was held with East Melbourne and Hascola to bring uniformity into education to be within the aegis of the Board, and afternoon classes were opened in Northcote. A meeting with St Kilda considered responsibility for classes in the Elwood area; many of whom were children of Melbourne Hebrew Congregation members. A proposal for joint running of a class was rejected in favour of a programme to operate char a banc transport from Elwood to the Toorak synagogue, where Mr (later Rabbi) Goldman was now appointed as a teacher. The main Carlton Centre was moved from Rathdowne Street to Lee Street.

In his capacity as Principal, Newman Rosenthal reported in 1935:

At the moment we have some 223 children on the rolls.... We have classes at Geelong, Berwick, Middle Park, Caulfield, Rathdowne Street, Herzl Hall, Princes Hill. Yet, despite the increase which I am happy to report in the attendances and enrolment by far the larger proportion of Jewish children do not receive any religious instruction whatsoever. I exclude of course in such a statement those receiving instruction from institutions outside the Education Board. But, altogether, I do not think we have appreciably solved the problem of those 1000 odd Jewish children whom some two years ago, after investigation at the various State Schools, I discovered were not receiving Jewish instruction either from the classes of the Board or from any other source.



UJEB Certificate, 1931

This year's University grade is extremely large. We shall have about 15 candidates sitting for Intermediate, and probably eight for Leaving. In addition, four candidates will present for Honours- a record.

I have to record my appreciation of the fact that thanks to the interest of Mr B Boas, a Scout Troop has been attached to the Rathdowne Street Centre, and I regard this extra-school activity as of great importance.

He also noted that a special essay prize on 'Jews in England' was awarded to (later, Rabbi) Mattus Honig.

The following year Newman Rosenthal reported in a similar vein, also paying tribute to:

Misses Lenzer, Kierson and Harris, Messrs. I J Super, M J Cohen, R Havin, V Fonda, Newton Super and R Freadman. Mr Super has gone to Geelong and Mr Feiglin to Berwick.

Classes in Geelong were held at the home of Mr and Mrs Crawcour. Mrs Crawcour (nee Lenzer) was herself formerly a teacher of the Board.

However he then raised another perennial problem:

Before I conclude, might I raise one most important point for the consideration of parents. I refer to the need for regularity in attendance. Children are kept away for an extraordinary number of reasons, usually inadequate. Might I point out to them that the attitude of children is often decided by the parents' attitude, and if Jewish education is a small matter to the parents you can be sure children will look upon it in exactly the same way.

On the other hand a positive aspect was the way public examinations in Hebrew served as an incentive to students to stay till long after Bar-mitzvah.



The United Jewish Education Board Rathdowne Street Class, 1922 (photo from the Australian Jewish Herald, Jan 20 1922)

Rabbi Brodie Says Farewell

At a Board meeting in March, the last he attended in his official capacity prior to departure for England, where he would eventually be appointed as Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, Rabbi Brodie presented the Principal's report and emphasised the room for improvement in the teaching and organisation of the Toorak centre. In light of the increasing number of alternative educational facilities available, he opposed the suggestion for fee increases, while supporting the need for investigating the causes of decline in the number of children attending the Board's classes. Reflecting the social differences between the established Jewish community and the new European arrivals, Rabbi Danglow concurred in these comments and further emphasised the harm that the establishment of Yiddish classes would do to Jewish education generally.

At the same meeting Mr J Goldenberg moved adoption of the Principal's suggestion for establishment of a Muftah (sic) class. This resolution, seconded by Mr B Bromberger, marked the first formal UJEB move into Parsha training for Barmitzvah boys. Previously this had been the sole province of congregational ministers and teachers who provided private tuition – albeit that the latter included the best known names in contemporary Jewish education, Minnie Kiersen and Hettie Feuerman.

In 1937 the Constitution was altered to exclude provision for East Melbourne to appoint its own representatives to the Board. This followed repeated attempts to bring East Melbourne back into the fold.

Poliomyelitis Sweeps the Town

Most classes were closed from August 1937 to January 1938 due to the poliomyelitis epidemic. The 1938 Report noted that two members of the Leaving Honours class intended to enter the Ministry and that a centre had opened at Princes Hill. Provision for trams to run on Sunday morning meant the possibility of disposing with the charabanc. Rabbi Danglow assumed the position of Honorary Director pending the arrival of Rabbi Dr H Freedman as Chief Minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. It was anticipated that as a matter of course he would in that capacity also follow Rabbi Brodie in his UJEB involvement; unfortunately he was to be the last such appointee to do so.

As early as 1929, Hebrew speakers from Eretz Israel, in conjunction with members of the previously mentioned Bar Kahn group, had established the Ivriah Society with the aims of Hebrew education and the promotion of Zionism. The educational activity of the Society expanded through the 1930s and in 1939 the Board resolved to subsidise Ivriah classes providing an additional teacher at 35/- per week. A meeting between Rabbi Freedman and Messrs. Patkin and Saks was held in regard to arrangements. However, despite Rabbi Freedman's personal sympathetic attitude towards Ivriah classes, arrangements fell down over the UJEB insistence on inclusion of religious subjects in the curriculum. The Ivriah classes which continued to operate independently were the forerunner of today's Bialik School. A further independent educational entity commenced operation after a meeting in November 1940 resolved to create the Brunswick Talmud Torah as a Hebrew Sunday School independent of the UJEB. These developments signalled the advent of the situation during the 1940s and 1950s when the various part time schools associated with congregations and other organisations, operated mainly to meet the demands of 'newcomers', emphasising Hebrew, Yiddish and Talmud education, largely in Carlton and the Northern suburbs. Interestingly, they also provoked a series of articles in the *Jewish News* by educationalist UJEB Principal Newman Rosenthal who attempted to define appropriate directions for Jewish education, and a set of fascinating correspondent responses regarding various aspects and alternatives.

1940's - WARTIME EXPANSION

War Time Change

The first reference to the war within the Minutes of the UJEB is to be found at the AGM of 1941, when Rabbi Freedman emphasised that

as the centres of Jewish life in European countries were being destroyed, so much more important became the Jewish Educational effort in Australia.

However, by 1942 there was further impact as the advent of the war with Japan brought to the fore the question of evacuation from the Toorak Synagogue, so that alternative arrangements required consideration. Teachers were appointed for proposed evacuation centres at Marysville and Healesville. Flight Lieutenant Rosenthal was granted leave of absence to undertake military duties, and his position was offered to Rabbi Freedman on an acting basis. Other teachers requiring leave of absence due to their military duties were Victor Fonda and S Marantz.

During 1942 Rabbi Freedman was teaching 26 pupils at Camberwell High each Thursday and up to 80 at University High each Friday morning.

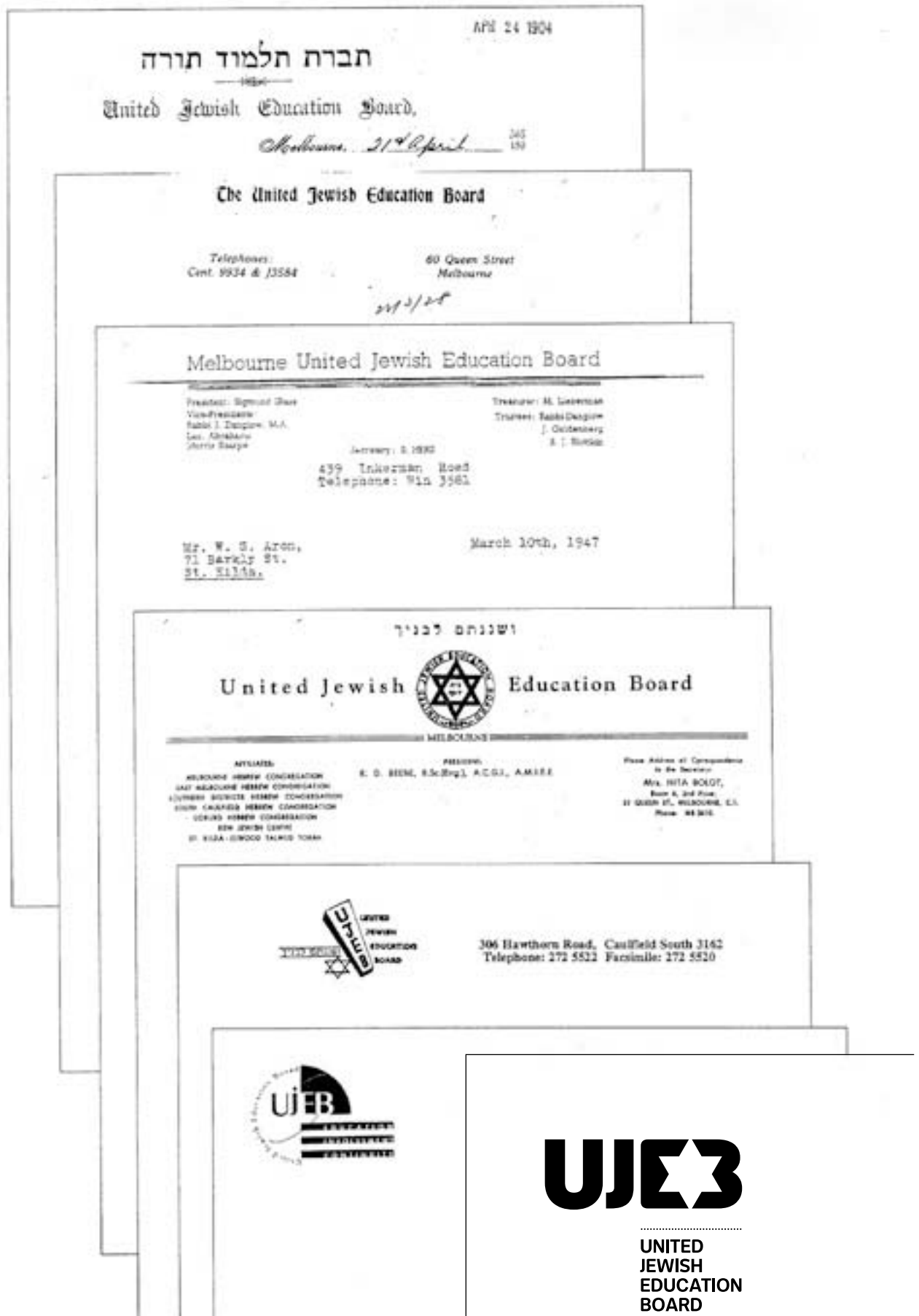
In 1944 Rabbi Dr Ehrentreu was appointed to teach Religious Instruction at Northcote where Mrs Lew assisted in establishing a centre at the Town Hall. Rabbi Ehrentreu was one of the many of the internees ex the *Dunera* who were to become involved in Jewish education in Melbourne from the 1940s onwards, and the first such internee to assist UJEB. At the subsequent AGM Rabbi Freedman forcefully expressed the view that Sunday classes were insufficient, and had to be supplemented by teaching during the week. The maximum number of hours now taught at the four centres - Toorak Road Synagogue, Northcote Town Hall, Princes Hill State School and Balaclava Road State School - was five hours per week.

Mr Joseph Goldenberg, Rabbi Freedman and Mr Gotal Movitz were appointed to investigate the possibility of providing classes for children in Camberwell, Kew and Balwyn. Early 1945 saw classes open in Kew under the supervision of Rabbi Blumenthal. Rabbis Freedman and Ehrentreu commenced Religious Instruction at Elwood State School where there were 87 children between the ages of eight and fourteen.

A feature of the Melbourne communal scene of the 1940s, prior to day school establishment, was the interest in establishing Jewish kindergartens. On the motion of Messrs J Adler and A Goldenberg it was agreed that the Board also examine the advisability of establishing a Jewish kindergarten; the sole dissenter was Rabbi Danglow. By December the sub-committee had met with representatives of the Caulfield Hebrew School (forerunner of today's Caulfield Hebrew Congregation) and resolved in favour of 'the establishment of a Jewish Kindergarten or Kindergartens under a unified control'. The Kindergarten Union as subsequently established included UJEB, Elwood and Brunswick Talmud Torahs and the Caulfield Hebrew School as affiliated bodies; however the UJEB role was to be limited to provision of a subsidy and no kindergarten was actually opened under its aegis.

At the August AGM, the President Joseph Goldenberg noted that unlike other educational institutions, the Board was anxious to provide teaching facilities in as many centres as possible, so that it would reach children who would not otherwise have a Jewish education. The UJEB had been successful in preparing pupils for Intermediate, Leaving and Leaving Honours in Hebrew. Now that the Chair of Semitic Studies had been established at the University of Melbourne it was hoped that more students would avail themselves of the facilities of the Board in obtaining the necessary preliminary Hebrew education before proceeding with Hebrew at the University.

Rabbi Danglow spoke as to the need for parental interest in education of their children, including supervision of work at home. He sought an overall communal appeal for Jewish education with funds to be distributed to all bodies involved with Jewish education. Victor Fonda reported a new system of seeking voluntary contributions from parents of Board students and was commended for his efforts. Gotal Movitz referred to the valuable co-ordination work of the Education sub-committee of the Victorian Jewish Advisory Board (VJAB, forerunner of the JCCV), and that Board's establishment of a children's library. He hoped that UJEB would avail itself of the books provided. He also advised of VJAB intention to enhance its educational involvement by appointment of an educational advisory officer. UJEB supported this move which was to lead to the appointment of Mr Abraham Feiglin to that



position and the subsequent establishment of Mount Scopus College where he was later appointed Principal.

UJEB's First Life Governors

Rabbis Danglow and Freedman were appointed Life Governors in view of their long and devoted service. Concern regarding the number of children leaving the Board's classes led Victor Fonda to point out that because of the contradiction between what the children were being taught at the classes and what they saw at home, children failed to absorb what they were being taught, and often went through the classes without gaining a proper Jewish background. He suggested that something should be done to inculcate in the children a general Jewish conscience in addition to teaching them religious instruction. Rabbi Freedman argued that having regard to the limited time at the disposal of the teachers, any departure from the present syllabus would involve infringement on what was being taught in reading, writing, and religious instructions, which was not sufficient to give the children the minimum requirements. Mr Sharpe suggested that classrooms be made more attractive by decoration.

During this era it was traditional to hold a joint Prize Giving in March involving the various educational centres. For the Ceremony scheduled for March 1946 Victor Fonda undertook to obtain a film 'Palestine the Land of Hope' from the JNF. In the pre-television era, films played a much more significant role than today as an informative medium; the JNF was in the forefront of communal use of film especially in that 1940s era of ferment in regard to the future of Palestine. Like others in a then much smaller community who were prime movers in various communal organisations, Victor Fonda was well placed to combine his dual role in JNF and UJEB to mutual benefit. Similarly at the same February meeting those present heard from Melbourne Hebrew Congregation Vice President and UJEB delegate Gotal Movitz that the MHC was now to increase its annual UJEB subsidy from 200 to 300 Pounds.

Essay Competitions are Introduced

In an interesting forerunner to the now well known Hans and Rosi Ruskin Essay Competition, the Board acknowledged a proposal by the President to stimulate pupil interest by annual essay competitions about the time of the New Year and around Passover. The actual subject of the essay which was to be generally festival related, was to be left to the discretion of the Principal. Prizes were to be awarded for the best essay in each centre.

May 1946 saw a resolution to seek an appropriate location for classes at Middle Brighton. Rabbi Danglow expressed concern that this would impact on St Kilda. However Victor Fonda agreed that though some children were able to attend at St Kilda on Sundays (particularly as petrol restrictions were eased), the Middle Brighton centre was expected to facilitate midweek attendance as well. The matter was subsequently left in abeyance pending a report by VJAB educational officer A Feiglin. However the Board was not impressed when classes were subsequently opened by the VJAB – and a press report 'that the Middle Brighton School was a triumph for the Education Officer, no mention being made of the spade work of the UJEB.' The Board feared it created a new operational educational organisation and sought consultation with the VJAB.

Prior to the departure of Rabbi Freedman for overseas a Board luncheon was held in his honour. Rabbi Goldman was appointed as Principal though determination of his final duties was initially deferred pending resolution of his position at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Rabbi Erhentrau taught RI at University High School where 'over 100 children were attending and enjoying his lesson immensely'. Despite efforts to retain him for that class, he too was shortly to resign and leave Australia.

In September the Board requested Mr Stanton to examine the demand for classes at Camberwell. It was suggested that classes at Princes Hill, taught by Mr S Elbaum and Miss Lenzer, be discontinued given poor attendances and the existence of another (non UJEB) Hebrew School in the area, and that resources be redirected to Camberwell where no classes existed for the 10 or 12 local children. There was also a demand for classes in Geelong where Mr Jacobs had undertaken to raise 125 pounds per annum towards expenses. Mr Sigmund Glass and Rabbi Goldman went to Geelong on Sunday 6th October in conjunction with Mr Feiglin to examine the situation.

By November children at Princes Hill were consolidated into one class taught by Miss Lenzer, and Mr Loebenstein had commenced teaching at Geelong for a salary of two pounds ten shillings per day plus fare. A teacher was sent to Caulfield State School for religious instruction.

However with the expansion of the UJEB activity across Melbourne it was clearly necessary to establish staffing on a more solid footing. UJEB had moved beyond the stage of a series of part time teaching personnel and honorary administration by the Board members. Accordingly a special meeting was held on 30 December 1946 to consider the appointment of a full time teacher and secretary. The appointees were Mr and Mrs S Herz. Mr Sophoni Herz, a *Dunera* internee, was already teaching at Elwood Talmud Torah and was to become secretary. His wife, Mrs Susie Herz, a graduate of the Wurzburg Teachers' Seminary and best known in Melbourne for her subsequent educational activity as teacher and principal of Beth Rivkah Ladies College, was to be a full-time teacher attending at various centres as required.

Post-war Expansion

1947 opened with lessons given by Mrs Herz in Camberwell at the Oberman residence, pending availability of a room at the Camberwell Town Hall. Religious Instruction was now being given at Melbourne High, MacRobertson High and Elwood Central, as well as University High, Princes Hill, Lee Street, Brighton State School, Caulfield Central and St Kilda State School. Teachers included Mr and Mrs Herz, Mrs H Kohn, Mr W Aron and Mr Blashki. However finance was now of increasing concern and to improve the financial position of the Board Mr Glass suggested that parents should contribute voluntarily according to means. An effort should be made to increase the number of subscribers and Special Subscriptions exceeding the nominal guinea should also be sought.

In April the previously independent Middle Brighton Centre sought incorporation into UJEB. Its teacher was Mr Bromberger (who later headed the Mount Scopus Junior School in St Kilda Road). Some debate ensued relating to the question as to whether UJEB should adopt existing centres or concentrate on areas where no educational facility existed. President Sigmund Glass supported an immediate takeover in the best interests of the community and UJEB, particularly as:

the chances for Middle Brighton were favourable as the Centre was growing owing to the arrival of many refugees.

Rabbi Goldman's 1947 Report indicated the level of expansion of the other Centres:

The Toorak Road Synagogue-Centre engaged now four teachers. In charge of the little children was a student teacher, Herman Levy, who with remarkable skill fulfils his difficult task. A new arrangement should be made at the end of the year in Professor Billigheimer's class. Although the pupils had not reached yet the stage of Hebrew Leaving, he was preparing them for matric already. In future those who were interested in matric, should receive special lessons. Kew was a most happy Centre with a highly experienced teacher in charge, Miss Lenzer, supported most successfully by the student teacher Ellen Lewy. More than 25 children were attending on Sunday. The only complaint in Kew was the building where the lessons are given. All effort should be made to get another schoolroom. Since Mrs Kohn took over Northcote, the development of this centre was very satisfactory too. At Carlton Rabbi Blumenthal gave lessons four times a week. The Caulfield Centre gave the children a chance to attend the Hebrew lessons on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Since Mr Loebenstein took over Geelong, Hebrew lessons were given every Tuesday, and arrangements had been made that even boys of Geelong Grammar School attend these lessons. Camberwell with 14 pupils on the roll developed most satisfactorily. Mr Bromberger, in charge of the newly incorporated Brighton Centre, was working and teaching in a most modern way. Equipped with scissors and papers the children pave themselves their way into the realm of the Aleph Beth.

To guarantee systematic teaching and learning, Rabbi Goldman introduced a staged syllabus, whereby children would not pass to a higher step until they had full knowledge of its predecessor. The Hebrew centre syllabus covered ages five to seventeen; preparation of a Religious Instruction syllabus was to follow.

However the expansion was straining resources. The Board resolved that:

the collection of the tuition fees should be done in a proper business way. An account should be sent to the parents.

Additionally, it was decided to seek teachers from other 'Talmud Thoras' (sic) and the Advisory Board, to assist in Religious Instruction.

A drive for new subscribers in October 1947 raised 240 Pounds. Consideration was given to a fundraising Education Ball, modelled on a Sydney equivalent. Newton Super's proposal to close the Princes Hill School which cost 300 Pounds to run for 15 children, in the context of duplication of educational facilities in Carlton, was termed 'defeatism' by Mr Blashki.

At the commencement of the AGM on 3 December 1947:

the Chairman Sigmund Glass expressed joy and high hopes of the UNO decision to found a Jewish State in Palestine. The meeting and all later speakers joined with him.

The UJEB was teaching 192 children in eight centres and a further 504 children in ten RI classes at eight schools. Presenting the Principal's Report, Rabbi Goldman drew attention to the overhaul of the Religious Instruction system and syllabus for 1948. The lack of books was being overcome as fast as they could be obtained. Modern kindergarten teaching methods were being introduced. Nevertheless the Board was handicapped by parental indifference and inertia, and a special sub-committee was proposed to meet with parents.

At the commencement of 1948 the class at Caulfield had doubled from 35 to 70 students, and at St Kilda had increased from 15 to 35. On the other hand, at Lee Street the teacher reported that a missionary was 'attempting to entice the tiny children from her class' and sought an additional teacher to combat the problem. 200 children attended a model seder at Toorak Road. Despite some apprehension reflecting the impact of the (now renamed) Board of Deputies on the work of UJEB, it was agreed that UJEB apply for admission as a member organisation of that Board. The rapidly expanding scope of UJEB in this era, coinciding with establishment of Mount Scopus College and the dayschool movement generally, is indicated by the details in the following Table on page 31.

1947 CLASSES, PUPIL NUMBERS AND TIMES

Special Intermediate, Leaving and Matriculation Classes:

Oneg Shabbat and Discussion Group for Senior Children every Saturday afternoon at 3.30 p.m., at the home of Dr Billigheimer, 69 Westbury Street, St Kilda Road.

Unfortunately when new premises were required at Kew, the Town Clerk advised that facilities could not be made available in the Town Hall as:

the Council was against letting to any religious body as it may appear that they were favouring that religion.

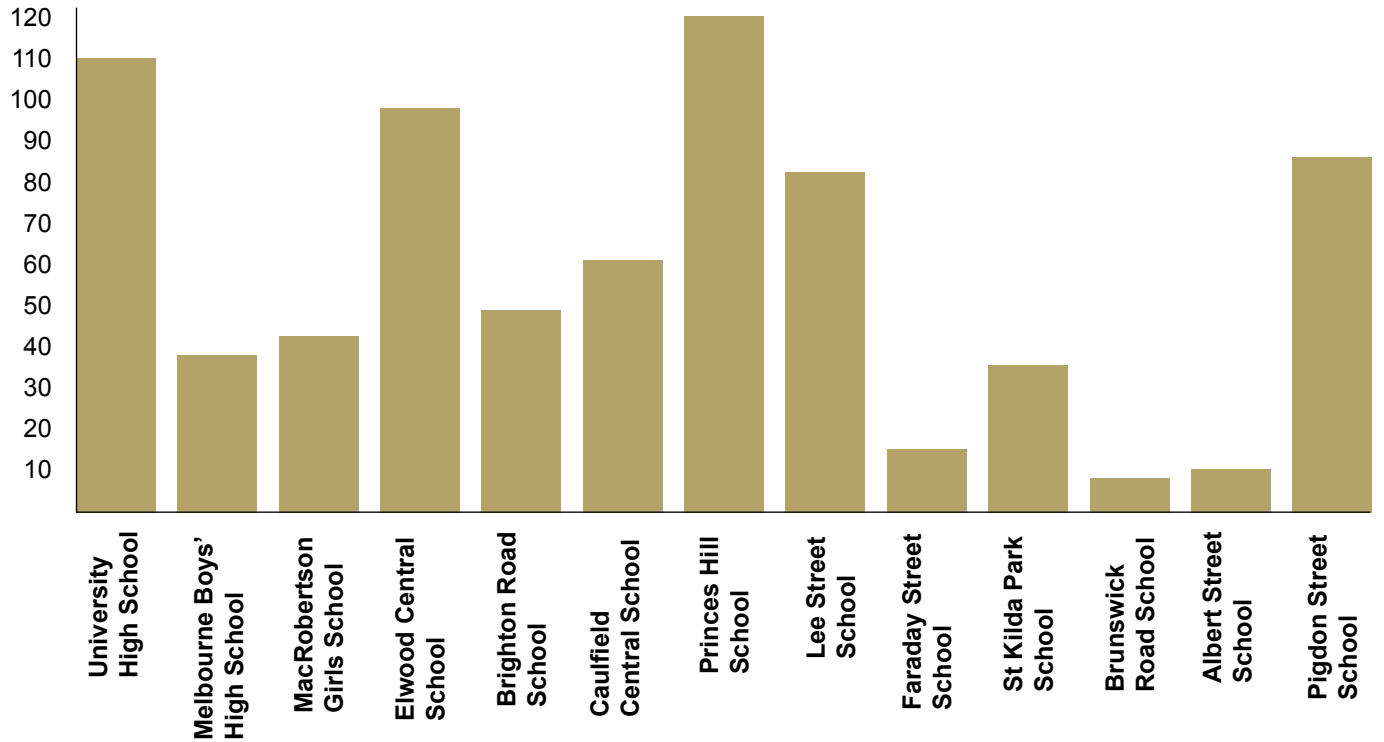
UJEB supported moves by the Kew Community to take an option on a property for a communal centre. In June 1950 Dr Kurt Frankel offered the use of his home for teaching children in the Camberwell district. Those children were subsequently transferred to the Kew community premises, where six classes at the Norman Smorgon House also included pupils transported weekly from Northcote by Messrs Z Rudin and A Wittner (so as to give them the facilities of a bigger centre). UJEB also took over responsibility for classes at the Frances Barkman House (Laredo).

A sub-committee was appointed to investigate incorporation into UJEB of the classes at Brunswick Talmud Torah, subject to doubling of the East Melbourne annual subsidy of 100 Pounds. November 1949 saw approval in principle for a move to examine the practicality of classes in Moorabbin as sought by Mr M Schmul.

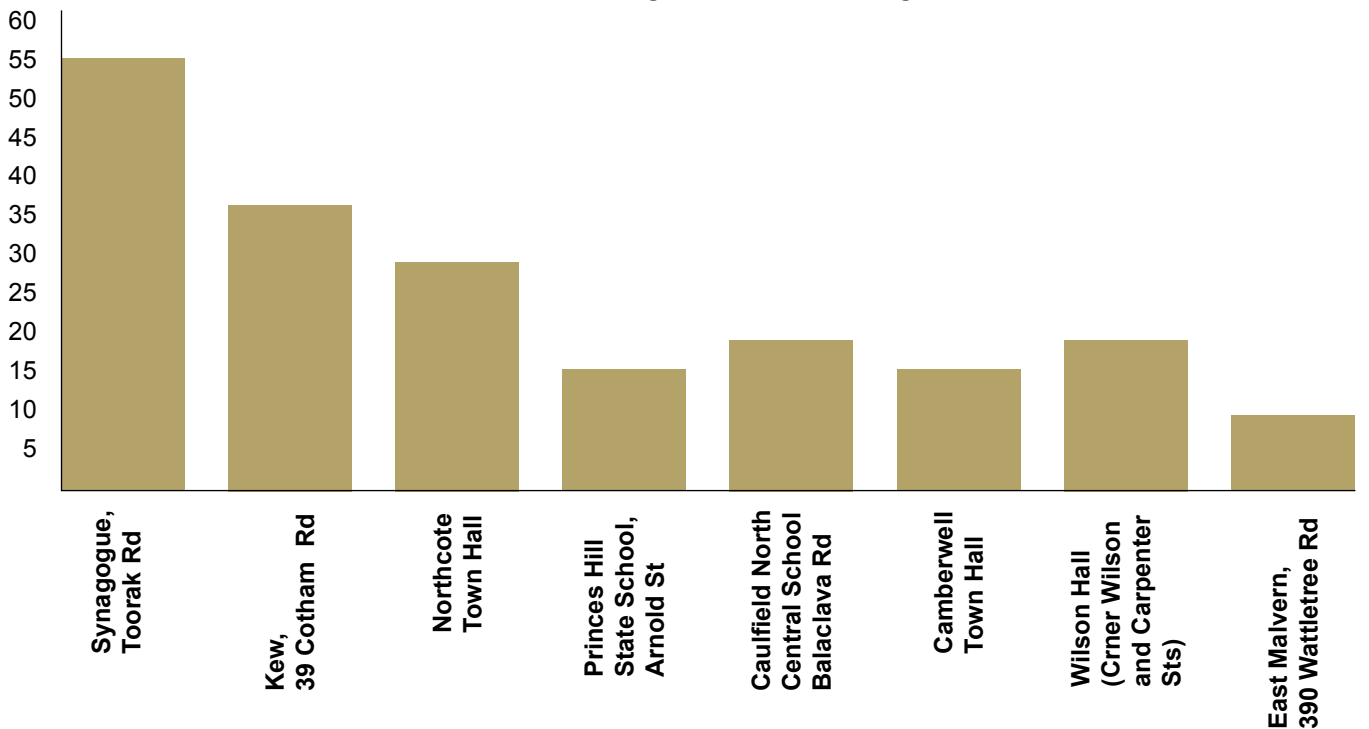
UJEB participated in the Tu Bishvat function at the JNF Hachshara farm in Springvale but owing to the poliomyelitis epidemic, consideration was given to deferment of the prizegiving, picnic and Chanukah functions. Rabbi Goldman taught matriculation Hebrew for four hours weekly. He considered the Adler grammar books as the best texts available – and anyway American books could not be imported.

With expanded activities the increasing overdraft was becoming a problem. 1949 saw UJEB write to the Board of Deputies seeking a month for an Appeal in 1950 – the beginning of what would become a regular practice. However the UJEB also sought to ensure it maximised the revenue obtained from those benefitting from its services. Hettie Feuerman offered to assist by collecting monies due and outstanding thereby replacing the deceased collector Mr Cohn.

Religious Instruction



Hebrew classes are being held in the following centres



1950's - BABY BOOM EXPLOSION HITS RE

The Advent of Universal Religious Instruction

Up to this point, Religious Instruction classes took place in State primary and high schools on the basis of individual arrangements between UJEB and the schools. 1950 witnessed new legislation regarding religious instruction in State Schools, making it compulsory except for objectors.

The UJEB welcomed the legislation noting that: much can be done to build up the moral and religious outlook of a child in half an hour's talk by a teacher who has prepared his lesson and knows his objective.

Early in 1951 Leon Freedman and Rabbi Goldman were appointed to confer on an approach to the Minister of Education regarding a directive that no RI lectures could be given unless the lecturers had approval of the Minister. Mr Herz sought establishment of classes at his home where Sabbath services were held by the fledgling South Caulfield Hebrew Congregation; action was however deferred owing to the financial situation. Establishment by 'new settlers' of a shule in Northcote, led to re-examination of the question of a centre there. The Board was mindful of Rabbi Goldman's caution that:

The glamour of the Jewish Day School has naturally focussed the attention of . . . educational workers towards that institution. It would be a grave error, though, on the part of those who are interested in education and in our community, to divorce the work done by the UJEB and other Talmud Torahs from the Day School movement. It is all one. This applied particularly to Melbourne, where all the children wishing to go to the Day School cannot be accommodated I appeal, therefore, to ... educational workers to beware of the danger of believing that, because of the establishment of one Day School, our educational problems have been solved. In a way, they make us more aware of our shortcomings and the need to intensify our work for the UJEB and Talmud Torahs until the ideal has been achieved

Dr Hans Ruskin Makes his Mark

July 1951 saw the appointment of Mr James Kimche as secretary of the UJEB to replace Mr S D Rose, who remained on the Board. Though only briefly serving as a paid officer, Mr Kimche's communal involvement with UJEB and the Adass Israel Congregation was to continue for nearly a decade. The same period also saw the commencement of involvement with UJEB by Dr Hans Ruskin who began as a religious instruction teacher, and subsequently continued to become a driving force in the activity of the Board. At the first Board Meeting at which he participated Rabbi Goldman referred to the lack of teachers, the low standard of some appointees, and problems related to unprofessionalism. To improve the situation the following proposals by Dr Ruskin were adopted: to advertise for teachers in the Jewish Press; to try to improve teaching staff by appointing qualified and religious teachers; to increase teachers' salaries as soon as the finances of the Board would permit; and to improve the control of the Principal over the attendance of all teachers. Dr Ruskin also placed on the agenda for the near future: the financial self-support of the UJEB; the advisability that the Rabbis themselves should teach in Hebrew classes and Religious Instructions; the issue of closer co-operation of the Board with other Jewish Educational Institutions in Melbourne; and the opening of the Yavneh Institute as a Higher Jewish Education Centre, headed by Rabbi Doctor E Schwarz and emphasising training of teachers to meet local needs.

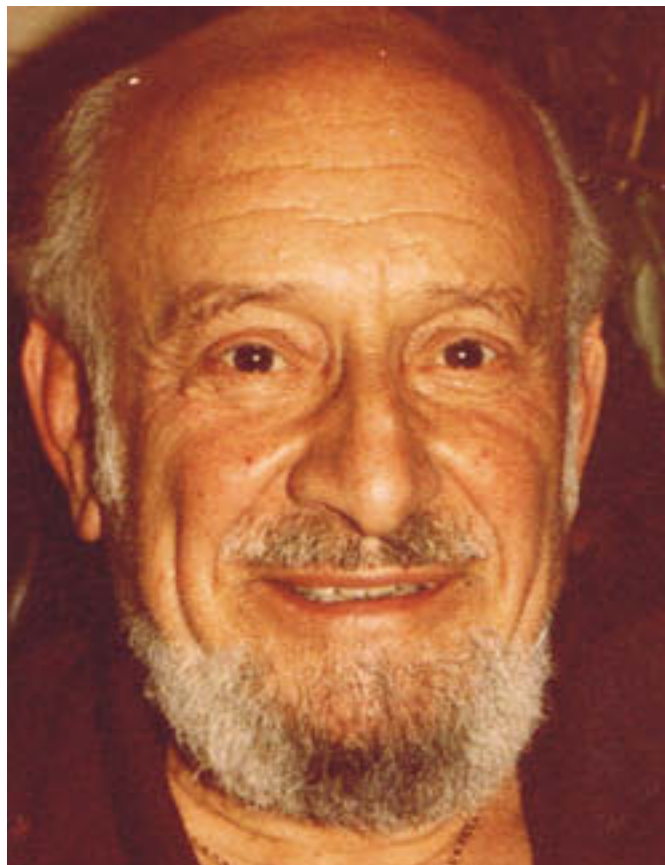
During 1952 the financial situation of the Board was the subject of continuing discussion. Teachers were seeking increases in line with unprecedented inflation in the community generally; while the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation had increased its annual payment to 750 Pounds, other organisations had maintained previous subsidy levels. Fees for Hebrew centres were fixed at 10 Pounds per annum.



Hans and Rosi Ruskin competition winners



Hans and Rosi Ruskin competition winners



Hans Ruskin



Hans and Rosi Ruskin competition winners, 1998

The President, Sigmund Glass, restated his view that if the UJEB was to expand its activities to fill the obvious gaps existing in Jewish education, it must become more truly representative of the whole community and, to this end, he intended to invite the various organisations and congregations to give their moral and financial support. The Secretary, Mr E A King Smith was instructed to write to the following organisations: The Young Mens' Hebrew Association, St Kilda – Elwood Talmud Torah, Bachelors' and Hosts' Ball Committee, Chevra Kadisha, Pitt Street Synagogue North Carlton, Chevra Chessed Shel Emess, Victorian Jewish Returned Ex-Servicemen's Association and the various Landsmanshaften. The letters were to set out the community wide activities of the UJEB, particularly the latest achievement of obtaining the right to teach Jewish Religious Instruction in State Schools, and inviting them to take a practical interest in these activities which most of them had recently expressed, particularly during and after the Chief Rabbi's visit. Parents of RI pupils were invited to become subscribers.

The developing program of the UJEB was encapsulated in the 1952 Annual Report:

Five classes are held at the Toorak Road Centre ranging from children of five years of age up to classes for children taking the Public Examinations in Hebrew. This year candidates will be sitting for the Intermediate, Leaving and Matriculation examinations, and Professor Billigheimer is very hopeful of their success. Professor Billigheimer also holds an Oneg Shabbat at his home every Saturday afternoon for the senior members of the classes, and I am fully appreciative of his efforts in this connection, particularly because . . . it is the Board's function primarily to inculcate the spirit of Judaism into our children, and the Oneg Shabbat certainly helps a great deal to achieve this aim. Connected with the Toorak Road Centre are the classes held during the week at the Caulfield Central School, in Balaclava Road, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Besides the examination class Professor Billigheimer conducts a special class on Thursdays teaching boys the Trope of the Torah and Haftarah, so as to enable them to read any selection from our Holy Writ by sight. An increasing number of boys are taking the opportunity of attending this class which I believe others too would avail themselves of, if this phase of the Board's work would be better known.

With the assistance of Mr Hall and his education committee at the Norman Smorgon Centre in Kew, I am very hopeful that still further progress will be made in the tuition of the children in this area where a large number of Jewish children now reside. Under the guidance of Miss Lenzer, who carries out her duties most conscientiously, the senior children are now making rapid progress, and those children who attended the mid-week classes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are showing marked proficiency in reading, translation and grammar, which is very pleasing to those interested in their educational welfare.

Innumerable difficulties had to be overcome when the health authorities refused further permission for the Board to conduct its classes in the Scout Hall in Wilson Street Brighton, for the children living in the southern suburbs. To maintain the classes, arrangements had to be made to transfer the children every Sunday morning to the synagogue at Toorak Road. With the completion of the Southern Suburbs Jewish Centre in Marriage Road (soon to become the Brighton Hebrew Congregation), and with the consent of the energetic and enthusiastic committee of that synagogue, classes are now being conducted in this centre. As predicted, as soon as the classes opened in the district itself, the number of pupils doubled, and extra teachers will have to be sought in the coming year. Arrangements will also be made for the mid-week classes to be re-continued at least twice a week and, if possible, four times a week. It is obvious that, within the next two or three years, even the present class rooms will not be sufficient for the number of pupils that will desire to attend, and it would be showing a great deal of foresight if a parcel of land could be bought within the area for the purpose of building school premises only at some future date.

On behalf of the community, the Board continues to fulfil an important function in conducting the Religious Instruction classes which could be further expanded if sufficient teachers could be found to teach in the mornings. I would like to emphasise that, although the Religious Instruction lesson is only given for one half-hour a week, it should not be considered a waste of time. On enquiries being made, it has been discovered that the half hour is the only instruction the child receives in many cases where there is no hope of the parents sending the child to Hebrew instruction on Sundays or after school hours. It has also proven itself to be an important supplementary lesson in the Jewish faith and in history for Jewish children who do attend other classes. The psychological benefit of these classes to the Jewish children is invaluable.

A theatre night was held by the re-constituted Ladies Auxiliary at the Arrow Theatre, Middle Park, on 10 August 1952. Dr Ruskin advised of the difficulty of lecturing to classes of 80 to 100 pupils at University, Melbourne and MacRobertson High Schools. Rabbi Super and Dr Billigheimer suggested that synagogues could increase the standard of Jewish learning if they demanded an improved standard before Barmitzvah boys could be called to read their portion of the Torah. To increase Shule participation, restoring the original situation whereby the UJEB was a creation of Melbourne synagogues, the St Kilda – Elwood Talmud Torah, Southern Districts Hebrew Congregation and Norman Smorgon House were admitted as members of the Board with allotted delegates.

Mr R D Beebe succeeded Mr S Glass as President after his seven years in the position. Following upon the arrival of Rabbi Dr Rapaport to replace Rabbi Stransky at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, the UJEB sought his assistance for Religious Instruction. In the early years of his ministry he gave RI in various schools; during the sixties a feature of his involvement was to be the annual commencement and/or concluding services held at the Toorak synagogue for students at Melbourne and MacRobertson High Schools. Emulating the system utilised by the London United Synagogue, the Board approached congregations to introduce an annual seat levy of One Guinea per seat holder or Two Guineas per family. Parent/teacher meetings were introduced at all centres to arouse greater interest of parents towards the education of the children, and improve attendance and class room furnishings. Newman Rosenthal, now with the Visual Education Department of the University of Melbourne, promised to assist the UJEB in acquiring suitable sample film strips and a projector.

The Talmud Torah/Hebrew School Debate

During the post-war decade, the Melbourne Jewish community benefitted from a particularly strong Talmud Torah system of part time education. It paralleled that provided by the UJEB and was particularly attractive to the families of new arrivals in Melbourne. When the UJEB commenced operation in Kew, many in the Congregation were concerned at the style of the UJEB education and sought a 'Talmud Torah' rather than the 'Hebrew School' on its premises. For a brief period two educational streams were to operate side by side. However despite differences in style, all agreed that the emphasis should be on the substance of the teaching provided. Mr. Gelbard raised the need for an energetic and efficient director of education stating that the Kew Jewish Centre would be prepared to subsidise 'a man of the right calibre' to organise teaching methods and standards. Retrospectively it is interesting to note the use of the word 'man' in regard to the person sought for a senior administrative position, when so many of the Board's teachers were in fact women. It was only to be another decade before leading Melbourne

educationalist Mrs. Mena Kozminsky would be appointed to such a position, and of course more recently 'gender neutrality' has become an essential element of the Board's approach to appointments.

Dr Ruskin moved to improve teacher qualifications through refresher courses at various levels of Hebrew Teaching, organised with the collaboration of Professor G Browne at the University Teachers College, Professor M D Goldman of the Department of Semitic Studies, Dr S Kallay, Director of Education of the Zionist Federation, and Newman Rosenthal. Course completion entitled a teacher to a higher salary.

Fears that the expansion of Religious Instruction would adversely affect the much more substantial Hebrew school attendance were countered with instructions to RI teachers to encourage Hebrew Centre enrolment. Reporting to the Board on proposals to strengthen RI, Dr Ruskin noted that:

- a. Headmasters of many schools are very interested to ensure the proper conduct of Jewish RI classes and occasionally even attended them themselves.*
- b. The standard of teachers was surprisingly good, despite awkward hours and low remuneration. However they suffered badly from lack of direction.*
- c. Classes must be made attractive to attract pupils, this being specially important with those who had no other Jewish contact.*
- d. It was the Principal's prerogative to attend these classes at any time.*
- e. Teachers should exercise influence to prevent children attending school on Yomtov.*

The question of appointment of a full-time Principal foundered owing to its cost, estimated at 1000 Pounds. Dr Ruskin suggested that the project could be feasible with the extra income provided from local Centres unable to afford the services of a full-time Rabbi. The Principal's duties, should be similar to that of headmaster of the NSW Board of Jewish Education: a roving senior teacher of Hebrew and Judaism at the various centres during the week, religious, instruction teacher, Barmitzvah tutor, coordinator of regular conferences with the teachers and director of staff, so that instruction of the highest possible standard could be given.

On his return from overseas, Rabbi Goldman recommended a process of grading staff for the purpose of determining increased salaries. This was to counter the tendency for staff to leave the Board because of inadequate salaries set at a base rate of 30 shillings for Sunday morning classes.

Early 1954 saw resolution of the situation at Kew with amalgamation of the more intensive Talmud Torah and UJEB streams under the Headmaster Rabbi Kaye (Kaplinsky) who was to be paid by the UJEB. In June the Board agreed to affiliation of the Coburg Talmud Torah where 50 pupils were taught under the supervision of Mr

Jacobs. There were problems at Caulfield North regarding authority to conduct after school classes, however the Education Department granted permission for classes in Hebrew and History. An interesting proposal emphasising the significance of Simchat Torah for children, saw letters sent to the Chatan Torah and Chatan B'reshith in each synagogue asking them to become subscribers.

In February 1955 classes commenced at Leopold Street, South Caulfield. Parents were encouraged to send their children to relieve overcrowding at East Brighton. An innovation was the provision of separate classes for those attending weekdays as well as Sunday. Senior teacher was Mr Walter Duffield who would later serve as congregational President in addition to other aspects of his communal involvement. Thus from its inception, the South Caulfield Hebrew School was to involve its lay and religious leadership in the running of its Hebrew School – a factor which would be a major contributor to its growth and long-running success. Within a year there would be 70 children attending on Sundays and 30 four evenings a week.

Contemporary teachers included Messrs Klarberg, Sheink and Dressler and Mrs Glass. Herschel Davis headed the Brighton Centre and Mr. Ben David succeeded Mr H Getzler at Kew. Miss Lenzer was offered the headmistress position at Toorak.

Radio Cheder- Jewish Education Hits the Airwaves



Radio Cheder was written and produced by Dr Ruskin (left)

The key initiative of 1955 was commencement of Radio Cheder broadcasts on 3XY, once a week, from 5.30 to 5.45 p.m. The advent of this program had immense significance at a time long preceding the concept of ethnic broadcasting now taken for granted in Australia. For this program a committee was appointed, consisting of Messrs Beebe, Bromberger, Arnold Bloch, Isi Leibler, Rabbi Goldman, Dr Ruskin, Rabbi Schwarz and Mrs Caroline Isaacson. Regularly introduced by the Hebrew tune 'U'sheavtem Mayim B'sasson' and featuring inter alia Nehama Patkin and Betty Rain, the broadcasts proved very popular and were a feature of the Melbourne educational scene until 1959. Josie's was to be a major sponsor, through the assistance of Mrs M Ashkanasy.

The chaplain at Wesley College discussed with Dr Ruskin the formulation of a curriculum for Jewish boys at the school. The introduction of Ivrit at Kew and East Brighton 'had a notable effect on the interest and enthusiasm of pupils'. Mrs Nita Bolot succeeded Mr Eric King Smith as Secretary. A number of teachers participated in an Association of Hebrew Teachers chaired by Mr (now Rabbi) Raymond Apple. The Board felt that this group, with aims of improving teacher knowledge and forming training classes, should include specific UJEB representation at committee level.

It was in 1955 that the UJEB adopted the Sephardit pronunciation for the teaching of Hebrew as Modern Hebrew was now part of the curriculum. On a visit to the Moonee Ponds Centre, which sought affiliation with the Board, Mr Prawer noted that one class was being taught Hebrew with Polish pronunciation and another class studied in Yiddish. Coburg had 3 classes (totalling 50 children) in Andalusia Hall, where they were taught Hebrew Reading and Jewish History under the guidance of H. Segal. That centre and Northcote sought support from appeals to purchase permanent accommodation. Rabbi Danglow saw a need for a communal body to assist the congregations, noting that the UJEB would do its best to provide teachers for the outer suburbs 'but the income from the Appeal was not such as to fill them with undue confidence with regard to the future'.

In July Rabbi Goldman received medical advice to resign due to ill health. The Board resolved to raise funds for purchase of a motor car for Rabbi Goldman in recognition of his service to Jewish education and as Principal of the UJEB. Subsequently, Rabbi Danglow was congratulated for his Golden Jubilee of service to Australian Jewry including the UJEB, and the Rabbi Jacob Danglow Prize was founded to be awarded annually to the Dux of each centre.

The Lily Solvey Era

A new era commenced in August 1956 with the appointment of Mrs Lily Solvey as Organising Secretary. She would spend more than three decades at the helm of the Board's administration and become known in the community as Mrs UJEB. She had a particular knack for utilising her many communal connections to the benefit of UJEB, drawing into the work of the Board practically anyone she knew. More than any other person it was Lily who transformed an organisation administratively dependent on voluntary workers, into a professional body – yet one still able to harness voluntary energy to assist in fund-raising and auxiliary activities.

To facilitate establishment of the new office, a room was obtained at 31 Queen Street at Five Pounds per month. Lily's tasks were Executive rather than secretarial~ and arrangements were made for Glix Secretarial Service to do all typing and duplicating (up to 14 hours per week) for 7 Pounds weekly.

The UJEB workload was expanding significantly. Dr Ruskin advised that the Board was conducting 74 Religious Instruction classes between 9 and 9.30 a.m. and applications for 14 more classes were received. He suggested that mothers be asked to take the classes 'as he felt this could be done without much training'. The Board sought a more formal approach, including Rabbinical assistance. Members were concerned that the instruction was kept on Orthodox lines. Caulfield Hebrew Congregation agreed to increase the salary of Rabbi S Gutnick so as to allow him to continue RI classes in an honorary capacity.

The impact of expanded demand was not confined to the metropolitan area. Ballarat which had once had its own Hebrew school but where the community had now declined in numbers, was serviced by a correspondence course developed and supervised by Raymond Apple. A teacher visited the students each three months meeting with them on the synagogue premises. The correspondence course had expanded from servicing three children in Wonthaggi in February 1955, to 70 children throughout Victoria and Tasmania in 1956, providing fortnightly lessons, personal contact, as well as religious requisites such as Matzah, Siddur, Books and Mezuzot. On one occasion a nine year old country correspondence pupil bought a Mezuzah for Father's Day- the nearest Mezuzah was apparently 200 miles away.

Raymond Apple also arranged a Chanukah service for the Geelong community, including seven correspondence school students at the Geelong Synagogue. For many years such services conducted by himself or Mr. H. Barr were to be a feature of the calendar for this declining community.

1957 Purim celebrations were combined with a picnic. 45 children enrolled at a new centre in Gooch St Thornbury. Children formerly enrolled at classes in the Welfare Society Home in Burke Road Camberwell were transferred to Kew as the Home was needed for newly arriving (Hungarian) immigrants. Toorak and North Caulfield centres combined to provide Leaving and Matriculation students with a traditional 'Shavuoth Lemen' program. Rabbi Dr Schwarz and Revd Wreschner lectured teachers on Tanach and Modern Hebrew Teaching methods. A feature of the period throughout the 1950s was children's participation in the Jewish Child's Day fundraising activities for Youth Aliyah.

The budget for 1957 was 13,500 Pounds. 4200 Pounds to come from school fees was supplemented by 2000 Pounds from congregations; the rest was to come from the appeal. However within that budget there was little room to manoeuvre; serious financial difficulties came from fee remissions totalling 545 Pounds and the need to write off a further 500 Pounds in unpaid fees. After much airing of the crisis in the Jewish press and a series of meetings with the Board of Deputies, it was averted by the generous donations of donors including Board members, Mount Scopus Parent's Association, Chevra Chessed Shel Emess and the Melbourne and Kew Congregations. Other congregations encouraged their members to support the UJEB emergency appeal for which Rabbi Dr Porush was brought from Sydney as a guest speaker. Board of Deputies President Trevor Rapke hosted the opening cocktail party at Stanmark, in conjunction with UJEB President Dr J Bomstein.

For 1958 Rabbi Nathan Shlesinger of London, who was in Melbourne on a scholarship studying for his PhD, was appointed Director of Education. He was to put particular effort into curriculum and strengthening of weekday classes at the Centres. Interestingly, regarding Barmitzvah tuition he took the view that 'it was impossible to take such classes in groups' and 'the only possibility would be for the Board to employ private teachers and subsequently charge these pupils wishing to take Barmitzvah classes for same'. To increase resources he wrote to various overseas personalities including Dr J Burg M K, Rabbi Isidor Epstein, Professor C Domb and Dr Nechamah Leibovitz, seeking articles to be compiled as a 'Topic for the Week' Scheme.

Three thousand five hundred children participated in a Tenth Anniversary Israeli Independence Day Function at the Palais on Tuesday 22 April 1958. The Education Department granted all Victorian Jewish children a half holiday to facilitate their participation in the ceremony, for which UJEB arranged transport to and from schools. Two days earlier, 500 Hebrew Centre pupils participated in a similar combined function at Copping Hall, Prahran.

May, 1958 saw the UJEB office move to 90 Queen Street, where it would be located for some 30 years, until the end of Lily Solvey's tenure. Over three hundred friends and supporters attended an inter centre competitive quiz afternoon at the Prahran Town Hall. Similar functions would be features of subsequent years.

1960's - RADIO AND CORRESPONDENCE CLASSES OPEN UJEB NATIONALLY

The Zionist Movement and UJEB

With the increased number of Jewish children at Elwood High, Hebrew was provided as a Matriculation subject-classes initially given by Revd W Wreschner were funded by the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand. However, a proposal that Zionist funds be taxed on a broader basis for local educational purposes was opposed by Dr Ruskin on the grounds that 'there is sufficient money to be gotten provided people to get it are available'. Given the debate on the issue of funds for Israel vis a vis local education, current in the community at the time of preparing this history, it is perhaps worth adding that the issue has simmered even since 1948; Benzion Patkin recalled that at the time of the first appeal for Israel there were fears and objections relating to the implication it might have for fundraising for the fledgling Mount Scopus.

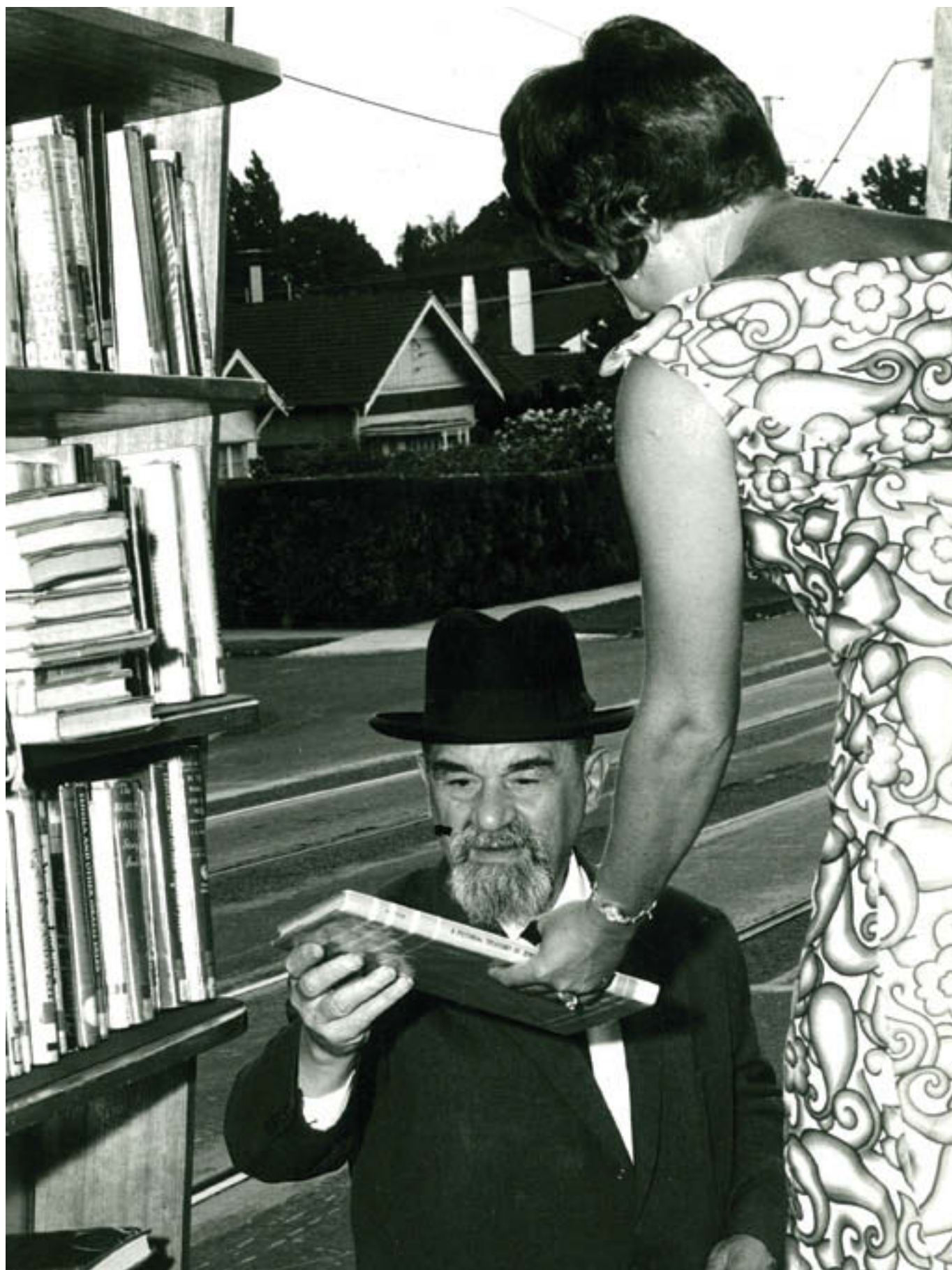


A retrospectively interesting motion was passed at the meeting of 25 May 1959: 'that the Executive strongly disapproves of smoking in class'. Rabbi Shlesinger was instructed to discuss the matter with Headmasters. President Dr Basil Stoll represented UJEB at the dedication of purpose built new classrooms adjoining the Kew Jewish Centre, Norman Smorgon House. Rabbi Chaim Gutnick, recently appointed to the Elwood Talmud Torah, agreed to take Religious Instruction classes.

A new initiative of 1960 was commenced at Bet Sefer Habonim, providing Sunday and midweek classes at their new premises on the corner of Gordon and Sinclair Streets, Elsternwick. As the emphasis was to be on Israel and the Hebrew language, the curriculum was to be amended for this situation although they agreed to 'comply with our program of religious education'. Forty pupils attended the centre in its early stages; there were now 500 pupils in other Hebrew centres.

The 1959 Federal Budget brought down by Treasurer Harold Holt included announcement of tax deductibility status for donations to the Council for Jewish Education in Schools, and for the next fifty years, the UJEB administered matters relating to the Council in Victoria. In the context of the newly granted tax deductibility, the 1960 Appeal was organised on a grand scale. Appeal Presidents were Aaron Altschul and Chairman Maurice Slonim. Prior to the Appeal opening, the Minister for Education, the Hon JS Bloomfield, and Professor Zelman Cowen addressed a Jubilee Banquet held at Stanmark, where the toast was proposed by Sir Archie Michaelis. The appeal itself was organised on the basis of a series of cocktail parties and drawing room meetings.

Rabbi P. Rosengarten, of the Torah Department in Jerusalem, was in Melbourne on behalf of the Mizrachi organisation assisting with the development of Yavneh College. Rabbi Dr Rosengarten was asked to visit all centres and prepare a comprehensive report as to his impressions and centre needs. The report identified the well known deficiencies of part-time education, recommended institution of separately timetabled periods on a Sunday morning, and introduction of an educational inspectorate to regularly visit centres and bring about improvements. The Jewish Agency was asked to provide resources for a draft new curriculum to enable implementation of updated teaching methods. Dr Stoll was asked to investigate whether the position of Director of Education could be combined with that of Rabbi for South Caulfield.



Mobile library, Chief Rabbi Dr Israel Brodie with librarian Mrs Pearl Lipshut, 1966

At the recommendation of Dulcie Kanatopsky all religious instruction pupils were invited to attend synagogue services at a specially declared Shabbat before Rosh Hashana. It was agreed to enforce a policy that no child be allowed to attend a centre if fees for two or more terms were outstanding. Kurt Rathner reported the success of pre-Barmitzvah classes at Kew and South Caulfield where pupils were taught the skills of reading the Torah and Haftorah, precluding the need for private lessons prior to their Barmitzvah. Most congregations agreed to the imposition of a standard prior to acceptance of boys for their Barmitzvah ceremony.

Maurice Slonim assumed the UJEB Presidency at a time when part time Jewish Education was facing a crossroads. The day schools had proven their viability as their numbers increased, enrolments expanded and the first groups achieved great success in their matriculation examinations. Religious Instruction class numbers were soon to peak with the demographics impact of the end of the post war baby boom and the shift to the Jewish schools, but realising the need to continue the provision of alternative educational opportunities, he worked diligently at improvement of the Hebrew Centre system, paying personal visits to each centre.

From 1961 a new centre in conjunction with Betar was opened at East Melbourne. On the other hand Bet Sefer Habonim amalgamated with East Brighton. A centre was also opened at Moorabbin Technical School. The school year began with an extensive series of evening seminars for teachers by Revd Wreschner, Rabbi Rosengarten and Professor Billigheimer. Malcolm Caplan was appointed to supervise all Religious Instruction classes and prepare teachers' aids; there were now 3,800 pupils at 72 schools. There were moves to establish a UJEB kindergarten at Kew; However this materialised independently leading to the advent of the Mount Scopus feeder school. Assistance was provided to Miss G Friedman and Mr H Amzalak to facilitate study in Israel.

UJEB received 2250 Pounds in the 1961 allocation of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany. At Elwood High, Mr Taub prepared 35 students for Leaving and Matriculation Hebrew examinations. The after school classes attracted students from as far away as Melbourne and MacRobertson High Schools.

The Southern Districts Congregation, under the leadership of Rabbi J Schick, was re-amalgamated with UJEB after a four year break. This occurred at the beginning of 1963, compensating for the closure of Coburg where remaining pupils transferred to what was then the largest centre, at Kew (137 pupils). Second largest centre was South Caulfield (72 pupils). The Board accepted the tendency for Hebrew Centre enrolments to decrease as 'only natural with the ever increasing popularity of the Jewish Day Schools!'

The Danglow Memorial Scholarship.

Following upon the sad death of Rabbi Jacob Danglow who to this day remains unsurpassed for the length of his rabbinical tenure in Victoria, 1963 saw establishment of the Jacob Danglow Memorial Fund intended as a permanent memorial 'to his unflagging zeal in the interests of Jewish Education. The Danglow Memorial Scholarship was launched by the Premier, The Hon Henry Bolte MLA, at a function chaired by acting VJBD President Nathan Beller, at the home of Mr and Mrs N Rockman.

1964/5 was to see Religious Instruction at its peak, with approximately 4300 students attending and 80 teachers employed to serve them. In the face of the difficulty of finding trained teachers to take the classes, President Sam Mordech proposed that Day Schools schedule their activities to facilitate the release of their religious studies teachers at the time that they were needed to take State School classes. The fact that the numbers of students taught by the UJEB in State primary and secondary schools would soon begin to decline was a reflection of the demographic impact of the end of the post war baby boom, and the increased acceptance of day school education as a viable option up to matriculation level.

Rabbi Rudzki took over administration of the UJEB centre at South Caulfield (where he was now Chief Minister) on the departure of Mrs Kozminsky, who continued to assist in administrative matters whilst serving as full time headmistress at Yavneh College. Initial disquiet at Rabbi Rudzki's reorganisation of the centre as a Talmud Torah was soon resolved as the positive impact of his work became obvious.



Rabbi Rudzki

UJEB Library on Wheels

The Aaron Cohen Mobile Library was launched outside Beth Weizmann by the Minister for Education, the Hon. J S Bloomfield MLA. It commenced operation under the administration of Pearl Lipshut who was to spend 12 years with the UJEB in librarian and administrative capacities, and was an immediate success, visiting all centres on a regular basis as well as State Schools. During a pastoral visit to Australia, Chief Rabbi Brodie inspected the Mobile Library and considered it a bold step forward in the field of Religious Education, which could be emulated throughout the world. The Library substantially increased its stock of books by seeking donations from Barmitzvah boys and Batmitzvah girls.

Kurt Rathner replaced Dr Billigheimer as head of Toorak. Professor Billigheimer had been involved with UJEB for 25 years with his major responsibility the joint Toorak/North Caulfield Centres, and was presented with a Louis Kahan portrait of himself in recognition. Former UJEB pupil, Minnie Kierson, retired at the same time. As a child she had been examined by Rabbi Abrahams in 1908, and placed at the top of the order of merit. Both retirees were acknowledged by Rabbi Apple as having led him on the road to the Ministry; Miss Kierson in particular was 'one of a band of maiden ladies' who kept Jewish Education and Judaism alive in the era before the advent of the Jewish Day School.

With the appointment of Rabbi Schreiber to Kew Hebrew Congregation as permanent Rabbi from the beginning of 1965, he too took up duties as headmaster of the UJEB centre. This increased emphasis on Orthodoxy through Rabbinic involvement in centre management led to the search for an Orthodox 'Mefakeah' to assist in improving the method of teaching religious subjects. Hebrew was at this time under control of Jewish Agency Shaliach and Bialik Principal, Mr A Chowers. There was some disquiet at Kew when classes were opened at the North Eastern Centre, for whom Leon Freedman, a longstanding worker for the UJEB cause, was a major advocate. The area served by this centre was also lacking in religious instruction; Sol Spitalnic who represented the centre at the Board sought RI in the 'outlying schools', and Max Rosenbaum reported the need for a teacher at Mont Albert North where 12 children were spread over eight classes. Included in this group were his own sons Norman and Yankel, who also spent many years at the Kew Centre. Little did anyone foresee that Yankel was to be murdered some 25 years later in a riot in Crown Heights, New York and his brother was to become well known in Australia and the United States through his fight for justice in the case.

Financial matters were in the hands of Messrs Sam Mordech, Fred Winton and Eric Cohen. The Appeal based on the Drawing Room Meeting system as introduced and administered by Lily Solvey generally brought good results; school fees and remissions were constantly a sensitive matter.



The Aaron Cohen memorial mobile library, 1966



Mobile library bus



Inside the library bus, 1966



Children enjoying the mobile library

UJEB Expands its Educational Horizons

During 1966 the Hashomair Hatzair Centre affiliated with UJEB under the directorship of Mrs Esther Ofer. Emphasis was on Hebrew language, History and the Festivals as celebrated on the kibbutz. Classes were also commenced at the Bialistocker Centre in Robe St., St Kilda. Mrs Har-Chen was appointed Mephakachat and commenced her work by supervising the setup at each centre in regard to teachers, pupils and facilities. Use of audio visual Hebrew teaching methods was extended, and a roving singing teacher taught songs at all centres. A series of seminars was addressed by professional teachers. Mrs Har-Chen agreed with Max Rosenbaum that given the success of Barmitzvah classes in several centres, it was necessary to devote similar efforts to the girls.

Contemporary initiatives for older students included Tefillin Clubs and breakfast with the respective congregational Rabbis after Sunday morning sessions at Kew and South Caulfield. South Caulfield, which had overtaken Kew as the largest centre, had a large post Barmitzvah class taught by Mr Goldenberg. At Kew particularly enthusiastic post Bar/Bat-Mitzvah classes developed under the direction of Rabbi Schreiber and were taught by David Stone and subsequently Yossi Aron. These may well have been the only UJEB classes which extended to advanced Talmudic study and even to an introduction to Kabbalistic and Mussar literature. The classes even attracted students completing high school at Jewish Day Schools; some students later proceeded to Yeshivah studies in Israel where a number settled permanently. Girls were taught in similarly advanced parallel classes by Hadassah Kimelman and Zippi Cylich.

Seven students at Toorak, led by Kurt Rathner, were stimulated to learn spoken Ivrit taught by visual aid methods introduced by Mrs Har-Chen, while discussion groups centred about Herman Wouk's 'This is my G-d'. All 25 correspondence pupils participated in an annual magazine 'Itoneinu'. They were drawn from New Guinea, North West Australia, Tasmania, NSW, Queensland, New Zealand and Victoria. For 1967 a new centre was established at Burwood High School to serve the children of members of the Burwood and District Jewish Centre (which conducted services at Mount Scopus College).

Messrs Sigmund Glass and Leon Lasky made a presentation to Mrs Carol Rosenberg on her retirement after decades of involvement in the cause of Jewish education, including RI and Hebrew Centre teaching and Correspondence Course administration. Communal worker Sam Wynn was honoured by UJEB on his 75th birthday. The appeal period involved a symposium on the role of religion in education in the 1970s, held at the home of Mr and Mrs Reuben Lehrer, and addressed by Dr A H Wood, Dr Frank Knopfelmacher and Mr Nahum Feiglin. *Jewish Herald* feature writer Robert Kahn provided extensive publicity assistance. UJEB students participated in the first Lag

B'Orner Parade arranged by the Yeshivah Centre. In the context of the Six Day War, children at Toorak donated \$165 of their pocket money to the Emergency Appeal for Israel.

In 1969 Mr A Berkovic reported that whilst the results at Kew were outstanding, and many students participated in synagogue services, numbers were declining due to day school enrolment. Up to 20 students attended the Sunday morning Bar-mitzvah breakfast club with Rabbi Schreiber and principal Yossi Aron, where the meal was prepared and served by female students, led by Lorraine Wells. In fact it was not only the advent of day schools as even the decline in the birth rate affected the number of post baby boom school age children. Geographical change in the community was also having an effect, and at the North Eastern Centre enrolments had risen to fifty-one. On the other hand at long established Toorak numbers had fallen to 29. A further indication of demographic changes and the impact of the Day School movement was the termination of examination Hebrew classes at Elwood High. In all centres the introduction of audio-visual Hebrew teaching was proving successful. UJEB published a precis of Jewish History written by Rabbi Rudzki.

Guest speakers at the 1969 Appeal included Andrew Peacock, MHR and Rabbi Dr H Freedman. Phil Symons succeeded Sam Mordech as President. In subsequent years his educational involvement would rise to presidency of Mount Scopus College and he would be awarded the Jerusalem Prize for services to Jewish education in the Diaspora. 1970 saw Mr I (Pixie) Ernest, headmaster of Moriah Division of Scopus College, succeed Mrs Har-Chen as Mefakeach. In the face of declining student numbers, Mrs Solvey initiated advice to parents of RI children as to the potential for their attendance at centres. However, unfortunately, a number of High Schools were also cutting back on RI; this added to the reduction in numbers caused by birth rate decline and day school impact.

At the commencement of 1971 the Elwood Centre, with 20 pupils came under the jurisdiction of UJEB. It had operated independently for more than three decades. After 20 years of UJEB involvement, Reuben Lehrer was appointed Appeal Chairman. In June the Board received the final report of Mr Ernest prior to his departure for Israel. Given that it serves as a benchmark it is reproduced here:

PUPILS: Sunday morning attendances at all Centres had stabilised ... , three (Kew, North Eastern, South Caulfield) each with a population of over 50, South Caulfield being the largest with 85 pupils, and the other four (Elwood, Toorak, Brighton and Moorabbin) with between 20 – 30 pupils each. Mid-week attendances had definitely increased during first term, especially at North Eastern, Kew and Elwood, but had dropped off again with the onset of the winter in Term 2. The overall population at the end of Term 1 was just over 300. Term 2 saw new enrolments in many Centres.

TEACHERS: Of the 39 teachers we employ for the Centres, about half have teaching qualifications or are undergoing training (at secular institutions). The availability of teachers from Scopus, as well as ex-Yeshivah graduates, most of whom have spent a year in Israel, has helped to raise the teaching standard generally. Ohel Chana has shown itself to be a source for future teachers. Regular attendance and punctuality of teachers has improved in most Centres.

SYLLABUS AND TEACHING PRACTICE: Notwithstanding each Centre's individual 'tone', expressed by emphasis on one or another aspect of the syllabus, continuous advice and supervision of the Director has offset these differences, and a more balanced programme is now being carried out in all Centres:

1. Hebrew language texts have been graded and unified; audio-visual teaching has been extended successfully to the maximum number of pupils with present equipment and tapes available.
2. Jewish History is being taught enthusiastically. Whereas the concise text of Rabbi Rudzki has served to give an overall survey of the History of our people, the added texts and workbooks at all levels have served to make the subject more palatable to the pupils and more teachable for the teachers.
3. Judaism: Teaching of prayer and Siddur has been given a tangible form with the introduction of the Siddur Meforash and its workbook. Holy day material is being taught according to the teaching aids acquired last year, and the material in the new textbooks
4. Bible, Gemorah and Shu/chan Aruch are being taught as 'extras', i.e. to post-Bar-mitzvah classes and those who come regularly to mid-week classes. Important changes in teaching practice included the system whereby teachers taught one subject to several grades, rather than one teacher teaching all subjects to one grade. Tests at the end of the year were held in all Centres. Term 2 saw the introduction of itemised work programmes to be written up weekly (in advance) by the class teachers, which if done regularly and conscientiously should be a true reflection of the work being done at each level.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK:

1. That an annual budget be decided upon for further improvement of centres, including physical upgrading and provision of teaching resources.
2. That RI classes be seen as a reservoir of additional pupils for the Centres.
3. That the work done in RI classes be of the nature to give pupils an appetite to search for additional Jewish knowledge and identity.
4. That an effort be made to set up an educational framework (term holiday seminars) for post-Bar-mitzvah students.
5. That a programme of teacher-training be instituted: at least one Sunday per term and a 4 – 5 day annual Seminar; work in UJEB Centres being conditional upon attendance at such a seminar.

In his place Mr Manfred Klarberg was appointed as a full-time Director of Education. An experienced teacher with an academic background, Mr Klarberg was to continue the work of Mr Ernest, but in addition would attend to RI classes, their staffing, writing syllabus, attending to teacher training and endeavouring to conduct post Barmitzvah classes etc.

To finance the appointment, fees, subscriptions and synagogue seat levies were increased. However, the Board found this too much of a strain, and despite the 'remarkably good job' done by Mr Klarberg, the Board could not afford a full time appointment. Treasurer Tom Lowenstein pointed out that a deficit of \$15,000 was incurred over a profit in the previous year of \$2,000. Aside from the cost of the Director, major contributors to this discrepancy were increasing teachers' salaries and the employment of better qualified teachers. The Board was also feeling the impact of a drop in general and appeal donations and a decline in receipts from school fees caused by smaller attendances. Though carried by investment income, the situation could not continue. Students at Moorabbin and East Brighton travelled to Ballarat for a prize giving combined with an experience in Australian Jewish History. They were addressed by Jessica Simons, Secretary of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation.



Mr Peregat East Brighton seder, 1965



Prize giving with Mr J Tugendhaft president Kew Shule, 1965



Mrs F Winton presenting prizes at Caulfield South, 1966



Mrs Prawer presenting prize, Moorabbin 1964



Mr Feiglin headmaster East Brighton presenting prize, 1964



Prize Giving Moorabbin, 1964



Prizing Giving in 1965 at Caulfield South



Prize Giving in 1964 at Caulfield South



Alan Lachman & Harold Lubansky with Mrs Lipshut & Rabbi J Schreiber presenting books in honour of Bar Mitzvah 1966



Library bus students and Mrs P Lipshut, 1964



Appeal President Mr Kipen by UJEB President Mr P Freadman, 1963



Mrs M Kozminsky retiring headmistress of Caulfield South, 1964



Morris Cohen, Sir Zelman Cowen, Yanki Crafti, 1962



Dr Colin Tatz Guest speaker at DRM at Mordech home, 1965



Meeting of executives, 1965



Shule



Model seder



Kew Hebrew school Purim, 1973

1970's - GROWTH OF DAY SCHOOLS

Kurt Rathner Assumes the Role of Education Coordinator

A new era commenced in 1973 with the appointment of Kurt Rathner on a part-time basis to replace Mr Klarberg. He was to occupy the position of Co-ordinator for 20 years. A successful appeal on the theme of 'Family Planning' (an alternative mode) reduced the deficit; it was assisted by congregational seat levies and reductions of staff at South Caulfield, North Eastern and Moorabbin to improve teacher/pupil ratios.

A joint 25th Independence Day Function at the North Eastern Centre was attended by 250 children and 150 adults. Plans were made for a magazine, meetings with parents and a camp. In 1973 there were 613 RI pupils in State Schools and 265 pupils in High Schools – a total of 878 – a one third decline on the previous year. At MacRobertson High, informal voluntary meetings with guest speakers provided a partial substitute for the now terminated RI classes.

The advent of the emergency appeal for Israel following the Yom Kippur War adversely affected collection of UJEB Appeal Pledges. Kurt Rathner reported that out of 247 Hebrew Centre children, half attended at least one mid-week class. He emphasised the potential for practical as well as theoretical teaching including TuBishvat tree planting, making of Tzitzit, Challah and Seder covers, and giving Tzedakah (blue boxes). At Kew practical initiatives already in place enabled older boys to visit the Yeshivah Gedolah library, girls to visit a Mikvah and all students to participate in Matzah Baking at the Yeshivah. Additionally, Esther Ainsworth had introduced kosher cooking classes for the girls. Mr Rathner introduced meetings with Headmasters to discuss current issues, and moved towards introduction of a uniform syllabus to replace the situation where each centre ran practically autonomously.

Pearl Lipshut and Ella Barr were in contact with 22 pupils through the correspondence course including one in Singapore. The mobile library had nearly 2000 books. A camp at Mount Macedon was very successful and it was agreed that such camps should become an annual event. Kew Headmaster Yossi Aron who was also a lecturer at Swinburne

Institute was nominated to fill a position at Prahran College of Advanced Education to develop its Jewish Studies Course and achieve its acceptance for the Diploma of Arts conferred by the Victorian Institute of Colleges.

Judy Reichwald succeeded Victor New as head of the North Eastern Hebrew School. Sylvia Tinner commenced employment as secretary. During 1974 the Counterpoint team of American rabbinical students and youth leaders was invited to visit centres and attend a luncheon at which mutual problems were discussed. They were very impressed by the mobile library concept which they had never seen and intended to emulate in the USA. A practical result of Counterpoint was agreement to take post Barmitzvah groups out of the classroom atmosphere into organised discussion groups. Many centres suffered from the fact that not all students commenced at the appropriate starting age and North Eastern Centre became the first to introduce a remedial class for late enrolled students. The Burwood centre reopened on Mt.Scopus College premises. At the 1974 AGM Miss Hettie Feuerman was awarded a life membership in appreciation of her lifetime of work for the Board.

In 1975 a telethon raised \$30,000 for the Appeal. Caulfield Hebrew Congregation agreed to impose a seat levy. The annual fundraising celebration was introduced, with the first prize being a trip for two to Israel.

A State Government Inquiry into the overall system of Right of Entry Religious Instruction in Victoria resulted in publication of the Russel Report. Concerns were raised that if accepted it would have meant the end of the 'right of entry' system of denominational Religious Instruction, and its replacement with a general social studies type class teaching 'about religion'. A special committee under the Chairmanship of Arnold Bloch was formed to present a Jewish communal response and included Rabbi R. Lubofsky as Rabbinical spokesman to meet with the Catholic hierarchy and the Minister of Education.



Rabbi Raymond Apple at appeal meeting, 1973



Rabbi Raymond Apple at Appeal meeting, 1973

The South East Asian Bureau

The ECAJ sought assistance for South East Asian countries on behalf of the South East Asian Board of the World Jewish Congress and early in 1976 Mr Rathner paid a visit to Singapore, Bombay, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Manila on the way to Israel. The intention was to assess needs and to ascertain existing facilities in e.g. syllabus planning and resources. In October, following a meeting with Arnold Bloch, the UJEB accepted responsibility to act as a pedagogical centre for South East Asia with funding provided by the ECAJ which administered the South East Asian Bureau of World Jewish Congress. Manny Kingsley's post Barmitzvah class (later to be known as the Barmitzvah Club) had grown to 23 pupils; this was to be a feature of UJEB activities for some 15 years, and take a number of pupils to senior high school level, even arranging for post-school travel to Israel. However the centre at Toorak closed when only three students were left. Its demise marked the end of over eighty years of operation of a UJEB centre on the premises of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation which dated back to the Bourke St era. It was however appropriate that the break was not to be final and UJEB would return to working with the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in its Centenary year.

The difficulties facing RI highlighted in a report prepared by Raphael Aron, led to the extension of Kurt Rathner's position to include appointment as RI Coordinator. From 1977 RI books printed in NSW were to be reprinted and adapted to Victorian needs. The Correspondence Course was administered by Anita Flieg, who spent nearly three decades with the Board and would also rewrite the RI books specifically for Victorian schools.

Manny Kingsley prepared a syllabus for South East Asian use. After visiting centres at Hong Kong (100 pupils), Taiwan (20), Singapore (40) and Bangkok (30), Kurt Rathner reported substantial improvements in learning. Six of the post Barmitzvah club students left for Mount Scopus in 1977. However the Hebrew School at the Kew Centre was disintegrating, owing to the ageing profile of Jewish residents in Kew where potential younger members in adjoining municipalities were migrating to the North Eastern Centre. Establishment of a VJBD Standing Committee on Education was welcomed by the UJEB. With the assistance of Gila Rubinstein North Eastern introduced a Gesher program for children joining UJEB classes straight out of Kindergarten.

December 1977 saw the first UJEB Batmitzvah ceremony in Burwood. Dr Ruskin was appointed Honorary Life Vice President. As the mobile library was reaching the end of its useful life, facilities during 1977 were provided by Eva Rathner visiting centres with books in her family station wagon. A review of the books and the situation generally by Shirley Sles led to cessation of the mobile service, disposal of the older book stock, and its replacement by the Joseph and Millie Goldenberg Libraries of modern books progressively established in each centre, and visited fortnightly by Claire Hain in her capacity as librarian.

Isi Plack succeeded Reuben Lehrer as President. It would be only a year later that UJEB mourned the untimely death of past president Reuben Lehrer whose Board involvement spanned some twenty years and had commenced with his service as representative of the Kew Hebrew School. His wife, Leah, and son, Barry, would continue the family tradition of Board involvement and the Reuben Lehrer Memorial Scholarship was established to assist post Bar/Bat-mitzvah students with travel to Israel.

Israel's 30th Birthday Party for children of all centres was held at North Eastern. The closure of Kew Centre finally took place in September 1978. Together with the few remaining pupils, Yossi Aron transferred to head the North Eastern Centre. Reflecting communal demographic trends, that centre was proving a major growth point at the time when other UJEB activities were declining.

February 1979 saw the introduction of new pay scales and a system of contracts for teachers. Classes for Russian immigrants commenced at Elwood High, conducted in Russian by Mr Joe Solvey. Anita Fleig compiled a book of prose and sayings by the correspondence students, the first of what would become an annual feature.

Unfortunately at senior levels only Caulfield and Melbourne High Schools still provided RI facilities, and total RI was now down to 403 students in 36 schools. After his annual visit to South East Asian centres, Kurt Rathner reported on the need for assistance in regard to matters other than education, including assistance in provision of kosher meat, and a Mohel when necessary.



North Eastern Hebrew School, 1979



Prize giving with Motel Roth, Elwood, 1973



Sharon Nathani Dux of Elwood Hebrew School, 1973



Model Seder, 1972



Model Seder, 1972



Bat Mitzvah Group, 1972



North Eastern Prize Giving with Rabbi Sultanik



Toorak Hebrew School, 1978



Counterpoint meeting, 1975



Sam Lipski at appeal meeting, 1973



Drawing Room Meeting with Rabbi Shreiber, 1964

1980's - NORTH EASTERN EXPANSION

For 1980 a small Sephardi Hebrew centre was opened in conjunction with the Darling Road Sephardi Congregation. Unfortunately insufficient enrolments led to cessation of operation.

In 1981 students participated in a JNF fundraising effort for a grove in the Sir Zelman Cowen Forest in Israel. The terms of the Reuben Lehrer Scholarship were extended to allow for assistance to teachers, and Sally Berkovic, herself a former UJEB pupil, was the first to receive the Grant. On her return she recommended establishment of a UJEB resource centre. A number of high schools agreed to a UJEB proposal for a one time speaker to address Jewish children prior to the High Holydays. Grants received from the Ethnic Schools Commission, prevented the need to raise school fees in 1982.

At the AGM, President Isi Plack regretted the closure of the Brighton Centre following a decline in enrolments, but noted with satisfaction the ease with which UJEB students were able to transfer to day schools. During 1981/2 concern developed regarding the large number of Doncaster Park students not attending any Sunday School – UJEB, Temple or Yiddish. In 1983, 52 parents petitioned Doncaster Park for the introduction of Hebrew, within the framework of Education Department studies. This was not expected to impinge on RI, but would lead to a reduction in further Hebrew Centre attendance as parents considered that sufficient Jewish/Hebrew education was provided at school. There were also other reasons for declines in attendances. As a sign of changing social values, Dr Ruskin identified the problems of attendance and other consequences resulting from increasing number of 'broken homes'.

There was a weekend camp in 1982 at the Basin. Syllabus modification early in 1983 was based on the NSW model, emphasising inter-centre uniformity, prescribed level of achievement and a focus on Siddur reading. The Jerusalem program was adopted by UJEB and a centre re-opened at Brighton. Staff assisting Mrs Solvey at administrative level during this period included Sylvia Tinner, Susie Yardney and Miriam Sheps.

The Passing of Dr Ruskin: The End of an Era

The 1984 passing of Dr Hans Ruskin was a tragedy not only for the UJEB but for all in Melbourne committed to Jewish education. March saw agreement to introduce the annual essay competition to perpetuate his name. Burwood Headmaster Yirmi Loebenstein prepared the new student Haggadah for use in centres. Denise Monheit took over operation of the library and Anita Wail joined the secretarial staff.

Following the 1985 resignation of Rabbi Rudzki from heading the South Caulfield Hebrew Centre, Yossi Aron, who was also the Chazan and Assistant Minister at South Caulfield, moved from North Eastern to take over as Headmaster. UJEB marked Rabbi Rudzki's retirement from teaching with participation as patron in the foundation celebrating his 25 years with South Caulfield. An adult Hebrew class was arranged at South Caulfield in response to expressed parent interest. Moty Ickowicz returned to Brighton where as headmaster he would develop the centre to a level constrained only by the limitations of its physical capacity. In Term II of 1986 UJEB commenced classes at St Kilda – a historic move in the context of over a century of Hebrew school activity at St Kilda which jealously guarded its independence. Unfortunately despite attempts to canvass local students, numbers remained low. About ten South Australian children attended the annual UJEB camp.

In a reciprocal move, Harry Gluck arranged for nine UJEB students to join a 1987 Massada College holiday camp in Adelaide. They were accompanied on the coach trip by UJEB President Isi Plack. A proposed rent increase for the Queen Street office led to a search for alternative office accommodation.

In 1988 all children participated in communal Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations at Luna Park. Sandy Baigel and Edith Chasen revised the RI curriculum. As a publicity initiative Leanne Faraday Brash arranged for UJEB pupils to appear on the 3EA Hebrew program with Uri Palti. This was the first of many novel interviews conducted both with 3EA and with 3ZZZ's Dulcie Kanatopsky.



Annual General Meeting, 1986



Mrs Lustig 30 yrs certificate, 1983

UJEB on the Move

The administrative office relocated to St Kilda Road. Rabbis J Gutnick and P Heilbrunn as well as staff and students attended the Mezuzah fixing ceremony. In the event of Lily Solvey's illness which was soon to lead to her retirement after 33 years service, Past President Michael Hertan was appointed Executive Director. In this capacity, he would modernise office administration and improve the financial profile of the UJEB. Michael was to argue strongly for the need for the community to cease taking UJEB for granted when it served the largest number of primary school pupils of any Jewish educational institution after Scopus.



UJEB Mezuzah Ceremony St Kilda Rd, 1988

The Ballarat camp organised by Barry Lehrer had an 'Israeli flavour', and included a visit by the 43 campers to the historic Ballarat Shule. With the assistance of the Theo and Tilly Woolf bequest, video technology was introduced at each centre. This was just another example of the way UJEB education was keeping abreast with advances in the broader educational scene.



St Kilda Hebrew Centre, 1989



Mezuzah Ceremony at St Kilda Rd office, 1988

The Wesley Debate

There were moves to establish a Jewish Teenagers Club at Wesley College to service the large number of Jewish children in attendance there. However communal opposition subsequently led to transfer of the proposed class to Beth Weizmann. This rather contentious project was the subject of a positive halachic ruling from the Rabbinical Council of Victoria led by Rabbi Chaim Gutnick as to UJEB responsibility for children already in church schools, but was feared by others, as providing an additional incentive to parents who already were availing themselves of alternatives to Jewish Day Schools. Rabbi Lubofsky felt that classes should go ahead as teaching would be the lesser of two evils, compared to assimilation and intermarriage. Sam Lipski and the Australian Jewish News spoke out strongly in support of the UJEB view. The impact of this controversy was to be echoed at the 1990 JCCV education debates regarding communal needs, and subsequently led to the development of the Education Task Force, chaired by Danielle Charak.

The Executive made a concerted effort to raise the Board's profile, promote communal awareness of its activity, revamp appeal literature and place the UJEB fairly and squarely on the communal agenda. At the initiative of Leanne Faraday-Brash 1989 saw commencement of production of the *UJEB Post* as a chatty, informative newsletter for parents and subscribers. Increased enrolment of Eastmoor children at South Caulfield and Brighton Centres led to a need to review curriculum so as to avoid overlap given that half the Religious Instruction students at Eastmoor also attended a Hebrew Centre. However, an additional problem was the withdrawal of children from RI (all religions) in many schools, and a fear that Eastmoor might review its RI involvement generally. These matters were a priority for newly appointed RI Co-ordinator Yechiel Reichberger who was succeeded as principal of the North Eastern Centre by Riva Cohen.



Eastmoor Primary religious education class, 1989

July 1989 saw UJEB incorporation formalised. In 1990 Ivrit and Judaism after-school sessions were introduced at McKinnon High, offering optional additional studies for those interested among the 400 Jewish children enrolled at the school. UJEB participated for the first time in the combined day school Yom Ha'atzmaut Choir, with training provided by Lara Nissman. In August the Executive heard a report from Manny Kingsley as to the success of the UJEB post Barmitzvah Club, including involvement of its graduates in Jewish life in Australia and Israel. One club member spent a term at a High School in Israel. A smaller scale club was also being run by David Walles with students who had passed Bar/Bat-mitzvah at South Caulfield. That centre also introduced a special class for ex-day school children whose needs differed from UJEB classes generally.

One of the highlights of Arnold Dexter's presidency was the special 95th Anniversary Function held at International Receptions in Brighton. Addressed by Sir Zelman Cowen and Sam Lipski, it was attended by people drawn from across the spectrum of the community and awards were presented to long-term staff and supporters. Patrons in chief were Victor and Lottie Smorgon. Chief sponsor was Mr David Jurgrau. The UJEB choir performance was a highlight of the function which raised \$25,000 and temporarily allayed the Board's financial difficulties.



UJEB camp, 1982



Hans Rosi Ruskin competition winners, 1988



Model Seder North Eastern, 1989



Annual General Meeting, 1983



Caulfield South Purim, 1989



Caulfield South Purim, 1989



Model Seder Brighton, 1987



Model seder North Eastern, 1988



UJEB Camp May, 1989



Bat Mitzvah ceremony Burwood, 1983



B Lelvier, Afterschool, 1982



Reading certificates, 1983



Eastmoor Primary RE class, 1989



Brighton Centre, 1989



Burwood, 1983



Burwood certificates, 1983



Model Seder North Eastern, 1989

1990's - JSN - UJEB FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

UJEB Returns to Secondary Colleges

Whilst the numbers of students attending UJEB Religious Instruction classes in the State primary schools were on the increase, the major gap in the provision of religious education to Jewish school age children in Victoria was a product of the absence of provision for RI in State high schools. Accordingly, further to the report of the Education Task Force, UJEB embarked on the Jewish Student Network project utilising tertiary students as fieldworkers to develop and implement an informal educational and social program for high school students outside the Jewish day school framework. In the context of the general financial situation, Michael Herten developed a bursary program to cover school fees where remissions were granted. Initial funds were provided by Rabbi J Gutnick, and by the end of the year a large number of bursaries were established, including those provided by individuals, congregations, and the Lehrer and Dangelow Scholarship Trusts. Indication of impact of the recession was the increased demand for RI classes in 'the more affluent suburbs' including Toorak, Ivanhoe, Malvern, Armadale and Glen Waverley. Mrs Chaya Hanovitch, a former employee of the London Jewish Education Board and now involved at Beth Rivkah as a Curriculum Development officer, was appointed to assist in Curriculum Development. Riva Cohen arranged a Shabbaton for North Eastern students in the Caulfield area. This was to become a regular annual feature, also involving Anne Shnider and South Caulfield Batmitzvah students. A class commenced in Ballarat with 12 children drawn from the city and surrounding district. Over 700 entries were received for the Ruskin Essay Competition; these came from the Day schools as well as Hebrew Centres and RI classes.

Arnold Dexter was succeeded by Jeffery Greenberg as President. Jeff Greenberg would transform the existing executive structure, establishing several small subcommittees which would meet monthly. They would serve to strengthen executive meetings and ensure that more time was allocated to important issues of education and curriculum. Inasmuch as he was a member of the South Caulfield Congregation, his appointment completed a trio of Presidencies drawn from three Congregations where UJEB conducted Hebrew Centres (Michael Herten had been involved in North Eastern and Arnold Dexter was on the Brighton Shule Board).

The Passing of "Mrs UJEB"

1992 commenced on a sad note with the death of Lily Solvey. After a lifetime of communal service with a deeply felt commitment to Education and Zionism, she was mourned by all who had known her. Her communal involvement had ranged from UJEB – 'which was her life' – to Bialik College, Friends of Bar Ilan University and a multitude of other Zionist causes.

With the large number of children attending McKinnon High School, 1992 saw the expansion of after-school Hebrew and Jewish Studies classes as well as activities by Fieldworkers of the Jewish Student Network. The term 'Religious Instruction' was updated to 'Religious Education'. Numbers of children attending at the various schools varied from three at Hawthorn West to 121 at Doncaster Park and 164 at Eastmoor. Sandra Katz conducted the Correspondence Course. Discussions were initiated with all congregations regarding a UJEB seat levy. Regular adult education morning coffee sessions had already been introduced by Riva Cohen at North Eastern.



Doncaster Park Primary School Bluthenthal, 1990

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| Section 1 Inside News/Views Israel-Diaspora — the new priorities  | Section 2 Life/Style Changing the image of women  | Section 3 Property/Business Investing in retail property  |
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THE AUSTRALIAN

Jewish News

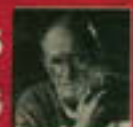
VOL. 60. No. 21 — FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1994 — SHEVAT 30, 5754 \$2.50. MELBOURNE EDITION



Learning with the UJEB

**Do our young
need a centre?**

**Frank Hardy's
father and the Jews**



Independence Day/Yom Yerushalayim functions were arranged for all centres in conjunction with the Zionist Youth Groups, and RE students were invited to attend as part of a pilot scheme to open schools to community groups. Tisha b'Av saw a very successful visit to the Holocaust Museum. South Caulfield and Elwood Congregations conducted UJEB appeals on first day Rosh Hashanah. Other congregations agreed to a voluntary seat levy and at least a distribution of flyers.



Shabbat, 1991

Michael Herten retired as Executive Director at the end of 1992 and was succeeded by Barbara Cohen who brought to the position a new level of professionalism laced with good humour. Although UJEB had always occupied premises away from the Jewish Communal Centre, the move of Beth Weizmann to Hawthorn Road saw UJEB follow suit, joining most other communal organisation at the new Beth Weizmann. This was part of a now established strategy to place UJEB within the organisational mainstream of the Jewish community.

Following the 1994 retirement of Yechiel Reichberger from his RI coordination role, his position in conjunction with that formerly held by Kurt Rathner was re-advertised. The successful applicant was Debbie Searle, whose vibrant new approach to the organisation was also symbolical of a maintenance of past traditions. Her late father Phil Goldenberg was a long standing staff member, and her late grandfather Joseph Goldenberg was a former UJEB President, in whose name new libraries were established.

In the context of the Recession and apparent changes in communal attitudes, 1993/4 saw increases in the number of Jewish children outside the day schools to a total of approximately 3000. Nearly 1000 were now in the State primary schools where RI was to be their major point of contact with the Jewish community. Analysis of the geographical spread shows that the focus was on the South Eastern suburbs (Caulfield/Brighton/Moorabbin) and the North Eastern area (Doncaster/Templestowe/ Balwyn/ Waverley), but interestingly 1994 saw reintroduction of

a class at Lee St Carlton, whilst requests indicating the presence of Jewish children came from as far away as Wandin. There was no formal RI in any High School, but the Jewish Student Network was reaching approximately 200 children in Balwyn, Elwood, Greymore, McKinnon and Melbourne High Schools as well as Wesley College. The three Hebrew Centres had an enrolment of over 200 children, but expansion led to logistical problems relating to the physical constraints of synagogue premises whose class room facilities were already being shared with the day schools which conducted feeder schools on their respective premises. Whilst Brighton and South Caulfield were largely catering for children living in the suburbs in their immediate vicinity, the location of those centres relative to the Princes and Nepean Highways serving the Southern and Eastern sectors of Melbourne, meant that at times individual pupils came from as far away as Gembrook and Cranbourne as well as Frankston, Chelsea and Cheltenham. Similarly the North Eastern Centre attracted children from Templestowe to Glen Waverley, though the recent growth of the Waverley community meant that alternative local facilities were now available to Waverley residents. For the benefit of children located in the Toorak/Malvern area, February 1995 saw the UJEB once again involved with reopening a Hebrew Centre on the premises of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, in conjunction with a new energetic Rabbi and Board of Management of that Congregation.

The successful Super Sunday appeal concept introduced in 1994 was repeated in 1995 – and would become a permanent feature of UJEB fundraising. More than \$62,000 had been raised by some 100 volunteers who had assisted with phoning, ranging from long involved past president and Executive Director Michael Herten and his wife Anna, to high school students from various Jewish day schools and youth movements. At McKinnon Secondary College basic Hebrew and Jewish Studies classes were announced as available after school on Tuesdays for years 7 to 12, taught by Linda Yardeny. They were advertised in the Jewish News as “not only informative and interesting but also FUN”.

For the Jewish Student Network led by coordinator Belinda Marcuse, extra fieldworkers were employed to increase contact with the nearly 2000 Jewish students believed to be in the secondary system. A specially tailored program was designed for students of Russian background at Elwood High. Numbers at McKinnon Secondary College were substantially increasing; for some years McKinnon would be viewed as the Government High School for Jewish students, hosting a VCE Hebrew language program run by the Victorian School of Languages open to students from other schools as well.

The Centenary Year

At the commencement of 1995, its Centenary Year, the UJEB adopted a two pronged approach to its commemoration. Firstly the commissioning and publication of a history was intended to ensure a recognition of past achievement at the same time as that achievement served as an anchor for initiatives in the future. Yossi Aron was commissioned to write that history of the first hundred years that comprises the major part of this book. (In 2015 Yossi Aron would return to update the history by recording developments from 1995 to 2015, thereby completing the document you are now reading.)

The book was launched by Shmuel Rosenkrantz at the AGM in March. Two weeks earlier, the Governor of Victoria Richard McGarvie launched the Centenary Year at a kosher catered reception at Government House, attended by some 100 UJEB friends and supporters. The Governor spoke of the history of UJEB from its foundation president Sir Isaac Isaacs until the current era. He stressed the need in society at large for education in ethics and organisations such as UJEB.



95 year celebration of UJEB



95 year celebration of UJEB

Regarding the future the Board was of the view that this very reflection on the past gave UJEB an opportunity to rethink and reassess its role and what must be done to ensure that its activities are relevant, realistic and for the future benefit of the community. Therefore, simultaneously with the commemoration and recording of our past, the UJEB prepared and published a Strategic Management Plan, outlining its directions, roles and values, and setting out objectives and plans for the coming years. This plan, written by Jeffery Greenberg and Leanne Faraday Brash, would be written up and summarised in the *Jewish News* as an insightful and honest document. It was to be used to explain to major donors the need for additional funds and additional projects that would benefit. The Plan talked of UJEB's vision, mission, values, roles and responsibilities in the community over the next several years. Introducing the plan at the AGM, Jeffery Greenberg emphasised that over the next three years UJEB would play a strategic role in promoting high quality part time Jewish education and identification, expanding the range and quantity of services offered to cater for students at different levels with diverse needs. He said that UJEB planned to become more flexible, professional, client driven, aware and achievement oriented.

On Sunday October 29, more than 250 people including Victorian Governor Richard Mc Garvie, newly arrived Israeli Ambassador Shmuel Moyal and former Australian Governor General and UJEB student Sir Zelman Cowen, celebrated the UJEB centenary with a gala dinner at Leonda. Attendees included Edna Berliner who recalled attending UJEB classes at the old Bourke St shul in the 1920s.

President Jeffery Greenberg emphasised communal responsibility for the 30% of primary students and 50% of secondary students outside the Jewish day school system. UJEB even taught 18 distance education students. ECAJ president Isi Leibler spoke of the crucial role of UJEB in educating those who otherwise received no Jewish education. Governor Mc Garvie spoke about the changing nature of today's society, and suggested that for the next century UJEB should continue its role of "teaching the Jewish community wisdom and ethics" and also take a role in teaching the secular community "the great truths of ethics of which it is a custodian and communicator".

Entertainment was provided by talented pianist and grade three UJEB pupil Rochelle Shtoltzenberg, the UJEB choir led by Lara Nisman and tenor Brett Kaye accompanied by pianist Nadav Rayman. Anne Shnider presented the history of UJEB in slides and comedian Mordi Katz (Robert Weil) gave a hilarious speech. Administrator Sylvia Tinner, educator Yossi Aron and educational consultant Kurt Rathner were presented with certificates for more than 88 years of combined service.

A Time for Change

1996 saw Leanne Faraday Brash succeed Jeffery Greenberg as president. In October Helen Zeimer who had previously taught RE, commenced a one year contract as RE coordinator – she would remain with the organisation in that role and then that of Manager Schools until 2009. In the Annual Report for 1996 prepared the following year, Leanne referred to Helen having brought to the role “an exuberance, professionalism and courage to challenge old conventions so as to instigate meaningful change.” As School principals were generally not proactive in seeking RE provision at their schools while parents also hesitated to demand it fearing there were costs involved, Helen also made it a priority to seek out schools where Jewish children were likely to be present but no RE was offered. Such was often the case where one school in an area had RE but a nearby school did not. One was also aware of the outwards movement of families from Caulfield through Bentleigh to Warrigal Rd and beyond, as well as towards Moorabbin and beyond along the Nepean Highway and South Road axes; over the ensuing twenty years these movements and their implications would need investigation followed up by action to ensure the “periphery” was also serviced by UJEB. Finally, there was also a need to gain the right to provide for classes with Jewish children within schools where RE was not offered to all levels. (Gardenvale, destined to become our biggest recipient of RE services, and also Coatesville fell into this category.) For possible extra-metropolitan families and those from outer areas, advertising of the distance education program was necessary.



1st female Pres L Faraday Brash Past President

There were now two instances of second generation involvement amongst the personnel of UJEB – Jason Greenberg was now JSN Coordinator and Gideon Rathner was Treasurer.

However more change was ahead.

Executive Director Barbara Cohen left UJEB in April 1997 to take up a position at St Kilda Hebrew Congregation. And after 23 years in her secretarial/administrative role, August would see Sylvia Tinner retire from a position taken up at 90 Queen St in 1974 as successor to Miriam Sheps, in the heyday of Lily Solvey's tenure as Organising Secretary. She

was replaced by Rose Chester who had previously been employed in administration at Sholem Aleichem College, and would serve as UJEB office administrator till 2009 – at times, in the absence of an Executive Director, being the only full time employee in the organisation. Rose had herself once been a UJEB student. A book Rose won as a prize in an essay competition is still a treasured possession.

Barbara Cohen was succeeded as executive director by UJEB vice president Eric Aufgang. Principal of Sholem Aleichem College from 1993 to 1996, he had been teaching for 35 years including 19 years as senior teacher and acting vice principal at McKinnon Secondary College. His association with UJEB had actually spanned many decades; some fifty years earlier he himself had attended UJEB classes in Kew.

Following extensive work by a subcommittee led by Jeffery Greenberg the UJEB Constitution had been updated with new Rules reflecting change such as JSN and Distance Education that had not been envisaged in earlier versions of the Constitution. At the AGM, the new version was adopted by acclaim.

There were 689 children in 63 RE classes around Melbourne. A government policy of closing and amalgamating State Primary schools meant that RE students at, for example Doncaster Park (where there were once so many Jewish children that Hebrew was taught as a second language) and Eastmoor moved elsewhere. RE accordingly expanded to other schools such as Birralee PS, Serpell PS, and Manningham Park. Tucker Rd PS absorbed many Eastmoor students.

After school classes supplant Sunday school

Unfortunately however, despite an upgrading of the Hebrew curriculum resultant from work by long standing Brighton staff member and trained educator Andrea Wikinski, Sunday attendances were declining though interest in Bar and Bat mitzvah classes remained high. On the basis of parental requests, following analysis of the problem by Yossi Aron, this issue of declining enrolments was now to be tackled by a what was seen a revolutionary new approach to the provision of part time Jewish education (although as indicated earlier, it had almost forgotten precedents decades earlier including an arrangement in the 1950s at Caulfield Junior College then called Caulfield North Central School).

Yossi advised the Board that in light of changing social realities the provision of part time education on Sunday mornings had ceased to be tenable. The nature of Sunday in Melbourne had changed – Sunday shopping and sport were now legal and had become the norm. Parents asked for change – and with their assistance via school councils and cooperative principals it was becoming feasible to run after school classes on school premises – subject to what fortunately was only a nominal payment asked for use of the school facilities. The first such after

school Hebrew Centre operating initially with 35 children two afternoons weekly (Tuesday and Thursday) was established in 1998 at Caulfield Junior College with the assistance of its innovative Principal Jennie Douglas who was keen to attract more students to her comparatively small school by provision of this facility as well as working with the Alliance Francaise to attract students to a French Immersion program. Gardenvale Primary School led by Andrew Jackson and where the majority of students were Jewish followed suit in 1999, with its classes on Monday and Wednesday similarly involving 35 children (and 50 by the commencement of term II when classes were also provided for Prep children). Hebrew Centre principal at CJC was Judy Kantor; at Gardenvale it was Lesley Sheezel whose earliest involvement with UJEB had been at Kew Hebrew Centre in 1968. Within months a request was also received from Valkstone Primary School parents for a similar centre to be provided there.

Leanne stood down from the presidency at the 1998 AGM and was succeeded by Yirmi Loebenstein. Jeffery Greenberg was appointed an Honorary Life President. Following the departure of Eric Aufgang, UJEB operated without an Executive Director.

New RE classes were established at Serpell (Templestowe), Sandringham and Tucker Rd. Yossi Aron combined the role of Principal of the South Caulfield Centre with that of Manager Education. He and Helen Zeimer spent substantial amounts of time visiting the schools for which they were respectively responsible to ensure seamless operation of programs, as appropriate to maintain good relationships with host government schools, to observe classes in action and generally to assist as required.

In the interest of the very important task of trying to maintain the connection between teenagers at government schools and the Jewish community, the Pratt Foundation was now totally underwriting the cost of JSN to the tune of \$50,000 per annum for three years. Eleven fieldworkers guided by coordinator Claire Benkemoun visited eight secondary schools. In school activities were complemented by out of school events such as visits to the Jewish Museum. Judith Montag (later Judith Perlstein) was camp coordinator; taking into account campers and staff almost 100 persons were involved. Numbers had been assisted by reducing camp fees to below cost.

There was little change during 1998. Numbers in after school classes increased; there was evidence of some movement from Jewish day schools owing to the fee burden. A number of parents of ex-day school children at Caulfield Junior College sought a higher level of Hebrew teaching to meet the needs of such children who had reached a higher standard of knowledge than those who had only been in the government school system. The President met with Peter Kolliner of the Progressive movement to ensure that UJEB, while constitutionally formally Orthodox, also met the needs of its members.

At the March 2000 AGM, past president Arnold Dexter, Chairman of the Education Sub Committee, reported that Esther Raitman took over the North Eastern Sunday centre in mid 1999 and had succeeded in “turning it around”. Unlike the situation elsewhere where parents could choose between Sunday or after school classes (and those provided by organisations other than UJEB, the Sunday morning Hebrew Centre located at the North Eastern Centre was now the sole part time educational option actually located in the Doncaster area. Accordingly UJEB had a significant task ahead in meeting local needs particularly in light of the (then apparently) pending closure of the Doncaster Jewish day school.



Religious Education, Carnegie Primary



Chanuka 90's Afterschool



Caulfield Junior College, 1997



UJEB camp (with Danny Pollack). Dedication to Danny, sadly missed. Died in 2008



Caulfield Junior College, 1996



Carnegie primary RE, 1991



Caulfield Junior College, 1992



Eastmoor Primary RE



Farewell for Yossi Aron and Helen Zeimer



Gardenvale Primary



Carnegie primary, 1990



Caulfield South Primary

2000's - AFTER SCHOOL SUPERSEDES SUNDAY SCHOOL

Batmitzvah and other initiatives

In 1999, a record 25 girls at Brighton and South Caulfield were prepared for Batmitzvah by Anne Shnider with a course including classes as well as excursions to places of Jewish interest. There were 800 participants in the Hans and Rosi Ruskin essay competition drawn from almost all Jewish day schools in Melbourne. Camp coordinator Judith Montag reported that over 100 children attended the 1999 UJEB camp. At the initiative of JNF Executive Director Joe Krycer, JNF Education Shaliach Shlomo Ben Haim assisted in regard to exciting practical hands on programs both in classes as well as at camp.

In 2000 JSN camp led by Lainie Snider had 53 attendees. There were now 70 attending Caulfield Junior College after school classes although there were still parents who preferred Sunday morning at South Caulfield shul. However the largest Sunday program was now at Brighton. A post Batmitzvah class was offered at the Toorak Centre and an adult education group at North Eastern. The RE program continued growing. About 1000 students participated in 68 RE classes in 36 schools taught by a network of 25 instructors.

In May 2000 over 150 children of Bar/Bat mitzvah age from communities worldwide participated in the Massuah Israel program of education and touring centred on Yom Yerushalayim. Four out of the seven Victorian participants were drawn from the 1999 UJEB Batmitzvah program. Responsibility for leading the whole Australian contingent was given to UJEB Batmitzvah teacher Anne Shnider.

JSN led by Kollen Sussman was now in twelve schools including Berendale Special School and Glen Eira College. Over a hundred students attended on a weekly basis. Kollen reported to the 2001 AGM that the final highlight of 2000 was going on line -- important as so many teenagers now spend so many hours on the web. The 2001 AGM also saw past president Arnold Dexter return to the presidency of UJEB while Harry Gluck now chaired the Education subcommittee.



Bat Mitzvah Ceremony



Bat Mitzvah at Brighton with Riva Cohen, 2006



Batmitzvah Brighton 26th November, 2006



Hebrew at Merkaz Bentleigh Afterschool



Rosh Hashana at Brighton, 2006

Consolidation and expansion

2001 was a year of change. After nearly five decades of Sunday classes at the premises of the South Caulfield Hebrew Congregation the centre was closed and remaining students transferred to Brighton where facilities were improved following completion of the refurbishment of the premises. Only Ron Reichwald's Wednesday afternoon Barmitzvah Academy (involving parashah tuition by Ron and sessions by Yossi Aron regarding festivals, shul services and other aspects of Judaism) and a Batmitzvah class, continued at South Caulfield on a regular basis. At Brighton an exciting program developed by Principal Riva Cohen included excursions to the Jewish museum and a Shabbaton in Caulfield.

Toorak now also offered midweek classes; its model seder featured the students acting out the Pesach story. Students also embarked on a roots project to find their family tree and geographic origins. An afternoon class briefly offered at Birralee PS in 2002 following closure of the Doncaster Jewish Day School was terminated at the end of third term and the students moved back to Sunday School at the North Eastern Centre. Model Sedarim had become a major feature of the Hebrew Centre year for after school centres as well as Sunday centres; some 200 students and family members attended the Model seder at Caulfield Junior College which in 2002 had to be transferred to Beth Weizmann as the school could not accommodate all participants.

With the assistance of a grant from the Besen Family Foundation, Judy Kantor carried out work developing a curriculum for the Hebrew Centres and Elana Turtledove reworked the Religious Education workbooks.

RE demand was not only increasing but also expanding to "outer" areas such as Templestowe that were difficult to service with teachers. Once again August saw the Managers Education and Schools prepare well over a thousand apple and honey bags to hand out to students of all UJEB programs prior to Rosh Hashanah.

The 2003 AGM at which educationalist Harry Gluck was elected President, was held at Arnold Dexter's home as Beth Weizmann was evacuated owing to a bomb threat. The new President was welcomed to the position as the first ever in the history of UJEB who had lengthy experience as a teacher and had served as principal of a Jewish school (in Adelaide).

AGM attendees heard that there were 80 students at Caulfield Junior College afterschool classes. Yossi Aron pointed out that a student enrolled in RE, UJEB after school classes and also the schools Hebrew immersion program at CJC could have 5.5 hours of Hebrew/Jewish studies weekly for just \$1000 per annum. Parents were well aware as to how this compared with the cost of Jewish Day School education and making choices accordingly. UJEB would not wish to encourage departure from day schools but our role was to maximise the value of what we provided. Helen Zeimer advised that RE classes had just begun in Sandringham PS and were about to start at Carlton North PS.

At the schools with substantial Jewish populations, 2003 saw a further substantial increase in RE demand because of a tendency to send the children to prep at these schools after graduation from Jewish Kindergartens. It was not easy to provide staffing at 40 geographically disparate venues as the part time nature of the work and low remuneration made it difficult to attract more staff – especially experienced quality personnel. The problem facing Manager Schools Helen Zeimer was compounded by the fact that classes in so many schools tended to operate simultaneously – on Monday afternoon.

Also during 2003 a preschool class for six children commenced operation at the North Eastern Centre on Sunday mornings. There was expansion at Gardenvale PS where the Centre coordinator was veteran UJEB teacher Lesley Sheezel. Midyear Gershon Rapke took over from Renee Komesaroff management of the JSN still so ably sponsored by the Pratt Foundation. On behalf of the Melbourne Jewish Friendly Society, Max Rose provided a further handsome contribution to the Resource Centre. Regular in service training sessions were provided for staff. The quality of UJEB annual camps had become so well known around the community that there was an attempt by some Jewish day school students to enrol and attend. However as a matter of policy it was decided not to accede to such requests.

Chairman of the Education subcommittee in 2004 was Dr David Wilson. Gail Berman assisted Rose Chester in administrative matters that extended as always to the Annual Appeal and the placement of cards in synagogues, mainly at High Holyday time. UJEB sponsored principals and staff to attend the Jewish Educators Forum convened at Bialik College, after which an In Service workshop on handling difficult students was arranged for staff. Melbourne Jewish Friendly Society Funds were used for new educational software.

A revamped Batmitzvah program at Brighton with evening classes to suit participants leading to ceremonies both there and at South Caulfield, was led by Deena Kaltmann. For Brighton there was a further group prepared by Alyssa Krycer together with Riva Cohen, with classes during Sunday mornings. With an increase also in the number of Barmitzvah Academy enrolments, Zeev Gelber assisted Ron Reichwald, while Yossi Aron provided students with informal but informative sessions regarding shul services, festivals and other basic elements of Judaism. With his guitar Zeev Gelber also provided Carlebach style music sessions for Hebrew Centres.

In light of the expansion of the Jewish community along the North Road corridor, a new after school centre was established in Carnegie with the assistance of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Bondar. Further outwards movement of Jewish families to even beyond Warrigal Road, resulted in provision of RE at South Oakleigh Primary School, bringing to 40 the total number of schools where RE was provided – one with over 300 participants, others with just a handful. Involvement in the latter schools was not to be deprecated despite the cost – in some ways RE at those schools served an even more significant purpose than instruction per se by clarifying to students and parents who else were the few Jewish students/families in the school/

district and facilitating networking that is literally crucial to Jewish continuity of otherwise isolated Jewish individuals.

At Caulfield Junior College there were 80 attending after school Jewish Studies. Despite a greater number of Jewish children at Gardenvale, only 50 attended the afterschool sessions. Competition from the increasingly popular Lamdeni was a factor but unfortunately there were many hundreds who had no Jewish education other than RE. Awareness of this reality placed an extra responsibility on RE teachers to maximise the effectiveness of their limited teaching time. But it also gave UJEB an opening to follow up those whose names were on RE rolls but not any other program, to try and gain their participation in other programs.

A new era with a new President

The Annual Report for 2005 was the first by Judith Montag (Perlstein) as president, with Tony Fell now chairman of the Education Subcommittee. Treasurer was now Tom Junger. A primary concern of the Board was raising the communal profile of UJEB with the emphasis on the importance of its work – particularly in regard to elements of the community that were otherwise somewhat neglected by communal bodies. It was necessary to action the recently prepared

Spreading Jewish education beyond dayschools

Judith Montag leads a double life as a lawyer and the head of the United Jewish Education Board. She spoke to **BENJAMIN FELDMAN** about her passion for Jewish education.

FOR lawyer Judith Montag, educating others is part of her nature. She likes to invite curious colleagues to the family Succah and brings yom tov foods, such as matzah, macaroons and apples and honey to work to share. So it comes as little surprise to those who know her that her other full-time job involves spreading her love of Judaism.

Earlier this year, Montag was elected president of the United Jewish Education Board (UJEB), an organisation that provides Jewish education services to Jewish students at state and non-Jewish private schools.

After joining the organisation as a teacher during her student years at Monash University, Montag, 27, has been elected president of the 110-year-old organisation.

Asked how she co-ordinates this role with 10-hour days in the planning and environment group of Maddocks Lawyers, Montag says: "I struggle. I'm learning to balance the two."

A graduate of Mount Scopus College, Montag finds that facets of work as a lawyer, such as delegation training, complement her UJEB role.

Having recently delivered a speech at the Jewish Community Council of Victoria's monthly plenum, Montag found that people were quite surprised at how much UJEB does in the community.

Its number-one priority is to deliver teaching on basic Jewish culture, traditions and festivals to Jewish students as part of the primary-school religious-education syllabus.

But for Montag, this only gives students a taste.

"From half-an-hour a week, how much can you teach someone?" she says.

"Our biggest aim is to get those kids into our other programs, or other people's programs."

Other initiatives include bar and bat mitzvah programs and post-bat mitzvah courses, after-school programs and camps, the Pratt Foundation Jewish Student Network for secondary students, and instruc-



Judith Montag – elected president of UJEB this year.

tion at Hebrew centres on Sundays or week nights.

UJEB believes there are around 1200 Jewish students who do not attend Jewish dayschools. Each week it teaches religious education to around 950 students, an increase of more than 10 per cent from its 2004 enrolment of approximately 850 students.

Montag points to an editorial in the AJN (4/2) which suggested that an increase in UJEB figures is commensurate with a decline in enrolments at Jewish dayschools.

While there may have been "history" between the two main

providers of Jewish education – namely UJEB and the dayschools – Montag wants them to work together.

"We would prefer for every Jewish child to get a Jewish education," she says.

"We acknowledge that the ideal way to do that is to attend a Jewish school. However, for various reasons, that's often not achievable."

Montag says that after returning from a year-long stint in Israel with Bnei Akiva, she has a passion to teach, which helped her to appreciate her own Jewish dayschool education.

She taught religious education at the North Eastern Jewish War Memorial Centre and as a Jewish Student Network fieldworker. In 2000 she was asked to join an all-male board where the majority of members "were a lot older".

"I felt very young for the job, I think I was 23 ... in fourth year [university]."

Progressing from general member to secretary and then vice-president, Montag was made acting president in December last year before being elected to the role last April.

For information about UJEB contact (03) 9272 5522.

Strategic Plan. The Treasurer noted that out of a database of 8000 names only 1500 made financial contributions to the Appeal. The database needed revision and attempts should be made to increase the number of actual donors.

A sign of the times was Tony Fell's work developing UJEB policies on child protection in accordance with Australian Council of Children and Youth Organisations (ACCYO) guidelines. Andi Green of Jewish Care provided a session on child protection for all staff; more recently of course all staff (and volunteers such as camp madrichim) are required to comply with government regulations requiring them to have Police checks and valid current Working With Children checks.

Dani Landes worked tirelessly to further develop the Pratt Foundation Jewish Student Network. 35 students attended camp while there were also a series of socially significant out of hours evening functions such as a video/pizza night.

Rabbi Yehuda Kohn of Merkaz HaTorah made the facilities of his Centre on Hawthorn Rd available to UJEB for the Caulfield Junior College model seder.

As part of its strategic planning priorities developed in 2005, August 2006 saw employment of Deena Spektor as Development Officer. Her primary tasks included raising the UJEB profile communally and upgrading appeal publicity and promotional material. There was increased interaction between UJEB and Shuls and also Maccabi.

Manager Schools Helen Zeimer reported to the AGM that workbook activities aside, "RE students had the opportunity to see smell and feel lulav and etrog, hear the shofar, enjoy apple and honey, share challah and grape juice for model Shabbatot and crunch on matza". In 2006 there were 927 students in 75 RE classes across 29 schools. Professional development was arranged for teachers.

At the request of parents, in 2006 an after school Hebrew Centre was established at East Bentleigh Primary School. It was coordinated by Naomi Morris who also coordinated the Caulfield South Centre operating at the premises of Central Shule Chabad near to Caulfield South Primary School. (In the absence of facilities for after school classes at Caulfield South, children attending the school were walked across to Central under supervision with their bags brought over by car, usually by the Manager Education himself.) However the Carnegie Centre ceased operation.

With increased enrolments, the five after school centres (E Bentleigh, Melbourne HC, Caulfield Junior College, Caulfield South and Gardenvale) had 182 students. As attendance at after school classes meant a long day at school, all students were provided with a drink and a snack prior to class commencement.

Sunday Hebrew Centres at Brighton and North Eastern had 33 students apart from Bat Mitzvah candidates. The Pratt Foundation JSN provided educational programs coordinated by Jess Braitberg at Melbourne High School, Brighton Secondary College, McKinnon Secondary College, Elwood Secondary College, and Wesley College (Elsternwick and Prahran campuses). A record 38 students attended JSN camp; however there were only 43 at UJEB camp which was substantially less than in previous years. Clearly, following termination of the policy of earlier years whereby camp was heavily subsidised to way below cost, the charge for camp had become a deterrent factor for many families.

Unfortunately the Toorak Centre at the premises of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation closed owing to a lack of students; however experienced educator and principal Judy Kantor continued to head the very popular centre at Caulfield Junior College.

In 2007, there were approximately 1000 students in the RE program across 33 schools. Numbers in individual schools ranged from 340 at Gardenvale to just a handful in other cases. Indicative of a communal spread outwards along the North Road corridor, the largest growth was at Caulfield South Primary School and East Bentleigh PS; at Caulfield South the number of enrolments increased by 55% from 58 in 2005 to 91 in 2007. Increasingly strict Departmental insistence on compliance with zoning rules played a part in increased enrolments in schools other than the much preferred Gardenvale and Caulfield Junior College. (On occasions the Managers Schools and Education were actually contacted from South Africa by intending immigrants seeking to rent or buy a house, who wanted to be certain that a property recommended to them was in the right school zone.) As the year commenced, with the support of the Gandel Charitable Trust all students received a showbag including gifts for the students such as food and an Aleph Bet ruler plus a Jewish festivals magnetic calendar, a Jewish Community Directory listing communal organisations and shops.

Regarding Hebrew Centres too, changes in the demography and geography of Melbourne's Jewish community impacted on the demand for UJEB's services and the locations where such services were to be provided. Accordingly to the chagrin of the principal of East Bentleigh Primary School who saw the Hebrew Centre as a drawcard, the Bentleigh Hebrew Centre transferred from that school to premises of Bentleigh Chabad to facilitate serving students just across the road at Coatesville Primary School as well. It was now managed by Orna Joffe while Naomi Morris commenced operation of a new centre at Malvern Primary School that was subsequently managed by Elke Goldberg. Owing to lack of numbers the Sunday centre at Brighton Hebrew Congregation was closed; after a break of a number of years its long standing dedicated principal Riva Cohen would rejoin UJEB in 2014 as Afterschool Coordinator.

Whilst determined to provide the best part time Jewish education possible, UJEB never took the view that it was the be all and end all of Jewish education in Victoria. Those attending UJEB facilities included some who philosophically favoured education through the public system rather than in what they saw as segregated Jewish facilities, but for many attendance at public rather than Jewish schools was not a matter of choice but rather a financial issue that they perhaps did not realise could be at least somewhat overcome. In March UJEB hosted a Jewish Secondary Schools expo and information night for Grade Five and Six students at government schools. The idea was to enable families to learn about Jewish secondary schools and meet and hear from school representatives with a particular emphasis on scholarship opportunities to facilitate a transfer from a government school to the Jewish school system.

JSN initiatives during the year included a formal dinner for students at Melbourne and MacRobertson High Schools held at the Blake St Congregation where 25 students debated and learnt with two rabbis till well into the night. The camp held at Underbank Stud at Bacchus Marsh was run around the Jewish life cycle culminating in a mock wedding replete with a wedding meal and of course a reception. A very successful post camp reunion and function for 30 participants was held in the Central Shul Succah and included a barbecue and a program run by the community shlichim.

There was discussion regarding the need to move the Appeal from the commencement of the school year as that timing meant that the two biggest sources of office work load coincided. It was also thought preferable if the Super Sunday did not take place one week after JNF Green Sunday as some who were phoned for donations confused the two, even saying to our phoning volunteers that they had already donated. However any change was dependent on the JCCV that allocated appeal periods to all organisations and it would take a few years before change was achieved.

With the assistance of funding from the Pratt Foundation the long awaited formal strategic planning process was initiated. With the use of Zing technology and facilitator Peter Ellyard the UJEB Board and staff members spent a considerable amount of time working together to explore different views of UJEB helping to develop an outline for UJEB's future direction. A number of parents with varying degrees of involvement in the organisation were also invited to attend a parent's forum to provide additional insight into how UJEB was perceived communally.

Highlights of 2008 were another "start of year" pack provided to over 1000 students thanks to the Gandel Trust and Jemark Imports, a Rosh Hashanah parents evening, a fantastic Succot function in the Central Shule succah where among other things our students made stained glass succah decorations for the succah, participation in Israel's sixtieth by producing artwork displayed at Shuk Hashishim, the receipt of two grants to cover the cost of UJEB camp – one from the Ethel Herman Charitable Trust and one from the Multicultural Commission and launch of the new website. However a shadow of gloom was cast over UJEB by the untimely passing of board member and for many years camp coordinator, Danny Polack, a close friend and colleague of President Judith Perlstein.

There were now 1010 students in RE in 85 classes at the following 32 primary schools (new schools for 2008 are asterisked):

Beaumaris, Bentleigh West, Birallee, Brighton, Camberwell, Camberwell South, Carnegie, Caulfield South, Coatesville, East Bentleigh, Elsternwick, Elwood, Gardenvale, Glen Allen Special School, Glenferrie, Katandra, Kew East, Kew, Lloyd St, Malvern, Mentone, McKinnon, Moorabbin, Mountview*, Ripponlea, Sandringham, Serpel, Southmoor*, South Oakleigh, Toorak, Tucker Rd, Valkstone. There were also specially modified programs for eleven students at Glen Allen Special School and Katandra School.*

In addition to facilitating the usual special festival activities, UJEB was delighted that students from Leibler Yavneh College plus Hesder boys and Sherut girls from Mizrahi assisted with Chanukah celebrations at Gardenvale. Caulfield Junior College model seder was held at the Spiritgrow premises just across the road from the school. For Sukkot, Chabad Youth led by Rabbi Moshe Kahn brought the Mobile Sukkah to various schools.

Four students undertook distance education by correspondence. After school principals were now Judy Kantor, Elke Goldberg, Lily Rozen and Lesley Sheezel; Esther Raitman continued as principal of the only remaining Sunday School, at the North Eastern Jewish Centre. The pupils at Caulfield Junior College Jewish Studies after school classes on Tuesdays included many who also attended the Hebrew Immersion program operated by the school three mornings weekly. A separate after school Hebrew program led by Lesley Sheezel and Orna Joffe on Thursdays provided basic language tuition for 25 students not enrolled in the Immersion classes.

Over 650 essays were submitted for the Hans and Rosie Ruskin Essay competition sponsored as always by Hester Greenfield and family in memory of Hester's parents, Hans and Rosi Ruskin. Always supported by Rosi, Hans had been particularly instrumental in Jewish Education generally and the work of the UJEB decades earlier. As always Hester flew from Sydney to speak at the presentation function which always filled the hall at Beth

Weizmann with students, staff and families drawn from almost every Melbourne Jewish day school and UJEB centre. However on this occasion Hester was almost moved to tears when Manager Education Yossi Aron made a surprise presentation to her of a volume of the original transcripts of the 1950's Radio Cheder program (broadcast for 15 minutes weekly on Melbourne commercial radio) that had been her father's initiative.

For JSN some 15 dynamic field workers from a range of youth movements and AUJS attended seven schools – now including Methodist Ladies College and Elwood College. There was a focus on getting students to attend functions outside school – including a Pesach scavenger hunt, an Israeli music drum café, a post camp reunion (23 had attended camp) at AMF bowl, a pre Rosh Hashanah Laserforce function and a series of Hebrew Café sessions. These were held at Benny's Burgers with games and music allowing students to increase their vocabulary on topics such as food, summer, music, Hebrew slang and Israeli movies.

The end of an era

2009 began on a high note with appointment of Sergio Herskovitz as Executive Director. There were now 1150 students in RE – an increase of 15%. It was foreshadowed at the AGM that Daniel Jenshel would shortly succeed Judith Perlstein as President. The AGM heard that during 2008 ten boys graduated from the Barmitzvah Academy and ten girls completed their Batmitzvah program taught by Deena Kaltmann. JSN activities led by Amanda Shilkin included camp (30 attendees), the Hebrew Café program, and a youth leadership (Hadracha) seminar for graduating year twelves interested in further pursuing communal leadership. Almost 1100 were now enrolled in RE – a 6% increase on 2008; there was an 11% increase in the number of attendees at Hebrew Centres that now totalled 220 students. An E-newsletter had been introduced to facilitate contact between the Board and parents. Two subcommittees were set up to streamline Board activities: Fundraising --- Daniel Jenshel, Debbie Klotzman and Michael Slonim. Education — Tony Fell, Shari Meddledorf and Adina Bankier- Karp.

However in actuality 2009 was destined to become the end of an era. Prior to the AGM Sergio Herskovitz resigned as the Executive Director position after just three months, to assume an appointment in South America. As a temporary arrangement, Deon Kamien, a Board member and former JSN coordinator, was appointed Interim Operations Manager tasked with upgrading the hardware and software of the office. And then over a period of just six months, UJEB saw the departure of the professional trio who had been the key to the office for some twelve years.

Already prior to the AGM, first to give notice of resignation was office manager Rose Chester who had succeeded Sylvia Tinner in that role, serving the organisation since 1997 with meticulous attention to administrative detail. Manager

Schools Helen Zeimer resigned mid year after some 14 years with UJEB including 12 in the managerial position. Under her watch RE enrolments had nearly doubled; while the curriculum had moved to involve an extensive series of cycle of the year based activities beyond theoretical instruction. Finally, in August, Yossi Aron announced his retirement from his position as Manager Education that he had held for twelve years. He had however actually been with UJEB for a record 42 years since starting with UJEB as an RE teacher (of High School students) in 1968 while a university student, commencing at Kew Hebrew School at Rabbi Shreiber's initiative the same year, and then progressing to Hebrew school principal at Kew, North Eastern and South Caulfield and finally to office based management. His wife Vera also served as RE teacher for many years having been first employed by Lily Solvey; decades earlier his parents had also taught Religious Instruction as it was then called.

In a meeting with the President and Vice President prior to his departure Yossi Aron spoke of the major problems facing the Hebrew Centre program that would need to be addressed if the program was to remain viable. The key issues were lack of resources and increasing competition from private (rather than communal) providers of part time education. After school classes at Gardenvale and CJC had the advantage that students were already on site and parents did not have to transport them to classes; from a parental perspective the situation was comparable to school based after care programs allowing them to collect their children later than 3.30. However the facilities available there using classrooms in which we were just visitors could not be compared to what was available at the increasingly popular Hamerkaz Shelanu – which was embarking on its (since completed) new building project that would provide after school classes in the most modern dedicated facilities involving the most up to date equipment and teaching aids. Similarly, Chabad Houses, particularly those in Malvern and Glen Eira provided alternatives to UJEB which like Hamerkaz were also based in community facilities providing a whole Jewish experience to families – not just classes in limited hours. To a comment by newly appointed president Daniel Jenshel that if private operators were better able to provide the service and given the UJEB funding shortage one might consider leaving it to them, it was agreed that such a move would be totally inappropriate. Just as the advent of day schools representing particular interests of sections of the community did not obviate the need for a community school such as Mt Scopus, the existence of Chabad, Progressive, and even private Hebrew/Jewish studies classes did not mean the community could abrogate its responsibility for part time Jewish education – and that was UJEB's role.

In October, a farewell for Yossi Aron and Helen Zeimer took the form of a morning tea at the premises of the Blake Street Congregation. The attendance by UJEB board members and staff, parents, members of Jewish communal organisations, as well heads of government schools where UJEB operated, was indicative of the

esteem in which they were held. Over their careers they had touched the lives of many thousands of students and families for some of whom they were the key connection to the Jewish community per se. Particularly moving was a poetic tribute by one parent, Annie Cogan who emphasised that UJEB did not only teach students but provided a Jewish connection assisting many families in so many ways. In response Yossi pointed out the extent to which UJEB served from time to time as the point of contact for parents regarding so many matters. Examples included expectant mothers seeking advice as to where to turn to arrange a brit, and, more tragically, what to do to gain a desperately needed gett. The office even supplied matzot to persons in need. Indeed UJEB was much more than an organisation providing part time education -- often also serving through the small classes in schools distant from the St Kilda/Caulfield/ Bentleigh axis, as the only vehicle bringing otherwise isolated Jewish families (often households with only single parents) in touch with other Jews and things Jewish.

Following the departure of the key staff, Deon Kamien's role was changed to that of General Manager. Bookkeeper Ilana Roitman and Administrator Lianne Franco served as new office staff working alongside development officer Deena Spektor. The President restated the aims of UJEB previously outlined, to develop a sustainable financial model for UJEB, streamline operational procedures and systems for efficiencies, develop a new RE curriculum and build UJEB corporate profile and awareness. Though remaining on the Board, Joel Queit resigned as Treasurer owing to work commitments and was succeeded in that role by Jonathan Caplan.

Some 600 essays were entered into the 2009 Ruskin Competition. The award presentation function held at the premises of the Blake Street Congregation with retiring Manager Education Yossi Aron as MC for this event (his last official function with the organisation) was unique in that the audience included three rabbis -- one Orthodox, one Masorti and one Reform, each related to a prize winner.

NAOMI LEVIN

THE Jewish Student Network (JSN) is out to prove that it isn't just students at Jewish schools who have all the fun. JSN held its first big function of the year -- a "drum cafe" -- earlier this month at Spiritgrew in Caulfield. It was attended by Jewish students who attend secular schools and who want to make friends in the Jewish community and learn about Judaism and Israel.

At the drum cafe, Baruch Moshel led the students in a tribal extravaganza that combined bongos and more conventional drums. This was followed by a feast of falafel and salads, hardly your standard canteen fare.

Jessica Brivik, JSN coordinator, says that while the drum cafe was well-attended, there are about 2000 Jewish students attending non-Jewish schools who they would like to involve as well.

She says that facilitators from Jewish youth movements and from the Australasian Union of Jewish Students visit schools with more than 10 Jewish students for an hour every week. While at the school, the facilitators provide insight into Jewish issues and an



James Herten (left) and Ben Cohen let rip on the drums.



From left: Brach Rychter, James Herten, Ben Cohen, Julian Kowal, Jacob Wytwormnik and Yaniv Kaufman tuck into some pita and falafel.

introduction to Israel, which gives students the chance to identify with their background.

"It is a weekly taster of what it means to be Jewish and a sense of belonging for these students," Brivik says. "JSN is a chance for students to get access to all the benefits of being Jewish."

As well as in-school sessions, JSN organises out-of-school-hours functions, including an upcoming winter camp. The camp, which is planned for early August, will have a Hollywood theme and will explore Jewish identity through film.

"Camp is run over Shabbat so that students have the chance to experience a traditional Shabbat," Brivik explains.

"We are going to have a massive party, fantastic madrichim, and really exciting programs. This is a chance for students to make new friends, escape for a weekend, enjoy a relaxing break, and have heaps of fun!"

In the coming months, JSN will also be

launching a youth advisory committee which will give the students involved more ownership of JSN.

Enthusiastic students will be selected to facilitate JSN activities, increase awareness about JSN's role and develop leadership skills.

"JSN will provide members of the youth advisory committee with access to Jewish community leaders, speakers and entrepreneurs, and allow them to access places and attend events otherwise inaccessible to students their age," Brivik says.

"Through this program, JSN will create a strong group of young Jewish leaders from a non-Jewish school background, who will be able to continue to use their acquired knowledge ... to contribute to community projects and organisations after they finish school."

For more information on JSN contact the UJEB at (03) 9272 5522 or Jessica (0401 857 111).

2010's - NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Starting over once again

Thanks to a generous donation from the Gandel Charitable Trust, as 2009 ended Karen Chizik was appointed UJEB Curriculum Coordinator, working with a team of UJEB teachers to develop the new RE curriculum. Shelley Engel was subsequently appointed as Education Director responsible for the curricular overhaul of RE.

In 2010 UJEB moved from Beth Weizmann to new larger offices in Glen Huntly Road. Financial considerations aside, it was felt that a location out of Beth Weizmann -- that had been considered for some years -- would facilitate greater use of UJEB premises after hours and provide easier access for teachers to a resource centre that could be expanded given availability of more space. However UJEB would return to Beth Weizmann just a few short years later, at the end of 2014.



Yossi Goldfarb and Daniel Jenshel

By 2011 Daniel Jenshel was able to report success in improving UJEB's financial position, introduction of new systems for operational purposes and RE curriculum development. The Appeal period was finally moved to June after many years of dissatisfaction with its February timetable. However it was 2012, when he was succeeded as President by Yossi Goldfarb (himself a UJEB parent) that was to become another year of particularly significant change for the organisation.

A significantly revised RE curriculum was implemented in 2011 and the second year of the two year spiral program was implemented in Term I, 2012 across the 37 schools that UJEB covered. The UJEB Resource Library was re-established in the new UJEB offices with the creation of new visual aids. In 2012, Hebrew Centres located in Malvern, Gardenvale and Caulfield also received a new curriculum to provide a more contemporary and consistent approach to Jewish Studies and Hebrew education. To assist with this objective, UJEB re-structured the Hebrew Centre Coordinator role from one Hebrew Centre Coordinator at each site to just one, namely Irit Snir, with overall program responsibility. She would also strengthen the connection between centres and head office that had lapsed since 2009. Also in 2011, the highly regarded (private) Millies Jewish education program in Bentleigh/McKinnon was incorporated into the UJEB Hebrew Centre program. This provided UJEB with strategic access to a Jewish growth area.

The JSN program supported by The Pratt Foundation was initially provided at eight schools in 2011 under Dani Miller consolidated to four schools where over 80% of Jewish students in the JSN program were located: Bentleigh Secondary College, Brighton Secondary College, Glen Eira College and McKinnon Secondary College. These four schools have both the largest Jewish student populations and a proven correlation between those attending the lunchtime sessions and then going on to participate in other JSN activities, for example JSN camps.

The changing of the guard

As 2012 commenced Yossi Goldfarb took over the presidency from Daniel Jenshel. Then Director of Global Engagement Management Systems with the Victorian Department of State Development, Business and Innovation, he had a long history of Jewish communal involvement ranging from student activism to organisations such as the Zionist Council of Victoria and Blake Street Shul. Deon Kamien (General Manager), Shelley Engel (Education Director) and Deena Spektor (Development Officer) resigned. Life Vice President Jeffery Greenberg also resigned after 34 years with the Board. A past president



JSN Camp, 2011



JSN, 2012

and treasurer, for decades he had also been the chief administrator of the provisions for tax deductibility available to Jewish educational institutions teaching religious studies through the provisions of the tax exempt status of the Council for Jewish Education in Schools (the administration of which had now been handed over to the JCCV). The Sunday classes at the North Eastern Jewish Centre was closed in May 2012 due to very low student enrolments.



UJEB camp

David Simmelmann served as Acting Executive Director until Marlo Newton, previously Head of Jewish Studies at the Middle School of King David (and prior to that at the Brandeis Hillel Middle School in California), took up the Executive Director position in July 2012. UJEB now had at the helm a charismatic experienced and accomplished educator with international and local experience in strategic planning, change management and fundraising within Jewish schools.

For the first time UJEB partnered with its Sydney based sister organisation, BJE and sent four Melbourne Year 10 students on a six week Israel program. The Year 10 Emet Israel Program is custom designed for Jewish teenagers who do not attend Jewish schools and offers active opportunities for the participants to explore, embrace and experience their Jewish identity.

At Glen Eira College Jonathan Schauder led an initiative to implement Hebrew classes on campus; these commenced in Term II, 2012. A cohort of GEC Jewish parents established "Horim", a formal body to advocate for the inclusion of quality Jewish supplementary education at the school. Through their efforts 2012 saw the introduction of Hebrew as a LOTE for Year 7 students. UJEB was not officially affiliated with the group, but a mutual aim (providing opportunities for connection and engagement with a Jewish identity) saw JSN play an active role in

supporting, guiding and mentoring the members of this group. A successful "meet and greet" was also held in March 2012 at a private home. Twenty families were appreciative of the opportunity to increase their Jewish social networks and become better informed about UJEB and its high school experience, JSN.



JSN, Yom Hatzmaut at Glen Eira College

The 2012 Autumn Getaway (camp) saw a fantastic 43 camp participants actively experience Shabbat the JSN way and learn, discuss and encounter the dual facets at a Jewish identity – a connection to Israel and an identification with Judaism.

Finally, for the second consecutive year, JSN offered participants an authentic Zionist experience through its Zionist Seminar. Together with Bialik College a group of experienced and creative informal educators were brought from Israel to provide opportunities for Diaspora teenagers to connect with an important element of their Jewish identity – Israel. The JSN Zionist Seminar gave 30 participants the time and the space to meaningfully and actively discuss, learn about and experience their Zionism in a positive and engaging environment.

With a view to the future, UJEB had long sought a dedicated centre in Melbourne's South East where increasing numbers of Jewish families were living. 2013 saw the opening of Merkaz Bentleigh at the premises of the Etz Chaim Progressive synagogue, with the support of Gandel Philanthropy and the cooperation of the Board of Etz Chayim. 50 students attended the classes headed by Rosh Limor Peretz. Afterschool classes continued at Caulfield Junior College under the leadership of Brocho Matouf, and at Gardenvale under Liza Ezekiel.

On the other hand, Malvern Primary After School Centre closed at the end of Term I, 2013, due to low enrolments. At the end of 2013 a strategic review saw the decision to close Gardenvale as an Afterschool, and concentrate attention on Merkaz Bentleigh, where there was greater flexibility and room to grow. Throughout 2013/4 the Afterschool centres had the creativity and scholarship of

Rebecca Lobel, who directed the curriculum including both Hebrew language and Jewish Studies. The Afterschool program also benefitted from the introduction of a regular music program that culminated in an end-of-year Chanukah concert and sing-along, which friends, parents and grandparents all enjoyed. Professional Development topics for Afterschool teachers included: Managing Anaphylaxis and Classroom Management.

Once again in 2013 the RE program followed predicted trends growing both in scope and number. There were RE classes in 38 government day schools teaching over 80 classes a week reaching 1243 students. Malvern Central and Glen Iris Primary were added to the roster of primary schools and classes resumed after a six year break at Glenferrie Primary. The numbers in some schools grew to the point that Jewish RE was now run for half of the school demographic.

Significant enhancements were made to the program. The first was opening a new class at Katandra in Ormond, a special school where classes had been provided in previous years but had subsequently lapsed. Together with ongoing classes at Glen Allen Special School the move signified the commitment by UJEB to include students with special needs into programs. The second change, made possible with support of UIA, was the introduction of music into the R.E. curriculum. Three music specialists spread themselves over the 38 primary schools to teach a selection of festival and Hebrew songs for which a special song book was created.

Two camps were run, one for Years 3-6 and one for Years 7-12. There was a 25% increase in numbers on junior camp. Both included the participation of Israeli and local madrichim.

Marketing and Communications

No organisation can operate, let alone expand its activities, without ample funds. The marketing and communication goals of 2013 were to cement UJEB's image as a vibrant alternative Jewish Education in Melbourne, and to tell our story to a wider audience so as to gain assured support for an annual budget now in the vicinity of \$750,000.

The Annual Report reporting the 2012 calendar year was revamped into an informative and colourful production published as a marketing tool in 2013. A business partnership was developed with the *Jewish News* with strategic advertising in the educational features throughout the year. This has placed UJEB on the map as a Jewish educational option for primary and secondary students outside of Jewish day schools. A promotional video highlighted the work UJEB does in the community, documenting all the services UJEB has to offer. The web site and Facebook page were updated more regularly to provide information on programs and activities throughout the year. A dedicated You Tube channel featured two UJEB promotional videos.

The Annual Appeal now ran from May 1 to June 1. The success of the 2012 campaign was built upon to produce the billboards and artwork for the appeal advertising. It was decided to continue using the previous year's theme and style (based on catchy slogans such as "there is more to Judaism than Seinfeld" and "because milk and honey is more than just a shampoo") to continue to gain the recognition achieved in the previous year but new slogans were developed. Once again Year Ten students were offered participation in a summer Israel program, an undoubted life-affirming experience for them. UJEB's sister organisation in NSW, the Board of Jewish Education assisted to make this possible.

For 2014 the Board of Management comprised:

President: Yossi Goldfarb.

Immediate past President: Daniel Jenshel.

Life Vice President: Arnold Dexter.

Treasurer: Jonny Caplan.

Board members: Tania Burstin, Tony Fell, Jeremy Leibler.

(Tony Fell acted as President for three months while Yossi Goldfarb concentrated on other matters.)

In his 2014 presidential report Yossi Goldfarb noted that towards the end of 2013, the UJEB board spent time deliberating on our strategic direction. Whilst the overall mission was clear – educating Jewish children in government schools and linking them with the broader community – changes in this educational landscape along with changes in the expectations that parents and children have for their Jewish education, led the Board to review UJEB's direction.

As was the case across the community, 2014 saw UJEB instigate a major communal focus on Child Protection. UJEB completed five sessions on Child Protection with Kate Levi, through the JCCV. The President reported that UJEB rewrote its Child Protection Policy, believing that "we are proactive in our approach and thorough in our application of policy".

Over the previous three years UJEB had assisted parents of Glen Eira College (GEC) to establish Hebrew as a language offered on campus. Three Year Seven classes as well as some in higher classes now studied Hebrew as a LOTE, though for students in Year Ten and above seeking to do Hebrew as a VCE subject, it was still necessary to attend evening classes at McKinnon.

In 2014 UJEB took the next step in supporting parents at GEC by establishing a Jewish Studies program after hours. Funded by grants from the Pratt Foundation, the Werdiger Family Foundation and an anonymous donor the program operated for 1.5 hours on Wednesday afternoons, secured students from McKinnon and Brighton Secondary Colleges as well as GEC attendees. Ms Andrea Gore wrote and taught the first unit, on Lifecycle. Daniel Gould taught Israel from Herzl to Statehood. With this offering GEC cemented itself as a school where students can access a full Jewish curriculum, both Hebrew and Jewish Studies and, through JSN, informal education. Much credit is due to Jonathan Schauder and Robert Hain for their efforts.



JED class

Supported by a start up grant from the Besen Family Foundation, UJEB began a Parents and Friends group on the model of state primary schools. The first family function was held on Chol Hamoad Sukkot at Allnutt Park with a portable sukkah. Fifty people attended.

It was decided to move back into Beth Weizmann, to benefit from new opportunities arising from sharing space in the communal building.

Rena Adler Memorial

It is trite to say it, but while all who work for UJEB are special, yes, some are more special than others. While so many who taught Religious Instruction/Education classes over the years were effectively transient staff members, Rena Adler's part time occupation as a religious instructor for UJEB lasted nearly 30 years. Over her years with UJEB, Rena taught at more than a dozen state public schools ranging from Doncaster Park in the East to Oakleigh South and numerous others in between, with class sizes ranging from two dozen to just one or two.

In those years 100s of children learned a little of "Judaism" from Rena. She was particularly proud of her work with special needs students. Sadly Rena's cancer finally put a stop to teaching early in 2013 and following her passing her family decided to financially support the 'Rena Adler Inclusion Fund' which commenced from her 'Yahrzeit' in October 2014. The income raised from this Fund is used to extend the education programs of the United Jewish Education Board to children with special needs.



Rena Adler Chanuka

At this point I would just mention two other longstanding RE teachers who like Rena have provided particularly outstanding service to UJEB and our students. Albeit not continuously, Lesley Sheezel's involvement in both RE and Sunday/after school classes spanned the years from 1968 till 2010. And gifted qualified Special Education teacher Elana Turtledove was involved for well over a decade following her immigration from South Africa paying special attention to students with special needs. At times Elana made the point that her UJEB role played a significant part in her acclimatisation to Australia – which raises the issue of what UJEB has done for many staff over the years that complements what those staff have done for UJEB and our students.

More new initiatives

In 2014 a Hebrew only day was instituted at Merkaz Bentleigh on Mondays for families who wished their children to learn Hebrew in an immersion style at an intensive level. Tuesday and Wednesday classes continued to combine Jewish Studies and Hebrew Language. Rosh of Merkaz Bentleigh was Limor Peretz. She was instrumental in helping UJEB achieve official approval to run as an After School Hours Centre so that 2015 fees could be eligible for the Child Care Benefit and Rebate. A new Rosh of Caulfield, Omer Rosinger, was appointed in February 2014. There were some 60 students at Bentleigh and 30 at Caulfield Junior College.

2014 also saw the introduction of an exciting new four part Batmitzvah program led by Naomi Orelowitz in conjunction with Jewish Aid Australia, the Jewish Museum of Australia and the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia (Vic). Topics included in the program were:

- Social action, with participation in Stand Up's social justice program exploring 21st Century challenges such as poverty alleviation and human rights.*
 - Israel and Torah: Exploring our historic and current connections to Israel. Girls also researched the parashah that falls on their 12th birthday, writing a d'var torah based on its themes.*
 - History and culture, including meetings at the Jewish Museum of Australia, an exploration of the Australian Jewish story and a roots project investigating the girls' individual family stories of migration and settlement.*
 - Jewish women: The final term at NCJWA (Vic) explored a wide variety of influential roles that Jewish women have undertaken throughout the ages as well as meeting local inspirational Jewish women*
-

Bureaucratic intervention endangers our services

In May of 2014, UJEB supplied Religious Education (now referred to as SRI, Special Religious Instruction) to 1,300 students in 37 primary schools, including two special schools. Our numbers had grown at an average of 5.5% per annum each year of the last decade. However in May of 2014, the Department of Education and Training, who supervised UJEB and the other faith providers, began an overhaul of the program. They were concerned to crack down on reports of proselytising by some instructors, and on bribes of lollies that were given as inducements for students to participate in religious events outside school. (The latter problem was separate from earlier in school policy changes associated with allergy concerns, that had prevented continuation of the long established UJEB modus operandi including provision of such items as hamentashen, matzot, cheesecake, apple and honey and doughnuts at the appropriate festivals, that used to give children a memorable "gastronomic" experience of Judaism".) Their policy update was released as Ministerial Directive (MD) 141. Importantly for UJEB, it included in its first draft (in May) a requirement for parents to "opt in" to the program each year, and the ability of Principals to decline to provide SRI programs if "not enough" students opted in to it.

After securing a meeting with the Minister of Education Mr Martin Dixon MP, President Yossi Goldfarb, Executive Director Marlo Newton and Board member Jeremy Leibler represented the difficulties that this presented to UJEB as a minority provider. Thanks to their efforts, and those of local member for Caulfield David Southwick MP, the language was changed in a July version of MD141. The requirement for "enough" students to opt in was dropped, but the requirement for annual opt in remained. This led to wide scale confusion in July and August 2014, as parents were asked by their school to "opt in" again for 2014. Some schools communicated these changes more effectively than others.

There was another issue as well. In addition to the "opt in" requirement, principals were reminded of their duty of care and the requirement to have one of their own teachers in every classroom where religious programs ran. In many schools this long standing requirement had previously been somewhat ignored. Now principals who could not comply with this could not run the SRI program.

UJEB wrote to all of parents, explaining the changes that occurred, and tried to assist parents to find their schools timetable and paperwork to opt in. The variety in school response was instructive. Principals who had been historically reluctant to run programs were quick to respond that "not enough" students had opted in and that they did not need to run the program. When we responded that the phrase "not enough" had been dropped from the directive, they immediately wrote back saying: "I cannot provide appropriate duty of care for this program."

In an interesting case study, parents of South Caulfield Primary called for a meeting with UJEB management when their Principal claimed that not enough students had opted in. UJEB facilitated a parent meeting, and a delegation of parents asked to meet with the Department of Education, claiming that the Principal had not given sufficient time to respond to the opt in form and that she needed to be responsive to her school community. Following a meeting between the Principal and UJEB's Executive Director, SRI did indeed return to South Caulfield Primary in 2015. Unfortunately a more apathetic attitude prevailing amongst parents of students at other schools did not assist to bring about a turnaround in those cases.

In 2014 JSN also faced new legal regulations regarding activity within schools which caused a minor setback in the start date. However JSN soon flew into action at our four schools: Brighton Secondary, McKinnon Secondary, Bentleigh Secondary and Glen Eira College. Programs ranged from exploring the importance of and connection to their own Jewish identity, to different perspectives as to how chaggim are celebrated/commemorated with multiple cultural observances. At a different level students also discussed moral dilemmas and concepts of morality in Judaism.

JSN ran two major celebrations at Glen Eira College (for Rosh Hashanah and Chanukah) with cake and food stalls and fun activities and stations. They were open to the whole school allowing our festivities and culture to be shared and explored by all students. In June long time JSN Coordinator Dani Miller resigned. Our maturity as an organisation was displayed when Beau Landes, a UJEB and JSN graduate, became the first former participant to lead the program.

Rebecca Lobel resigned prior to Term Four of 2014; experienced educator and former UJEB Hebrew Centre principal Riva Cohen then acted as Afterschool Coordinator. Becky Kiper-Fox also resigned towards the end of 2014. Amongst other achievements she had been responsible for two years of curriculum writing that reinvigorated the SRI program. So for 2015 Riva Cohen was appointed as SRI Coordinator with Executive Director Marlo Newton acting as After School Coordinator in addition to her other roles. Rochelle Kotek was Office Manager and Lisa Baron Marketing and Communications Officer.

All reported to Executive Director Marlo Newton. Also for 2015, it was decided to change the advertising strategy. Billboards boldly headed "Unite to Educate this Generation" were now to feature prominent communal personalities such as Rabbi Raymond Apple, Ginette Searle, Helen Brustman, Rachel Caplan and others, who had commenced their Jewish involvement through a UJEB education. All Appeal activity was now in June, just prior to the end of the financial year – a time that would not impinge on the busy period at the start of the school year and would hopefully encourage last minute tax deductible donations.

Unfortunately, just as UJEB with its outstanding professional team entered its 120th year that should have been a cause for celebration, and just as more and more children are finding their way into government rather than Jewish schools for financial reasons, hence making UJEB'S work all the more important in the interests of Jewish continuity, there is dark shadow over UJEB's future. For despite the work put into overcoming new government regulation and policies described above, and despite the success in gaining our programs once again at Caulfield South for over 200 students, the first half of 2015 saw a reduction of the overall number of students experiencing UJEB programs to approximately 800. Particularly disappointing was the April 2015 confirmation by the School Council of the earlier withdrawal from the program of Caulfield Junior College, the school that had once been in the forefront of providing Jewish education under the leadership of former principals Jennie and then Tim Douglas. Also then out was Valkstone with its 220 students as well as a number of schools with smaller numbers. And then in August came the dreaded though not unanticipated announcement by the Victorian government that SRI in school hours would come to an end and there would be no SRI from the commencement of the 2016 school year.

Whatever the reasons for this move that affects the multiplicity of faiths across the whole Victorian community UJEB cannot allow so many Jewish students and their families to be denied any Jewish education – and, for that matter – what in many instances amounted to a key connection of more isolated families with Judaism, other Jewish families in particular areas and other Jewish children in their respective schools as well as with the Jewish community generally. Any assumption that this development will mean all Jewish families will now ensure that their children will now attend Jewish schools is based on a misunderstanding of reality. Unlike after school or Sunday options provided by UJEB, Chabad Houses, Hamerkaz Shelanu, Spiritgrow and the Progressive movement, SRI was never an alternative to Jewish day school education. Anyway, all of these only catered for portion of those in government or non Jewish private schools. Location, cost, an in principle preference of some not to segregate themselves from the broader community and even an unwillingness to comply with bureaucratic procedures to achieve fee reduction will mean that many may now be denied any Jewish education – and this group will include many of the weakest of our community both from a social/financial perspective and from the perspective of community involvement in any sense.

The undoubted challenge for UJEB in its second 120 years is to overcome this new situation across the Victorian primary government school system – using lateral thinking to find innovative solutions that will benefit our community. As just one example of what might be possible, as these lines were written, UJEB was working with the Department of Education to target select primary schools and establish Hebrew language there as a formal LOTE option, complemented by afterschool Jewish studies and school wide celebrations of key holidays. This is designed to cater for more Jewish children in the South-East area including those displaced from other favoured schools by zoning. And her opinion that needs immediate exploration is a form of online course updating the correspondence school model.



Bat Mitzvah girls



Glen Eira College JSN girls

Collaborating towards a new bat mitzvah experience

PHOEBE ROTH

THE United Jewish Education Board (UJEB) has partnered with Jewish Aid Australia, the Jewish Museum of Australia and the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia (NCJWA) Victoria to deliver a unique, year-long bat mitzvah program.

UJEB's new bat mitzvah program for 2014 invites girls to learn about and experience social action, Zionism, Torah, Jewish history and culture, and their own emerging identities as young Jewish women.

"This is the first time such a positive collaboration is being tried, and we are thrilled by the possibilities," said UJEB executive director Marlo Newton.

In term one, students will participate in Stand Up, Jewish Aid's social justice program for b'nei mitzvah-aged students. As part of this program, they will explore contemporary challenges including social cohesion, poverty alleviation, equitable distribution of wealth and human rights.

During term two, the focus will move to Israel, with classes exploring historic and current connections to Israel. The girls will also have the



From left: Adriana Gomberg (Jewish Museum of Australia), Frances Prince (NCJWA Vic), Marlo Newton (UJEB), Annette Sweet (NCJWA Vic) and Elise Teperman (Jewish Aid).

opportunity to research the parshah that falls closest to their 12th birthday.

In term three, the classes will meet at the Jewish Museum of Australia, focusing on Jewish history, art and culture. This stage will culminate in a roots project examining the girls' individual family stories of migration and settlement.

At the NCJWA (Victoria) in the final term, the role Jewish women play in public and private life will be explored. The students will meet with Jewish women who are active in making a difference in the Jewish community and the wider community, both in professional and voluntary capacities.

Newton said the program will

connect girls who do not attend Jewish day schools with the wider Jewish community, which is one of UJEB's core aims.

"These girls will have multiple pathways to a Jewish identity. They can connect through Zionism, Torah and Jewish living ... through their drive towards social action and social justice," she told *The AJN*. "So they see there are many different ways to be a young Jewish woman."

The year-long journey will culminate in a bat mitzvah presentation in the company of family and friends.

Classes begin in early February 2014.
Enquiries: UJEB (03) 9038 5028;
www.ujeb.org.au.



Merkaz Bentleigh



CJC seder



CJC chanukah



CJC purim



CJC



Malvern chanukah, 2014



Merkaz Seder, 2014



Seder, 2014



Purim at Merkaz Bentleigh, 2013



Gardenvale Beit Hamikdash



A clown, Haman and a Queen. Gardenvale purim, 2015



Challah making at Merkaz Bentleigh



Seder Gardenvale



CJC afterschool



JSN



UJEB camp



Gardenvale



Merkaz Bentleigh Purim



Reading with Marlo. Gardenvale model seder



JSN camp



Lulav shake Gardenvale Primary



Modern Chalutzim JSN



Merkaz Bentleigh



UJEB camp, 2014



JSN Rosh Hashana



JED Back to School, 2015



First day CJC Afterschool



Model seder



UJEB camp, 2014



UJEB camp, 2014



Bat Mitzvah girls, 2014



Omer at CJC seder



Camp



JSN Rosh Hashana



Parents and friends purim party, 2015



Purim at CJC



Purim at CJC



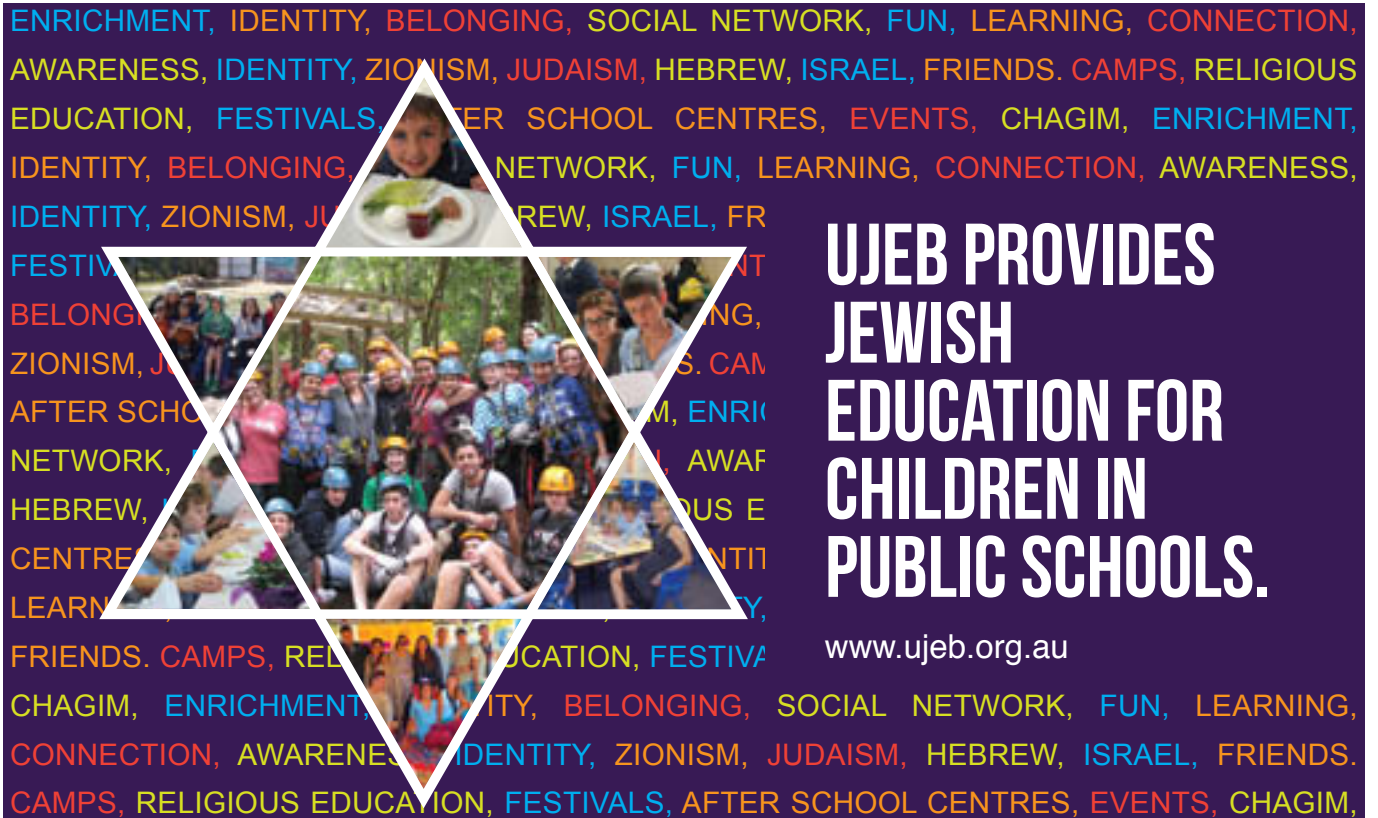
Rabbi Adelstein shows a scroll to CJC students on Rosh Chodesh Elul, 2014



Purim at Merkaz Bentleigh, 2015

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- Celebrate with family and friends

**Full details are available
from UJEB. Tel: 9038 5028
www.ujeb.org.au**



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I graduated from
UJEB Sunday School
at Caulfield South
Synagogue.

GINETTE SEARLE

I am the Executive Director of the Zionist Federation of Australia,
proudly part of the Blake St Shule community and a former youth
movement and AUJS leader.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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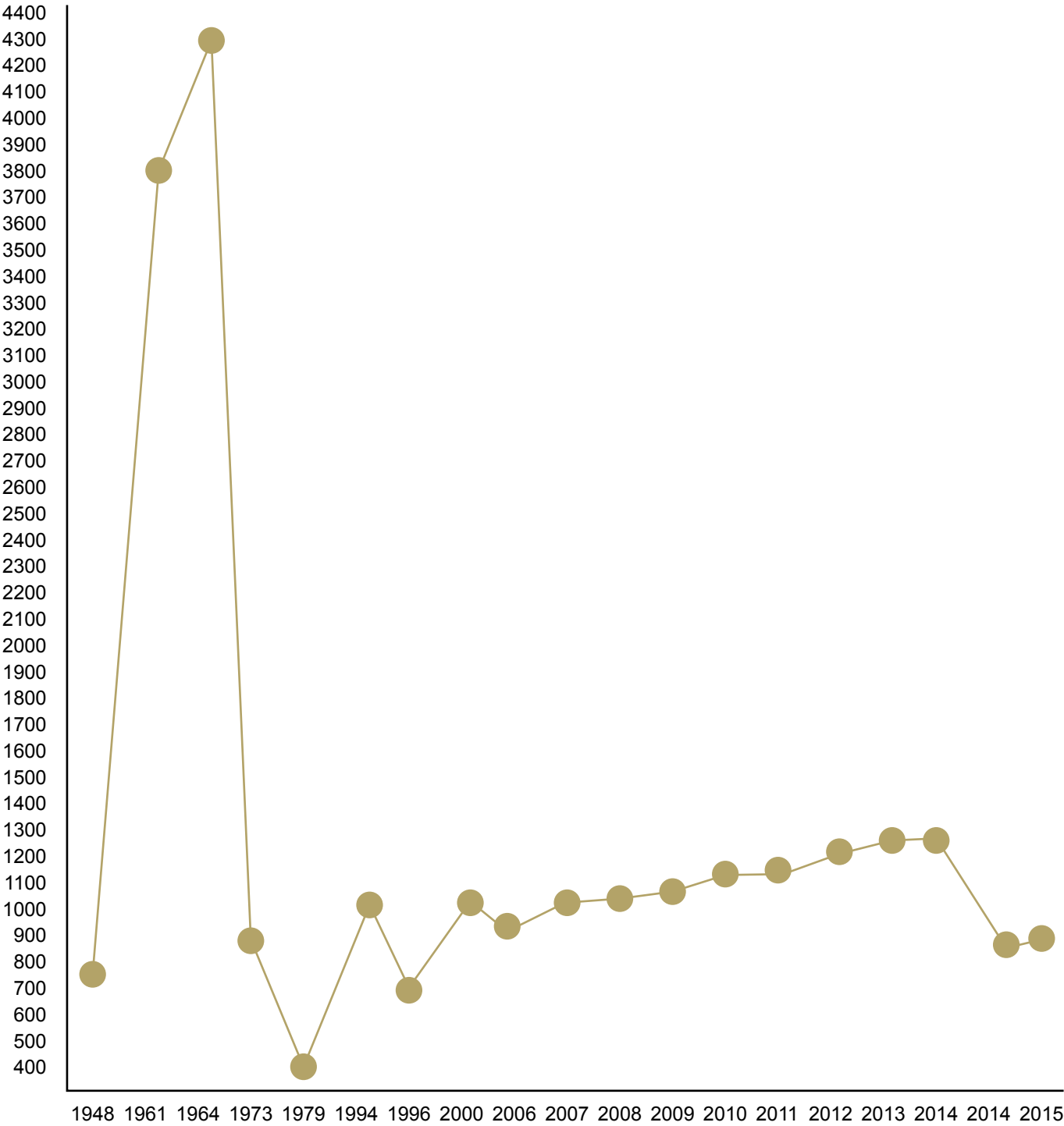
I graduated from
UJEB at primary and
secondary school and
I am now head of the
Jewish Student Network.



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GRAPH - DEMAND FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



AFTER SCHOOL LOCATIONS OVER TIME

1900 - 1930



1940 - 1970



1980 - 1990



2000s



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This brief historical record traced how the United Jewish Education Board, the oldest existing organisation in Victoria solely dedicated to the furtherance of Jewish education, took root and flourished as the forerunner of the vital, diverse and proud Jewish educational scene in Melbourne today – and still continues its beneficial work. Despite the welcome strength of the day school movement in Melbourne and UJEB's recurring theme as a “Cinderella” organisation by comparison, UJEB continues to benefit from the strength of positive identification by the community. Given the thousands of current members of the community who have had a direct association with the UJEB as either pupils or, at the very least, as children of former pupils, there must be practically no-one in the community unaware of its work. An examination of the list of its employees and Board members over the years reads like a who's who of influential and committed Jewish leaders, showing that practically all the active members of the multiplicity of communal organisations in Melbourne have spent at least some time with UJEB to further its aims.

The commitment of a Jewish community to education should not come as a surprise to anyone, but this important milestone provides pause for thought and allows us to ponder what the next 120 years may hold for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Whilst the emphasis of the Melbourne Jewish community must continue to be upon the promotion and growth of day school education, there is an essential need to provide a viable Jewish educational option for those students not attending a Jewish Day School. Many of these students are to be found in schools further from the Jewish “centre of gravity” around Caulfield and beyond; such schools as Oakleigh South Primary School and even Kingswood Primary School in Dingley that already currently need servicing, clearly have growth potential that will require more UJEB attention and involvement in future years, but are situated where getting teachers to those locations for half hour SRI sessions (that UJEB is working to ensure are continued) is not easy. The challenge facing UJEB is to strengthen existing and potential ties, thereby earning the interest and commitment of people who will continue to further the work of the UJEB in the context of its values and traditions.

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1895: Sir Isaac Isaacs
1896: Mr P Blashki
1897 - 1901: Rabbi J Abrahams
1902 - 1903: Reverend. Blaubaum
1904 - 1906: Reverend. J Lenzer
1907: Mr N Levi
1908: Reverend. J Lenzer
1909 - 1910: Rabbi J Abrahams
1911 - 1912: Mr M Marks
1913: Mr L Isaacs
1914 - 1938: Mr P Cohen
1939 - 1943: Mr L Morris (Acting President)
1944: Mr J Goldenberg (Acting President)
1945 - 1954: Mr S Glass
1955: Mr RD Beebe
1956 - 1958: Dr J Borenstein
1959 - 1960: Dr B A Stoll
1961: Mr M Slonim
1962: Mr P Freedman
1963 - 1969: Mr S A Mordech
1970 - 1972: Mr P Symons
1973 - 1978: Mr R Lehrer
1979 - 1984: Mr I Plack
1985 - 1987: Mr M Hertan
1988 - 1991: Mr A Dexter
1992 - 1995: Mr J Greenberg
1996 - 1998: Ms Leanne Faraday Brash
1998 - 2000: Mr Y Loebenstein
2001: Mr A Dexter
2002 - 2005: Mr H Gluck
2005 - 2008: Ms J Montag/Perlstein
2009 - 2011: Mr D Jenshel
2012: Mr Y Goldfarb



UJEB Camp



RE at Tucker Rd Primary, 2015

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